

After Freeman's Farm, the lines remained stable for three weeks. Burgoyne had heard that Clinton, with the force Howe had left in New York, had started north to relieve him. Clinton in fact had finally received reinforcements from Europe and launched a lightning strike against Putnam's weakened Highlands Department. The British stormed Forts Clinton and Montgomery on the Hudson on October 6 and forced a path through the mountains. Clinton could not do more because he received explicit orders from Howe to send the reinforcements on to Philadelphia. He took a chance and sent out a small diversion to Kingston but returned to New York when that probe indicated it could do nothing of value.

Burgoyne was left to his fate. Gates strengthened his entrenchments and calmly awaited the attack he was sure Burgoyne would have to make. Militia reinforcements increased his forces to around 10,000 by October 7. Meanwhile, Burgoyne's position grew more desperate. Unable to hold his supply line open, Burgoyne faced a choice. He could cut his losses and fall back toward Canada and safety, or he could stay and fight. He chose to stay and fight in hopes of defeating the army in front of him and pushing on to Albany. Food was running out; the animals had grazed the meadows bare; and every day more men slipped into the forest, deserting the lost cause. With little intelligence of American strength or dispositions, on October 7 Burgoyne sent out a reconnaissance in force to feel out the American positions. On learning that the British were approaching, Gates sent out a contingent including Morgan's riflemen to meet them; a second battle developed, usually known as Bemis Heights or the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm. Although Gates intended to fight a cautious, defensive battle, he lost control of his own men. Arnold, an open supporter of Schuyler and critic of the cautious Gates, had been placed under house arrest for insubordination. When Arnold learned of Burgoyne's probe, he impetuously broke arrest and rushed into the fray, distinguishing himself before he was wounded in leading an attack on Breymann's Redoubt. The British suffered severe losses, five times those of the Americans, and were driven back to their fortified positions.

Two days after the battle, Burgoyne withdrew to a position in the vicinity of Saratoga. Militia soon worked around to his rear and hemmed him in from the north as well. His position hopeless, Burgoyne finally capitulated on October 17 at Saratoga. The total prisoner count was nearly 6,000, and great quantities of military stores fell into American hands. The victory at Saratoga brought the Americans out well ahead in the campaign of 1777 despite the loss of Philadelphia. What had been at stake soon became obvious. In February 1778 France negotiated a treaty of alliance with the American states, tantamount to a declaration of war against England.

Valley Forge

The name of Valley Forge has come to stand, and rightly so, as a patriotic symbol of suffering, courage, and perseverance. The hard core of continentals who stayed with Washington during that bitter winter of 1777–1778 suffered much indeed. Supply problems caused some men to go without shoes, pants, and blankets. Weeks passed when there

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After a disappointing fall campaign that ended with a British army occupying Philadelphia, George Washington cast about for winter quarters for his troops. He found a site among the thickly wooded hills around Valley Forge. The American camp lay somewhat to the north, but within easy striking distance, of the main road from Philadelphia to York, where the Continental Congress had taken refuge. This allowed his army to provide protection for the revolution's governing body. Valley Forge lay in a rich agricultural region that the contending armies had picked over extensively during the previous year. Dependent almost entirely on a wretchedly mismanaged supply system, the Americans were chronically short of food and clothing through much of the winter until Nathanael Greene, one of America's ablest commanders, took over as Quartermaster General. Steuben's drill instruction has received wide credit for bolstering American morale, but Greene's efficiency proved equally important. When in June 1778 the Continental Army finally marched out of Valley Forge to face the British again, it was well prepared in mind and body for what would follow.

was no meat, and men were reduced to boiling and eating their shoes. It was no place for "summer soldiers and sunshine patriots."

The symbolism of Valley Forge should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the suffering was largely unnecessary. While the soldiers shivered and went hungry, food rotted and clothing lay unused in depots throughout the country. True, access to Valley Forge was difficult, but little determined effort was made to get supplies into the area. The supply and transport system had broken down. In mid-1777 both the Quartermaster and Commissary Generals resigned along with numerous subordinate officials in both departments, mostly merchants who found private trade more lucrative. Congress, in refuge at York, Pennsylvania, and split into factions, found it difficult to find replacements. If there was not, as most historians now believe, an organized cabal seeking to replace Washington with Gates, there were many, both in and out of the Army, who were dissatisfied with the Commander in Chief; and much intrigue went on. Gates was made President of the new Board of War set up that winter, and at least two of its members were Washington's enemies. In the administrative chaos at the height of the Valley Forge crisis, there was no functioning Quartermaster General at all.

Washington weathered the storm, and the Continental Army would emerge from Valley Forge a more effective force than before. With his advice, Congress instituted reforms in the Quartermaster and Commissary Departments that temporarily restored the effectiveness of both agencies. Washington's ablest subordinate, General Greene, reluctantly accepted the post of Quartermaster General. The Continental Army itself gained a new professional competence from the training given by Steuben.

Steuben appeared at Valley Forge in February 1778. He represented himself as a baron, a title of dubious validity, and as a former lieutenant general on the staff of Frederick the Great. (In reality he had been only a captain. The fraud was harmless, for Steuben had a broad knowledge of military affairs and had the ability to communicate with the American soldiers and teach them the basics of their new craft.) Appointed

by Washington as Inspector General in charge of a training program, Steuben vigorously drilled the troops that remained under arms during the winter of 1777–1778 at Valley Forge. He taught the Continental Army a simplified but effective version of the drill formations and movements of European armies and the proper care of equipment and supplemented American marksmanship with instruction on the use of the bayonet, a weapon in which British superiority had previously been marked. All through the training, Steuben never lost sight of a major difference between the American citizen-soldier and the European professional. He early noted that American soldiers had to be told why they did things before they would do them well, and he applied this philosophy in his training program. His trenchant good humor and vigorous profanity delighted the Continental soldiers and made the rigorous drill more palatable. After Valley Forge, continentals would fight on equal terms with British regulars in the open field.

First Fruits of the French Alliance

While the Continental Army was undergoing its ordeal and transformation at Valley Forge, Howe dallied in Philadelphia, forfeiting whatever remaining chance he had to win a decisive victory before the effects of the French alliance were felt. He had had his fill of the American war; and the king accepted his resignation from command, appointing General Clinton as his successor. As Washington prepared to sally forth from Valley Forge, the British Army and the Philadelphia Tories said goodbye to Howe in a series of lavish parties. However, Clinton already had orders to evacuate the American capital. With the French in the war, the strategic situation had changed dramatically. England now had to ensure the safety of the long ocean supply line to America, as well as its valuable commercial possessions in other parts of the world, in particular the rich sugar plantations of the Caribbean. Clinton's orders were to detach 5,000 men to the West Indies and 3,000 to Florida and to return the rest of his army to New York by sea. He was then to give thought to recovering the southern states, where once again ever-hopeful refugees insisted the majority of the population would rally to the royal standard.

As Clinton prepared to depart Philadelphia, Washington had high hopes that the war might be won in 1778 by a cooperative effort between his army and the French Fleet. Charles Hector, the Comte d'Estaing, with a French naval squadron of eleven ships of the line and transports carrying 4,000 troops left France in May to sail for the American coast. D'Estaing's fleet was considerably more powerful than any Admiral Howe could immediately concentrate in American waters. For a brief period in 1778, the strategic initiative passed from British hands; Washington hoped to make full use of it.

Clinton had already decided, before he learned of the threat from d'Estaing, to move his army overland to New York prior to making any detachments, largely because he lacked sufficient transports to make the voyage by sea. On June 18, 1778, he set out with about 10,000 men. Washington, having gathered by that time about 12,000, immediately occupied Philadelphia and then took up the pursuit of Clinton. His council of war was divided, though none of his generals advised a

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A fellow Virginian presented these English-made pistols (manufactured about 1749) to General Washington as a token of esteem in March 1778.

“general action.” The boldest, General Wayne, and the young General Lafayette urged a “partial attack” to strike at a portion of the British Army while it was strung out on the road. The most cautious, Maj. Gen. Charles Lee, who had been exchanged and had rejoined the army at Valley Forge, advised only guerrilla action to harass the British columns. On June 26 Washington decided to take a bold approach, though he issued no orders indicating an intention to bring on a general action. He sent forward an advance guard composed of almost half his army to strike at the British rear when Clinton moved out of Monmouth Court House on the morning of June 27. Lee, the cautious, claimed the command from Lafayette, the bold, when he learned the detachment would be so large.

In the early morning Lee advanced over rough ground that had not been reconnoitered and made contact with the British rear, but Clinton reacted quickly and maneuvered to envelop the American right flank. Lee, feeling that his force was in an untenable position and underestimating the training transformation of the American Army during the encampment at Valley Forge, fell back in confusion. Washington rode up and, exceedingly irate to find the advance guard in retreat, exchanged harsh words with Lee. He then assumed direction of what had to be a defense against a British counterattack. The battle that followed, involving the bulk of both armies, lasted until nightfall on a sultry day with both sides holding their own. For the first time the Americans fought well with the bayonet as well as with the musket and rifle, and their battlefield behavior generally reflected the Valley Forge training. Nevertheless, Washington failed to strike a telling blow at the British Army, for Clinton slipped away in the night and in a few days completed the retreat to New York. Lee demanded and got a court-martial at which he was judged, perhaps unjustly, guilty of disobedience of orders, poor conduct of the retreat, and disrespect for the Commander in Chief. As a consequence he retired from the Army, though the controversy over his actions at Monmouth was to go on for years.

Washington meanwhile sought his victory in cooperation with the French Fleet. D’Estaing arrived off the coast on July 8, and the two commanders at first agreed on a combined land and sea attack on New York; but d’Estaing feared he would be unable to get his deep-draft ships across the bar that extended from Staten Island to Sandy Hook to get at Howe’s inferior fleet. They decided to transfer the attack to the other and weaker British stronghold at Newport, Rhode Island, a city standing on an island with difficult approaches. They agreed that the French Fleet would force the passage on the west side of the island and an American force under General Sullivan would cross over and mount an assault from the east. The whole scheme soon went awry. The French Fleet arrived off Newport on July 29 and successfully forced the passage; Sullivan began crossing on the east on August 8, and d’Estaing began to disembark his troops. Unfortunately, at this juncture Admiral Howe appeared with a reinforced British Fleet, forcing d’Estaing to reembark his troops and put out to sea to meet him. As the two fleets maneuvered for advantage, a great gale scattered both on August 12. The British returned to New York to refit and the French Fleet to Boston; d’Estaing decided to move on to tasks he considered more pressing in the West Indies. Sullivan was left to extricate his forces from an

untenable position as best he could, and the first experiment in Franco-American cooperation came to a disappointing end with recriminations on both sides.

The fiasco at Newport ended any hopes for an early victory over the British as a result of the French alliance. By the next year, as the French were forced to devote their major attention to the West Indies, the British regained the initiative on the mainland; the war entered a new phase.

The New Conditions of the War

After France entered the war in 1778, it rapidly took on the dimensions of a major European as well as an American conflict. In 1779 Spain declared war against England, and in the following year Holland followed suit. The necessity of fighting European enemies in the West Indies and other areas and of standing guard at home against invasion weakened the British effort against the American rebels. Yet the Americans were unable to take full advantage of Britain's embarrassments, for their own effort suffered more and more from war weariness, lack of strong direction, and inadequate finance. Moreover, the interests of the European states fighting Britain did not necessarily coincide with American interests. Spain and Holland did not ally themselves with the American states at all, and even France found it expedient to devote its major effort to the West Indies. Finally, the entry of ancient enemies into the fray spurred the British to intensify their effort and evoked some, if not enough, of that characteristic tenacity that has produced victory for England in so many wars. Despite the many new commitments the British were able to maintain in America an army that was usually superior in numbers to the dwindling Continental Army, though it was never strong enough to undertake offensives again on the scale of those of 1776 and 1777.

Monmouth was the last major engagement in the north between Washington's and Clinton's armies. In 1779 the situation there became a stalemate and remained so until the end of the war. The defense system Washington set up around New York with its center at West Point was too strong for Clinton to attack. The British commander did, in late spring 1779, attempt to draw Washington into the open by descending in force on unfinished American outpost fortifications at Verplanck's Point and Stony Point, but Washington refused to take the bait. When Clinton withdrew his main force to New York, the American commander retaliated on July 15, 1779, by sending General Wayne with an elite corps of light infantry on a stealthy night attack on Stony Point, a successful action more notable for demonstrating the proficiency with which the Americans now used the bayonet than for any important strategic gains. Thereafter the war around New York became largely an affair of raids, skirmishes, and constant vigilance on both sides. Twice in 1780 large British forces pushed into northern New Jersey in foraging operations intended to lure Washington into the open, but both times the flexible American defensive belt repulsed them easily.

Clinton's inaction allowed Washington to attempt to deal with British-inspired Indian attacks. Although Burgoyne's defeat ended the

threat of invasion from Canada, the British continued to incite the Indians all along the frontier to bloody raids on American settlements. From Fort Niagara and Detroit, they sent out their bands, usually led by Tories, to pillage and burn in the Mohawk Valley of New York, the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania, and the new American settlements in Kentucky. Although local defense was primarily the responsibility of state governments and the militia, the pressure on the Mohawk frontier soon prompted a Continental response. In August 1779 Washington detached General Sullivan with a force to deal with the Iroquois in Pennsylvania and New York. Sullivan laid waste the Indians' villages and defeated a force of Tories and Indians at Newtown on August 29. Although Sullivan's mission did not end Indian frontier raids, it essentially broke the back of Iroquois power and ensured the flow of supplies to the army from these fertile areas.

In the winter of 1778–1779, the colony of Virginia had sponsored an expedition that struck a severe blow at the British and Indians in the northwest. Young Lt. Col. George Rogers Clark, with a force of only 175 men ostensibly recruited for the defense of Kentucky, overran all the British posts in what is today Illinois and Indiana. Neither he nor Sullivan, however, was able to strike at the sources of the trouble—Niagara and Detroit. Indian raids along the frontiers continued, though they were somewhat less frequent and less severe.

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British Successes in the South

Late in 1778 the British began to turn their main effort to the south. The king's ministers hoped to bring the southern states into the fold one by one. From bases there, they would strangle the recalcitrant north. A small British force operating from Florida cooperated with the first reinforcements sent by Clinton and quickly overran thinly populated Georgia in the winter of 1778–1779. Alarmed by this development, Congress sent General Lincoln south to Charleston in December 1778 to command the Southern Army and organize the southern effort. It hoped that he could repeat his performance during the Saratoga campaign as a leader who could mix Continental regulars and militiamen. Lincoln gathered 3,500 continentals and militiamen; but in May 1779, while he maneuvered along the Georgia border, the British commander, Maj. Gen. Augustine Prevost, slipped around him to raid Charleston. The city barely managed to hold out until Lincoln returned to relieve it. (*Map 10*)

In September 1779 Admiral d'Estaing arrived off the coast of Georgia with a strong French Fleet and 6,000 troops. Lincoln hurried south with 1,350 Americans to join him in a siege of the main British base at Savannah. Unfortunately, the Franco-American force had to hurry its attack because d'Estaing was unwilling to risk his fleet in a position dangerously exposed to autumn storms. The French and Americans mounted a direct assault on Savannah on October 9, abandoning their plan to make a systematic approach by regular parallels. The British in strongly entrenched positions repulsed the attack in what was essentially a Bunker Hill in reverse, with the French and Americans suffering staggering losses. D'Estaing then sailed away to the West Indies, Lincoln returned to Charleston, and the second attempt at Franco-American