“NO REGULAR CORPS COULD HAVE MAINTAINED ITS GROUND MORE FIRMLY”

SITE DOCUMENTATION AND PRESERVATION PLAN FOR THE BATTLE OF THE HOOK, OCTOBER 3, 1781

GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VIRGINIA

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION PROGRAM GRANT

PREPARED FOR GLOUCESTER PARKS, RECREATION & TOURISM

BY
Wade P. Catts, RPA Robert A. Selig, Ph.D., Lt. Col. Lewis H. Burruss (ret), and Kevin Bradley, RPA

FINAL 2021

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- Maryland State Archives Collection. Portrait of Colonel John Francis Mercer, c.1803, by Robert Field (page 27).
- The Anne S.K. Browne Military Collection, Brown University. Image of Lauzun's Legion, Cavalry (Hussars) (page 36).
- Museum of the American Revolution. Portrait of Joachim du Perron Comte de Revel (or the Comte du Perron) (page 51).
- William L. Clements Library Image Bank, Henry Clinton Papers, Map 757. Detail of Gloucester Point, from "Sketch of the posts of York Town and Gloucester
- Point shewing the French and rebel attacks upon the former in October, 1781" (page 121)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Goals of the Study

The overall goal of this preservation plan and historical documentation is to conduct a survey and inventory using historical documents and cultural landscape resources. The work included a KOCOA Analysis and Archeological Research Design to identify landowners to be approached for further studies. Native American consultation was undertaken as part of this project. The project provides a strategy for preservation planning and supplies information needed to submit a National Register nomination in the future. In addition, a brochure was created to educate landowners, County Planners and elected officials about the battlefield's resources and how they can learn more about protection strategies.

The project was funded through a grant by the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) of the National Park Service and met the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (see 36 CFR 61). The project was conducted in accordance with the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Research Performance* as established by the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA).

The ABPP's *Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites* did not specifically identify or recognize the Battle of the Hook as a battlefield site in Virginia. The report did identify Yorktown (VA207) as a Priority I, Class A battlefield with medium short-term and long-term development threats (ABPP 2007:53). However, Gloucester Point is identified as an associative property with Yorktown, and is thus included in as a Priority I, Class A battlefield.

1.2 Gloucester County and the Middle Peninsula

Gloucester County is located in the southeastern portion of Virginia's Middle Peninsula. Half of the county's 140,364 acres are bounded by two tidal rivers (York River to the south and Piankatank to the north) and the Mobjack Bay. Gloucester County is known as a bedroom community for neighboring Virginia Peninsula localities (Newport News, Hampton, James City County, Poquoson, York County, and Williamsburg) and County Planning Commission is a member of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of July 1, 2019 (the most recent data is available) there are approximately 16,857 housing units in the county with an estimated 37,348 residents, or approximately 165.3 people/square mile (www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/gloucestercountyvirginia/PST045219).

Both Gloucester County's Comprehensive Plan and the Gloucester Point/Hayes Village Plan (Amended) identify Gloucester Point and Gloucester Courthouse as development districts and proposed growth areas (Gloucester County 2011, 2016). The Gloucester Point/Hayes Village Plan is particularly applicable to the study of the Battle of the Hook, since it is in this general location that the battlefield is situated.

Figure 1.1. Gloucester Point, Gloucester Court House and the general setting of the Battle of the Hook (USGS 2020).

The U.S. Route 17 corridor is an important area of commercial and community growth in the County. Between 1970 and 2000, the County's population has grown by over 60 percent and this additional influx of new residents has encouraged mass commercial and residential development. In the last half-century Gloucester has become an important commercial center for the Middle Peninsula, upper Hampton Roads, and the Northern Neck areas. Despite the influx in development, Gloucester still maintains a large amount of rural and farmland acreage (especially in the northern end of the county) which contributes to the County's rich agricultural tradition.

While not formally identified by the ABPP 2007 report, threats to the Hook battlefield have been recognized by the local historical community and Gloucester County planners. The most significant threat within the Battlefield boundary continues to be development of the US Route 17 corridor for transportation, commercial and residential purposes. Recently, the HRPDC approved, and The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be implementing, the addition of new sidewalks and the widening of US Route 17. The Gloucester Point/Hayes Village Development Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment recognizes traffic congestion and the need to plan for expected growth (Gloucester County 2011). The plan addresses connectivity, mixed-use development, and other potential improvements within this region of the County.

1.3 The Setting for the Battlefield

Modern development has disturbed or displaced the historic resources, landscape, and archaeological resources associated with the 1781 campaign. Additional development will further damage the landscape and impair historic view sheds. Future development may result in the subdivision of parcels which could cause more destruction of the landscape due to stormwater and other regulations.

The majority of land within the battlefield boundary is in private ownership and predominately zoned commercial. Information gathered through the inventory will provide the basis for a brochure to explain the importance of battlefield resources with landowners as well as with County Planners and elected officials. This information may lead to easements, acquisitions, changes in development plans and other strategies to preserve the landscape and historic resources.

Much of the battlefield in Gloucester County has not been studied. The battlefield, including the Battlefield Boundary and Core Area, are estimated to measure approximately 9,200 acres with 3,400 acres essentially remaining unchanged from the time of the battle and threatened by development. The study area is 4,200 acres and of that amount 3,897 acres are owned privately (93.5%), public 65 acres (1.5%), and private non-profit 206 acres (4.9%).

Opportunities for education, interpretation, and public access are currently limited. Locally most interpretation, research, planning, and public access for the battlefield focuses on the opposite side of the York River at Yorktown, where the National Historical Park is located, while there is virtually no interpretation of the other areas in the region that are within the battlefield boundary. Limited interpretation of military action is undertaken at Tyndall's Point Park, including both the Revolutionary War and the American Civil War.

The historical context and resource assessment presented herein will serve as a basis for developing long-range plans to protect remaining resources and to build awareness and interpretive efforts to educate the public about the significance of events that occurred in Gloucester during the Revolutionary War. Potentially, the County Planning and Zoning Department will be able to designate it as a historic district (H-1 zoning; see County Code of Ordinances, Appendix B, Article 4, Section 4.15), and/or share information with potential developers which may result in landowners voluntarily protecting resources. The results of the Battle of the Hook Documentation will allow the County to coordinate information and findings with plans for commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolutionary War. There is a strong public interest in the Battle of the Hook. Major reenactments were held in 2008 and 2013, with smaller commemorative activities in other years. Plans are underway for another reenactment. Information from the project will be shared with the public at the event. Recent archeological work completed at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science may be of assistance.

The analyses completed for this study were research-based and did not require physical access to private lands or ground disturbance. The KOCOA method of military terrain assessment was used, as required by ABPP grants. The project team utilized historic maps and aerials, in addition to available descriptive texts, to attempt to identify key defining features associated with the Battle of the Hook.

In general, the broad elements of a battlefield preservation plan include 1) researching and establishing the historical significance of the battle and the battlefield; 2) identifying the location and geographical area of the battlefield; 3) mapping the cultural and natural resources on and within the battlefield; and 4) documenting the current conditions of the battlefield. The following plan covers each of these elements and provides a detailed historical analysis of the battle actions. In the case of the Battle of the Hook, previous commemorative activities had mis-located the actual battlefield, thus necessitating the detailed KOCOA analysis and battle description. The plan also offers a range of planning recommendations for future interpretation, additional historical and archaeological research, heritage tourism, and County planning.

2. NOTES ON SOURCES

2.1. American Sources (Appendices 1 through 5)

The historical narrative in this report is based principally on published and unpublished primary sources. The analysis and historiography of military activities in Virginia in 1781 leading up to the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and the last British operational field army on October 19, 1781, traditionally focused on events in and around Yorktown on the right bank of the York River. Such an approach is generally justified since the majority of American, French and British forces was stationed in and around Yorktown. But the Franco-American alliance was only able to force the surrender of Cornwallis because the ever-tightening siege ring which quickly strangled Cornwallis into surrender was made complete by ground forces in Gloucester County and French naval forces under the command of the comte de Grasse in the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Research for this report, which addresses the essential role of these two components in the siege ring around Cornwallis and the decisive role played by the Battle of the Hook on October 3, 1781, in cutting off the last potential escape route of his forces, has brought to light almost 200 primary sources which form the basis for the historical analysis presented here.

The 155 American primary sources, both military and civilian, are collected in Appendices 1 through 5. The correspondence of General George Weedon with George Washington, Gabriel de Choisy, commanding officer of allied forces in Gloucester County, and Virginia Governor Thomas Nelson (Appendices 1 and 2) provide background information from the top of the chain of command on the build-up and logistics leading up to the Battle of the Hook. For the course of the battle itself we have the detailed account by John F. Mercer, who commanded the American infantry – "Mercer's Grenadiers" - in the Battle of the Hook, and the account by Henry Lee. Conversely the most important and richest body of primary sources from the American viewpoint for the War of Independence in Gloucester County in general and the Battle of the Hook in particular are the pension applications filed by veterans in the 1830s pursuant to federal legislation. The majority of these applications provide the small details vital to the reconstruction of the battle though occasionally applications such as that by Sergeant John White of Mercer's Grenadiers provide more detail. These pension applications are available on-line at Fold3 and were transcribed in Appendix 3. One unique feature among these applications is those filed by ten hussars of Lauzun's Legion (including a few questionable applications), most of whom deserted in the United States. No attempt has been made to list and transcribe every pension application that mentions military service in Gloucester County in the summer and fall of 1781 or participation in the Battle of the Hook, but the project team is confident that all applications with substantial information have been transcribed.

A second source of primary sources transcribed for this study are the Civilian Service and Damage Claims. During the Revolution the Virginia General Assembly authorized the procurement of supplies from its citizens for the use of the militia, state, and Continental troops. The Legislature, sitting in sessions between May 4, 1780, and July 14, 1780, passed "An act for procuring a supply of provisions and other necessaries for the use of the Army" [Henning 10:233-237]. This act, extended in other sessions, authorized the governor to appoint commissioners within each county to impress such supplies and services as were thought necessary to the war effort. The commissioners issued receipts, or certificates, to individuals for the requisitioned items so that

owners could seek reimbursement from the state government. The certificates and any other available documentation were presented to the county court during special sessions held between 1781 and 1783. Certificates were examined and authenticated by the courts, and the amount of compensation was determined. Information pertaining to claims that were approved was recorded by the court clerk in court booklets which were sent to the public service claims commissioners' office in Richmond. The local provision law commissioners and deputy commissaries also kept lists of foodstuffs, animals and other provisions that were collected in each county.

Two public service claims commissioners were appointed by the governor in 1783 to settle claims and to authorize reimbursement for materials and services provided. Individuals or their agents went to the commissioner's office in Richmond where payment on their claims was approved based on information contained in the certificates and court booklets. These transactions were recorded in the commissioners' books. The individual or his agent was then issued a warrant by the Auditor of Public Accounts which he in turn took to the state treasurer's office for payment.

The damage claims provide information on land use, surface features, fences and other man-made objects which, when compared with statements in pension applications, allow for the placement of troops on the landscape and a more accurate reconstruction of approaches to the battlefield and battlefield actions. They are of great importance for the KOCOA analysis of this report and are transcribed in Appendix 5.

Regarding official papers and legislation, most of these have been printed and published during the late nineteenth century, viz. William P. Palmer editor, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and other Manuscripts from April 1, 1781, to December 31, 1781.* vol. 2 (Goode 1881) and *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and other Manuscripts from January 1, 1782, to December 31, 1784*. vol. 3 (Goode 1883). These collections are readily available on-line. A representative collection of these official correspondence sources can be found in Appendix 4.

2.2 French Sources (Appendix 6)

French land forces provided crucial manpower to stabilize the siege line in Gloucester while naval forces under the command of the comte de Grasse in the mouth of the York River closed off any possibility of evacuation of British forces by sea. A look at the primary sources from members of Lauzun's Legion shows that papers, letters or memoirs from five officers survived, but unfortunately the list is misleading. D'Arrot's papers among the Lafayette-Leclerc Papers in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation contain very little information, Robert Dillon's journal ends a few minutes before the beginning of the battle, while Hugau's account begins only after the siege of Yorktown and Gloucester. That leaves the duc de Lauzun – his account needs to be read with a grain of salt, but fortunately other American and French sources complement his account of events.

First and foremost among these sources are accounts by French naval and infantry officers serving on the vessels in the fleet of the comte de Grasse. Few of these 16 sources, almost all of which are in French, have been published and even fewer have ever been used to any extent in a historical narrative of the sieges of Yorktown and Gloucester; even the best-known of these sources, the account by Lieutenant Joachim du Perron of the Regiment de Monsieur Infantry, has, to the best

of the knowledge of this team, never been published in extenso in English. Virtually unknown until the compilation of this report was the journal kept by *Sous-lieutenant* Paul de Sers d'Aulix of the Regiment de Brie Infantry. Perron and Sers d'Aulix served in Gloucester until the end of the siege and provide important information even if they only reached the battlefield a few minutes after the fighting had ceased. They were part of an 800-man detachment of French Line Infantry serving on de Grasse's fleet detached to Gloucester at the request of the comte de Rochambeau, which points to an important, but virtually un-known aspect of the siege of Gloucester: the only regular line troops – infantry, cavalry and artillery – on the allied side was French. Hardly ever used ship logs and journals by regular naval officers and *gardes de la marine*, young noblemen on vessels of war training to become naval officers, provide the background for this little-known aspect of the siege and victory at Yorktown. Completely unknown on this side of the Atlantic was the journal of 20-year-old *Garde du Pavillon* Jean Baptiste Victor Valentin des Mures, who served on the 74-gun ship *l'Hector*. Discovery and use of these sources contribute significantly to our knowledge about the sieges of York and Gloucester.

2.3 British Sources (Appendix 7)

Compared to the vast number of American and French sources on the Battle of the Hook, the number of British sources is very small. Only three officers – John Graves Simcoe, Banastre Tarleton and Hessian Jäger Captain Johann Ewald – left accounts of that pivotal battle on October 3, 1781. Only two of these three officers fought in battle since Simcoe lay sick in Gloucester Point. Tarleton's account, while generally reliable, needs to be read with caution, which leaves Ewald is our primary source on the British side.

No "traditional" sources such as Regimental Orderly Books, court-martial records, or explanations for presumed errors or misjudgements written after the fact to clear one's name have been found, and only a single battlefield map drawn by Joachim de Perron has come down to us.

2.4 Virginia Militia Legislation (Appendix 8)

American forces in Gloucester consisted exclusively of militia and Gentlemen Volunteers, therefore no regular Continental Army forces fought in the Battle of the Hook. A final appendix looks at the historical background of the concept of armed militias in the context of British history and also reproduces the militia law of May 5, 1777, in effect in Virginia at the time of the siege of Gloucester.

3. THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE BATTLEFIELD – GEOGRAPHY, SETTLEMENT, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Following English battlefield archeologist Glen Foard's analysis of the battlefield at Sedgemoor and adapting it for application for battlefields in North America, the primary terrain elements affecting the battlefield are: 1) physical geography; 2) settlements and land use; and 3) communications (Foard 2003:33-35). These three elements are reviewed below to understand the battlefield, particularly the area defined as the Battlefield Boundary, in a broader historical and landscape context. The general area of the battlefield is situated at the lower (southern) end of the Middle Peninsula of Gloucester Point, and contains the historical locations of Gloucester Courthouse, Seawell's Ordinary (the unincorporated community of Ordinary), Ware Church, Abingdon Church, and Gloucester Point (Figure 3.1).

3. 1 Physical Geography

Gloucester County is bordered on the north by the Piankatank River and Dragon Run Swamp, on the east by Mathews County and Mobjack Bay, on the south by the York River, and on the west by King and Queen County and Poropotank Creek. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 288 square miles, of which 218 square miles is land and 70 square miles is water (Gloucester County 2016).

The Gloucester Point Census Designated Place (CDP), which is the general area containing the Hook battlefield, has a total area of 16.4 square miles (42.4 km^2), of which 9.4 square miles (24.3 km^2) are land and 7.0 square miles (18.1 km^2), or 42.58%, are water, consisting of the tidal York River and its inlets, including Sarah Creek and part of Timberneck Creek.

Elevations in the county range from sea level to over 130 feet. Elevations are considerably lower within the general area of the battlefield; the highest point in the Gloucester Point CDP is 33 feet above sea level. For the southern portions of the county, Route 17 can easily be used as an elevation marker due to its bisecting qualities: it separates the majority of the low-lying land on the southeastern portion of the county from the higher elevated portions of land on the southwestern portions of the county. The southern portion of Route 17 is constructed on land that is 20 to 40 feet above sea level (Gloucester County 2014, 2016).

There are three major topographic features in Gloucester, three terraces formed by the advancing and receding sea during the Pleistocene. These are Princess Anne, Yorktown, and Wicomico, with elevations of sea level to about 30 feet, 30 to 90 feet, and 90 to 130 feet, respectively. Vegetational characteristics of the lower terraces resemble the other southern coastal Virginia locations, while the upper terrace and associated vegetation resemble the Piedmont.

The Yorktown terrace comprises about 35 percent of the area of the county. Its precise upper limits are not as easily discernible as in Princess Anne, but it includes many steep ravines and hills. Many spring-fed streams are found cutting through the terrace, draining the uplands into lower sections of Yorktown and Princess Anne terraces. Soils range from well-drained, alkaline sandy loams to

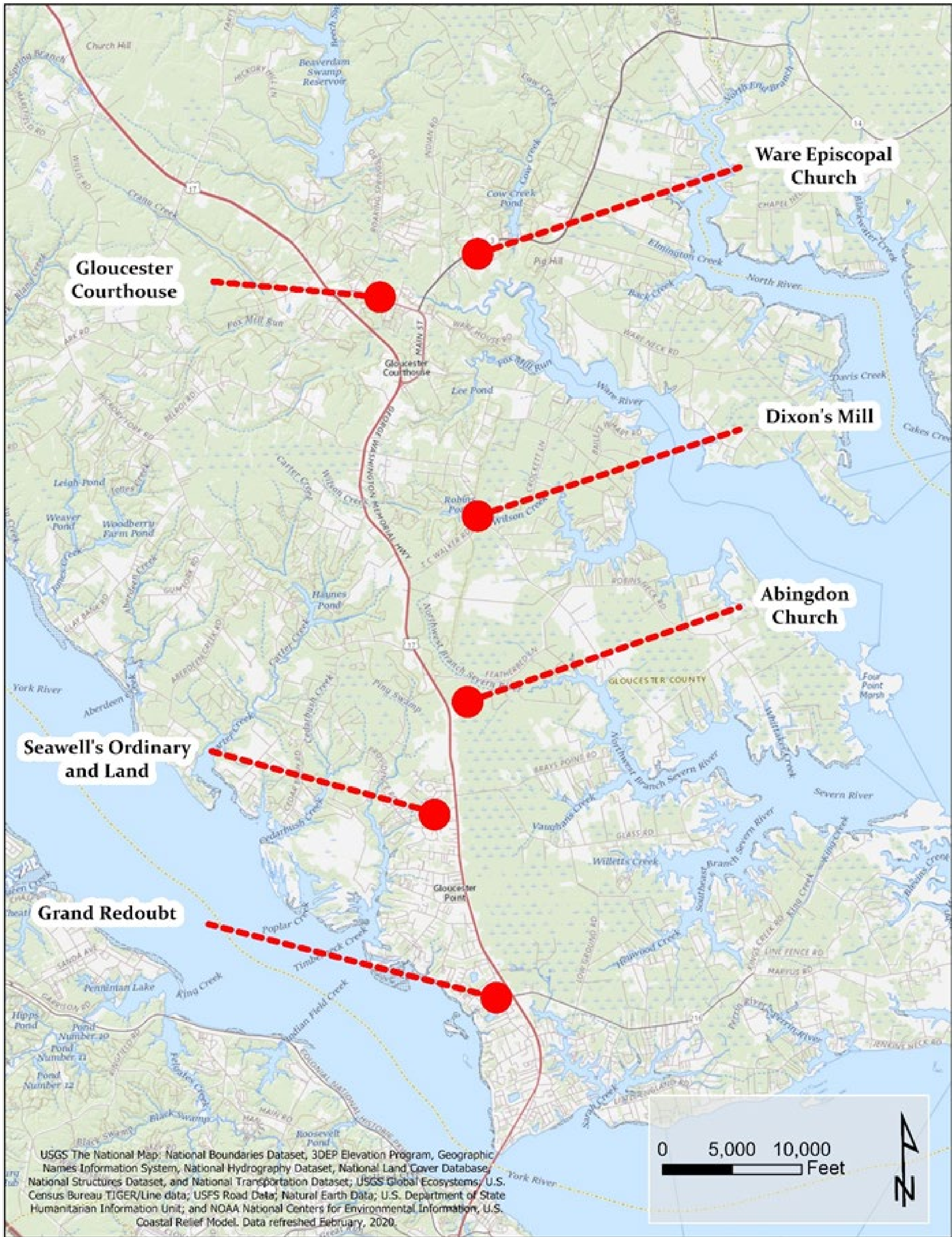


Figure 3.1. USGS map showing locations of places that figure in the Battle of the Hook battlefield.

tightly-packed, acidic clays found in bogs and swales. Vast areas of marl underlying the county are exposed by many of the major ravines and watercourses.

The Princess Anne terrace accounts for about 17 percent of the area of the county, with a third of this as marshes and tidal flats. Topographic boundaries between Princess Anne and Yorktown are most obviously seen as abrupt slopes parallel to Routes 3 and 14 east and northeast of Gloucester Court House. In many places along the York River, this boundary is eroded bluffs, and sloping shorelines, visible from across the river.

About 30 percent of the Gloucester county is above 90 feet and is within the Wicomico formation. Soils are generally well-drained sandy to pebbly loams, creating fairly depauperate conditions for vegetational diversity. However, because of the level nature of much of this terrace, there are several large expanses of bog and pine barren-like areas north and east of Beaverdam Swamp. The remaining 18 percent of the county is within the 50 to 90-foot elevation range, and is made of those areas that began as high uplands, but have had ravines cut into, and had great amounts of soil eroded away from, the upper two terraces. Many significant plant species were found associated with these watershed areas; however, more floristic work is needed in the northern uplands of the county to determine the significance of the unusual species found during the survey of Beaverdam Swamp.

Major forest types are Maple-Gum-Oak in and near swamps, and Beech-Oak-Hickory on drier sites on slopes and uplands. Pure and mixed pine forests can be found throughout the county as cultivars, as well as second-growth forests on old fields. Sub-dominants include Ash, Elm, Blacklocust, Birch, Sweetgum, Hackberry, Redcedar, and some smaller oaks. Joachim comte de Revel du Perron, a French officer in the allied forces, described the wooded and swampy (likely Coleman's Swamp) setting around the battlefield, stating that "the many pools of water and the numerous forests there were marks of a state of nature still wild" and that "…all the trees and plants of Europe are found there also, and I have seen none of those from the Antilles…" (Perron 1898:173).

3.2 Settlement and Land Use

At the time of the Battle of the Hook, Gloucester County was an "older" Tidewater County with a numerous middle class and a small aristocracy based on slaves and tobacco (Ryan 1978:11). The county had been under European and American settlement for over a century. Gloucester county was reported to contain "…some of the best lowlands in the Province" (Gordon 1916: 406). The county was divided into four parishes: Abingdon and Petsworth on the York River, Ware on Mobjack Bay, and Kingston on the Piankatank River. Parish churches, the Gloucester County courthouse (then called Botetourt Town), and the mercantile port at Tyndall's Point or Gloucester Town, ferry crossings, and a handful of rural taverns or ordinaries were the focal points for social activity (McCartney 2001:82-83; Ryan 1978:4). The principal villages, Botetourt Town (Gloucester Courthouse) and Gloucester Town, had only a small number of town lots and inhabitants, and many of these people owned other lands in the county (Higgins et al. 1992:21-22; McCartney 2001:88-91).

Reverend Thomas Fielde of Kingston Parish, in a 1770 letter declared that "The County hereabout is the most populous in Virginia" (Fielde 1997:166). The county's population at the start of the American Revolution is estimated at 4,421 white inhabitants and 3,284 enslaved laborers (Ryan 1978:102). The 1770 county tax rolls reveal that many landholders owned between 200 and 800 acres, while the majority held 100 acres or less, and a small number owned extremely large estates (Hunt 2011; McCartney 2001:83).

The 1782 Gloucester County Land Book contains quantifiable data for Gloucester County inhabitants in the year immediately following the siege at Gloucester Point. In that year, 1,199 inhabitants were recorded; of this total 49.6 percent were landless. These residents were the large class of tenant farmers and landless laborers. Landowners accounted for 604 inhabitants and of this number 63 percent owned property of 250 acres or less. This class of landowner were the middle-class planters, fairly well-off and numerous (Ryan 1987:104).

Only a small percentage (6.2%) of the inhabitants held 500 acres or more; this category of landholder included the Seawells, Whitings, Warner, Burwell, and other principal planter families in the county, the small but active landed aristocracy whose economic success was based on tobacco and enslaved labor. Owners of hundreds and often thousands of acres of land, these successful planters often subdivided their holdings into quarters, "out plantations," or tenant farms operated by white overseers and worked by enslaved laborers (McCartney 2001:82).

At the time of the war, ownership of enslaved Africans and African Americans was widespread in Gloucester County. Slaveowners in the county numbered 517, or 42.2 percent of all taxpayers in 1 7 8 2 (Ryan 1978:103). Nearly 200 tenants also owned slaves, and the landless that owned slaves were the largest economic group in the county (Ryan 1978:9).

Structures present on plantations and farms dating to the war years included small dwelling houses generally built of wood (log and frame), and less likely brick. Dwelling plans included a range of traditional options, such as hall, hall-parlor, double-cell, cross-passage, and four-room (Upton 1982). Surviving foundations of this period are occasionally constructed of brick, particularly for substantial housing, but the majority of foundations for dwellings, quarters, barns, and outbuildings of all types were of earthfast or impermanent construction, a building style that characterized much of the architecture in British North America during this period (Carson et al. 1981; Wells 1993). A range of outbuildings such as tenant and enslaved laborer quarters – Perron refers to these as huts and/or shacks – tobacco barns, kitchens, granaries, grain barns, springhouses, smokehouses and meat houses would have been present on plantations.

Many of the agricultural complexes were considered to be quarters or "out plantations." While often these places were in poor condition, at other times they could be quite fine. noted as he traveled in the Middle Peninsula that "we saw there several beautiful plantations that had been entrusted to the care of a few negroes and seemed to belong to wealthy people, judging by their exteriors and commodious interiors" (Perron 1898:173).

Overall, Perron was unimpressed with the people inhabiting the region. "This part of Virginia" he wrote in his journal, "seemed generally unhealthy; all the inhabitants that we saw around our camp had a shallow, pale look; possibly their food contributes to this, for they eat no bread, and some of

them have no knowledge of it at all" (Perron 1781:173). The area around Perron's camp is the general vicinity of the Seawell and Whiting plantations. Perron went on further, noting that the enslaved population "… stayed in their huts (for there were many without master) seemed sad and miserable" (Perron 1898:173).

By the 1760s, agriculture in Gloucester County was a mixture of tobacco and grains. Tobacco was the principal cash crop. observed in his journal: "They cultivate much tobacco, which is their sole trade" (Perron 1898:173). In the decades before the war, tobacco was the most important market crop produced in the county. Colonel Adam Gordon of the Sixty-Sixth Regiment of Foot stated in the mid-1760s that this region produced some of "the best Tobacco in the World, and many other useful crops…." (Gordon 1916:404).

Corn and wheat and the raising of livestock (cattle and sheep) were secondary endeavors to the growing of tobacco for overseas markets (Ryan 1978:6). Ebenezer Hazard commented however, that "Hay is not to be met with, & Oats are very scarce. The Food now given to Horses is Corn Blades (called Fodder) and Indian Corn" (Shelley 1954:405). A few years before the war, Royal Customs Inspector General John Williams quantified the amount of tobacco and other products shipped from the York River, reporting that "…8,319 hogsheads tobacco, naval stores, bar and pig iron, hemp, &ca … are shipped principally to London, Bristol, and Liverpool; and about 134,318 bushels of corn, wheat, peas and oats, and about 1,096 barrels of flour, lumber &ca [etc.] shipped to the different ports of Spain, Portugal, and the West Indies" (Frese 1973:287).

Perron observed that for livestock the inhabitants "have many animals (i.e., cattle and sheep) which give the people a comfortable food-supply" and that "they have a kind of horse that is small but extremely nimble and requires little care and bears up well under tiring work" (Perron 1898:173). The cattle herd in the County, however, was decimated by distemper around the time of the war, drastically effecting the numbers. Residents of the county petitioned the state government in 1784, commenting that "stocks of cattle much reduced by a Distemper which raged among them for several years. At the siege of York and Gloucester Town numbers were taken to support the armies. The few [cattle] left were again much reduced by the severe winter of 1784" (Petition 1884:270).

Standard farming practice in colonial Virginia was for planters to grow tobacco for several years on a tract of land, followed by planting Indian corn on the same tract for successive years. If the tobacco yield was profitable, then the field was returned to the production of that crop. If not profitable, corn was once again planted until the profit was negligible. The land was eventually abandoned when even the yield of corn was unprofitable. Additionally, the plan of permitting fields to lie fallow in weeds and not in a cover crop such as clover, was commonplace in the Tidewater region (Low 1951:124). These fallow fields were termed meadows by some of the contemporary writers who passed through the area. In the spring of 1777 Ebenezer Hazard commented on the lack of management of meadow lands, reporting that he "saw several Pieces of Land which would make a good Meadow, but the Virginians do not appear to know the Use of Meadow" (Shelley 1954:404). made a distinction between cultivated and uncultivated lands, noting that on the battlefield he saw a "…small meadow before a corn field…." (Perron 1898:144).

However, tobacco farming took a toll on the quality of the Tidewater soils. In an April 1787 petition to Governor Randolph, signed by one hundred Gloucester County inhabitants, the

petitioners lamented that "The lands [are] a long time all cleared and worn out" and that "Little or no Tobacco could be made in the county for years before [the war]" (Petition 1787:270). The nature and condition of the soil was remarked upon by in 1781, noting that "…the land seemed unfruitful; only sand and is apparent it is covered with forests of fir trees; from time to time there are oaks, walnut trees, apple trees and peach trees; the land that is neither covered with forests nor cultivated, produces only a kind of grass with a long stem, dry and arid" (1898:173).

The effect on the land of more than a century of farming and the extent of cultivation is evident in the written statements of some of the soldiers who campaigned in this portion of the Middle Peninsula. Banastre Tarleton observed that in the region north of Tyndall's Point and Gloucester Town "…The ground is clear and level for a mile in front. At that distance stands a wood… Beyond the gorge [at Gloucester Town] the country is open and uncultivated…." (Tarleton 1787:371). Johan Ewald, whose foraging detachments crisscrossed this section of the county in the weeks before the siege, noted "…the entire tract of land through which I roamed here consists of an exceedingly well cultivated and fertile plain" (Ewald 1979:322).

Complimenting and supplementing these first-person accounts is the manuscript map drawn by Perron depicting the lands from Gloucester Point (Tyndall's Point) to Abingdon Church (Figure 3.2). Perron's map shows a very open landscape with cultivated fields and meadow (fallow fields) separated by fences. Woodland is depicted, in some areas apparently quite thick, but much of the area is cleared land, particularly the land closest to Gloucester Town. The location of Coleman Swamp is depicted by stippling and unused land.

3.3 Communications

Roads and road traces, as avenues of approach and retreat for military troop movements, are important KOCOA defining features for battlefield analysis. The eighteenth-century road network in the lower Middle Peninsula was generally formed through a system of approved roads (via road petitions) and private plantation roads or traces that typically connected destinations such as mills, taverns, crossroad villages, and places of worship.

Ebenezer Hazard's description of Tidewater Virginia roads is applicable to those in the Middle Peninsula. As he "rode through large Tracts of piny Lands" Hazard noted that "the Road [was] sandy & in many Places very deep" (Shelley 1954:404). Roads surfaces were not mantled with any hard materials, like gravel, thus hard rains or inclement weather could make these traces impassible or difficult to use. While public roads were the primary means of moving through the landscape period maps and contemporary landscape descriptions indicate that secondary plantation roads, extending between and among the quarters, plantations, and tenant properties in the area, also served to provide road communications.

Several period maps serve to illustrate the general road system of 1781. The manuscript map by Vicomte d'Arrot, an officer in Lauzun's Legion provides a rough view of the road network around

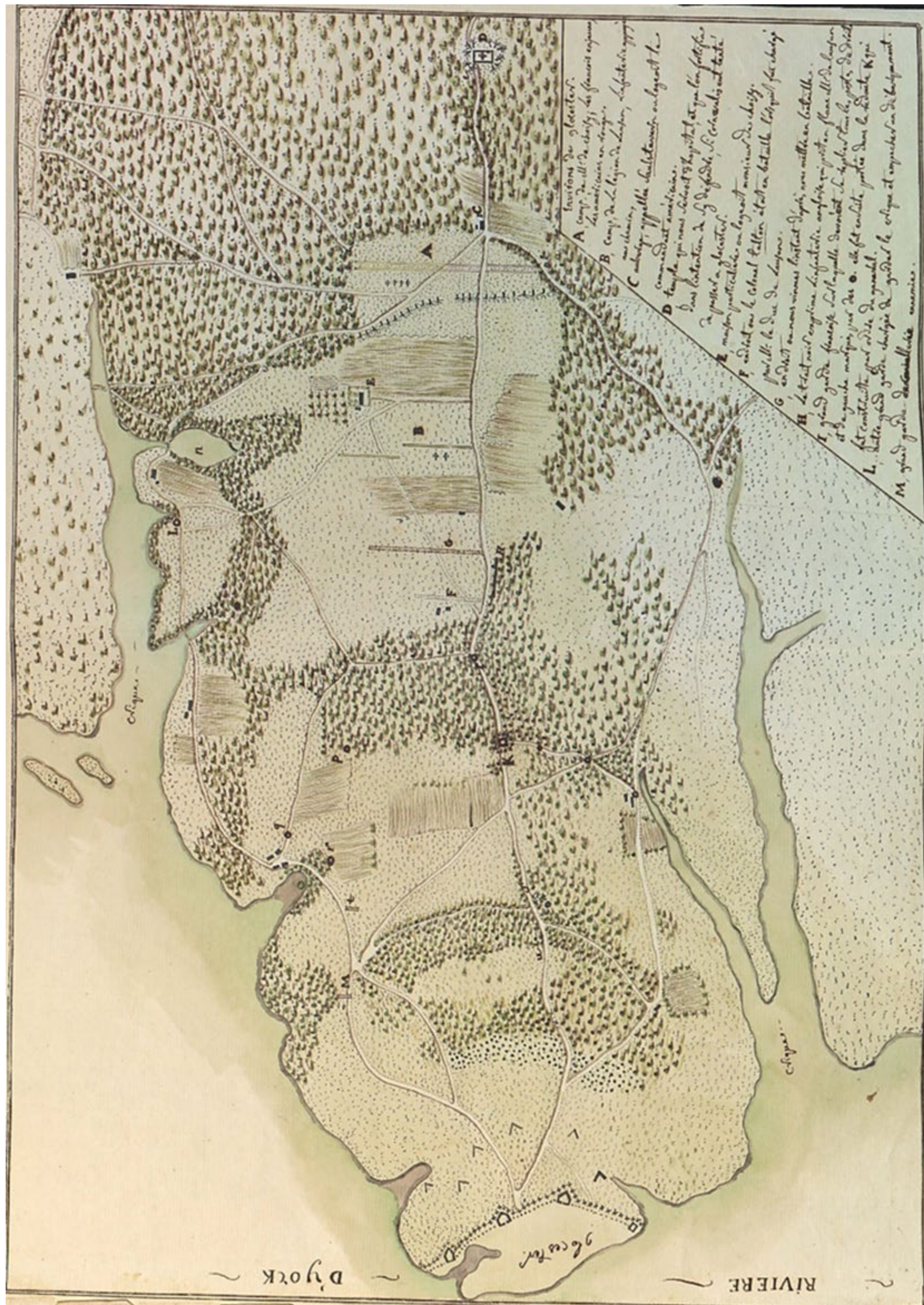


Figure 3.2. "Environs du Glocester," by Joachim comte de Revel du Perron. 1781 (Princeton University Library). Perron's map is drawn with north to the right; it has been rotated to place north at the top.

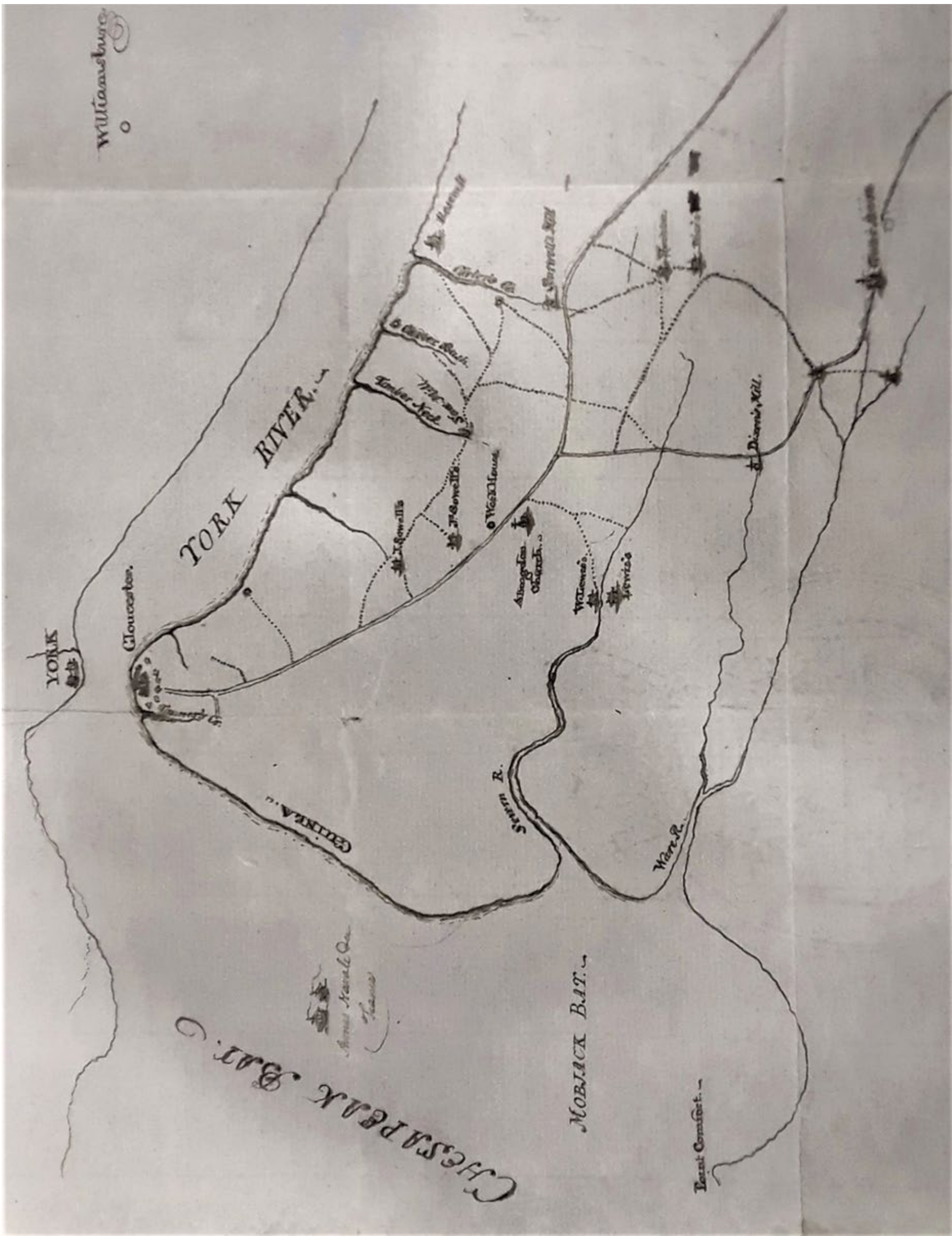


Figure 3.3. Vicomte d'Arrot manuscript map, circa 1781 (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation).

Gloucester Point (Figure 3.3). The map is not drawn to scale. The principal road shown is the Great Road to Gloucester Town or Point (Tyndall's Point), essentially the modern trace of US Route 17 (with some modifications, particularly at Hayes, where the old road has been bypassed). Extending north from Gloucester Point Along this road several structures or locations are noted to the west side of the road, labelled as "J. Sowell's [J. Seawell's] and "Jo. Sowell's [Jo. Seawell's], and a structure identified as Workhouse, while on the east side of the road Abingdon Church is identified. A second major road is the Severn River Road, approximately the route of County Road 629 today. Buildings depicted along this road include Dixon's Mill (at modern Roane) and Gloucester Courthouse. Both of these roads are shown as solid lines. Secondary roads are also shown on the d'Arrot map. These are shown as dashed lines and serve to link the main roads with several plantations and other principal features, such as Lewis's and W. Lewis', and a sawmill. Mobjack Bay, the York River, Severn River, Ware River, and several creeks draining into the York River are marked.

A second, more detailed regional map showing the road network is the manuscript map identified as the unfinished Rochambeau map (Figure 3.4). While the map is incomplete, it was apparently drafted by an anonymous French engineer/cartographer, so its level of accuracy appears to be greater than other contemporary maps showing the same area. This map shows a remarkable level of detail not only for the road system but also for the waterways in this portion of Gloucester County. The two principal roads – Severn River Road and Great Road to Gloucester – are shown on the Rochambeau map, as well as the various secondary roads. The nexus of roads radiating out of Gloucester Point are also illustrated. The unfinished Rochambeau map clearly depicts the settlement at Gloucester Courthouse, the location of Dixon's Mill, and the location of a redoubt along the Great Road to Tyndall's Point/Gloucester Point. Some of the other maps of Gloucester Point, drawn by English, French, and American draftsmen and engineers, show these roads, but these maps do not extend as far up the Middle Peninsula as the unfinished Rochambeau map (cf., Bauman 1782; Hills 1781; La Combe 1781; Sutherland 1781).

On the unfinished Rochambeau map, the watercourses shown easily correspond with modern drainages, such as Ware River, the Severn River, Sarah's Creek, and Timberneck Creek. Several cultural features are marked on the map, including the square at Gloucester Courthouse, Warner Hall, Abingdon Church, and the fortifications at Gloucester Point.

Perron's map above (Figure 3.2) illustrates the immediate vicinity of the battlefield and is the only period map that depicts this area in any detail. also sketched a map showing the siege area at Gloucester Point and included both shores of the York River. A detail of this map (Figure 3.5) illustrates the Crown Forces defenses around Gloucester Point and shows the locations of redoubts and fleches and redans. The map also shows the general open condition of lands around the siege area and shows the road network north of Gloucester Point and extending into the modern areas of Hayes. Areas where timbering has occurred to open fields of fire and observation are shown, as are areas of heavier woodland. The three principal roads that converge at Tyndall's Point are also depicted – the York River Road, the Great Road, and the Severn River road.

Figure 3.4. Unfinished Rochambeau Map (Rice and Brown 1972, volume 2, map 91).

Figure 3.5. Detail, "Plan Des postes D'York et Glocester pris sus Les anglaise au mois d'Octobre 1781" by by Joachim comte de Revel du Perron. 1781 (Princeton University Library).

4. PRELUDE TO BATTLE: THE OPPOSING FORCES GATHER ON THE MIDDLE PENINSULA

4.1 General George Weedon and the Virginia Militia

Up until the spring of 1781, Virginia and Gloucester County had remained relatively unscathed by the War of Independence, even though the Commonwealth had been in the vanguard of opposition even before Patrick Henry on March 23, 1775, urged his fellow Virginians during the Second Virginia Convention in St. John's Episcopal Church in Richmond to raise a militia to defend against real or perceived encroachment of colonial rights by the House of Commons. When Henry boldly declared, or at least is said to have done so, that "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death", he and many of his fellow Virginians were prepared to let deeds follow their words. On April 21, Virginia militia led by Henry tried to force Governor John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, to return 15 half barrels of gunpowder that Royal Marines had taken from the magazine in Williamsburg. On May 3, some 150 militiamen from Henry's home county of Hanover began their march on Williamsburg. The next day, Dunmore paid Carter Braxton for the gunpowder. Henry set off to take his seat at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, which was about to elect a fellow Virginian, Peyton Randolph, who had been president of the Second Virginia Convention in 1775, as its president on May 10. A month later, on June 15, 1775, Congress appointed another Virginian, George Washington, Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. By then Dunmore and his family had fled Williamsburg and taken refuge on HMS *Fowey*. From the safety of the vessel, he tried in vain to re-establish royal control over the colony. But the days of reconciliation had passed at the latest when Dunmore made good of his threat and on November 14 issued a proclamation that freed "all indentured servants, Negroes, or others" belonging to rebels if they were "able and willing to bear arms" for the crown (*Virginia Gazette* 1775).

Armed conflict seemed inevitable once Congress on December 4 recommended that Virginians resist Dunmore with all possible means. The Commonwealth was getting ready for war. As tensions with the crown increased in the fall of 1774, a number of counties such as Fairfax organized Independent or Volunteer Companies (White 1978:149). Within days of the Gunpowder Incident a "Volunteer Company of Dinwiddie County" organized itself and on June 10, 1775, advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* for "an expert ADJUTANT to instruct them in military Discipline." But volunteer companies and militia could not be a substitute for regular forces. The Third Virginia Convention sitting in Richmond realized that as well and on July 17, 1775, authorized the raising of two regiments of regular infantry under Patrick Henry and William Woodford. Both regiments counted a number of soldiers from Dinwiddie in their ranks which together with the Culpepper Minutemen and militia defeated Dunmore's forces in the Battle of Great Bridge on December 9, 1775.

The departure of British forces under Lord Dunmore in early January 1776 following the Battle of Great Bridge and the burning of Norfolk on January 1/2, 1776, rang in quieter times for Virginia. Though it continued to supply men and materiel to the Continental Army in the years following the outbreak of the war, Virginia was largely spared the devastation the war wreaked on the mid-Atlantic states. All that changed when Sir Henry Clinton decided to shift the focus of the war to the southern states. Savannah fell in December 1778, and after the failed attempts by French forces

to retake the city in September and October 1779, British forces embarked on the invasion of South Carolina. The fall of Charleston on May 12, 1780, and the Waxhaw Massacre on the 29th wiped out the Virginia Line. Only two companies of the 9th Virginia Regiment stationed at Fort Pitt escaped destruction and imprisonment. With the regular infantry prisoners of war, the defense of the Commonwealth devolved on the militia. In the spring of 1774, the House of Burgesses had already been working on a new militia law, but Dunmore had dissolved the assembly on May 26, 1774, before the bill could be passed. Following Henry's speech of March 23, 1775, the Convention appointed a committee to prepare a "Plan for the embodying, arming, and disciplining such a number of men as may be sufficient" for defending the colony. For men such as Henry, militia, defined as "the People in Arms", was akin to an article of faith in the struggle against the Crown. At the Second Virginia Convention in Richmond on March 23, 1775, Henry introduced a resolution declaring "That a well regulated Militia, composed of Gentlemen and Yeomen, is the natural Strength, and only Security, of a free Government" (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/res_cong_va_1775.asp).

The subsequent turmoil in the colony again prevented the passage of a militia law. Once the political and military situation had stabilized following the departure of Dunmore, the House of Burgesses on June 12, 1776, finally passed "A Declaration of Rights made by the Representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free Convention; which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of Government." Article 1 declared "That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." Regarding militia the delegates held "That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state, that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power" (https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/virginia-declaration-of-rights).

Though this Declaration of Rights of June 1776 laid the legal and ideological foundations for the subsequent *Act for the regulating and disciplining the Militia* of May 5, 1777, it followed neither its letter nor its spirit. Under the 1777 militia law not "all men" were "by nature equally free and independent" nor did the law extend the duty to serve to the whole "body of the people." Just as in the last Colonial Militia Law of 1757, which the new law was meant to replace, the obligation to service in the militia was restricted to "all male persons above the age of eighteen years, and under the age of sixty years, within this colony (imported servants excepted)." Though this stipulation also applied to white indentured servants, the law however included, and extended the duty of, militia service to free African-Americans, though just like Indians they were not allowed to serve with arms: "all such free mulattoes, negroes, as Indians as are or shall be inlisted [sic], as aforesaid, shall appear without arms, and may be employed as drummers, trumpeters, or pioneers, or in such other servile labor as they shall be directed to perform" (Selective Service 1947:207). Each militiaman was expected to supply his own musket as well as a cartridge box, one pound of powder, and four pounds (approx. 60 balls of caliber 0.69) of musket balls. Militiamen who could not afford the expense were to be supplied the equipment at public expense. Just as it had been in 1757 the right, and duty, to serve in the militia was restricted to "all free male persons, hired

servants, and apprentices, between the ages of sixteen and fifty years" only. The "free mulattoes (...) shall be employed as drummers, fifers or pioneers" (Selective Service 1947:321).

Since Virginia was spared the turmoil and destruction of war for the next few years, the need to call out the militia arose but rarely, though the state did send assistance to South Carolina in May 1780 – too late to prevent the fall of Charleston less than two weeks later (Selective Service 1947:367). By then the shift in British strategy was beginning to impact the state as well. Sir Henry Clinton had finally realized the crucial importance of Virginia as a supply base for the Continental Army as well as a conduit of resources to Georgia and the Carolinas. Still, the arrival on May 9, 1779, of Crown forces under Commodore Sir George Collier in the Elizabeth River caught Virginians off guard. On May 10, 1779, Major General Edward Mathews landed his troops near Pig Point on the James River and marched on Portsmouth. Over the next two weeks Mathews raided the countryside as far as Suffolk against weak militia resistance, destroying warehouses of supplies and burned 137 vessels. The Americans themselves burned a 28-gun frigate and two visiting French merchantmen. On May 24, Collier had pulled out of Hampton Roads, leaving behind horrendous damage.

Aware of the danger caused by the change of British strategy, and fearful of a return of Crown forces, the legislature expanded the powers of the chief executive of the state. Not quite a year into Governor Thomas Jefferson's term, the legislature on May 1, 1780, had passed *An act for giving farther powers to the governour and council, and for other purposes*. "The governour, with advice of council, shall have full power, and he is hereby required, if need be, to call into actual service, from such counties as shall be judged most proper, any number of the militia, not exceeding twenty thousand men, including those already ordered out by virtue of the act of general assembly, entitled "An act to embody militia for the relief of South Carolina. [...] When regimented, they may be marched either to the northern states, or to the assistance of any of the southern United States." (Selective Service 1947:380).

When war returned to Virginia in the spring of 1781, the question of sending militia outside the state became moot. Every single militiaman was needed at home, and if the *Act for giving farther powers to the governour* of May 1780 had threatened every deserter from the militia with eight months service in one of Virginia's regiments in the Continental Army (Selective Service 1947:384), the *Act to amend the act for regulating and disciplining the militia, and for other purposes* of May 7, 1781 went even further when it declared that "every militia-man ordered into actual service, who shall refuse and neglect to appear at the time and place of rendezvous [...] or produce an able-bodied substitute [...] shall, upon conviction before a court-martial, be declared a regular soldier for six months" (Selective Service 1947:406). To judge from the consistent complaints of officers of such diverse backgrounds as Brigadier Muhlenberg, the marquis de Lafayette, Baron Steuben or George Weedon about the unsatisfactory response to the governors calling out the militia, even the threat of six months service in the Continental Army often seems to have been insufficient to field large numbers of militia. But those who did answer the call were indispensable in Continental strategy of wearing down British forces in the hot Virginia summer of 1781.

Before a jubilant Virginia could celebrate the capture of Lord Cornwallis, however, she had to endure a year of invasions with its concurrent bloodshed and destruction. On October 19, 1780, a

British fleet of 60 sail carrying 2,500 troops under General Alexander Leslie anchored off Cape Henry. To oppose these unwelcome guests, Governor Jefferson, or rather Generals Weedon, Muhlenberg and Baron Steuben, the new commanding officer in Virginia, had only militia forces

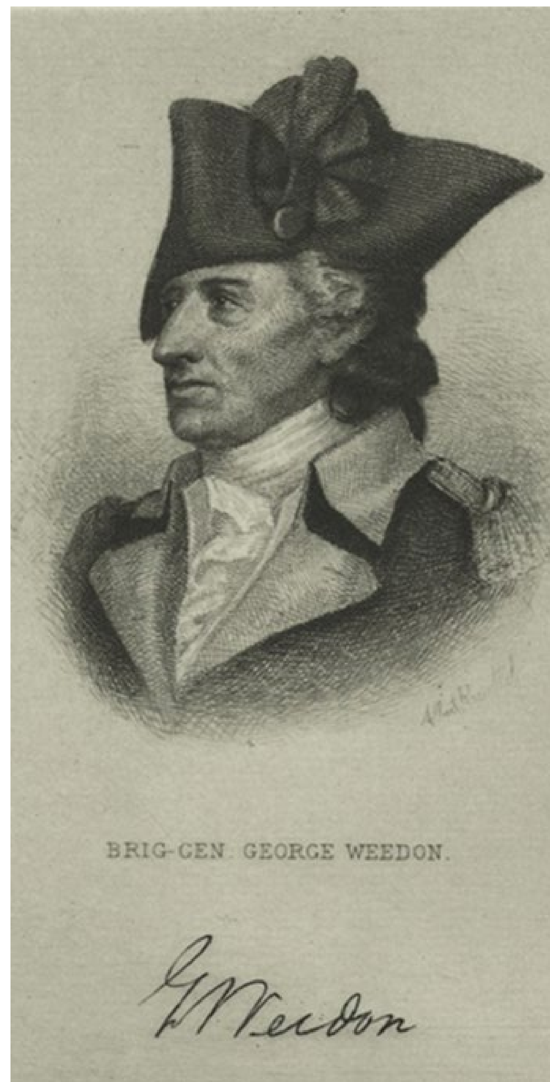


Figure 4.1. Brigadier General George Weedon

at their disposal (Figure 4.1). When Nathanael Greene had received orders to take command of Continental forces in the southern theatre, Washington had assigned Steuben to Greene who made him commanding officer tasked with organizing supplies and establishing defense mechanisms in the state. Fortunately for Steuben, Matthews departed Virginia within a month to join Cornwallis in Charleston just as he and Greene arrived in the state. Steuben's good fortune did not last. On December 31, 1780, Benedict Arnold, now a Brigadier-General in the British Army, disembarked some 1,200 British officers and men in Portsmouth. His detachment consisted of the 80th (or Edinburgh) regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Dundas, Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe and his Queen's Rangers, a detachment of the New York Volunteers under Captain John Althause. Without waiting for the arrival of three transports carrying an additional

400 troops, Arnold's forces sailed up the James River and quickly captured Richmond on January 5, 1781. The few Continental Army forces and militiamen under the command of Baron Steuben since his arrival in the Commonwealth on 20 November 1780 were unable to prevent the destruction wreaked by Arnold's forces. Responding to Virginia's pleas for help, Washington on 20 February 1781 ordered Lafayette with the newly established corps of some 1,200 men Light Infantry to Virginia.

Lafayette reached Yorktown on March 14. Here the Frenchman was to co-operate with a French naval force under Admiral Charles René Dominique Sochet, *chevalier* des Touches and an infantry force of some 1,100 French grenadiers and chasseurs under Antoine Charles du Houx, *baron* de Vioménil sent from Rhode Island with the express purpose of capturing Arnold. Following an indecisive naval engagement with Admiral Mariot Arbuthnot on March 16, known as the "First Battle off the Capes", a disappointed French squadron returned to Newport. As an equally disappointed Lafayette was making his way back to New York, a British fleet sailed into the Chesapeake on March 20. It carried Major-General William Phillips and more than 3,000 regular British troops with them. On 12 April Washington ordered Lafayette, who had just crossed the Susquehanna at John Rodger's Tavern 12 miles south of Head of Elk, to remain in Virginia and engage British forces there to keep them from joining Cornwallis in the Carolinas. Having re-crossed the Susquehanna on the 15th, Lafayette reached Baltimore on April 16, one day ahead of his troops.

Just as Lafayette was crossing into Virginia on April 21, British forces under Major-General William Phillips joined troops under Arnold at Westover *en route* to Petersburg and Richmond. Phillips had entered the Elizabeth River on a British fleet carrying the English Light Infantry, the 76th Highland Regiment, the 80th Regiment, the Hessian Erbprinz Regiment and a small contingent of Artillery. On April 1, he began to debark his troops in Portsmouth. Upon arrival in Richmond on April 29, Phillips was surprised to find Lafayette with about 900 Continental Light Infantry already there and contesting the entry to the city. Forced to temporarily retire down the James, Phillips was back in Petersburg by May 9, but so ill that Arnold had to assume command of the army. Hard on his heels, Lafayette's little army arrived on the heights north of Petersburg, today's Colonial Heights, on May 10, and briefly shelled the town. Cornwallis reached Petersburg with 5,300 men on May 20, one week after Phillips had died of typhoid on May 13, and immediately sent Arnold back to New York City.

Re-enforced by the arrival of Anthony Wayne and his Pennsylvanians on June 10, Lafayette and Cornwallis now began eight weeks of marches across Virginia, but "the boy" somehow always managed to escape Cornwallis, sometimes even gaining an advantage as at Spencer's Ordinary on June 26. As Cornwallis' forces retreated toward Williamsburg, he continued to search for a base of operations in Virginia where the Royal Navy could resupply him, where he could receive reinforcements from Sir Henry in New York, and if necessary be evacuated as well. For the time being, until a suitable base of operations could be found, Cornwallis decided to retire to Portsmouth, and to do so, decided to cross the James River at the north-western tip of James Island in an area known as Green Spring, named after the seventeenth-century plantation of Governor Berkeley. Part of his plan, however, was setting a trap for his pursuers. Anthony Wayne took it. When the battle was over in the evening of July 6, Lafayette had committed one of the few mistakes of his Virginia campaign and could be glad that his losses were not any higher.

Following Green Spring, Cornwallis completed his withdrawal across the James and began his march to Portsmouth on July 9, where he remained until the beginning of August. On August 2 his forces disembarked from shipboard to take up a post on the York River. Though he was not entirely pleased with the location, Cornwallis felt secure in the knowledge that Royal Navy was close at hand and began erecting earthworks in Yorktown and across the river at Gloucester Point. As Cornwallis troops disembarked at Little York, Wayne's Pennsylvanians were encamped in Dinwiddie County near the Asnaguin River. Learning of Cornwallis' arrival in Yorktown, Lafayette and Wayne moved their forces closer toward Westham and Richmond; Wayne camped briefly at New Forest Plantation in New Kent County before marching into Surry County. Supplemented by forces under General Weedon north of Gloucester County, these forces by mid-August created a moving screen that stretched from Surry County on the South side of the James River to West Point at the confluence of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers into King and Queen County and moving ever closer to British positions in Yorktown and Gloucester Point. "Thence we gradually moved down towards, watching the movements & hanging upon the shirts of the enemy, till we reached Gloucester, opposite York Town; & we remained at Gloucester, aiding in the siege of York, till the surrender of Cornwallis in October '81" (Morrison 1834).

The arrival of Lafayette's Light Infantry and Wayne's Pennsylvanians in Virginia in late April and early June had brought much needed relief to the Virginia militia, which had shouldered the defense of the Commonwealth virtually alone since October 1780. But Lafayette's command was too small to fulfill the task of keeping Cornwallis from leaving York if he wanted to do so. The pending arrival of Washington's and Rochambeau's forces in September and the prospect of laying siege to Lord Cornwallis once again increased the demands on the militia. A recent study concludes that "By the time Cornwallis surrendered, sixty of Virginia's seventy-five counties supplied militia-men at Yorktown and Gloucester." Their ages ranged from just under 15 to 51, and while many had had some prior military experience, only seven percent had served in the Continental Army for terms between one and four years (Reynolds 2015:170).

Throughout the difficult months of early 1781 and into the summer, Weedon had provided logistical support for Lafayette, an exceedingly thankless task for a man yearning to once again hold a field command (Ward 1979:193-208). News of the arrival of de Grasse off the Virginia coast and the approach of the Franco-American army from the northward made Weedon almost giddy with joy. Victory and independence were close at hand, exuberantly he wrote to his friend Nathanael Greene from his home in Fredericksburg: "I am all on fire – by the Great God of War. I think we may all hang up our Swords by the last of the year in perfect peace and Security" (Ward 1979:213). As the militia was called out in early September, Weedon hoped that Governor Nelson would appoint him commanding officer, but Nelson preferred Colonel James Innes for the command. Fortunately, a letter from Lafayette of September 11, in which the young Frenchman expressed his wish that he "would be happy if you were to command" the militia, turned the tide in Weedon's favor (Ward 1979:214). Weedon immediately set out for Gloucester and arrived at Hubbard's Heights, or Hubbard's Old Fields, on September 13, to assume command. Late in the afternoon of September 14, Washington rode into Williamsburg to the acclamations of Lafayette and the American and French forces assembled there. Learning of his arrival, Weedon on September 18 congratulated Washington from his headquarters at Hubbard's Heights "on your safe return once more to your own Country" and to inform him of the deplorable state of the units

under his command. “The greatest attention shall be paid to the small supply of cartridges arrived in Camp last Night: previous to which the Troops in this Quarter had not two per man and am sorry to inform your Excellency that great part of the Men are badly armed and worse equipt, there not being Cartouche Boxes for more than one third & I have no Artillery of any sort” (Weedon 1781). His forces numbered around 1,200 men: hundreds of Loudoun County militia and a company of militia from Prince William County had joined after completing road repairs in northern Virginia for the French and American baggage train. These men lacked everything, not just ammunition. On September 18, five days after he had arrived in Gloucester and “on my taking the command here made strict enquiry into the Supplies laid in for the support of the Troops, and found that sofar from their being any Magazine of Grain or provisions of any sort in Store, there was not sufficient for two days support. Part of the specific Tax of the County had been collected at a place called Burwell Mills.” Whatever had not been removed “fell into the Enemies Hands” (Weedon 1781).

Upon arrival he organized his militia into three regiments under Colonels James Innes, John Page and William Griffin and immediately deployed his forces to critical points on his perimeter (Figure 4.2). On September 17, he ordered Colonel Page to march his regiment immediately and to “take your encampment for this night at Poplar Spring Church” (Weedon 1781). “I last Night moved Colonel Page’s Regiment consisting of 400 Men with orders to throw himself within supporting distance.” Lastly, he began to reconnoiter the area and move closer to Gloucester Point: “I shall this Morning [September 18] march the remainder of the Troops consisting of two small Regiments to a Position Six Miles below this till I gain more perfect Knowledge of the Country” (Weedon 1781).

Page’s primary task was to protect the inhabitants from British foraging parties, as Weedon informed Washington still in his letter of September 18: “The first object that struck my attention on joining this Army was to circumscribe if possible the Enemies’ Foraging Parties.” But he also needed mobile forces, cavalry, and “for this purpose formed a Partisan Legion of 60 Horse and 400 Infantry under the command of Lt. Col. Webb, who marched three Nights ago with Instructions to take a secure Post near Gloucester Court House keeping strong Patroles [sic] in his Front and Flanks, till I could support Him with more Men which at that time was out of my power for want of Ammunition” (Weedon 1781). Weedon’s orders to Webb, given possibly as early as September 15 (Ward 1979:217) were unequivocal. He was to deploy one troop “on York River Road to cover your right flank.” His flank secured, Weedon ordered him to “take your first position near the Mills in the Neighborhood of the Church till you gain a thorough Knowledge of the Country, after which you will change your Ground as circumstances may point so as to render the most faithful Service to our distressed Citizens. I would recommend it to you that a constant look out at, or in the Neighborhood of Abington [sic] Church where the roads Fork, from whence the Videts may Patrole [sic] as low down as Mr. Terrells. Every kind of Depredation you will make no Doubt for our side prevent, and I have not a thought but by your Execution and Diligence you will be able to Afford such Protection to the Inhabitants as will greatly alleviate [sic] their present Exposed Situation” (Weedon 1781). The church mentioned in Weedon’s order is Abingdon Church, the place “where the roads Fork” marks the location where the Severn and York Roads merge, the roads taken by Choisy’s two columns on October 3, and “Mr Terrell” is most likely an incorrect spelling of “Mr. Seawell.” It almost seems as if Weedon was staking out the battlefield.

Until then, however, Webb's men were constantly in motion. Private Newell Walton may have been one of Webb's men. In his pension application of 1832, he deposed that he "crossed the River to Gloucester side after being there a short time, myself among seventy-five active chosen men was detached from the Army put under Officers who were residents of Gloucester County who well knew the situation of the place to watch & scout on the enemy's lines, we were on a continual

Figure 4.2. Virginia Militia, fall of 1781 (print courtesy of Don Troiani).

scout, never ate or slept twice on the same place, often alarmed by the foraging parties of the enemy, but never came to an engagement, finding always that they were too strong for our little Corps" (Walton 1832). Sixteen-year-old Alexander deposed in 1841 that "They crossed York River & went into Middlesex & Gloucester Counties, and were there engaged in clearing the country mostly by night for some time to keep the enemy in check & secure the citizens from their marauding & foraging parties" (Aston 1841). Similarly, Turner Lane of the Hanover County militia deposed that "we crossed York River at West Point, were marched down to the North side of that River there to form a barrier against the plundering scouts of Tarleton, who were in habit of pillaging the country in the vicinity of Gloucester. The Regiment to which this applicant belonged was commanded by Colonel John Taylor of Caroline County, who was also Col. Comdt. of the detachment; Major Claiborne acted as Brigade Major, and Captain Isaiah Hayden commanded this applicant. The duty here was active, being like that of a flying; almost constantly

marching from place to place and that most generally in the night, and but seldom lying two days together at the same place” (Lane 1832).

Figure 4.3. Colonel John Francis Mercer, c.1803, by Robert Field (courtesy of Maryland State Archives Collection).

Taking advantage of the Continental Army veterans in the militia he ordered Lieutenant-Colonel John Mercer (Figure 4.3), a veteran of the 3d Virginia Regiment, to select

> “from the militia such old soldiers as I cou'd find, who having retir'd from the army after the expiration of their term of service, were now performing their tours of duty with the militia as other citizens; to these I added the most likely young men that volunteer'd their services & such young gentlemen as officers as appear'd most promising; personally I was acquainted with none of them. Of such materials I collected a corps consisting of 200 rank & file & a proportionate number of officers; without much relation to size, as a distinction that appear'd best calculated to create an esprit du corps, they were termed the Grenadier reg't. After arming & disciplining them in the best manner time & circumstances wou'd permit, they were attach'd to the legion of Lauzun, the infantry of which did not exceed 350 men, fit for duty (Mercer 1892:56).

Most of Mercer's Grenadiers, as many as 50 of whom may have had previous service in the Continental Army, were volunteers. George Morris, seventeen years old at the time, remembered "about this time Colonel John F Mercer called for volunteers out of Weedon's brigade, to form what was called a Regiment of Grenadiers, he joined Colonel Mercer, and was with him in the engagement he had with the British at Sowell's old field near Gloucester town" (Morris 1834). Richard Payne, like Morris born in 1763 recalled that "being stationed at and near Gloucester Court House and at a Church (Weir's) General Weedon called for volunteers for a Grenadier Company and promoted Lieutenant Hungerford to a Captaincy to command it" (Payne 1836). Some, like Robert Brooks, were drafted: "shortly after we got into service, our Regiment stood a draft at Gloucester C House, Virg, as I understood it for the purpose of filling up, and completeing a Regiment of Regulars – or Grenadiers; I was drafted or picked out for that purpose, and the Regiment now complete was commanded by Col. Mercer" (Brooks 1833). So was Irvine Hyde, born in 1762. "On the arrival of this Army [at Gloucester Court House] there was selected out of it for special service one hundred fifty Grenadiers of which affiant was chosen one and fifty well built men for light infantry. Affiant was put under one Stephen Mabury as Captain Commander of said Grenadiers" (Hyde 1832). Richard Nuckolls "arrived at Gloster opposite Little York [and] was put in the Grenadier Company commanded by Colonel Mercer" (Nuckolls 1833). Many of the officers such as Lieutenant John Hungerford were recommended to Mercer by Weedon. "Colonel John F Mercer, who came on with General Weedon, and who had been in the Continental service, it was thought proper to give a command and to effect this object, a company from each Regiment was selected, which gave him the Command of between 3 and 400 men which were distinguished by the Grenadier Regiment, or Battalion. In selecting the Company from the regiments I was then in, General Weeden asked me the rank I bore, I told him a Lieutenant – he then observed to me, that if I could raise a Company of Volunteers, I should commanded, which I soon accomplish, and the Regiment being formed, we marched the same evening on the lines Colonel Mercer & Major Throgmorton were the field Officers" (Hungerford 1832). Once recruitment had been completed the unit was attached to Lauzun's Legion.

His initial preparations completed, Weedon on 19 September moved his forces to Ware Church; shortly thereafter, on September 23, Washington informed Weedon of the pending arrival of Lauzun's Legion. "The Legion of the Duke de Lauzun is ordered to join the Troops under your Command in Gloucester County, to aid in restraining the Enemy, and preventing their Collection of Provisions and Stores from the Country. This Service, if you are the Seniour Officer, you will endeavour to perform, with all your Diligence, without precipitating your Troops into too great Danger." Concurrently he admonished his fellow Virginian "I wish you to be exceedingly watchfull upon the Motions of the Enemy on your Side, and to prevent, as much as possible, without risquing too much, the Enemys gaining Provisions or Supplies from the Country, and you will be so good as to give me the earliest Information of any important Circumstance that may take place (Fitz Patrick 1937a:126). Weedon was doing just that, as he informed Washington on September 23:

> "Having received Intelligence on the night of the 21st that the Enemy intended a grand Forage, yesterday [i.e., September 22] moved the Militia Legion at 2 o'clock in the Morning with orders to take a position near Abington [sic] Church covering all the Roads leading from Gloster [sic]Town and at five marched with three small battalions to support them; Our Patroles of Horse were below the Mile Stone; we remained till near 12 o'clock.

> Whether the Enemy got intelligence of our being out, or whether my information was not so perfect will not undertake to say. They however eluded us by coming half a Mile up the road from Town, & turning down on the Right Hand, headed Sary's [Sarah's] Creek about two Miles from Town & made a small Forage in little Guinea, a Circumstance not known to us till after our Return" (Weedon 1781).

On September 24, Lauzun's hussars under the comte d'Arrot joined Weedon and the next day Lauzun himself and his entourage, including his *colonel-en-second* and commanding officer of the Second Squadron of Hussars, Robert Dillon, arrived as well (For more detail see 2.3 The duc de Lauzun and Lauzun's Legion). Many veterans remembered the arrival of Lauzun's hussars with their large mustaches, a sight unseen in eighteenth-century America. Enoch Breedon was among the veterans who mentioned the hussars' facial features in his pension application: "They were then marched down to Ware Church in Gloucester County where they were joined by the French Horse under Duke Lauzan — Those troopers all wore large mustachios on their upper lip, and very large whiskers. — lower down they were joined by a large body of French Infantry" (Breedon 1832).

On September 25, Weedon informed Washington from Ware Church of the Duke's arrival and his plans for moving his camp closer to Gloucester Point. "I have the honor of your Excellency's letter of the 23rd – Count D'Arotte at the head of Lauzun's Cavalry, joined me yesterday ½ after 11 o'Clock," (i.e., in the morning of September 24). "Mr. Hunter, my volunteer Aide de Camp, will have the honor of delivering you this. I had sent him in search of the infantry of the Duc's Corps. He returned yesterday without being able to gain any intelligence of 'em, - I take the liberty of introducing Mr. Hunter to your Excellency and of referring him to you for every particular respecting our (slow?) operations on this side, I shall move my camp this morning and take a position six miles below this at a place called Dixon's Mill" (Weedon 1781).

The arrival of Lauzun's hussars greatly improved Weedon's strength. Writing to Governor Nelson on September 24, Colonel Innes had lamented that he was "sorry to inform you that y[ou]r: Expectations of the strength of General Weedon's Army far exceed what it really is—-The General will, as soon as possible put me in possession of the honorable Command you have thought proper to recommend me to, but the troops in this quarter are so few as not to be competent to the formation of even one tolerably strong Brigade - nor is there a prospect of a speedy augmentation, unless it may be thought expedient to throw over two or three well organized and officered Battalions from the South Side of York River—The Northern Neck Counties are extremely deficient in their quotas, and those few men they have sent forward are quite raw & undisciplined, and diminishing every Day by Desertion" (Palmer 1881:486).

The move to Dixon's Mill on September 25, however, did not take place as Weedon told Washington on September 26. Still writing from his camp at Ware Church, Weedon stated: "The cavalry of the Duke's Legion having joined the day before Count D'Arat with Colonel Sheldon & others of my Officers, who were better acquainted with the situation of the country than we were reconnoitered the Ground thoroughly previously to our moving the Troops. This I thought advisable as the Country from here to Gloster forms rather a Neck or Tongue of Land accessible in almost every part by Water intersected by Roads leading to every Point. After looking at the intended positions with nice attention the Gentlemen were unanimously of opinion we could not

take it till our Army was stronger & knowing the Duke's Infantry were coming, advised me to hold my present Ground till the whole was up and until we had a knowledge of your Excellency's movements. I am sorry I gave your Excellency reason to believe we had advanced which certainly would have been the Case but for the above causes which did not so favorable weigh with me at first. We shall in a day or two however be able to advance. The Duke de Lauzun having last Night [25 September] arrived in Camp and informed his Infantry will be up tomorrow" [27 September] (Weedon 1781).

Washington advised Weedon on September 20, that Lauzun was "an officer of Rank and long Standing in the Service of his Most Christian Majesty," and he instructed Weedon "to shew him all that Respect and Attention, that his Rank and Services justly demands" (Fitzpatrick 1937a:127). Washington repeated his request three days later, and on September 27 Weedon promised that he "shall pay the most pointed attention to this distinguished Character & shall embrace every opportunity of improving his advice so far as related to the Service on this Side." That, however, was easier said than done. Weedon and Lauzun seem to have taken an immediate dislike to each other. Lauzun thought Weedon was a "rather good commander" but the Duke further opined that Weedon was perhaps cautious,

> "hating war which he had always refused to wage, and being specially in mortal fear of gun shots. Having become a brigadier-general by chance, the respectable officer was my senior in command; General Washington regretted this more than I, for he Intended to give me that command. He told me that he would write to General Wiedon [sic] that he could continue to hold the honours of his rank, but that he would forbid him to meddle with anything. I explained to him that we did not understand this manner of serving, that If General Wiedon were under my orders, I should certainly make him obey, but that being under his I should obey his every order, that I had no objection to serve under him, if he wished it, and that he might count on me to get along very well with him" (Méras 1912:324).

Lauzun's characterization of Weedon had little or no basis in fact: Weedon had already served as a lieutenant under Washington in the French and Indian War spent many years in the Continental Army, and succeeded Hugh Mercer as Colonel of the 3d Virginia Regiment in 1776. Promoted to brigadier in 1777, he fought in the Battles of Trenton, Brandywine, and Germantown, and spent the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge before resigning later that year over questions of seniority. Contrary to Lauzun's opinion, Weedon had heard gunshots many a time in his life. What Lauzun considered cowardice on Weedon's part was partly due to the weakness of his militia forces. On September 18, he had to discharge militia from the counties of Fluvanna, Goochland, Henrico, Chesterfield King and Queen and Louisa because their enlistments had expired (Ward 1979:217). But Weedon was also following Washington's orders of September 24 of shadowing Tarleton's men "without precipitating your Troops into too great Danger." Weedon in turn had already had occasion for admonishing Lauzun about the depredations of his cavalry on their way to Gloucester and warned him to keep better control of his men "by a total stop being put to the Troops rambling out of Camp" (Weedon 1781). Despite his protestations that he was "made exceedingly happy in the society & support of the Duke de Lauzun & his Corps, a perfect Harmony subsists & shall make it my study to improve it," Weedon probably considered Lauzun a French dandy who had

gained his rank through money and birthright and who had no business on the left bank of the York River (Ward 1979:220).

Colonel Innes had already warned Governor Nelson of the vulnerability of Weedon's forces, and in a letter to Nelson of September 27, Weedon revealed his full weakness of "our Operating Force amounting to 1134." Weedon had also done some re-organizing of his forces. "Col: Innis, agreable to your wish, is now at the head of the advanced Brigade, consisting of 3 Battalions of Infantry, one of Grenadiers, & Webb's Corps of Horse, consisting of 50. The rest of the Line forms two small Regiments comm'd by Collo's Page & Griffin: we are this day reinforced by the Duke de Lauzun's Infantry, which adds countenance to our little Army on this side." The "Grenadiers" were Mercer's close to 200 men, the 50 men of "Webb's Corp of Horse" the mounted remnants of the "Partisan Legion of 60 Horse and 400 Infantry under the command of Lt. Col. Webb" that he had told Washington about on September 18, whose infantry had probably been integrated into Innes' brigade (Palmer 1881:497).

A look at these numbers reveals the crucial importance of French assistance in the victory at Yorktown. Just like on the right bank of the river, where the seven Line regiments plus the Auxonne Artillery outnumbered Continental Army forces, the addition of 800 men from the ship garrisons on October 1 to Lauzun's 600 men brought the French total past the highly fluctuating militia numbers in Weedon's command, and it was an exclusively French fleet that completed the siege ring around Lord Cornwallis on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Until the arrival of the ship garrisons, Weedon and Lauzun were still too weak for any offensive action, even re-deployment closer to British forces to a "post between Dixon's & Burwell's Mills, [was] thought hazardous, with our present force." Weedon had only been "able to prevent Simcoe from coming far abroad, by appearing frequently in the lower Country" (Palmer 1881:497).

In view of the British strength facing Weedon – Simcoe surrendered 110 officers, quartermasters, surgeons and mates plus 91 Sergeants, 39 Drummers, and 936 Rank & File on October 19 – Washington was well aware of the need to strengthen his fellow Virginian's forces. In a letter of September 27, he informed Weedon that he had sent Gabriel de Choisy to the comte de Grasse with a request for additional ground forces (Fitzpatrick 1937a:127). Two days later, on September 29, a grateful Weedon suggested to Washington that "If your Excellency have not already pointed out a place for the Marines to debark at, I would recommend Mr Frank Willis's on Ware River, he lives not more than a Mile from Mobjac Bay, good navigation & 3 Mile from the left of our encampment & 10 from the Fleet laying in York River (Weedon 1781; for more detail see 4.4 The comte de Grasse and the French Navy, below). While he was waiting for the arrival of those forces, Weedon continued to collect forage and to scout British positions at Gloucester Point. On September 29, he informed Washington that "I yesterday made a forage at Abington [sic] Church from oats and barley belonging to Colonel Warner Lewis, by that gentleman's desire. The covering party consisted of three Militia battalions of Infantry: were advanced as low down as Seawell's. They were supported by 100 horse from the Duke de Lauzun's Legion with 30 militia dragoons" (i.e., Webb's cavalry). "While the Waggons were loading the Duke & self reconnoitered the country below and were within a mile of Gloster: the enemy lay quite still and have not been out since the 24th Inst." Simcoe was watching as well: "The last forage they made, our parties had a sight of each other, they fired a few Field pieces at us, but returned with a small Quantity of Corn that they had cut down in a Field near Town, not choosing to venture a single Yard after

Mr [Simcoe] reconnoiter'd us with his Glass who swore to his people, "our Rifle Men were as thick as the Stalks in the Corn Field" (Weedon 1781).

The information in this letter is important for the events that occurred just four days later, on October 3. First, Weedon was roaming and foraging as low as Seawell's tavern. Second, Lauzun's hussars and Webb's Virginia cavalry were operating jointly. Third, Weedon and Lauzun reconnoitered close to British defenses. Lastly, Weedon had already informed Washington on September 27 that "The enemy have never attempted a forage farther than three of four miles from their Lines since we took this post & we shall dispute with them shortly for our share even at that distance" (Weedon 1781). Now, on September 29, he reported that British forces had not been out foraging for five days. Put differently, French and American forces, from their commanding officers on down, were familiarizing themselves with the area, and with supplies presumably running low after five days, a British forage expedition could happen any day. The allies had been out scouting and foraging and scouting every day. Robert Dillon wrote in his journal that "[d]uring the five or six days that we lay at Gloucester Courthouse waiting for M de Choisy to join us with his 800 men, M de Lauzun and I undertook a number of reconnaissances toward Gloucestertown, and we never encountered anything but a few small posts which pulled back as soon as we appeared" (Dillon 1781).

The arrival of the 800 men ship garrisons on October 1 changed the equation in favor of Weedon, Lauzun, and the new commanding officer Gabriel de Choisy, whom Washington had recommended with an order couched as a request that "I have no doubt, you will put yourself under his Orders with great cheerfulness" (Fitzpatrick 1937a:146). The appointment of Choisy may have solved the issue of command in Gloucester County, but tension at the highest level of command persisted. Lauzun had a penchant to find fault with everyone around him, and that included Choisy. "M. de Choisy is a good and brave man, ridiculously violent, constantly in a passion, making scenes with everybody, and always without reason" (Méras 1912:326). Lauzun further noted that Choisy "began by sending General Wiedon and all the militia packing, told them that they were poltroons, and in five minutes frightened them almost as much as the English and assuredly that was saying a great deal" (Méras 1912:325-326).

Weedon had spent October 1 on "a foraging expedition that took him to the doorsteps of the Gloucester Point garrison. Weedon wrote:

> "I moved the Legion of Lauzun and Col. Innes's Brig'd Consisting of 3 Battalions and Webb's Horse as a covering party to our wagons. We formed within ¾ of a mile of Town, drove, or rather scared in their pickets, reconnoitered within 600 yards of their Works, and continued upwards of two hours on the ground. Not a man dare venture out the whole time. We left small parties of Horse to observe their motions and gain Intelligence if possible, they continued so close that could gain nothing from the Patroles. Three Deserters came out on Sunday. They agree in their accounts which [I] Inclose [sic], I have stationed a Coy (company) of Horsemen from Perrin's to Camp. The House stands at the mouth of Sary's [Sarah's] Creek, and commands a full view of Gloucester, York, and all their shipping" (Weedon 1781).

Concurrently he informed Washington on October 2 of his plans of moving his forces to Abingdon Church: "As Gen'l de Choisie with his Troops arrived yesterday, & was joined by 400 men from Loudon at about the same time, shall now advise an instant advance as low down as Abingdon Church which is the nearest Position we can take for want of water" (Weedon 1781). The arrival of both the ship garrisons as well the Loudon militia brought Weedon's forces to around 3,000 men, half regulars and half militia. Weedon felt strong enough to move on Gloucester Point.

While Weedon had been out foraging, the ship garrisons had landed, and once "our tools and munitions had been disembarked, we readied ourselves to leave the water's edge to camp a league away, within reach of Lauzun's legion and the Americans. Wagons harnessed with four horses came to take the baggage, and we began our march at 4 in the evening [on October 1]. We arrived at 5 o ' clock at a little village," Gloucester Court House, "with four or five houses, at the edge of a wide road; on its right we saw the site where our camp was being laid out" (Perron 1898:141). The next day, Lauzun "went with M. de Choisy and a detachment of his hussars to reconnoiter a camp closer to Gloucester, for we were 12 miles or four leagues from it. He came back at about 2 o'clock" (Perron 1898:142). Shortly after his return in a letter written at "3 P.M." Weedon told Washington that he had just returned from a scout during which he had "viewed the intended Position in the vicinity of Abingdon Church, "from whence we have only this Moment Returned. The Troops will move down in the Morning. Our strength will be about 2200 Infantry and the Duke's Cavalry, with the militia Horse under Colo. Webb amounting to about [40]. This will be sufficient, I hope to anything short of Cornwallis's main body" (Weedon 1781). The decision to advance on Gloucester Point had been made, and Perron recorded that "General Choisy ordered us to be ready to leave, the next day on the third, to make a new camp three miles or one league distant from Gloucester. As a result, we decamped at 5 in the morning and began to march at 7 o'clock" (Perron 1898:143).

As they were about to set out on the day's march, Lauzun informed Weedon early in the morning of October 3 that "I will be happy if we should have some things to do with Tarleton and Simcoe. I wish very much to make farther acquaintance with those Gentlemen. I intend to command myself the legion" (Ward 1979:223). About three hours later his wish came true.

4.2 Armand Louis de Gontaut *duc* de Lauzun and his Legion

The *Volontaires-étrangers de Lauzun,* commonly known as Lauzun's Legion, derived their name from the commanding officer, Armand Louis de Gontaut-Biron, *duc* de Lauzun (Figure 4.4). Born in Paris on April 13, 1747, Lauzun became an ensign in the French Guards, commanded by his uncle, the *duc* de Biron, three months before his 14th birthday; six months after he turned 20, he was breveted a colonel in the French Guards. Not quite 19 years old when he married 14-year-old Duchess Amélie de Boufflers in 1764, he lived separate from his wife and had no legitimate children with her. In 1769, Lauzun fought in Corsica; five years later, in February 1774, he was colonel of the *Légion Royale*. When the *Légion Royale* was dissolved in March 1776, Lauzun was appointed *mestre de camp effectif* (i.e., colonel), of the *Royal Dragons*, an unsatisfactory position for a young man yearning for glory.

When King Louis XVI signed treaties of Amity and Friendship and of Military Alliance with the United States on February 6, 1778, France needed to raise thousands of marines - 260 men and

four officers for a 110-gun man of war to 15 soldiers for a corvette of 16 guns - to provide the infantry supplement for the navy. On September 1, 1778, Naval Minister Antoine Raymond Jean Galbert Gabriel de Sartine, *comte* d'Alby ordered the creation of the *Volontaires étrangers de la Marine*: eight *légions* of 70 officers, four companies of infantry, one of artillery, one of workmen plus two squadrons of hussars. A *compagnie générale* brought the *volontaires* to almost 600 officers and 4,500 men (Selig 2004:18ff; for more detail see the discussion in the following Section 4.3, François Joseph Paul *comte* de Grasse and the French Navy).

Figure 4.4. Armand Louis de Gontaut, duc de Lauzun.

Lauzun had volunteered his services as soon as the war had broken out. As early as August 18, 1778, he received permission to raise two companies of lancers and two of hussars. Once he became *colonel propriétaire des volontaires étrangers de la Marine* on September 1, these companies were integrated into the new naval unit. He did not wait for the men to be recruited, equipped, and trained. In January 1779, he commanded the military force that conquered Senegal. By April, he was back in St. Malo in Normandy with the Second *Légion* of his *volontaires* preparing for the attack on England. The *Légion*'s 32 officers, 523 infantry, and 156 hussars (in June 1779) was to form the vanguard of the first wave of assault scheduled to cross the Channel. But the attack never came. In its place Louis XVI on March 20, 1780, signed the *Ordonnance du Roi, Pour régler le traitement des Troupes destinées à une expédition particulière*, which organized the ferrying of ground forces to the United States under the command of Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, *comte* de Rochambeau. Since Rochambeau wanted light troops as well,

Lauzun, eager to participate in the campaign, offered his services. Lauzun later claimed that Rochambeau "asked for myself, and was refused; he insisted, and they agreed; but this was not decided until the day upon which he took leave of the King" (Pilon 1928:190). This may be true; Lauzun's was the only cavalry and light infantry unit available, but his promotion to brigadier and appointment to command the light troops on March 1, 1780, was hardly accidental.

Lauzun also needed troops, but his *volontaires étrangers de la marine* were stationed in the West Indies and in the Indian Ocean. Only the Second Legion, quartered on the coast of Normandy, was available. On March 5, 1780, the *Ordonnance du Roi Portant suppression du Corps des Volontaires-étrangers de la Marine; & création d'un nouveau Corps, sous le titre de Volontaires-étrangers de Lauzun* suspended further recruitment for the remaining five legions of the *Volontaires-étrangers de la Marine*. The preamble of the *ordonnance* decreed that those segments already raised and deployed in the colonies would be preserved, but out of the "surplus" the king wished to create "un nouveau Corps affecté [i.e., posted to] spécialment au service de la Marine & des Colonies."

In its first article, the *ordonnance* confirmed the continued existence of the First and Third Legions of the *Volontaires étrangers de la Marine* created in 1778.

Article 2 suppressed the surplus of the general staff of the old *Volontaires*, its *compagnie générale*, its headquarters hussars, the *Volontaires étrangers de Nassau* attached to the Second *Légion* since 1 June 1779, the three infantry companies created *à la suite* of the Second Legion on 4 August 1779, the company of grenadiers created for service in the colonies on the same day, and whatever else was available in recruits for and of the Second Legion. Out of these men the *ordonnance* created a new corps, which, as ordered in Article 3, was to be known as the *Volontaires-étrangers de Lauzun*.

Its infantry component was to consist of two companies of fusiliers, a grenadier company, a company of *chasseurs*, and a company of artillery. The fusilier and *chasseur* companies consisted each of six officers: two captains and four lieutenants, and a (usually) noble officer aspirant called *cadet-gentilhomme*. It also had 18 non-commissioned officers (NCOs): a sergeant-major, five sergeants, ten corporals, a *fourrier-écrivain* or quartermaster-sergeant/clerk, and a *frater* or medic. The two tambours "or other instruments," and 144 men brought the company total to 171 officers and men. The grenadier company had the same number of officers, six, plus the *cadet-gentilhomme*, but only a sergeant-major, four sergeants, eight corporals, a *fourrier-écrivain* or quartermaster-sergeant/clerk, a *frater* or medic, two tambours "or other instruments," and 84 enlisted men for a total strength of 108 officers and men (Articles 4 to 6).

Its artillery or *cannonier* company, was to have the same six officers of an infantry company: a *capitaine-commandant*, a *capitaine en second*, a *lieutenant en premier*, a *lieutenant en second*, and two *sous lieutenants* plus the *cadet gentilhomme*. Its NCOs consisted of a sergeant-major, five sergeants, ten corporals, a *frater*, a *fourrier-écrivain*, two tambours and 144 gunners for a total strength of 171 officers and men handling its guns. When the *volontaires étrangers* were set up in September 1778, each legion was to have four four-pound light artillery guns *à la suédoise*. The *ordonnance* creating Lauzun's Legion did not specify the number of guns for the new unit, but it

seems fair to assume that it kept the four guns assigned to the original *légions* in September 1778 (Article 7).

Its cavalry component, the two squadrons of hussars of one company each, were to consist of two captains, four lieutenants, and a *cadet gentilhomme* (Figure 4.5). The NCO corps consisted of 13 non-commissioned officers, two trumpets and 152 hussars for 174 men each (Article 8). Each of the five infantry companies and the two hussar squadrons was to divide into four "divisions" of equal strength (Article 9).

Article 10 established the staff of the Legion. It was to consist of ten officers with Lauzun as proprietary colonel and inspector at the top. The other positions were those of *colonel-commandant*, *colonel-en-second*, lieutenant colonel, major, an *aide-major* each for the infantry and the hussars with the rank of captain, a quarter-master treasurer, and an ensign or *porte-*

Figure 4.5. Lauzun's Legion, Cavalry (Hussars) (*courtesy Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University).*

drapeaux for the infantry and a cornet or *porte-étendard* for the hussars. The other members of the staff below officer rank were one aide-de-camp or adjutant each for the infantry and the cavalry, the *chirurgien* and his aide, a priest, a drum-major for the six tambours and four trumpets (who

continued to be listed with and maintained by their companies and squadrons), a master farrier or *maréchal expert* and a master saddler as well as a gunsmith for a total staff of ten officers and nine NCOs. The paper strength of the unit (including the provost established in Article 11) was to be 1,160 officers and men. That strength was never reached and since the two fusilier companies never joined Lauzun's Legion on the American mainland, the *duc* had hardly ever more than 600 men under his command.

Article 11 decreed that the internal administration of the Legion was to be handled by a provost who was to be established on the same privileges and rights enjoyed by the other foreign regiments ("des autres régimens Étrangers") in the service of France. In all other aspects of discipline, training, and service, Lauzun's Legion was to be bound by the *ordonnances* of 26 March 1776, with the revisions and changes valid and in effect for the French land forces on 5 March 1780 (Article 12).

While forming his new unit, Lauzun, appointed proprietary colonel in Article 13, was to compile exact lists with the names of all officers, NCOs and enlisted men, collect all arms and pay all salaries up to the date of dissolution of the units involved, close the books on the assets of the dissolved units, and send a report of these proceedings to the naval minister (Articles 14 to 18). He received the right to choose his own officers but was instructed to keep the NCOs as much as possible in the ranks they had held previous to their integration into Lauzun's Legion.

Articles 19 and 20 gave Lauzun a free hand to organize the companies and to make the appointments of the NCOs. Article 21 ordered that a written record be kept of the proceedings setting up the Legion. Article 22 decreed that the officers and men were to receive their pay without deductions of the "four deniers" or for the "capitation," a direct royal tax established in 1695 and levied on all individuals. These royal taxes were to be covered from the "masse" or purses for the various expenses of a regiment. Article 23 of the *ordonnance* established a pay scale for the new unit identical with that of other units in the French line. Salaries before deductions and stoppages ranged from 20,000 livres per year for the *duc* de Lauzun to 720 livres for a *sous-lieutenant* and the *porte-étendard* of the hussars. The *colonel commandant* had 12,000 livres, the *capitaine-commandant* of each of the six companies received 2,400 livres, the *chirurgien-major* had 1,200 livres, a *cadet-gentilhomme* in the infantry had 216 livres, a *cadet-gentilhomme* of the hussars received 270 livres. Among the NCOs, the *sergent-major* or *maréchal-des-logis en chef* in the hussars was the best-paid at 360 livres per year; in the artillery and infantry, corporals had 186 livres but the *brigadier*, his equivalent in the hussars, received 180 livres. A hussar received 132 livres per year, fusilier or *chasseur* had all of 114 livres. To maintain the salaries of the Legion at par with those of Rochambeau's other troops they were increased by 50 percent for every officer, NCO and enlisted man, except the *duc* de Lauzun, in the *Ordonnance du Roi Pour régler le traitement des Troupes destinées à une expédition particulière* of March 20, 1780.

Articles 24, 25, and 26 regulated stoppages and their administration, Articles 27 to 30 dealt with the horses of the staff. Article 31 decreed that the uniform of the Legion would be the same as that set up for the *Volontaires-Etrangers de la Marine* on September 1, 1778, except for the hussars, who were to wear the uniform of the former *compagnie générale*. But though the color and style of the uniform of the *companie générale* is known, that does not necessarily mean that hussars in fact wore it in America. The pants of the *compagnie générale* were red, but the only known

contemporary drawing of a hussar in Lauzun's Legion shows the soldier wearing yellow pants. In his *Détails intéressants sur les événements dans la guerre d'Amérique. Hyver 1781 à 1782,* the only known eyewitness account of the Legion's participation in the American war, Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Hugau suggests that the styles and colors of the uniforms were even more varied. During a review of the Legion in Baltimore in August 1782, Count Robert Dillon and Lieutenant Jennings de Kilmaine wore white pants, Captain Louis de Beffroy and Lieutenant Michel Grabowsky wore yellow, and Captain Jean Nicholas de la Marle wore slate-colored pants instead of the regulation red-colored (or yellow?) pants worn by other officers (Massoni 1996:181). Also unknown is the uniform worn by the gunners; neither the *ordonnance* of September 1, 1778, nor that of March 5, 1780, contains any information on their uniform. French historian Gérard Antoine Massoni, an expert on the Legion, argues that they either wore the same uniform as the infantry or the uniform of the French naval artillery.

Article 32 decreed that in all aspects not specifically dealt with in the ordinance the infantry and hussars were to be subject to and guided by the ordinances valid for the infantry and the hussars, including the *Ordonnance du Roi Concernant l'Infanterie Françoise & Étrangère* and the *Ordonnance du Roi Concernant les Hussards* of March 25, 1776, and the *Ordonnance du Roi pour régler l'exercise de toutes les troupes à cheval* of May 1, 1777. All naval administrators in France as well as in the colonies were ordered to carry out the instructions of the ordinance. Counter-signed by the *duc* de Penthièvre as *Amiral de France* -- the Legion was "au service de la Marine & des Colonies" -- the ordinance went into force on March 10, 1780.

Even by eighteenth-century standards, the *volontaires étrangers de Lauzun* were a unique unit. An early example of an integrated force of infantry – one company each of grenadiers, Light Infantry and regular Line infantry, cavalry, and artillery that stood under the administration of the naval minister, 40 of the 56 officers of the Legion were Frenchmen, the remaining sixteen hailed from Sweden and from Belgium, from England and Ireland, from Poland and from sundry German states. The officers conversed in French, the *lingua franca* of the eighteenth century, but based on the contrôle, the enlistment record of the Legion, the rank and file may have spoken eight different languages. And by tradition and heritage the hussars cursed in Hungarian.

In order to ensure any kind of cohesion, instruction and command on the level of the company and squadron had to be conducted in a commonly understood language. But which one? The *volontaires étrangers de Lauzun* were by their very name part of the *infanterie* and the *cavalerie étrangère*, where commands and instruction would be given, had to be given, in the language that the soldiers understood. These units were not "German" or "Italian" in the nineteenth-century, post-French revolutionary sense of the word. “German”, “Irish”, “Italian” and other “Foreign” regiments were defined by the language of command used in the unit." "Foreign Regiments" were "foreign" if the language used in them was German or Italian or any language other than French. In the *volontaires étrangers de Lauzun* the most commonly used language was German. That means that drill and instruction manuals had to be translated into those languages, and they were. There are bilingual German-French editions as well as German-only translations of the 1750, 1764, 1775, and 1776, ordinances regulating drill and training of infantry, and the 1775 regulation is known to have been translated into Italian for the Royal Italien Regiment of Infantry as well.

In his research on the Legion, French historian Gérard Antoine Massoni found that about half of the recruits for the infantry companies came from German-speaking parts of Europe and France. Nineteen percent of the infantry were subjects various of rulers of the Holy Roman Empire on the right bank of the Rhine, whose territories included about one-third of the Alsace. Another 18 percent were German-speaking subjects of the Louis XVI from the French Alsace, 13 percent were his subjects born in the *Lorraine allemande*. The hussars of Lauzun's Legion spoke German as well. According to Massoni's research, 87 percent of them came from German-speaking parts of Europe: 33 percent from the Alsace, 30 percent from the German-speaking parts of Lorraine, 24 percent from the various states of the Holy Roman Empire (Massoni 1996:18).

But Lauzun's Legion had one more peculiarity that set it apart from other units. Standard equipment for the hussars was a curved *sabre à la hongroise*, similar to a 1767 French saber model. Some hussars may have received a late-model 1777 pistol, but most would have had the 1763 model, modified in 1766. The musket was either the cavalry carbine model 1766, or the 1767 hussar carbine. What set the Legion apart from all French cavalry units was the fact that one "division" of the First Squadron of Hussars was equipped with lances. These lances were a personal touch added by Lauzun: the *ordonnance* establishing Lauzun's Legion does not stipulate lances as part of the equipment of the hussars, they are not mentioned in any official document relating to the Legion, nor are they mentioned at the dissolution of the Legion and its transformation into a regular hussar regiment in the fall of 1783. Yet we know from numerous eyewitness accounts that some hussars were equipped with lances. An intelligence report by Captain Johann Hinrichs (1752-1834) of the Hessian *Jäger* of July 16, 1781, suggests that the lancers constituted an elite with the hussars and performed the function of a bodyguard to Lauzun. Hinrichs observed the hussars at White Plains in Westchester County, New York, and reported that "the cavalry of the Legion consists of two squadrons, each 150 strong; but […] thinks them no more than 230 in all — 40 of them very good, 60 middling, the rest not good. Thirty-five men are armed with Lances, wear fur Caps, are the best mounted, and exempted from mounting guards. The whole Legion a fine body of men, and their accoutrements for horses and men very good" (Clinton 1884:171). Since each squadron consisted of four "divisions" of equal strength, 35 hussars represent one of those "divisions" in the First Squadron of Hussars. We know that on October 3, 1781, Lauzun rode with the First Squadron of Hussars, and that the men who surrounded and accompanied him in his headlong charge at Tarleton were equipped with lances. André Amblard reported in his *Histoire* that Lauzun charged Tarleton "vigorously with 200 hussars and his company of lancers", confirming Hinrich's observations of the strength of the separate lance-carrying component of the hussars (Amblard 1781). Lastly, Count Friedrich Reinhard of Rechteren-Limpurg, *capitaine à la suite* in the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment of Infantry, had heard of the pivotal moment of the October 3 encounter that "One hussar sent a shot very close to his [i.e., Tarleton's] body; as luck would have it the bullet fell into his pistol-holders. Right after this a lancer's thrust missed him. By the shock of his horse, he was thrown to the ground, but saved by his men" (Rechteren-Limpurg 2016:111). On the British side Hessian *Jäger*-Captain Johann Ewald wrote in his description of the Battle of the Hook: "Here, all of a sudden the scene changed. This small body of horsemen, which was in the greatest disorder, suddenly ran into the entire corps under General Choisy. The *duc* de Lauzun, who at this instant should have fallen on the head of these disorganized horsemen with a single troop, formed himself into two lines with 8 troops of his lancers and hussars, which amounted to 300 horsemen without the Virginia cavalry. This gave

Dundas and Tarleton enough time to bring off their cavalry in orderly fashion to resist and withdraw toward Gloucester" (Ewald 1979:330).

Hussars with lances! There can be no doubt that between March 5 and April 5, 1780, within four weeks at most, a rather eclectic regimental size unit of cavalry and light infantry under the department of the navy had been created for Lauzun expressly for use across the ocean. On April 5, Lauzun, most of his staff, and some of his men boarded the 64-gun *Provence*, on April 5. The rest embarked on the *Baron D'Arras*, and some 60 men made the crossing on the *Lion*, but the *l'Ardent*, the *duc de Chartres*, and the *Fantasque* carried members of the Legion as well. Due to a lack of shipping space, only the hussars, the company of grenadiers, the chasseurs, and the artillery, some 600 men in all, made the crossing; the two fusilier companies and the hussar's horses were left behind.

Following winter quarters in Lebanon, Connecticut, the Legion in June 1781 followed a route along the Connecticut coast to the Franco-American encampment at White Plains. Between July 6 and August 18, the Legion occupied forward positions toward New York City; on the march through New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware it usually marched in the van of Rochambeau's army. Washington and the first units of the Continental Army reached Head of Elk/Elkton in Maryland on Thursday, September 6. On September 7, the First French Brigade joined them, the Second Brigade arrived on September 8. Once the American rearguard arrived from Christiana on September 9, the two armies were ready for the last leg of their deployment to Yorktown.

Lauzun's Legion, about 200 men infantry, 100 artillery and 300 hussars, had reached Head of Elk on September 8, 1781. Here the four French grenadier and four chasseur companies of the line infantry as well as Lauzun's infantry, approximately 220 officers and men, embarked for College Landing. That same day, Rochambeau, told the *baron* de Vioménil, that it was the intention of Washington that "as soon as the troops will have arrived in Baltimore, 1) the cavalry of Lauzun's Legion continues its march on land in a way that allows the greatest distances possible ... 2) the baron de Vioménil embarks the rest of the army at Baltimore if that is possible." The hussars would receive details of their route in Baltimore from Pierre François de Béville, *maréchal général des logis* on Rochambeau's staff. The instructions do not mention the destination, but the route was "the same that had been given by General Washington in Philadelphia" on September 3, via Caroline Court House and Newcastle to Williamsburg (Doniol 1892:537; Selig 2009a:302).

On September 9, 300 hussars as well as Lauzun's artillery, seven officers and 101 NCOs and cannoniers with four light 1-lb guns *à la Rostaing*, under the command of the vicomte d'Arrot and the French wagon train, departed from Head of Elk for Baltimore. Taken aback by the questionable seaworthiness of the craft he found in Baltimore on September 12, Vioménil "judged it impossible to expose the troops to the torture of such discomfort and restraint for several days and to the great risks we would run in these little boats, shamefully equipped in every respect. He has decided to march us overland" (Forbach 1868:45). The following day, September 13, Vioménil ordered d'Arrot "to depart tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock in the morning with the cavalry that you command to partake yourself to Williamsburg." Colonel Elisha Sheldon of the 2nd Regt., Continental Light Dragoons, would inform him of the route. When d'Arrot left Baltimore on September 14, his destination was still Williamsburg, not Gloucester Court House (Doniol 1892:539; Selig 2009a:305).

On September 14, the hussars and the legion's artillery left Baltimore for Snowden's Iron Works and crossed the Potomac into Virginia on the 15th. By September 18, the hussars lay encamped at William Dangerfield's Plantation "Belvedere" not quite seven miles south of Fredericksburg. In five days, the hussars had traveled around 110 miles, about 20 miles per day. At Fredericksburg a quartermaster handed d'Arrot an order from Rochambeau of September 16, instructing him to change his route and ride directly to Gloucester. "Current circumstances demand, Monsieur, that the corps of Brigadier General Weeden, who is encamped at Gloucester Court House, be re-enforced. I have the honor to write to you that it is the intention of General Washington and myself that you direct yourself there with the cavalry of your corps to place yourself under his orders. You shall order the wagons of your cavalry as well as those of your infantry to follow you because it is probable that as soon as your infantry will have arrived it will march to join you there with the duc de Lauzun" (Doniol 1892:541).

Following a day of rest, the hussars continued their ride south and encamped near Newmarket, the home of Colonel George Baylor, about three miles past Bowling Green on State Route 301 on September 20. Riding south on State Route 721 from Newmarket on September 21, the hussars rode about 20 miles to Todd's Bridge. The next day, September 2, they covered around 25 miles to King and Queen Court House on Route 14. Somewhere along the way, probably during the stay at King and Queen Court House, they exchanged some of their horses or somehow acquired 100 horses from Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Walton White of Colonel Stephen Moylan's Fourth Legionary Corps (formerly the Fourth Continental Light Dragoons). Since that meant many of his men were now without mounts, Colonel White on October 1 applied to Governor Thomas Nelson for permission to take some of the horses impressed by Colonel Benjamin Temple for the Corps (Palmer 1881:515). Concurrently some the hussars embarked on behavior that cause complaints about "Depredations committed by" them on their property, as George Weedon informed Lauzun on September 20 (Weedon 1781). That included picking up supposedly ownerless horses as William Buckner of Stafford County just north of Fredericksburg informed Richard Young on September 22, 1781. "My Boy brings the impressed Horses, my Mare which was missing at the same time is not come home & I'm apprehensive that the French Light Horse may have stopped her & taken her with them" (Young 1781).

On September 23, they were to ride 18 miles and camp at "Newstawerne." There was indeed a News Tavern at Gloucester Court House, but an analysis of the mileage in the itinerary takes the route to the Dragon Tavern near Adner on Route 17 in Gloucester County about 12 miles north of Gloucester Court House. Having ridden about 210 miles since their departure from Baltimore, the hussars covered the last 12 miles to join up with General Weedon at his camp at Ware Church. Brigadier George Weedon was waiting for them. On September 23, he had informed Washington from his "Camp Ware Church" that "An Officer from the Duke de Lauzun's Cavalry has just arrived. They will join tomorrow by 12 o'clock. I have heard nothing of his infantry tho' have an Aide in search of them, who has directions to have them amply supplied should they land in this County. They moment they join intend moving to a more plentiful country about five or six miles below this" (Weedon 1781). That same day September 23, Washington responded to Weedon's letter of September 18 from Williamsburg, telling him that "The Legion of the Duke Lauzun is ordered to join the Troops now under your Command, and you may soon Expect to see them. […] The Duke de Lauzun is a Gentleman of Rank and long Service in the Army of France, a Brigadier

at the present Time in the Army under Command of the Count de Rochambeau. You will please to show him all Respect and Attention that his Character demands. I am &c." (Fitzpatrick 1937b:130).

The hussars joined Weedon on September 24, but it would be a few more days before Lauzun and the Legion's infantry would arrive at Weedon's headquarters. On September 8, 1781, Lauzun's Legion, about 200 men infantry, 100 artillery and 300 hussars, reached Head of Elk as part of Rochambeau's forces. Here the four French grenadier and four chasseur companies of the line infantry as well as Lauzun's infantry, approximately 220 officers and men, embarked for College Landing on September 11. Forced to put into Annapolis on September 13 to await the outcome of the Battle of the Capes of September 5, they resumed their journey down the Chesapeake Bay in the morning of September 15. In the bay they encountered the transports sent by de Grasse to load the remainder of the French infantry in Annapolis for the journey to Virginia. On September 18, Rochambeau wrote to Colonel d'Arrot from on-board the *Queen Charlotte* in the James River as he and George Washington were making their way back to Williamsburg from a meeting with the *comte* de Grasse on *La Ville de Paris*:

"All the American and French troops embarked at Head of Elk and at Plomb Point shall enter Hampton, as was prescribed in the first instructions. All the boats shall go to College Creek in Williamsburg where the troops shall land in the following order:

The Americans shall land first, one battalion at a time; they shall take with them their camping effects and their equipment; it shall be the same for Lauzun's Legion, which shall land immediately after the Americans, as well as for the battalions of grenadiers and chasseurs who shall land by order of seniority, and finally the artillery.

As each corps or battalion lands, it shall march to its camp which is only a mile and a half away, and it shall take great care to send back the wagons immediately so that each troop may use them progressively and without loss of time" (Newport News 1931).

Lauzun's infantry landed at College Creek in the afternoon of September 23, where it spent the night. Earlier on September 23, Washington had informed Weeden also from on board the *Queen Charlotte*: "The Legion of the Duke de Lauzun is ordered to join the Troops under your Command in Gloucester County, to aid in restraining the Enemy, and preventing their Collection of Provisions and Stores from the Country. This Service, if you are the Seniour Officer, you will endeavour to perform, with all your Diligence, without precipitating your Troops into too great Danger" (Fitzpatrick 1937b:126).

The next day the infantry marched to Williamsburg but only spent the night of September 24/25 in Virginia's former capital before setting out for Gloucester County on September 25 to join their cavalry. Lauzun rode ahead and joined Weedon at Ware Church in the evening of September 25, his infantry did not arrive until three days later on September 27. In order to reach the left bank of the river, the infantry had to make a 50-mile detour. Marching north from Williamsburg via Toano, Barhamsville and Eltham to West Point they crossed the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers to Shaklefords where they turned south toward Adner and Gloucester Court House on the route taken a few days earlier by the hussars and the artillery.

Sometime during the week between the debarkation of Lauzun's infantry at College Landing in the evening of September 23, and October 1, most likely between the departure from Williamsburg on September 25 on the march to Gloucester Court House and their arrival there, one of Lauzun's soldiers murdered a Virginian. On October 1, Jacques Bergeot of the Chasseur Company, 22 years old when he had enlisted on January 16, 1779, was executed for *assassinat*, that is for murder. Bergeot was one of six soldiers of the Legion to be executed, but the only soldier executed for murder; the other five were executed for desertion. No information identifying the victim, or the place and time of the murder, has been found. For the sake of the Franco-American alliance, it seems, the case was successfully hushed up (Process Verbale 1783).

Responding to Washington's request to show Lauzun "all Respect and Attention that his Character demands", Weedon promised Washington on September 26 to "embrace every opportunity of improving his advice so far as related to the Service on this Side," but relations between the two officers were less than cordial (Weedon 1781). Weedon knew that this was his last opportunity for glory and he did not want to share it with a foreign late-comer. In spite of Lauzun's protestations that he would "get along very well with him [Weedon]," Lauzun considered the corpulent American general, affectionally called "General Gourd" by some of his soldiers (Saunders 1832), a country pumpkin living "in mortal fear of gun shots" (Méras 1912:324). Weedon, who had seen many an action in his life and probably was not anxious to die, was simply following Washington's orders of September 23, but Lauzun, anxious for action, was not a man to wait for British forces coming out of Gloucester Point looking for a fight. His infantry had arrived on September 27, the next day he was already out on a forage expedition with Weedon that took them within a mile of British fortifications, as Weedon informed Washington on September 29: "I yesterday made a forage at Abington Church from oats and barley belonging to Colonel Warner Lewis, by that gentleman's desire. The covering party consisted of three Militia battalions of Infantry: were advanced as low down as Seawell's. They were supported by 100 horse from the Duke de Lauzun's Legion with 30 militia dragoons" (Weedon 1781). Lauzun had his own version of events, writing in his memoirs that he

> "…proposed to him to advance towards Gloucester, and to go the next day and reconnoitre along the English posts; he consented, and we started with fifty hussars. When we were within six or seven miles of the enemy, he told me that he considered it useless and very dangerous to go any further, and that we could learn no more; I pressed him so, that he did not dare refuse to follow. I forced back the enemy's posts, and approached sufficiently to get an exact idea of their position. My general was in despair; he told me he would go no further with me; that he did not wish to get killed" (Méras 1912:325).

By October 1, Weedon's and Lauzun's commands had been considerably strengthened by the addition of 800 men - Line Infantry from the vessels of the *comte* de Grasse, but they had also been superseded by Gabriel de Choisy as commanding officer in Gloucester County. On September 29, General Gabriel de Choisy, armed with a request by Rochambeau in a letter dated September 27, set out for the *Ville de Paris* to ask the *comte* de Grasse for 800 men from the garrisons of his vessels. These men had debarked around noon on October 1 and joined Weedon's and Lauzun's forces. Following a day of rest the garrisons received orders to move within three miles of British positions in Gloucester Point. On October 2, Perron recorded in his journal that

"General Choisy ordered us to be ready to leave, the next day on the third, to make a new camp three miles or one league distant from Gloucester. As a result, we decamped at 5 in the morning and began to march at 7 o'clock, Lauzun's Legion marched in front of us, with an avant-guard of 50 hussars with whom M de Lauzun himself marched" (Perron 1898:143). "A moment before entering the plain of Gloucester," as Lauzun tells the story, "the dragoons of the state of Virginia came very much frightened to tell us that they had seen English dragoons outside, and that, in fear of some accident, they had come as fast as their legs could carry them, without further investigation. I went forward to try and learn more. I perceived a very pretty woman at the door of a small house, on the main road, I questioned her, she told me that, at the very moment, Colonel Tarleton had left her house; that she did not know if many troops had come out of Gloucester; that Colonel Tarleton was very anxious 'to shake hands with the French Duke.' I assured her that I came expressly to give him that pleasure. She was very sorry for me, thinking, I believe, by experience, that it was impossible to resist Tarleton; the American troops were of the same opinion (Méras 1912:326).

Lauzun's wish was about to be fulfilled.

4.3 François Joseph Paul *comte* de Grasse and the French Navy

The humiliating defeats in the Seven Years' War, known as the French and Indian War in the United States, against the Royal Navy on the oceans of the world, and the subsequent loss of almost all her overseas possessions in the First Peace of Paris in February 1763, had been caused by a smaller, less well-trained, and poorly equipped French fleet. César Gabriel de Choiseul-Chevigny, *duc* de Praslin, Naval Minister from 1766 to 1770, and his successors, particularly Antoine Raymond Jean Gualbert Gabriel de Sartine, *comte* d'Alby, Naval Minister from 1774 to 1780, embarked on an ambitious naval build-up. It called for a fleet of 80 Ships of the Line (SOLs) and 47 frigates, almost twice the 47 SOLSs in French service in 1763. Helped by an enthusiastic response from provincial estates and the generosity of municipalities such as Paris, France launched 22 SOLs between 1762 and 1768, only five of the vessels financed by the crown. By 1774 the French navy had grown to 64 SOLs, mostly of 74 guns, plus 44 frigates (Dull 1975: 351-378). In 1765, Choiseul issued the first major new navy regulations since 1689, retired a large number of officers he deemed incompetent, emphasized training, and in 1766 re-established the navy as an independent service in France's armed forces. Gabriel de Sartine continued these programs. In a series of seven decrees issued on September 27, 1776, he put French ports and naval dockyards under naval control and reorganized the corps of naval artillery and marine infantry. In 1775, he re-established the *Gardes de la Marine* as a school to train naval officers which were drawn, however, exclusively from members of the aristocracy.

As war with England loomed, he accelerated the ship-building program even more but with a focus on frigates so that by July 1, 1779, France's order of battle listed 63 SOLs of at least 50 guns plus 60 frigates with total crew strength of about 1,250 officers and 75,000 sailors. They were arrayed against Britain's 66 SOLs as of July 1, 1778, but there was hope that Spain would join in the fight, adding another 58 fighting ships to the French side of the equation. Parity with Great Britain had been achieved; since she would have to keep some 20 SOLs close to home to counter the threat of French raids, and even naval superiority in select theatres of war, as it occurred off Yorktown in September and October 1781, had become a possibility. The fleet that François Joseph Paul, *comte*

de Grasse, arrayed at the mouth of the York River in September 1781, and the troops that Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, *comte* de Rochambeau, would take to America and to victory at Yorktown, had little in common with the French army that had suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of the armies of Frederick the Great and the Royal Navy between 1756 and 1763.

Once France had begun supplying the United States with arms, ammunition, and funds in 1776, a fact well known in London, preparations for the anticipated naval war took on ever more concrete forms. By the summer of 1777, Charles Gravier, *comte* de Vergennes, Foreign Minister since 1774, knew that he would soon have to lay his cards on the table. On August 24, 1777, Louis XVI ordered all fishermen off Newfoundland to cease fishing and to return to France immediately: though the order did not mention it, it was an open secret on both sides of the Channel that the crews were needed to man French SOLs and frigates at the outbreak of war. The government of Frederick North, 2nd Earl of Guilford, better known as Lord North, was well aware of this order, which British papers interpreted as a sign that France was preparing for the commencement of hostilities in the Spring of 1778. It was the cumulative effect of the news reaching France of battles won at Saratoga and Red Bank, lost at Brandywine or even just fought like the one at Germantown, in the summer and fall of 1777, that brought about the decision in Versailles that the time had come to openly side with the Americans. The order to crews to return to France was published in Newfoundland on October 4, 1777; by the time Louis XVI signed the Treaties of Amity and Friendship and of Military Alliance with the United States on February 6, 1778, the fishing fleet and its personnel had returned to France. Both France and Great Britain understood the treaties of February 1778 as a declaration of war. In early June, British ships chased the frigate *Belle Poule* off the coast of Normandy; Louis XVI responded by ordering his navy on July 10, 1778, to give chase to Royal Navy vessels.

French mobilization for war also called for the deployment of an infantry supplement on each vessel. To provide fighting capabilities on land, the Ministry of the Navy had its own peace-time establishment of about 100 companies of Marines, six regiments of Colonial Infantry, mostly in the West Indies, and several battalions of Sepoys in India. Those units were however not large enough to meet the war-time man-power needs of the navy, which, on paper, ranged from four officers and 260 infantrymen for a 110-gun man of war to 15 soldiers for a corvette of 16 guns. On September 1, 1778, the *comte* de Sartine ordered the creation of the *Volontaires étrangers de la Marine*, eight *légions* of some 70 officers, four companies of infantry, one of artillery, one of workmen plus two *escadrons* of 150 hussars each. A *compagnie générale* was to bring the *volontaires* to a strength of almost 600 officers and 4,500 men. These *volontaires* were raised specifically to fight in cooperation with regular marines on board vessels, and to land in war zones under enemy fire, and to create the core of a military-civilian organization there before setting off for new objectives. Recruited mostly from *étrangers* (i.e., foreigners), which *de facto* meant almost exclusively German-speakers (except for the artillery, which were overwhelmingly native French), with Armand Louis de Gontaut-Biron, *duc* de Lauzun as their *colonel propriétaire*, the legions were meant to double the number of French marines.

Recruitment for the *volontaires étrangeres* did not yield by far the number of recruits that had been envisioned. Only three legions were raised eventually and deployed, the First Legion to the West Indies where it participated in the capture of Grenada in July 1779, and the Third Legion to the Isle de France (Mauritius in the English-speaking world) in the Indian Ocean for deployment in

India, while the Second Legion remained quartered on the coast of Normandy for use during the aborted 1779 invasion of Britain. On March 5, 1780, the *Ordonnance du Roi Portant suppression du Corps des Volontaires-étrangers de la Marine; & création d'un nouveau Corps, sous le titre de Volontaires-étrangers de Lauzun* suspended further recruitment for the remaining five legions of the *Volontaires-étrangers de la Marine* and assigned the personnel of the Second Legion together with the small remnants of other units to the *Volontaires-étrangers de Lauzun* (For more detail see the discussion in 4.2 Armand Louis de Gontaut duc de Lauzun and his Legion, above).

Looking for ways to meet the personnel needs of the navy for landing forces, the French government next resorted to drafting detachments from regular line infantry regiments and to assign them to specific vessels. In the early days of 1780, an unidentified officer in the Foix Regiment of Infantry (most likely Lieutenant Louis-Auguste comte de Mondion d'Artigny) stationed in Beziérs in Languedoc halfway between Montpelier and Carcassonne close to the Mediterranean Sea, received orders to march with two fellow officers and 300 men of his regiment almost 650 miles across France to Quimper in the Bretagne for embarkation. In March 1781 he embarked in Brest on the 74-gun ship *l'Hercule* in de Grasse's fleet for the West Indies (Voyage 1781d). He was among thousands of regular infantry troops on the vessels of the *comte* de Grasse when sailed from Cap Français (today's Cap-Haïtien) for the Chesapeake on August 5, 1781. His 28 SOLs and four frigates carried a total of 2,814 soldiers from more than a dozen different regiments ranging from 189 men of the Regiment Picardie on the 110-gun *Ville de Paris* to 30 men each on the four frigates in his fleet (Labat de Lapeyriere 2010:102). Sous-Lieutenant Joachim du Perron, *comte* de Revel's complaint about the deteriorating discipline of these troops can in part be explained by the fact that there existed no rules or regulations governing the service of regular line infantry that found itself stationed on vessels of war. It was not until April 4, 1781, too late for de Grasse's fleet, which had set sail from Brest on March 22, 1781, that the *comte* de Ségur issued a *Réglement pour determiner d'une manière uniforme le Service des Régimens d'Infantérie qui auront des détachemens à fournir pour le Service à la Mer*, which remained in effect until December 1787.

De Grasse's destination was the Chesapeake Bay. His vessels were bursting with passengers. Besides their regular crews an almost 3,000 men ship garrisons they carried some 3,000 men of the infantry regiments Gâtinais, Agenais, and Touraine under Claude-Anne de Rouvroy, *marquis* de Saint-Simon-Montbléru, a hundred artillery men from the Metz Artillery, 10 Vallière-type 4lb *canons de campagne*, a few siege guns and mortars, and 100 hussars of Lauzun's First Legion of the *Volontaires Etrangers de la Marine*, some 3,300 men altogether. Along the way de Grasse dispatched the frigate *l'Aigrette* to Havanna to pick up 1.2 million livres which Rochambeau had requested. It took all of five hours to collect these funds from public and private sources and the next day the Aigrette on her way again. George Washington would have preferred New York City as the destination for the French fleet, but his hope was dashed when de Grasse's letter of July 28 reached White Plains around noon on Tuesday, August 14. De Grasse informed Washington that he meant "pour se rendre en toute diligence dans la baie de Chesapeak, lieu qui me paraît indiqué par vous, Monsieur le Comte, et par MM. Washington, de la Luzerne, et de Barras comme le plus sûr à opére le bien que vous vous proposez -- to render himself in all diligence to the Chesapeake Bay, the place which seems to have been indicated to me by you, M. le comte, and by MM. Washington, de la Luzerne, and de Barras as the surest place to carry out the good which you propose." He wanted "…to have everything in the most perfect readiness to commence our

operations in the moment of his arrival as he should be under a necessity from particular engagements with the Spaniards to be in the West Indies by the Middle of October" (Doniol 1892:521). Three days after de Grasse's letter had arrived in White Plains, the first elements of the Continental Army crossed the Hudson River into New Jersey, by the evening of August 18, almost 2,500 officers and other ranks chosen from the Continental Army, and some 4,600 men of Rochambeau's forces, were on their way to Yorktown.

Independent of the target of the Campaign of 1781, whether it was New York City as Washington hoped, or any other city along the American East Coast, success or failure depended on the cooperation of a French naval component which would complete the siege ring on water that the Franco-American armies would establish on land. During the spring and into the summer of 1781, Washington had planned to lay siege to New York City, the center of British military and political power in the United States. Once he knew that de Grasse was sailing to the Chesapeake, he had no choice but to march his forces to Virginia.

Washington himself recorded the events of August 14, the day of the crucial meeting with Rochambeau, this way in his diary: "Matters having now come to a crisis and a decisive plan to be determined on, I was obliged, from the shortness of Count de Grasses (sic) promised stay on this Coast, the apparent disinclination in their Naval Officers to force the harbour of New York and the feeble compliance of the States to my requisition for Men, hitherto, and little prospect of greater exertion in the future, to give up all idea of attacking New York; instead thereof to remove the French Troops and a detachment from the American Army to the Head of Elk to be transported to Virginia for the purpose of co-operating with the force from the West Indies against the Troops in that State" (Jackson 1978:254).

Fortunately, the tactical situation in the south had changed in America's favor as well. Charles Cornwallis, The Earl Cornwallis, had done exactly what George Washington and Rochambeau would have wanted him to do. In late June and early July, Cornwallis had briefly occupied Williamsburg, but on July 19, he began his march to Yorktown and Gloucester. When news that Cornwallis had started digging in on August 2, 1781, reached Franco-American headquarters on August 16, two day after de Grasse's letter had reached White Plains and the decision to march south had been made, everything was falling into place. De Grasse would be there by the end of the month and the allied armies hopefully by mid-September as well. From now on Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, *marquis* de La Fayette, commanding officer of American forces in Virginia, had but one assignment: to keep Cornwallis in the trap he had unknowingly wandered into. On August 15, the day after the decision to march south was made, Washington wrote to Lafayette from Dobbs's Ferry, that "you will immediately take such position as will best enable you to prevent their retreat thro' North Carolina" (Washington 1937a:502). That same August 15, Rochambeau informed Jacques-Melchior Saint-Laurent, *comte* de Barras, in Newport that the arrival of 2,400 German recruits in New York on the 11th and, more importantly, the expected arrival of de Grasse in the Chesapeake "will oblige us to march as quickly as possible to the Head of Elk" and asked him to take the remaining French forces and the siege artillery from Newport to the Chesapeake (Doniol 1892:523). His aide-de-camp Axel von Fersen, who took these letters over the 220 miles from White Plains to Newport in 36 hours, wrote to Count Creutz, Swedish ambassador to France, at 8:00 a.m. on the 17th: "We expect the *comte* de Grasse at any moment; he is supposed to pull into the Chesapeake Bay to land his 3,000 troops under the command of M.

de Saint Simon. We will march immediately to Virginia with our army to join up with him and to chase the English from that part of the country if we can. The squadron which is here goes to join M. de Grasse" (Fersen 1929:82).

As the first elements of the Continental Army reached Trenton and the First French Brigade broke camp at Somerset Court House to march to its camp at Princeton on August 31, 1781, de Grasse's fleet was already anchored in the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Washington and Rochambeau learned this news almost a week later in the afternoon of September 5 at Marcus Hook just south of Philadelphia - just as de Grasse slipped his cables to meet the Royal Navy in the Battle of the Capes. At 8:00 a.m. a French frigate had signaled the arrival of 27 sails from the eastward steering toward the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay. Knowing that this had to be a British fleet rather than Barras nine sails arriving from Newport, de Grasse ordered his crews to prepare for battle. Unable to wait for nearly 90 officers and 1,800 men who had not yet returned from landing the forces of the *marquis* de St. Simon near Jamestown, de Grasse slipped his cables when the tide turned around noon and within less than 45 minutes, 24 of the 28 SOLs in his fleet were on their way, though “by no means in a regular and connected way," as Admiral Samuel Hood, 1st Viscount Hood, wrote in his "Sentiments upon the Truly Unfortunate Day" on September 6. It was already 4:15 p.m. before the van and center of the British fleet commenced firing. Admiral Samuel Graves’ decision to line up his ships parallel to the French fleet had provided de Grasse with the time he needed to bring his ships out of the bay and into battle formation. By 6:30 p.m. it was getting too dark to continue the battle and firing ceased. For the next two days the two fleets drifted southward. As the sun was setting around 7 p.m. in the evening of September 9, de Grasse lost sight of the English fleet, which was off Cape Hatteras the next day. De Grasse decided to return to the Chesapeake Bay, where he anchored off Cape Henry on September 11. Waiting for him in the bay was Barras, who had arrived from Newport the preceding day. Though the Royal Navy had suffered more damage and greater losses, the battle had ended in a tactical draw, but strategically de Grasse had achieved his goal: to pull Graves’ fleet of 19 SOLs away from the bay to allow Barras’ much smaller fleet of nine ships, including seven SOLs, to enter the bay on September 10. As Graves took his battered fleet to New York City, Cornwallis, aware the Washington had arrived in Williamsburg late in the afternoon of September 14, could only hope that another fleet would arrive soon to break through the French fleet to evacuate him and his forces from Yorktown before the arrival of the Franco-American army from the northward. That hope was dashed with the landing of the two armies at College Creek on September 26. Two days later, the allied armies set out for Yorktown.

The siege of Yorktown had however a pendant across the river in Gloucester where Lord Cornwallis had deployed some of his forces as soon as he started to entrench in Yorktown. As long as they faced only Virginia militia, British forces had free range of Gloucester County. Damage claims filed after the surrender on October 19, 1781, show the full extent of the carnage they wreaked. Once the siege of Yorktown had begun in earnest and Gloucester emerged as the only potential escape route for Cornwallis, the need to re-enforce General George Weedon and his militia by some regular line troops beyond the hussars and infantry of Lauzun’s Legion could no longer be ignored. On September 29, General Gabriel de Choisy (Figure 4.6), armed with a request by Rochambeau in a letter dated September 27, set out for the *Ville de Paris* to ask the *comte* de Grasse for 800 men from the garrisons of his vessels, almost 30 percent of the available ship

garrisons (Doniol 1892:548). De Grasse agreed reluctantly, informing Rochambeau on September 29, that this was the last support he could, and would, provide (Doniol 1892:550).

In mid-afternoon of September 30 between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. (Valentin des Mures 1781), the men drawn from 14 different vessels and different regiments embarked on row boats and by 4:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. were headed for "Trenkmorden" (i.e., Throckmorton) on the Ware River where they disembarked between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on October 1. *Sous-lieutenant* Paul de Sers d'Aulix of the Brie Regiment of Infantry serving on the 74-gun *l'Hector* recorded that on the evening of the September 29, the detachment received orders to select two officers, three sergeants, five corporals, one tambour and 66 fusiliers of his regiment serving as garrison on *l'Hector* for deployment in Gloucester (Sers 1781). Though they were to take a five-day supply of food without drinks with them, they stepped ashore without even the most basic equipment. Choisy informed Rochambeau on September 29 not only of unexpected difficulties on the part of de Grasse but also that these men had "ni tentes, ni bidons, ni marmites – neither tents nor water cans nor cooking pots" (Doniol 1892:551). Eventually he picked up 110 tents from one of the captured British

Figure 4.6. French Brigadier General Claude Gabriel de Choisy.

frigates, either the *Richmond* or the *Iris*, both taken on September 11 by the French frigates *L'Aigrette* and *La Diligente* in the bay, for his detachment. That was not all: on October 2, De Grasse told Rochambeau that he had sent the 800 men to Lauzun, but implored Rochambeau to provide for these men: "ils sont sans souliers, etc. Ménagez-les, je vous en prie! J'en ai fait la même prière à M. le duc de Lauzun – they are without shoes &c. Take care of them, please! I made the same request of M le duc de Lauzun" (Doniol 1892:556).

Upon landing the ship garrisons began their march to their campsite in Gloucester Court House around 4:00 p.m., reaching their destination, which Perron described as "a little village with four or five houses, at the edge of a wide road; on its right we saw the site where our camp was being laid out." Lauzun's Legion camped about "a musket shot" or about 300 yards from them.

Table 4.1. Garrisons on the Vessels in the Fleet of the *comte* de Grasse upon Arrival in Virginia, August 1781

Regiments	Strength	Vessel's Name	Sent to Gloucester
Picardie	189	*La Ville de Paris*	75
Monsieur	135	*Le Languedoc*	75
Brie	100	*L'Auguste*	
Beaujolais	113	*Le Saint-Esprit*	
Colonel(le) général(e)	191	*La César*	
Hainault	164	*Le Sceptre*	
Poitou	114	*Le Destin*	
Royal Italien	114	*Le Glorieux*	
Orléans	117	*La Victoire*	
Bresse	104	*Le Souverain*	
Foix	107	*Le Magnanime*	
Hainault	104	*La Diadème*	
Beaujolais	100	*Le Citoyen*	
Maine	104	*Le Marseillais*	75
Royal Italien	107	*Le Pluton*	
Angoumois	104	*La Bourgogne*	75?
Picardie	72	*Le Vaillant*	
La Sarre	44	*Le Caton*	
Poitou	60	*Le Solitaire*	
Foix	106	*L'Hercule*	
Maine	107	*Le Zélé*	75
Brie	109	*L'Hector*	75
La Sarre	49	*Le Réfléchi*	
Poitou	67	*Le Palmier*	
Angoumois	103	*Le Scipion*	75
La Sarre	68	*Le Triton*	
Angoumois	96	*Le Northumberland*	75
Piémont	47	*L'Expériment*	
Colonel(le) Général(e)	30	*La Railleuse*	
Penthièvre	30	*L'Andromaque*	
Maine	30	*L'Aigrette*	
Blaisois	30	*La Diligente*	
Total	**2,814**	**28 ships of the Line and four frigates**	**525 (600?)**

The list was compiled by Pierre-René-Marie de Vaugiraud, *comte* de Rosnay, major of de Grasse's fleet, and transcribed from photostats in the Library of Congress, Foreign Copying Project (France); the original manuscript is in Marine B4/184, fol. 169, Service historique de la Défense, Château de Vincennes, Paris; the distribution of troops is that given by Perron, *Journal particulier*, (pp. 138 and 139).

Upon arrival on land, Choisy organized his 800 troops into two battalions. Perron once again names the regiments from which the men in those battalions were drawn, and now lists 225 soldiers from Angoumois rather than the 150 in his initial list (Figure 4.7). The third vessel with a garrison drawn from the regiment Angoumois is La *Bourgogne*, which makes it the most likely vessel that supplied these 75 troops.

Figure 4.7. Joachim du Perron Comte de Revel (or the Comte du Perron) (Museum of the American Revolution).

The remaining 200 troops were drawn from the garrisons of six ships-of-the-line that had arrived off Yorktown with the *comte* de Barras from Newport on September 10, 1781, i.e., 40 men of the Regiment Picardie *from Le Duc de Bourgogne* and 40 of the Regiment Bresse from *Le Neptune*. An additional 30 soldiers each were drawn from the garrisons of *Le Jason* (Picardie)*, Le Conquérant* (La Sarre), *L'Eveillé* (Bourbon), and *La Provence* (Rohan-Soubise). Also in Barras' fleet were *L'Ardent*, the British 44-gun *Romulus* captured in Lynhaven Bay in February 1781, and the frigates *La Concorde* and *La Surveillante*; coming from Rhode Island the frigate *L'Hermione* joined them on September 26, 1781.

Following a day of rest the garrisons received orders to move within three miles of British positions in Gloucester Point. On October 2, Perron recorded in his journal that:

> "General Choisy ordered us to be ready to leave, the next day on the third, to make a new camp three miles or one league distant from Gloucester. As a result, we decamped at 5 in the morning and began to march at 7 o'clock, Lauzun's Legion marched in front of us, with an avant-guard of 50 hussars with whom M de Lauzun himself marched. After three hours of marching in a rather flat and well cultivated countryside, we passed near a church, where we left a guard; it was planned for this church to serve us as a hospital.
>
> Several minutes afterwards, we came to a rather pretty house on the right of the road, where an aide-de-camp came to tell us to quicken our pace, to go and support Lauzun's Legion, which had come to grips with the enemy. We marched as quickly as possible, and soon encountered several hussars covered with blood, some of them leading prisoners. The first sight of the blood, the pale look of the wounded, the contented look of those who led prisoners, the trembling of those same prisoners, who took little persuasion to run on foot before their guides on horseback, the wounded and dead horses, &c., all this had a singular effect on me. All our soldiers would have liked to fly to get within sight of the enemy" (Perron 1898:144).

4.4 Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton and Crown Forces

On July 9, 1776, Lord Dunmore evacuated Gwynn's Island, and Gloucester County was spared the devastation of war even if British raids remained a constant threat (Ryan 1978:63). Once the war had shifted to the southern states in 1779, however, British raids again grew in number, duration and magnitude. On May 8, 1779, Admiral Sir George Collier and General Edward Mathew with 1,800 troops attacked Portsmouth. A good year later, on October 19, 1780, a British fleet of 60 sail carrying 2,500 troops under General Alexander Leslie anchored off Cape Henry but remained only until late November, when they moved south to reinforce Lord Cornwallis. On December 31, 1780, Benedict Arnold, now a Brigadier-General in the British Army, disembarked some 1,200 British officers and men in Portsmouth. His detachment consisted of the 80th (or Edinburgh) regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Dundas, Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe and his Queen's Rangers, and a detachment of the New York Volunteers under Captain John Althause.

On February 9, 1781, Captain Le Gardeur de Tilly sailed from Newport for Virginia on the 64-gun l'*Eveillé* accompanied by the frigates *La Gentille* and *La Surveillante* and the cutter *La Guêpe*. His task was to assist in the capture of Benedict Arnold, who was wreaking havoc on the plantations along the James and York rivers. On February 18, 1781, Tilly's small flotilla arrived off Cape Henry where it took the corsair *Earl Cornwallis* (16 guns and a 50-man crew), the *Revenge* (12 guns and a 20-man crew), a third corsair of 8 guns and a 25-man crew (possibly called *Duke of York*) as well as a sloop carrying a load of flour. On February 19, the flotilla chased and took the *Romulus* of 44 guns and a 260-man crew as well as a brick with 59 *réfugies,* many of them slaves who had run away from their owners in the hope of gaining their freedom upon reaching British lines. Worrying about being trapped in the bay by a larger British fleet, Tilly returned to Rhode Island, sailing into the harbor of Newport on March 3. Five days later on March 8, Charles René Dominique Sochet, *Chevalier* Destouches (or Des Touches), again tasked with assisting in the capture of Benedict Arnold, sailed from Newport with all of Rochambeau's grenadiers and chasseurs, almost 1,200 troops, on board, and fought a Royal Navy squadron under Admiral Mariot Arbuthnot off Cape Henry on March 16 before returning to Newport on March 26, 1781.

One month later on April 21, 1781, 2,600 British forces under Major-General William Phillips joined Arnold at Westover *en route* to Petersburg and Richmond, where he arrived on April 29 only to find Lafayette with about 900 continental Light Infantry already there. By May 9, Phillips was back in Petersburg but so ill that Arnold had to assume command of the army. As Phillips lay dying of typhoid - he would die on May 13 - Cornwallis reached Petersburg with 5,300 men on May 20 and immediately sent Arnold back to New York. Looking for a location to establish a permanent base on the coast of Virginia, Cornwallis had first reconnoitered Yorktown on June 18, and reported to Sir Henry Clinton on June 30 that strong defensive posts at both York and Gloucester would be necessary to protect the British fleet in the York River. "Upon viewing York, I was clearly of opinion, that it far exceeds our power, consistent with your plans, to make safe defensive posts there and at Gloucester, both of which would be necessary for the protection of shipping" (Cornwallis 1853:184). Following the battles of Spencer's Ordinary (June 26) and Green Spring (July 6), Cornwallis moved his forces to Portsmouth where he remained until the end of the month. On July 29, his troops embarked in Portsmouth, but due to contrary winds needed four days to reach Yorktown where the 80th Regiment disembarked from shipboard in the evening of August 1. The rest followed the next day and took up posts on either side of the York River. Though he was not entirely pleased with the location, Cornwallis felt secure in the knowledge that Royal Navy was close at hand. But he was also well aware that establishing a post at Gloucester Point was vital for the control of the York River.

Holding on to Gloucester Point was as vital in Cornwallis' defensive strategy as it would be in the allies' plans for the siege of his forces once they arrived in Virginia in late September. The siege of Yorktown had a pendant across the river in Gloucester where Lord Cornwallis had deployed some of his forces even before he started to entrench in Yorktown. Defensive works on the Gloucester side of the river formed an integral part of Cornwallis' strategy. The construction of defensive works in Gloucester preceded work in Yorktown and gathered speed once the Hessian Prince Hereditaire or Erbprinz Regiment had joined the 80th Regiment in its efforts to throw up earthworks. On August 12, he sent Colonel John Simcoe and his Queens Rangers, whose "horses, by being so long on board [were] in a wretched condition" across the river and appointed Lt.-Col. Thomas Dundas of the 80th as Commanding Officer of British forces in Gloucester. On August 22, he could report to Sir Henry in New York that "[t]he works at Gloucester are now in such

forwardness, that a smaller detachment than the previous garrison would be in safety against a sudden attack; but I make no alteration there, as I cannot hope that the labour of the whole will complete that post in less than five or six weeks" (Cornwallis 1853:187). Work continued throughout September and by early October, Cornwallis had fortified Gloucester Point with a series of entrenchments, four strong redoubts and three batteries of altogether 19 pieces, mostly 18-pounders (Hatch 1940:269-270).

Immediately upon learning of the arrival of British forces in Gloucester Governor Thomas Nelson had called out the Gloucester County militia for a tour of eight weeks on August 2, but these forces were much too weak to keep British foragers at bay (Ryan 1978:78). British forces held free reign across Gloucester County in early August and the security situation deteriorated even further when on August 12, the Queen's Rangers under Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe joined British forces at Gloucester Point to provide forage from the county for the troops. Although Simcoe feared the "danger" from "the militia of the enemy, now assembling in numbers," Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton recalled that "While the infantry of the line were employed in constructing the defences of Yorktown and Gloucester, the Queen's rangers and the legion were equally active in collecting forage and cattle from the country for the use of the army. Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe managed his detachments in front of Gloucester with great dexterity, and met, in consequence, with trifling interruption" (Simcoe 1844:248, Tarleton 1787:373) (Figure 4.8). On August 20, when Simcoe dispersed an advanced guard led by Captain Weeks, he recalled, "this check, together with the country being "constantly ambuscaded, prevented the foragers from receiving the least interruption" (Simcoe 1844:249, Lee 1827:312). For the citizens of Gloucester County this meant that "[f]rom the 26th to the 29th the plantations on both banks of the Severn River were foraged continuously. Small skirmishes usually took place, and a magazine of forage was set up at Gloucester" (Ewald 1979:324).

Prior to General George Weedon taking command of the militia in Gloucester County in mid-September, but even thereafter until the arrival of Lauzun's Legion and the 800-man ship garrisons, British forces held almost free reign over the county. On September 5, Colonel John Taylor informed the marquis de Lafayette that the Gloucester Militia battalion was all of 115 men strong, not counting all of 16 new militiamen from New Kent and a few stragglers from Middlesex that had arrived recently (Palmer 1881: 393-394). The New Kent men were "mostly unarmed" though "with these parties I shall have an inundation of Militia Colonels, as they will probably claim" (Selig 2009b:2). That same day Robert Honyman recorded in his diary that "[g]reat numbers of Militia from many different counties are called into service; those between York river & Rappahannock to rendezvous [sic] at Gloucester Court house; those between York & James river to join the main army," but it took a while for the militia to arrive at Gloucester Court House (Honyman 1971:415). But the arriving militia was poorly trained, armed and equipped and unable to stop British depredations (for more detail see 3.1 General George Weedon and the Virginia Militia, above).

Damage claims and requests for services provided filed in 1782 and 1783 show the full extent of the destruction and carnage British forces as well as American militia had wreaked in Gloucester County, between August and November 1781. On September 7, 1782, "The Estate of John Thruston Gen^{t} dec^{ed}" reported losing "a Dwelling House 30 by 20 feet pull^{d} down & destroyed, a Large & almost new Store house Burnt, a Dairy and Smoak House pulled down, a large Garden destroyed a parcel of new posts pails & rails & plank destroyed, a Cornfield about 45 barrels with

the rails &c destroyed dwelling House Kitchen & Store house damaged." Besides 29 hogs and six head of cattle, John Seawell reported the loss of "1 Dwelling house 36 by 26 feet burnt down, 1 Smoak house burnt 1 Billings (?) house & Stable burnt 1 dwelling house 28 by 16 feet pull'd down ½ acre of paling destroyed, 1 kitchen 16 by 12 feet destroy'd 1 Cornfield 16000 hills with new fencing destroyed 1 ½ Lots with pailing destroyed 2 Corn houses pulled down 5000 lb lignum vita abt 5 £ worth 1 Bed 5 bedshades, 3 Tables,7 Chairs 150 fowl of Different kindes" (Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims 1781-83: Reports).

Figure 4.8. Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton.

American militia did its share of looting as well on either side of the river. On October 10, Colonel William Davies wrote to Governor Nelson that he had "intended to set off to camp this week but the back militia have stole my horses as well as those of every body else they can lay their hands on. The mischief these fellows have done under the pretense of rescuing horses from the enemy is really alarming to the country and their return from camp has more the appearance of an incursion of the enemy for plunder" (Selig 2009b:3).

French forces, not just the troopers of Lauzun's Legion but some of the ship garrisons as well, did their share of plundering too, though in the case of the garrison troops more out of necessity than inclination: "Our soldiers plundered a little, and that could hardly be prevented; several detachments, like ours, had been duped by the clerks of their ships and had only some bacon and

spoiled biscuit to live on for five days" (Perron 1898:143). Once again Lauzun's hussars set the as usual bad example: "It was difficult to hold our soldiers back, the woods were full of hogs which were simply entrusted to the care of mother nature, even though they belonged to individuals, there were even cows and sheep. Lauzun's hussars found them and overtook them with singular skill, and our soldiers thought they would do the same" (Perron 1898:151).

One of the few damage claims that expressly mention French forces as the culprits was filed by "John Fox Esqr at Bottetourt Town in Gloucester County Ware Parish" (Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims 1783: Commissioner's Books). His claim filed on May 29, 1782, listed the damage done "by the French Troops station'd their as followeth

To 205 Posts & Rails Fencing @ 5/p Pair	£ 51.5.
To paleing from a Garden ………………………..	5.
To Damages done 3 Stables ……………………. .	18.11
To Damage to a Publick House …………………..	(illegible)
To Do out Houses ……………………………………	12.10
To 1850 Common Fence Rails @ 40/p (illegible)	3.11
	£ 53.8 (?)
	£ 56.8 (?)

In 1782 and 1783, the Commonwealth and Gloucester County tabulated the losses with a view toward compensating the owners; in view of Perron's statement some of the missing hogs and sheep need to be "credited" to the French account as well. Anxious to maintain good relations with his hosts, Rochambeau tried to settle all damage claims quickly. In December, Mary Harris of Gloucester claimed that some of the Duc de Lauzun's hussars had stolen from her all her household furniture, including feather beds, rugs, cotton, wool, a Dutch oven, pewter and plates, and many other household items. When a hussar officer offered to line up the squadrons so that she could identify the culprit, Mrs. Harris declined the offer, saying that she might not be able to identify the man conclusively. When the governor and Council agreed that she had been "most cruelly treated by some of the French Soldiers," Rochambeau ordered that the woman be paid $70 Spanish silver dollars, the equivalent of £ 21 10/ 3d (Ryan 1978:97; Scott 1983:90).

In April 1782, French Intendant Benoît-Joseph de Tarlé and Colonel Donald Digges representing the Commonwealth of Virginia negotiated a final settlement of all charges against the French crown accumulated between September 1 and November 19, 1781. Fifteen prominent citizens of Gloucester County such as Johanna Dunlap, John Hobday, John Dudley, John Seawell, Lewis Burwell or Thomas Whiting received payment ranging from 24 livres to John Dudley to 2,628 livres for John Seawell adding up to a total payment of close to 7,400 French livres for Gloucester County. Once York, Warwick, James City and Elizabeth County were included, the total ran to over 44,000 livres (Articles of Agreement 1782).

Most damaging to the citizens of Gloucester County in the long term, however, was the loss of their enslaved Africans and African Americans. The proximity of British troops induced slave runaways and anxiety among slaveowners for their most valuable possession. On August 7, Colonel John Page, owner of Rosewell Plantation, wrote to Governor Nelson characterizing run-away slaves as "Those unhappy, deluded People are continually going over to them, to the ruin of many of us, & the Enemy continue their diabolical Practice" (Palmer 1881:300). Diabolical or not, slaves flocked to British lines by the hundreds. Johanna Dunlap claimed the loss of 20 hogs and

eight sheep plus “3 Houses 12 by 16 feet sawed logs two of which were planked above and below, 35 Barrels Indian corn, 80 Dunghill fowl 38 Turkeys 3 narrow Axes 4 rum Hhds a deal of wearing apparel 4000 bundles Corn blades.” She also lost, however, “Negro Jacob 40 years old went to the enemy returned” but died within days “after his return.” Gone forever were “Toby 25 yrs old Abraham 20. Dick 55. Peter 20.” The estate of Thomas Whiting reported losing 19 of his slaves, Thomas Smith lost 17 slaves. Enslaved blacks sought their freedom individually or in whole family groups. Mildred Scott lost “a negro man Ned 22 years old, Wilson a Lad 17, Jenny a woman 40, Frank a girl 4. Dick a boy 2, [and] Robin a boy 3.” Some returned voluntarily after the surrender of Cornwallis, but most of them were sick and often died soon thereafter. Francis Tomkins claimed the loss of “Robin about 45 or 46 a good Black smith this fellow was left at Wmsburg by the British with the Small Pox and died in a few days with it” as well as “Moses about 21 years old came up after the Surrender and was taken sick suppose the Goal Fever and died in a little time.” Altogether Gloucester slave-owners claimed losing 135 slaves in the summer and fall of 1781 (Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims 1781-83: Reports of Losses).

Once Gloucester Point had surrendered, hundreds of formerly enslaved Blacks fell into American hands. Lunenburg County Militia Ensign Henry Cook wrote “After he had surrendered two companies were detached to take all the property belonging to the Americans which the British had taken from them, in one of which companies he served and took upward of six hundred Negroes from the British and put them under guard in the fort on the Gloucester side (Cook 1832). Louisa County Militia Private Martin Walton added that “after the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis he then marched down to the town of Gloucester to guard a fort of British refugees and Negroes until they were removed he thence returned to said Church and was discharged” (Walton 1833). Not knowing what to do with them, George Weedon asked Governor Nelson on October 20 for “directions respecting the negroes and Refugees, and would request to know what are to be done with them after they are seperated, as there will be no guards here. I also would be glad your Excellency would give some General directions respecting the sick and wounded that will be left here belonging to the British; of whom not less than 1500 will remain” (Palmer 1881:560). Nelson ordered Weedon to return them to their owners as quickly as possible and to send all others to his camp.

Despite the best of efforts to prevent the escape of their property, some freedom seeking Blacks found their way onto the *Bonetta* as Colonel Richard Butler recorded in his journal. “The sloop of war Bonnetta fell down the river, with her iniquitous cargo of deserters, stolen negroes, and public stores that the British- officers had secreted, in violation of treaty and in breach of honor" (Butler 1864:111). At least three freedom seekers from Gloucester were in that group (Ryan 1978:127). Recovering freedom seekers from French officers remained one of the sore points between Rochambeau and the Virginia government. There was at least one Black soldier, a drummer, who had come from France with his regiment, in Rochambeau’s army, and French officers, including Rochambeau, had purchased or hired free African-Americans as servants. Rochambeau was determined to protect the property rights of his officers against the claims that his officers were hiding stolen property. Whatever enslaved people French officers may have stolen had long been spirited away on de Grasse’s vessels to be sold in the French West Indies. Perron recorded that “there were many Negroes taken and sold on our return to our colonies. Entire corps indulged in this indecency and after pocketing the birds [literally the seagulls, meaning the African-Americans] secretly made fun of those who had been more scrupulous” (Perron 1898:176).

As if that were not enough, a cattle pest ravaged the southern Virginia life-stock in October and November 1781, wiping out most of whatever cattle was still alive. On October 21, Timothy Pickering urged Charles Stewart to “kill all the well working oxen and salt the beef. If this be not done immediately, I fear they will all fall sick and die” (Stewart 1781). Pickering’s was not an empty warning. The French wagon train left Annapolis September 21 with 110 teams and 669 oxen to draw the empty wagons drawn to Williamsburg (Selig, 2009a:460). But those were the “official” wagons Jeremiah Wadsworth charged to the French army; Louis Alexandre Berthier wrote that the train moving to Virginia consisted of 1,500 horses, 800 oxen, and, once the private wagons of officers are counted, 220 wagons drawn by six oxen each (Itinerary 1972:83).

The wagon train arrived in Yorktown on October 8. When the wagon conductors reported the state of their teams on November 8, the results were devastating. Josiah Cleaveland reported that of the 109 oxen in his 20 teams that had left "Anapelus", 106 had died and only 3 were still alive. Samuel Northum reported 61 of his 66 oxen that had left Annapolis were dead, while Oliver Olmstead reported that of the 14 teams and 84 cattle that left Annapolis with him, 79 had died since the arrival. Another conductor reported that of 21 teams of 115 oxen that had left Annapolis with him, 110 had died. This means that in the four weeks following their arrival in Yorktown, these 78 teams with 468 head of draft oxen had lost a combined total of 446 of their 461 draft animals. Only 15 oxen, 3 percent of the total, were still alive. The other conductors reported similar numbers (Wadsworth 1781).

The "distemper” affected all cattle in and around Yorktown and Gloucester. On November 25, Jonathan Robertson told Colonel Davies that “[i]n Gloucester, the cattle are dying daily in numbers; the fattest die first, owing to ‘a distemper that prevails among them’” (Palmer 1883:623). Two weeks later, all the cattle in Gloucester had died. On December 7, Robertson told Colonel Davies that “there are no beeves at Gloucester, and three hundred prisoners in the Hospital to provide for” (Palmer 1883:642). Throughout the winter of 1781/82, Rochambeau’s forces were fed with beef from cattle that had been driven almost 600 miles from Central Connecticut to Virginia.

The full magnitude of the burden carried by the citizens of Gloucester County, however, only comes to light once the warrants for services and food valued at hundreds of pounds provided to the militia are added to the total (Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims 1783). On April 5, and again on August 2, 1782, more than 200 citizens filed claims for re-imbursement for impressed foodstuffs, animals and labor; by the time the process was completed in July 1785, about 300 citizens had filed claims (Ryan 1978:96). It took years for the county to recover from the ravages of just three months of occupation and warfare; citing the damages suffered “during the late War with Great Britain,” 100 families from Gloucester County petitioned the governor and the Council as late as 1787 for relief from taxation (Palmer 1884:270). The hardships of the local population were of little or no concern to the forces stationed in the county in late summer and early fall of 1781. Only Johann Ewald reflected on August 2 that he “arrived at Abington Church just as the inhabitants had driven together five to six hundred head of horn cattle from the countryside to save them from our hands. I felt sorry for these poor people and wished that they had escaped from me, but the army was nearby. I had to obey the orders and let the cattle be driven off” (Ewald 1979:322).

When the allied Franco-American armies marched on Little York in the morning of September 28, British forces in Gloucester consisted of:

a) the Queen's Rangers under John Graves Simcoe, which had deployed there on August 12 (Simcoe 1844:239, 248). On October 19, Simcoe surrendered 39 officers (incl. 12 ensigns) and 387 Rank and File total.
b) the 80th Regiment of Foot under Lieutenant Colonel Dundas, which surrendered eight officers (incl. 1 ensign), three staff, 20 Sergeants, 12 Drummers and 84 Rank and File on October 19.
c) a detachment of Hessian Jaeger Captain Johann Ewald which surrendered 1 officer, five NCOs and 47 Rank and File.
d) a detachment of soldiers from the 23rd and 82nd Light Infantry which consisted of 1 Captain, 4 Lieutenants, 3 Sergeants, 1 Drummer, 44 Rank and File Fit for Duty; 3 Sergeants, 26 Rank and File Sick Present; 6 Sergeants, 1 Drummer, 70 Rank and File total on October 19. That included 40 men from Captain Forbes Champagne's Grenadier Company from the 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers.
e) Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton's force consisted of 1 Lieutenant Colonel, 5 Captains, 7 Lieutenants, 8 Ensigns, 6 Sergeants, 4 Drummers, 85 Rank and File Fit for Duty; 1 Sergeant, 10 Rank & File Sick Present; 7 Sergeants, 95 Rank & File total.
f) Captain Branson's force consisted of 1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant, 1 Ensign, 1 Sergeant, 13 Rank & File Fit for Duty; 1 Sergeant, 8 Rank and File Sick Present; 2 Sergeants, 21 Rank & File total on October 19.
g) the Hessian Regiment Erbprinz (12 officers, 7 staff, 50 Sergeants, 11 Drummers, 367 Rank and File surrendered on October 19).

On September 30, Cornwallis ordered the Regiment Erbprinz across the York River to Yorktown and sent Banastre Tarleton's British Legion across the river to replace it. That included a detachment of about 20 to 25 men from the 17th Light Dragoons attached to Tarleton's British Legion that are not listed separately among the forces that surrendered on 19 October. The replacement of the Erbprinz Regiment with Tarleton's Legion at Gloucester Point brought the total strength of British forces there to close to 1,200 officers and men once deserters, deaths and men killed in action such as Lieutenant Moir of the 23d Regiment of Foot, are added. Replacing the Erbprinz with Tarleton's Legion made sense; the Legion consisted exclusively of cavalry, which was a little use to Cornwallis during the siege.

The exchange of forces did not go unnoticed. On September 30, George Washington had informed General Weedon that "I am this Day informed that some Troops are crossing the River to Glosesster; whether this is to replace a Corps of Germans which are said to have come from that side Yesterday or for some other purpose I cannot say; three Boats with Men, I saw cross myself" (Fitzpatrick 1937a:156). Rochambeau too informed Gabriel de Choisy, his commanding officer across the river, of the arrival of Tarleton's Legion. In a letter also written on September 30, he told Choisy that he need not fear the new cavalry:

> "This cavalry is not formidable because during the day of the investment [of Yorktown, September 28] we saw all of it, and it did not seem to be more than 100 horses of the Apocalypse to judge from those that we saw killed and lying in the roads. You are a man of war, my dear Choisy, and I do not doubt that you will only take a position, without committing yourself, through which you will tighten the ring around the enemy as much

> as possible. It would be of interest if you were to make demonstrations and disturb the works of Gloucester with small detachments which fire musket shots. Everything, however, is subordinate to you finding a position that the duc de Lauzun talked to me about and which you can approach without committing yourself" (Doniol 1892:553).

Choisy was indeed a "man of war" who wasted no time to disturb the enemy. Ewald recorded on October 1 that since "yesterday Choisy had pushed forward to Gloucester Court House and sent his patrols up to our outposts, whereupon a continual crackling noise arose" (Ewald 1979:329). The "crackling noise" originated in part from a skirmish between Lauzun's Hussars and Captain Shank of the Queen's Rangers. Simcoe remembered that on October 1, "Capt. Shank had faced the Duke of Lauzun with the cavalry of the Rangers the preceding day, it was probable the Duke would not hesitate to attack them, being acquainted with the inferiority of their numbers, when, if Lt. Col. Tarleton's corps, of whose arrival he must be ignorant, should be placed in ambuscade, the Duke's legion might be swept off and totally ruined. Lt. Col. Tarleton marched out with the cavalry the next morning, Col. Dundas accompanying him." (Simcoe 1844:251/252)

The "next morning" was October 3, 1781.

5. The Battle of the Hook October 3, 1781

In the early afternoon of October 3, the muskets had just fallen silent at the Hook, a jubilant Brigadier George Weedon informed George Washington from his "Camp Ware Church" of the victory over Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton. He had "had Intelligence last Night at 11 oClock of the Enemies being out" on a foraging expedition (Weedon 1781). Lieutenant John Hungerford of Mercer's Grenadiers confirmed this information in his pension application, writing that "it was ascertained the evening before, that a very considerable foraging party were out supported by Tarleton's dragoons and a Regiment of infantry" (Hungerford 1832). This information fundamentally changed the planning for the day. Initially Weedon's intention had been of "advancing this Morning & taking a position in the Neighborhood of Abington Church" (Weedon 1781). Mercer clarified the movement further, stating that they intended "to take up a position as near as practicable to the town of Gloucester" (Mercer 1892:57). But knowing that Tarleton would be out, Weedon immediately "communicated my information to the Duke & Gen[l] de Choisie requesting my advance Corps might be supported with Horses" (Weedon 1781). Brigadier Gabriel de Choisy and the duc de Lauzun, anxious for military action, agreed to the request, and informed their units.

Sous- Lieutenant Joachim du Perron of the Brie Infantry serving on the 74-gun Ship *Le Languedoc* entered into his journal that "General Choisy ordered us to be ready to leave, the next day on the third, to make a new camp three miles or one league distant from Gloucester. As a result, we decamped at 5 in the morning and began to march at 7 o'clock" (Perron 1898:143). Now that there was the possibility of a hostile encounter, Lauzun's hussars were detailed to accompany each of the two columns making their way on parallel routes toward Abingdon Church and Gloucester Point. Perron recorded that "Lauzun's Legion marched in front of us, with an avant-guard of 50 hussars with whom M de Lauzun himself marched" (Perron 1898:143). When Perron speaks of "Lauzun's Legion" he speaks *pars pro toto* – only hussars formed the avant-guard with 50 of the +/-150 hussars of the First Squadron riding in advance of this whole column. Lauzun's infantry, one company each of grenadiers, chasseurs and artillery as well as the 800-man detachment drawn from the ship garrisons and the wagon train, marched in Weedon's slow-moving column that brought up the rear. Lauzun's column included about 30 of Lieutenant-Colonel John Webb's Virginia volunteer cavalry attached to the Legion for a total possible cavalry strength of this column of 170 to 180 riders (Weedon 1781). *Sous-lieutenant* Paul de Sers d'Aulix also of the Regiment de Brie but doing duty as part of the infantry supplement on the 74-gun ship *L'Hector* confirms Perron's account. "[A]t 7 in the morning, we had packed all our tents and departed with arms and baggage to go and encamp one league [approx. 3 miles] from Gloucester" (Sers d'Aulix 1781).

Lieutenant-Colonel John Mercer, whose grenadiers marched in the column headed by Lauzun's Second Squadron of Hussars commanded by Robert Dillon, corroborates this information. "Early on the morning of the 2nd of Oct. [sic] I was order'd with my corps to join Lieut. Col. Count Robert Dillon who with 150 of the Dragoons of Lauzun was directed to gain the road that led to Gloucester by York river & to move on towards that Post: whilst Gen. Choisy & the Duc de Lauzun at the head of 150 Dragoons proceeded down the Severn road in the same direction, follow'd at a considerable interval by the French & American infantry" (Mercer 1892:56). Henry Lee remembered that "On the same morning [of the Battle of the Hook], and at an early hour, the corps

of Choise was put in motion, for the execution of his plan of close investiture", in other words, move closer to British positions around Gloucester Point. Lee recalled:

> "Count Dillon, with a squadron of Lauzun's dragoons", close to 150 troopers, "and Mercer's infantry," around 160 men by Mercer's own account, "took the York river road; while general Choise, with the main body of his infantry, seconded by Brigadier Weedon, and preceded by the duke de Lauzun with the remainder of his cavalry, moved on the Severn road. These two roads unite in a long lane, nearly four miles from Gloucester, with inclosed [sic] fields on each side" (Lee 1827:358).

At the height of the battle, allied forces would consist of close to 500 men – one third infantry and two thirds cavalry.

As they marched past Abingdon Church approaching Seawell's Ordinary, Weedon, Choisy and the duc de Lauzun were aware that they might encounter British forces at any moment. Possibly around 9:30 a.m. the long-expected message arrived when Captain Philip Taliaferro of the King William County militia (Neeves 1837) who may have been out scouting in advance of the main column, sent word to Weedon, "by Express" that "A party of the Enimy are now at Mrs. Whitings, and have sent out to collect the cattle and sheep adjacent. [t]here being no one to oppose them, have thought proper to send this information to you" (Palmer 1881:523). Since Weedon was marching behind Lauzun and Choisy, Choisy and Lauzun most likely also knew the content of the message Taliaferro was sending to Weedon. Lee recorded that "Choise, in his advance, was informed that the enemy's cavalry were in front and being desirous of striking them, he pressed forward with his horse, ordering Dillon and lieutenant colonel Mercer to hasten their junction with him" (Lee 1827:358).

As they hurried forward, the cavalry of the allied column soon thereafter was "[p]assing through the lane, [where] you arrive at an open field on your right and a copse of wood on your left, lining the road for half a mile, where it terminated at a small redoubt facing the road" (Lee 1827:358). Lee's "open field" is Lauzun's "plain of Gloucester", the site of the battle. A few years after the battle Lauzun wrote that a "moment before entering the plain of Gloucester, the dragoons of the state of Virginia came very much frightened to tell us that they had seen English dragoons outside, and that, in fear of some accident, they had come as fast as their legs could carry them, without further investigation" (Méras 1912:326).

The "dragoons of the state of Virginia" were the 30 to 40 cavalry of Lieutenant-Colonel John Webb's corps attached to Lauzun's cavalry who formed part of the advance guard. There were a number of reasons for including at least some of Webb's cavalry in the advance party, such as knowledge of the area and the ability to communicate with locals. The use of Webb's dragoons is confirmed in the pension application of Samuel Smith who "belonged to Colo. Webbs regt. of horse and served on the Gloster [sic] side of York River, ranging up and down the river above and below the town of Little York during the siege of Cornwallis in that town, applicant was in the engagement with the British commanded by Colo. Tarlton" (Smith 1833). Given Lauzun's well-known penchant for self-aggrandizement while denigrating the abilities of everyone else, the account of Webb's cavalry fleeing helter-skelter just from having seen Banastre Tarleton's horse needs to be read with a lot of caution. Webb's cavalry rode side by side with the hussars of the

First Squadron, and those hussars, or at least a few of them, should have returned as well to report their observations to their commanding officer, which, at least in Lauzun's account, did not happen.

Informed by the 'fleeing' Virginia cavalry of British cavalry ahead of him, Lauzun next rode forward to gain more intelligence of the situation. As he later wrote,

> "I perceived a very pretty woman at the door of a small house, on the main road, I questioned her, she told me that, at the very moment, Colonel Tarleton had left her house; that she did not know if many troops had come out of Gloucester; that Colonel Tarleton was very anxious 'to shake hands with the French Duke.' I assured her that I came expressly to give him that pleasure. She was very sorry for me, thinking, I believe, by experience, that it was impossible to resist Tarleton; the American troops were of the same opinion" (Méras 1912:326).

The "very pretty woman" was the same "Mrs Whiting" of Captain Taliaferro message to Weedon; Lauzun knew now that it was Tarleton himself who was not far ahead. "I had not gone a hundred paces, when I heard my advance guards firing pistols" (Méras 1912:326). Since Webb's men had supposedly all fled, the firing would have been Lauzun's hussars, who had ridden with Webb's men.

Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton, whose penchant for self-aggrandizement, like Lauzun's, is well known, tells a somewhat different story of how the battle unfolded. In his *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781,* Tarleton confirmed the time of the sighting and first exchange of fire when reported that "[a]t daybreak in the morning, Lieutenant-colonel Dundas, who commanded that post, led out detachments from all the corps in his garrison to forage the country in front. About three miles from Gloucester, the waggons, and the bat horses were loaded with Indian corn, and at ten o'clock the infantry of the covering party began to return" (Tarleton 1787:376). Henry Lee also wrote in his memoirs that "Lieutenant colonel Dondas moved with the dawn on the morning of the 3d at the head of a great portion of his garrison, to make a grand forage. The wagons and bat horses were loaded three miles from Gloucester before ten o'clock, when the infantry covering them commenced their return (Lee 1827:357),

Which units were those detachments drawn from that comprised Tarleton's forces and what was their strength? Eyewitness accounts and primary-sources list soldiers from five different units that were involved in the fighting in the morning of October 3. According to Tarleton, he "led out detachments from all the corps in his garrison to forage the country in front" (State of the Army 1781). But he also wrote that once the wagons had been loaded, "the infantry of the covering party began to return" to Gloucester Point (Tarleton 1787:376). That left the cavalry, and on October 3, Tarleton's Legion indeed only consisted only of cavalry. At the outset of the battle that "Part of the legion, of the 17th, and of Simcoe's dragoons, were ordered to face about in the wood whilst Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton, with Lieutenant Cameron's party, reconnoitered the enemy" (Tarleton 1787:376). In his thorough study of the Legion, Todd Braisted confirmed that "After the battle of Cowpens, the surviving Legion Infantry not taken prisoner, were either transferred to the cavalry or sent to Charlestown, where they sat out the rest of the war. Only the Legion Cavalry

stayed with Tarleton until the end at Yorktown (Braisted http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/britlegn/blinf1.htm).

Hessian Jäger Captain Johann Ewald too entered into his diary that on October 2, that "Tarleton arrived at Gloucester with the cavalry of the Legion, numbering 250 horse" (Ewald 1979:329). Ewald's numbers more or less reflect the strength of the Legion. On October 19 when the Gloucester Point garrison surrendered, Tarleton reported a total of 17 sergeants, 9 drummers and 232 rank and file (State of the Army 1781). That number however included about 20 to 25 members of the 17th Light Dragoons attached to the Legion that are not listed separately in the surrender table (Greene 2005:420). Eyewitness accounts put the strength of Tarleton's cavalry – Fit for Duty and on the field – on October 3 at around 150 mounted troopers (Archives Canada 1781b).

Simcoe was too sick to accompany Tarleton and provides no information of the strength of his Rangers, nor does he provide information of how many of his men formed part of the forage party. Data recorded in muster dates for the Rangers for pay periods (not the actual date of a muster) show that the strength of the three troops of Simcoe's Queen's Ranger cavalry in Gloucester stood at about 190 NCOs and enlisted men, while the six companies of infantry added about 245 men (Archives Canada 1781a). The only information about the possible strength of the Ranger cavalry at the Hook comes from Ewald who wrote that "At daybreak I was sent out with 100 horse of Simcoe's and the remainder of the jäger s and rangers, which amounted to only sixty men, in order to take a position between Seawell's plantation and Seawell's ordinary" (Ewald 1979:329). Most of his jäger – on October 18, Ewald surrendered five NCOs and 47 Rank and File – were infantry that he threw "into a ditch to the right of the road on the plain" (Ewald 1979:330). We don't know what Ewald meant by "remainder … of the rangers" but these men were most likely infantry not detailed to accompany the wagons into Gloucester Point: you don't throw cavalry 'into a ditch'.

Besides Tarleton's 150 riders from his Legion and Simcoe's 100 cavalry from the Rangers –a conservative estimate in view of the number in Simcoe's pay muster and the surrender data - Tarleton also had 40 mounted grenadiers from the 23d Regiment of Foot under Captain Forbes Champagne and Lieutenant Charles Moir in his command, which brings the total British cavalry to at least 300 (Greene 2005:146). At the outset of the battle Ewald's Jäger and Simcoe's Rangers, about 60 men, were the only units available for infantry support; the main bodies of infantry were on their way back to Gloucester Point: "at ten o'clock the infantry of the covering party began to return." As the battle unfolded, Tarleton was able to almost double his infantry support. About half-way through the battle Tarleton ordered both the 17th Light Dragoons, some 20 men, and Champagne's 40 grenadiers of the 23d Regiment to dismount. Lieutenant Moir was killed as he led the charge against Mercer's grenadiers (Greene 2005:144 and 419-421).

Based on these numbers Tarleton's force in the morning of October 3 numbered around 360 to 370 non-commissioned officers and men with around 300 (80%) cavalry. That number is smaller by about 100 from Mercer's estimate; he gave the size of Tarleton's force at "at least 460 horse of the enemy & a body of Infantry" (Mercer 1892:59). The discrepancy is most likely due to incorrect reporting of Tarleton's cavalry and a lack of information on the size of the infantry detachments. At a strength of 250 horses plus the 40 mounted grenadiers from the 23d, Tarleton and Simcoe's units could hardly have provided more riders, since the number of cavalry horses available in the Gloucester Point garrison was limited. Documentary evidence indicates that perhaps 325 horses,

an additional 25 horses "fit for duty" on October 3, was probably the limit on the day of the Battle of the Hook. On October 21, Major John Baytop and twelve militia officers certified the receipt of 308 horses from the garrison at Gloucester and "that there was no exchange of either Horses or Bridles while in possession of the Militia as witness our hands" (Baytop: https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw4.081_0678_0679/?sp=1). Even if high-ranking officers such as Tarleton were allowed to keep their horses, if some more had died between October 3 and October 18, and "eight of the prettiest horses of the garrison of Gloucester" had been "appropriated" by Pollerscky (Massoni 1996:79).

That means that the difference between 370 and 460 or even 500 troops, the number reported by Choisy to Weedon at the end of the battle, between 90 and 130 men, had to be made up through infantry drawn from Simcoe's Rangers and attached to Tarleton's detachment. This is a strong possibility in view of the numerous mentions of British infantry in battle accounts. Simcoe certainly had enough infantry at his disposal, about 250 men (Archives Canada 1781a). It is possible that upon hearing the sound of battle behind them, a few companies covering the forage wagons turned around to come to the assistance of their cavalry. The addition of 75 or more infantry would bring Tarleton's battle group close to the same number as French and American forces with an equal distribution of infantry and cavalry. This scenario is also supported by the *comte* de Rochambeau, who wrote that "Tarleton found himself with 600 men in that position, of which 400 were cavalry and 200 men infantry" (Rochambeau 1781). Rochambeau's inflated numbers, particularly the cavalry numbers - Tarleton did not have enough horses to field 400 cavalry - came either from Lauzun or Choisy or both of them via letters they wrote to the French general on October 3 (Brisout de Barneville 1950:272; Dumas 2018:193; Closen und Haydenburg 1958:142; Cromot du Bourg 1880:446).

Claiming that he had known all along that he was followed by allied cavalry, Tarleton wrote that his "rear guard, composed of dragoons, formed an ambuscade for some militia horsemen who made their appearance, and who came near enough to give effect to the stratagem" (Tarleton 1787:376). Ewald confirms Tarleton's account when he writes that

> "At daybreak I was sent out with 100 horse of Simcoe's and the remainder of the jägers and rangers, which amounted to only sixty men, in order to take a position between Seawell's plantation and Seawell's Ordinary. I was to form a chain there to protect a foraging of Indian corn between Seawell's and Whiting's plantations, which was to be undertaken for the benefit of the cavalry. Colonel Dundas had gone out with the Legion and the remaining cavalry to support me in case of an attack. I had hardly taken post when a party of French hussars and Virginia volunteers appeared, with whom I skirmished" (Ewald 1979:330).

The militiamen in Tarleton's and Ewald's accounts were John Webb's cavalry who had fallen into the ambush which resulted in musket or pistol fire - the "skirmish" that Lauzun had heard. Ewald "tried to lure them into the fire of my infantry, which I had thrown into a ditch to the right of the road on the plain, but they would not swallow the bait." Protected by the screen behind them and the skirmishing, which delayed the advance of allied forces, Tarleton wrote that the "waggons and infantry had nearly reached York river before the cavalry began to retreat" (Tarleton 1787:376). "Toward midday," wrote Ewald, "the foraging was finished. Colonel Dundas came to me on

horseback and ordered me to withdraw slowly. As soon as the enemy was about to fall upon me, he would rush out with the Legion. In a word, we intended to lure the enemy into an ambuscade, which would have succeeded if we had had patience" (Ewald 1979:330). As Ewald disengaged, "the enemy followed, but only with skirmishers and very cautiously. I had scarcely reached the [British] Legion, during which only six Virginia volunteers followed my rear guard, when the ambuscade fell out and pursued these few people into the woods of Seawell's plantation" (Ewald 1979:330).

The forage was safe, Tarleton's excursion had achieved its purpose, but the cavalry leader was not going to walk away from a fight. "When they had proceeded to the wood in front of Gloucester, Lieutenant [Allen] Cameron [of Tarleton's British Legion], who had been sent with a patrole [sic] to the rear, reported, that the enemy were advancing in force. A column of dust, and afterwards some French hussars, became visible" (Tarleton 1787:376). Now we have four version of how the battle unfolded. Tarleton wrote of a "column of dust" raised by the hoofs of "some" hussar horses, most likely Lauzun's 50 or 60-man advance party and claimed to have been fully informed of the movements of the allies in his rear both by the sound of musket and pistol fire as well as the report by Lieutenant David Cameron. Once he knew the hussars were coming Tarleton prepared for battle. Forming a battle line to face the enemy and ascertaining his opponent's strength and deployment is exactly what any responsible officer would do, and Tarleton, confirming Lee's account, did just that. "Part of the legion, of the 17th, and of Simcoe's dragoons, were ordered to face about in the wood, whilst Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton, with Lieutenant Cameron's party, reconnoitered the enemy." Reconnoitering for Tarleton meant skirmishing and an exchange of fire: "The superiority of their horses enabled this detachment to skirmish successfully with the hussars of Lauzun" (Tarleton 1787:377). In view of the comte de Rochambeau's letter to Choisy on September 30 this is a questionable statement at best. In the letter Rochambeau informed Choisy that Tarleton had crossed over to Gloucester but added: "That cavalry is not formidable … it did not look like more than 100 horses of the Apolcalypse [sic] to judge from the ones which we have seen killed lying about on the roads" (Doniol 1892:553).

In the scenario described by Lee, who used Tarleton's account as his main source, "Dillon, with his cavalry, met the general [Choisy], with the duke de Lauzun, at the mouth of the lane. The united body of dragoons advanced down the lane, through which the British cavalry had just passed, proceeding leisurely towards camp, to give convenient time for the foraging party's return to Gloucester, when lieutenant Cameron, commanding the rear guard, communicated the appearance of the French dragoons. This was soon confirmed by the approach of our van; upon which the main body of the enemy's horse halted and formed in the wood" (Lee 1827:358).

Lee's account does not make it clear whether it was allied cavalry who had first discovered British forces returning to Gloucester Point with their forage or whether Cameron had first seen Lauzun's hussars. Either way the intermittent skirmishing had alerted both sides that the enemy was close at hand. Having ascertained the strength of the force opposing him, and possibly having noticed additional columns of dust in the distance raised by Mercer's Grenadiers, Perron's ship garrisons and Weedon's militia, Tarleton decided to offer battle and lure Lauzun's cavalry into the fire of his infantry, which he had "arrayed in the wood on one side, and along a post and rail fence on the other side of the road" (Lee 1827:358). His preparations complete, "Lieutenant colonel Tarleton advanced with a part of his horse upon us" (Lee 1827:358).

Tarleton had thrown down the gauntlet by first displaying and then slowly advancing across the field with "a part" of his cavalry on Lauzun's advance guard of hussars. Lauzun eagerly accepted the challenge. The Englishman, it appears, saw the encounter almost like a duel on horse-back, and advanced with only "a part" of his Legion, a number equal to Lauzun's 50 or 60 hussars comes to mind, leaving the rest of his forces behind. As he moved out onto the plain with his dragoons, "the English rear guard", the vast majority of Tarleton's forces, "was forming at the edge of a wood upwards of a mile distant." They did so "in sight of the skirmish upon the intermediate plain", meaning that they were observing Tarleton's encounter with Lauzun. By the time he and his dragoons clashed with Lauzun's hussars, Tarleton had recklessly moved way ahead of his own forces, was unhorsed "so much nearer to the body of the French than the British cavalry" that his whole rear-guard rushed to his rescue from a mile away, "set out full speed from its distant situation." In the process it lost all unit cohesion, "arrived in such disorder, that its charge was unable to make impression upon the Duke of Lauzun's hussars, who at this period were formed upon the plain" (Tarleton 1787:377).

If Tarleton had acted recklessly, however, so had Lauzun. Having been informed by "Mrs. Whiting" that Tarleton had just been at her house, Lauzun had moved further down the lane, but "had not gone a hundred paces, when I heard my advance guards firing pistols." As soon as he heard the pistol fire, Lauzun "advanced at full gallop to look for ground on which I could arrange my troops for battle. On arriving I perceived the English cavalry three times more numerous than mine; I charged it without stopping, and we came together." The duel was about to take place: "Tarleton picked me out, came to me with his pistol raised. We were going to fight between our respective troops." Both men probably considered it unfortunate that at this moment Tarleton's "horse was thrown down by one of his dragoons who was being pursued by one of my lancers. I ran on him to take him prisoner, a company of English dragoons threw itself between us and protected his retreat, his horse was left to me" (Méras 1912:327). Lee confirms this head-long rush across the field and the un-horsing of Tarleton. He "was instantly charged by the French cavalry, when one of the enemy's horses was wounded by a spear, and plunging overthrew Tarleton's horse" (Lee 1827:358). As Tarleton tells it "a dragoon's horse of the British legion, plunged, on being struck with a spear by one of the hulans", and overthrew Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton and his horse (Tarleton 1787:377).

Lauzun's hussars were still lining up for battle, while Tarleton's cavalry, by his own words, were "in disorder." This is most likely the point at which, according to Ewald's diary, that Lauzun

> "… should have fallen on the head of these disorganized horsemen with a single troop, formed himself into two lines with eight troops of his lancers and hussars, which amounted to 300 horsemen without the Virginia cavalry. This gave Dundas and Tarleton enough time to bring off their cavalry in orderly fashion to resist and withdraw toward Gloucester. I hurried to their support with the 100 horse of the rangers, which Captain [David] Shank commanded" (Ewald 1979:330).

In his *Military Journal*, Simcoe remembered that Captain Shank "on his return, reported to Lt. Col. Simcoe, that being on the left when the line was formed he had received no orders; but when the right, composed of the legion, advanced to charge, he did the same, in close order, but

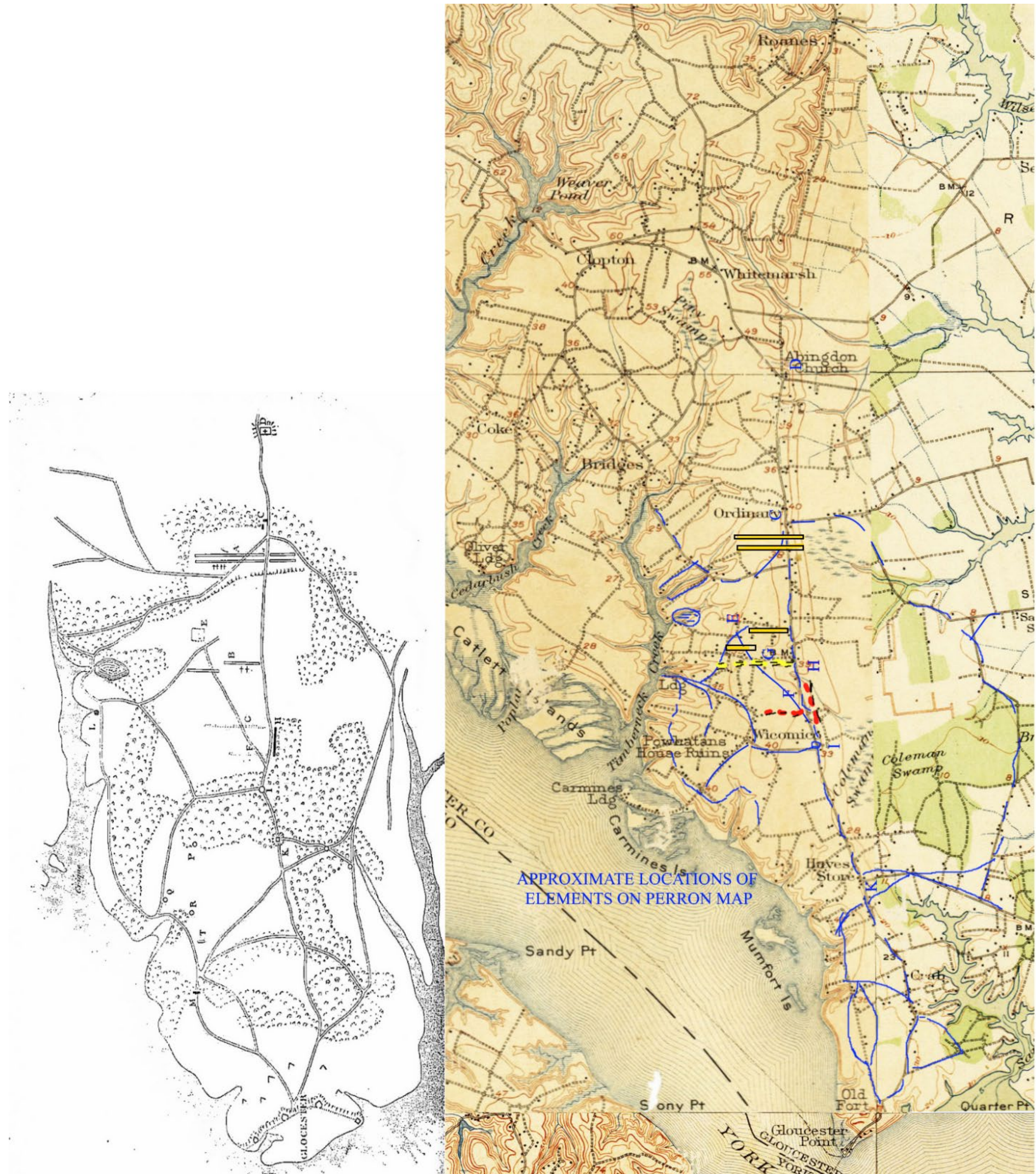


Figure 5.1. Peron's Battle Map (left) and Approximate Locations of the Elements of Peron's Map (right) superimposed on the 1906 USGS quadrangle map (illustration by Lewis Burrus). Peron's map is not to scale, so all locations are approximate.

necessarily not in equal front" (Simcoe 1844:253). It is not clear which phase of the battle Shank described to Simcoe, but it provides a strong indication that Ewald's jaeger, together with Simcoe's Rangers formed the left of Tarleton's combined cavalry and infantry deployment while the Legion together with Champagne's dismounted grenadiers and the 17th Light Dragoons covered the left flank.

Put differently, Tarleton took his opponents' measure, baiting Lauzun, who promptly charged him with such impetuosity that Tarleton had to be rescued by his own forces. By then the whole of the allied cavalry had appeared on the battlefield but Tarleton was in no position to execute an organized attack and had to retreat. A reckless charge is exactly what one would expect from the 34-year-old duke. Without any reconnoitering and assessment of the situation, Lauzun with 50 or 60 hussars rushed at "the English cavalry three times more numerous than mine." Until now, both antagonists had lived up to their reputation. Both had acquired reputations for bravery, for courage, if not outright recklessness, which they strove to maintain as they wrote their memoirs. Tarleton may not have had a choice, but his decision to offer battle rather than accompany his wagons into Gloucester Point fits the image he wanted to convey to his contemporaries and to posterity. Lauzun's penchant for self-aggrandizement is well known, and his memoirs provide plenty of examples of his inclination to denigrate and ridicule people around him to make himself look larger. Rather than charging 150 horses, the whole of Tarleton's cavalry (not counting Simcoe who was still with Ewald on his way to the battlefield), it is more likely that Lauzun charged the "part" of Tarleton's cavalry – perhaps 50 or so – that accompanied the Englishman onto the field. At this point of events, the battle had not yet started, Tarleton was reconnoitering and skirmishing, and you do not skirmish with half of your forces. But it is just as possible that Ewald consciously or sub-consciously "mis-remembered" events and allied cavalry was not (yet) ready to ride into action when Tarleton's rear-guard saved him from becoming Lauzun's prisoner. Admissions of mistakes on his part are few in Ewald's diary of the American War which is full of examples of what he and his jäger had done right next to an equally large number of admonitions and advice of what friend as well as foe had done wrong.

Either way there can be no doubt that Lauzun wanted to control the narrative, and he succeeded. If Tarleton indeed rode out onto the battlefield, the dueling space, with only "a part" of his cavalry, 150 horses would have been almost all of the Legion's cavalry out that morning and half of the total cavalry at his disposal. Nevertheless, Joachim de Perron, though not a participant in that phase of the battle, arrived on the battlefield within minutes after Tarleton had withdrawn, wrote that

> "M. de Lauzun, at the head of his avant-garde of 50 hussars had passed by the site of his camp to reconnoiter and position posts, he noticed the enemy, about 150 horses strong in battle order in front of the wood … and had charged them at once though his force was inferior; and that when he had arrived almost within pistol shot of them, he had received a volley from a detachment of infantry lying in ambush in the wood … that killed three hussars and wounded several horses, that he had in spite of the losses driven away the troops in front of him, and had routed them in the woods; after which he had retired in disorder to keep them [his own forces] from being surrounded" (Perron 1898:144).

What Perron carefully described as retiring was the attack by Tarleton's rear guard to rescue their commanding officer which, combined with fire from infantry concealed in the woods, drove

Lauzun off the field. Just as Lauzun's 50 or so hussars gave way before 150 of Tarleton's cavalry, however, the full force of Lauzun's two squadrons of hussars and Webb's cavalry, close to 350 troopers, appeared on the battlefield. John Mercer, though not a participant in the first phase of the battle, told Colonel Simms about 30 years late that "The dragoons under Dillon [i.e., the Second Squadron of Hussars] "passing the lane join'd those under Gen'l Choisy & the Duke at the mouth, —& immediately charg'd the right of Tarleton's line, which broke & gave way." (Mercer 1892:58)

Safe with his dragoons, Tarleton "obtained another horse" and set about re-organizing his lines. "[W]hen perceiving the broken state of his cavalry, occasioned by their anxiety for his safety, and which now precluded all vigorous efforts, he ordered a retreat, to afford them opportunity of recovering from their confusion." With a trained eye to the lay-out of the battlefield, its avenues of approach and field of fire, and his own strength, Tarleton knew where he could inflict the most damage to the approaching French. Events of the next few minutes proved him right. "At three hundred yards from the French squadrons he dismounted forty infantry [i.e., the grenadiers of the 23d Regiment of Foot] just come up under Captain [Forbes] Champagne, and placed them in a thicket on his right. The fire of this party restrained the enemy's hussars, and the British were soon rallied." (Tarleton 1787:377).

Lee wrote that Tarleton's cavalry now "took shelter under cover of their infantry, arrayed in the wood on one side, and along a post and rail fence on the other side of the road" (Lee 1827:358). Under infantry fire from both sides, Choisy called off the charge and pulled back as the British infantry was "pressing forward under cover of the wood, and incessantly delivering their fire, galled us considerably" (Lee 1827:358). John Mercer, wrote that "at the same time" as Choisy's hussars were charging Tarleton's forces in a clash that may have involved as many as 550 to 600 horses, "…the French being receiv'd by musquetry from the post & rail fence in the rear of the British horse, & from the wood in their right" (Mercer 1892:58). Dillon had charged into the Champagne's grenadiers, "the right of Tarleton's line", and now "found it necessary to fall back—which they did slowly with order & firmness under the fire of the enemy" (Mercer 1892:58). As Choisy retreated under the fire from the grenadiers, Tarleton prepared for another cavalry charge on Lauzun's hussars. "A disposition was instantly made to charge the front of the hussars with one hundred and fifty dragoons, [is this where Lauzun's number is coming from?] whilst a detachment wheeled upon their flank: No shock, however, took place between the two bodies of cavalry; the French hussars retired behind their infantry and a numerous militia who had arrived at the edge of the plain" (Tarleton 1787:378).

The lack of infantry support threatened to bring defeat to the Franco-American cavalry, which was, however, saved by the timely arrival of Mercer's Grenadiers. As the allied columns were making their way to British fortifications around Gloucester Point in the morning of October 3, the distance between the cavalry in the van of the columns and the slower-moving infantry with the supply wagons had continuously, and almost inevitable, increased. In his haste to make contact with British forces, the gap quickly became even larger: at the first exchange of fire allied cavalry, unlike Tarleton's and Simcoe's forces, was without infantry support. Mercer tells us that "The interval in which the Dragoons mov'd in advance of the French infantry was soon greatly increas'd, when it was found that the legions of Tarleton & Simcoe were out foraging, & by the anxiety of the French Gen'l & officers to fall in with them" (Mercer 1892:57). Choisy, however, was well aware of the need for infantry support and while "being desirous of striking" Tarleton and Simcoe,

“he pressed forward with his horse, ordering Dillon and lieutenant colonel Mercer to hasten their junction with him. The rapid push of the cavalry left the main body of our infantry far in the rear; Mercer's corps only was in supporting distance” (Lee 1827:358).

Mercer, who was riding at the head of his grenadiers, had also heard the pistol-fire. He remembered that it was “At 10 o'clock some scattering fire was heard in front” (Mercer 1892:57). Almost simultaneously “an order came to Count Dillon” who formed part of Mercer’s column “to advance with his horse [manuscript torn] that the legions of Tarleton & Simcoe being over taken by Gen'l Choisy had halted & that as the Gen'l had no infantry with him, he requested me to hasten my march, by dismounting & setting an example to the corps by running” (Mercer 1892:57). As he arrived on the battlefield, Mercer quickly analyzed the situation:

> “[W]hen we arriv'd within about 3 or four miles of Gloucester, emerging from the wood I found the two roads uniting in a lane in front, of near a mile in extent, a fence on each side enclosing a large open field, on the right & left. On the right were two houses, the first of which we approach'd became afterwards the quarters of Gen'l Weedon, this was contiguous to the lane; the second, at some distance from the lane, became the quarters of Gen'l Choisy. This lane led into an extensive open old field, where the fences dividing to right & left at right angles, seperated the fields on each side from the old field in front. On the left, at the mouth of the lane commenced a wood which running to the left of the main road for more than a mile, terminated in a small advanc'd redoubt, commanding the main road; to the right of this redoubt facing Gloucester appear'd a post & rail fence which running to the right, at right angles with the road, enclos'd the old field in the rear” (Mercer 1892:58).

Tarleton’s and Simcoe’s forces were waiting for him: “In this old field the British horse appear'd to be form'd in line, advanc'd of the redoubt” (Mercer 1892:58).

Buoyed by the sight of Mercer’s 160 men emerging from the wood, the cavalry reformed in the protection of the Virginia infantry, an action described in the pension application of Gabriel Hughes of Mercer’s grenadiers. Hughes recalled that his company “under Captain Hudgins, went to the assistance of the French horse, as soon as the French horse saw Mercer came to their assistance they rallied and went at it again” (Hughes 1832). Mercer wrote that when “they found that my corps was just emerging from the mouth of the lane, when the fire of the musquetry being considerably advanc'd in the wood on their right flank,” the French cavalry “made a rapid movement & fell behind my corps into the lane” (Mercer 1892:58). The appearance of John Mercer’s Grenadiers was about to turn the tide again in favor of Choisy’s Franco-American forces. “[D]iscovering the corps of Mercer just emerging out of the lane,” Lee wrote Choisy, the French cavalry “threw himself by a rapid evolution into its rear, and faced about to renew the conflict”, and they “went at it again” (Lee 1827:359). Re-organizing behind Mercer’s rear meant getting ready for Tarleton’s combined cavalry and infantry charge. “[T]hey fac'd about & their officers ranged themselves in front to receive the charge of the British horse, now form'd again & advancing in a line with their infantry in the wood” (Mercer 1892:58).

Tarleton could not know how large the detachment was that he saw emerging out of the woods but had to assume that they were but the van of Weedon’s full force. Unless he could throw the allied cavalry back onto Mercer’s men and cause them to flee, taking the rest of Weedon’s forces with

him in confusion, he would most likely lose the battle. Tarleton had not yet given up - Lee remembered that "Tarleton having rallied his cavalry, hastened up to the infantry, still advancing in the woods, and resting his right flank upon its left, came forward in point of time just as Mercer entered through the lane into the field. Mercer instantly deployed, stretching his left into the woods, and opened his fire upon the horse opposite to his right, and upon the infantry in front of his left" (Lee 1827:358). This was the sign for Tarleton to call off the battle: "upon receiving part of their fire from behind a rail" Tarleton "again ordered the retreat to be sounded" (Tarleton 1787:378).

It was at this pivotal point in the battle that Mercer's military experience and the thorough leavening of his Grenadiers with Continental Army veterans paid off – it is estimated that one-third of the Grenadiers were experienced veterans and knew what was expected of them. Mercer knew what to do and deployed his forces onto the flank of the advancing British. Mercer proudly recounted

> "My little corps of raw troops which did not exceed 160 Rank & File fit for duty, were at first somewhat startled to find the French horse retreating so rapidly by them in the open field expos'd to at least 460 horse of the enemy & a body of Infantry in the wood & their situation was evidently render'd more critical by having a very high fence in their rear & the lane they advanc'd thro' block'd up by the French horse. However they were immediately order'd to deploy so as to push their left flank into the wood, which they did with great celerity & good order, & commenced firing, one half on the cavalry on the right, & the other half on the infantry advancing rapidly thro' this wood. The horse of the enemy had approach'd within 250 yards & the infantry were not at more than 150 yards distance, when the firing began" (Mercer 1892:59).

Mercer deployed his forces, which had to make their way through "the French horse", exactly where they were needed, into "their", meaning the British grenadiers' "left flank into the wood", where they encountered Champagne's grenadiers, who were deploying on Tarleton's right (and Mercer's left) and "advancing rapidly thro' this wood." The hopelessly outnumbered British grenadiers – Champagne had all of 40 men – had to fall back, leaving Lieutenant Charles Moir behind. Moir had taken Sergeant John White's bullet in his head from 10 yards away and "was killed within a few paces of our line" (Lee 1827:359). The fighting had been fierce but "at a critical moment [Tarleton] sounded a retreat". Mercer could not have held out much longer, noting that "not 100 cartridges remain'd unexpended in the regiment" of 160 men (Mercer 1892:59). This admission meant that half of the Mercer's grenadiers were out of ammunition. Sergeant John White of the Grenadiers deposed in his pension application that "he was in an engagement with the enemy at Seawell's in which he fired thirteen rounds and his officers thought that he killed one of the British officers, this was about the time of the siege of York" (White 1832).

The death of Lieutenant Charles Moir of the 23d Regiment of Foot may have broken the morale of the British infantry Mercer recalled that "the British troop left Lieut. Moir dead on the field, within 10 paces of our line, & there ended this action" (Mercer 1892:59). Lee confirmed Mercer's account and wrote that "Lieutenant Moir, of the infantry, was killed within a few paces of our line; besides whom the enemy lost eleven rank and file, as stated by lieutenant colonel Tarleton, who puts down our loss at two officers and fourteen privates" (Lee 1827:359).

Mercer was afterwards full of praise for his grenadiers: “No regular troops cou'd behave with more zeal & alacrity than this corps of Militia; their spirits had been rais'd by running them up, and being hurried into action without time to reflect on their danger, they discovered as much gallantry & order as any regular corps that I ever saw in action” (Mercer 1892:59). Lee agreed with Mercer’s assessment, writing that “no regular corps could have maintained its ground more firmly than this battalion of our infantry. It brought the enemy to pause, which was soon followed by his retreat. When Tarleton drew off, the corps of Mercer had expended nearly all its cartridges” (Lee 1827:358).

A few minutes later and just after the fighting had ceased the van of the French ship garrisons reached the battlefield. At the time of the first exchange of fire at around 10:00 a.m. or shortly thereafter, Perron and the 800 troops of the ship garrisons, which had departed from their campsite at 7:00 a.m., had reached Abingdon Church. “After three hours of marching in a rather flat and well cultivated countryside, we passed near a church, where we left a guard”. Several minutes afterwards,” probably around 10:15 or 10:30 at the latest, “we came to a rather pretty house on the right of the road, where an aide-de-camp came to tell us to quicken our pace, to go and support Lauzun’s Legion, which had come to grips with the enemy” (Perron 1898:143). The “pretty house” was Seawell’s Ordinary. *Sous-lieutenant* Paul de Sers d’Aulix of the Regiment de Brie Infantry wrote “When we were one league from our new camp we learned from wounded hussars from Lauzun’s Legion that M le duc de Lauzun at the head of sixty hussars had attacked 200 English dragoons who had Colonel Tarleton at their head and a small detachment of English infantry which was attacked by 100 American soldiers. We immediately accelerated our march to come to their assistance but we arrived just after M le duc de Lauzun had forced them to retreat and to cede the field to him” (Sers d’Aulix 1781). Hurrying on, Perron and his men “passed the spot where we were supposed to camp and at the end of a quarter of an hour” or about 30 minutes after the first exchange of fire “we saw the legion of Lauzun in battle formation in a small meadow before a corn field, having in front of them within range of two musket shots a wood and two shacks. We arranged ourselves in battle order on the same alignment” (Perron 1898:144).

Sers d’Aulix had encountered “wounded hussars from Lauzun’s Legion” and Perron had seen the wounded as well. We “soon encountered several hussars covered with blood, some of them leading prisoners. The first sight of the blood, the pale look of the wounded, the contented look of those who led prisoners, the trembling of those same prisoners, who took little persuasion to run on foot before their guides on horseback, the wounded and dead horses, &c., all this had a singular effect on me.” A few minutes earlier, the “spirits” of Mercer’s Grenadiers “had been rais'd by running them up, and being hurried into action without time to reflect on their danger,” and the prospect of battle had a similar effect on Perron’s men as well: “All our soldiers would have liked to fly to get within sight of the enemy” (Perron 1898:144).

But Perron’s infantry never fired a round. Fighting had ceased, Tarleton had pulled back behind his earthworks at Gloucester Point. “Choisy’s infantry”, the grenadier, chasseur and artillery companies of Lauzun’s Legion plus the 800-man ship garrison detachment arrived too late to get into the battle. Corporal Charles Bettsworth of Mercer’s Grenadiers depose in 1832 that

> “the British made a sortie & with about 300 horse and a regiment of infantry approached the American lines Weedens [sic] Brigade was put in motion to meet them & marched

> forward with two small field pieces" [the 1-lb guns *à la Rostain* of Lauzun's artillery company] to oppose them but while marching they were passed by about 40 French Dragoons some mounted Militia and Mercers Corps of Grenadiers who dashed forward in advance of the army encountered them and put them to flight killing their colonel &c & taking 2 of the Queens Rangers prisoner before Weedens [sic] brigade got near enough to take part in the engagement" (Bettsworth 1832).

Anxious to defend his reputation and role of his men in the victory in the Battle of the Hook against Tarleton, an irate Mercer declared that

> "there was not one French or American foot soldier within 2 or perhaps three miles, except this corps of 160 militia : the infantry of the legion of Lauzun first arriv'd, with their field pieces, but they were not on the ground till 30 minutes after the firing ceased. From the fire this corps kept up, Col. Tarleton no doubt concluded them much more numerous than they were—but nothing cou'd excuse his not proving the fact, with his great superiority. That night I took possession of the advanc'd redoubt on the main road [Lee's "small redoubt facing the road"] with 150 French & 150 Americans; & the French & American troops encamp'd in the fields on each side of the lane" (Mercer 1892:60).

Lee supported his friend Mercer when he confirmed that it was "the cavalry of the duke de Lauzun, and to the grenadiers of Mercer, which constituted the whole of our force engaged. Lieutenant colonel Tarleton is extremely mistaken when he supposed that the main body of the investing corps was up. The infantry of Lauzun were the first which approached; they joined in thirty or forty minutes after the enemy retreated, followed by the marines and the militia under Weedon" (Lee 1827:359).

By early afternoon the fighting was over. Simcoe's claim that Tarleton "having again offered the enemy combat, which they declined, remained master of the field" is just as wrong as Lauzun bragging that "I charged him a third time, upset a portion of his cavalry, and pursued him to the intrenchments of Gloucester" (Simcoe 1844:253; Méras 1912:327). Not knowing how many troops were still behind Mercer, Tarleton knew it was time to disengage while he still could. Choisy equally unaware how much British infantry was still deployed along the road to Gloucester Point, wisely declined to press the issue as well. "Choise's infantry not having yet got up, he did not think proper to renew the attack without them, inasmuch as the enemy's whole force might be readily brought to sustain the retreating corps" (Lee 1827:359).

The exchange of fire had lasted intermittently for approximaely four hours – from 10:00 a.m. when the first shots were fired by the skirmishing advance guards until some time after about 1:30 p.m. For much of the time the outcome of the battle had hung in the balance. It began with skirmishing between Lauzun's hussars of the First Squadron of Hussars, Webb's cavalry and Tarleton's dragoons along the road to Gloucester Point around 10:00 a.m. Tarleton needed to protect his forage wagons but then again, he never shied away from a fight. Having been informed of the approach of the hussars, he lined his forces up for battle and, riding onto an open space with some of his dragoons, tried to bait Lauzun into a fight. Lauzun took the bait, rushed Tarleton and unhorsed him. Tarleton was rescued by his men, but in the process his line lost all cohesion and could not carry the attack onto Lauzun's hussars, which were not yet ready for battle. This would

have been the point for the hussars to charge – if Lauzun had taken the time to deploy his forces properly. Valuable time was lost before his men were lined up and Robert Dillon's Second Squadron had joined them. By then Tarleton had re-organized his line. The wall of over 300 horses charging Tarleton's 250 men pushed them back, but Tarleton had had time to deploy his infantry along the road. Without infantry support it was Lauzun's turn to retreat while Tarleton's horse, supported by infantry fire on both sides of the road, advanced. It was at this critical moment that Mercer's Grenadiers appeared on the scene and pushed back Tarleton's infantry. This provided the hussars the opportunity to cross the battlefield for the fifth time and send Tarleton back to Gloucester Point. The fighting over, a victorious Choisy informed George Weedon that the field was theirs.

> Obre 3th after noon at 2 o Clock
> Sir,
>
> I have the hounor to inform you that by our arrival at Saoul's Tavern we have met with the ennemi who was in number about 500 men Cavalry and Infantry, that the Cavalry of the Duc of Lauzun has attaqued them, pierced throug and that we have had a great advantage on them. We can esteem they have 30 Men killed or wounded. The 200 men grenadier Americans who were the only Infantry advanced enough to have part in the affair and who have behaved excedingly well have killed one officer who was at the head of the Infantry of the ennemi. T'is a general report that Tarleton has been wounded. The ennemi have retired to Gloucester and we are quickly in our Camp where I expect you will join tomorrow as we have al. agreed
>
> I have the hounor to be your
> Most humble servant,
> Choisy

Weedon immediately included the note in a letter to Washington, informing him that the firing he, and many others both on land as well as on de Grasse's vessels, had heard earlier that day were the sounds of an engagement in which Lauzun "in cooperation with Mercer's Grenadiers drove in and totally routed the Enemy" (Weedon 1781).

The battle had also been observed across the York River by officers wondering what the firing meant. On October 3, *Colonel-en-second* William de Deux-Ponts recorded in his diary that "Rather sharp firing was heard in the morning from the other side of the river, after which Tarleton's cavalry was seen returning in a hurry and in disorder. We think that it has made a sortie from the lines of Gloucester to attack the legion of Lauzun, and we hope that it has been driven back" (Forbach 1868:137). It was only the next day, on "the 4th of October, [that] the news of the engagement between the legion of Lauzun and Tarleton's cavalry is confirmed; the legion of Lauzun has repulsed Tarleton. The Duke de Lauzun has charged several times; he was supported by M. de Choisy, who had just arrived with eight hundred marines" (Forbach 1868:137). The delay was caused by the fact that on October 3 the courier still had to ride a 50-mile detour in order to reach the left bank of the river. Riding north from Gloucester Court House toward Adner, he had to cross the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers at West Point before turning south to Yorktown.

A shorter and faster way of communication had to be found, and so on October 4, Washington instructed Weedon "to consult Genl Choisey & determine if there may not a shorter route for your Expresses be found below the Town, under cover of the French ships, than is at present used. I fancy as the ships now lye, the distance may be much shortened by passing the way I mention. As the necessity of frequent and expeditious communications will probably increase - and may be of the utmost importance – it is a matter of great consequence to find out the shortest rout for our Expresses" (Fitzpatrick 1937a:173). The next day, October 5, Governor Thomas Nelson informed Sir John Peyton through his secretary Robert Andrews of the "immediate necessity for two swift Pettiaugers [*periauger*, shallow-draft sailing vessels] for the Purpose of opening a short communication between the camps" (Palmer 1881:56). Choisy opined that, in addition to a land-based message route, communication through the French fleet was also a secure route (Cauvigny 1996:154). Three days later, on "October 8th half after 11 oclock AM" Weedon informed Washington from his "Post in Timber Neck Creek" that

> "Agreeable to your Excellency's direction consulted Genl Choisy on a communication with your Camp. We shall establish two, one by the way of the Fleet which he thinks the most secure, and one from this post, where I write you on my horse. In my Opinion, there is no kind of risque from hence as we have a (fine?) view of the River and can discern any thing Hostile for some distance. The boat will pass from my position with Dispatches from this Camp, over to the Seat of Colo. Williams Digges four or five miles above York. If your Excellency will direct a swift rowing Pettiauger [*periauger*] or Boat to be kept nearly at that place under a small guard and 2 Lt. Dragoons any Intelligence from the two Camps may be communicated in two hours." In a post-script he added: "If no Vessel can be provided on the other side – three smokes made to the left or above Digges' House will be a Signal for our Boat to go over" (Weedon 1781).

Two hours transmittal time for messages between Yorktown and Gloucester represented a vast improvement over the 50-mile ride via Newport once Lauzun had established a post of hussars at the landing at Timberneck Creek to convey messages to headquarters at Seawell's Ordinary.

Confirmation of the battle came not only from Washington, however, who surely shared Choisy's letter with his French allies, but also directly from Lauzun and Choisy to Rochambeau. The writings of these officers, all of them aides-de-camp and in a position to learn the information contained in them first-hand, reflect the content of these letters. *Sous-Lieutenant* Brissout de Barneville, aide-de-camp to the baron de Vioménil, Rochambeau's second in command, recorded on October 4 "We learned the same day by a courier sent by M le duc de Lauzun who commands 250 hussars near Gloucester that around 300 cavalrymen of the corps of Tarleton having come to attack him yesterday morning, he [Lauzun] pushed them back and took from, killed, or wounded 50 men. The colonel himself was wounded and thrown from his horse" (Brisout de Barneville 1950:272).

Captain Mathieu Dumas, an aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, wrote that "The general received letters from M. de Choisy which inform him that as he was moving forward from his position to take that between the two creeks, Lord Cornwallis had Colonel Tarleton make a sortie. M. de Choisy turned the English troops and after a very lively fire at the cavalry of M Tarleton, M le duc de Lauzun charge them himself at the head of his company of lancers the cavalry of Colonel Tarleton. The

colonel himself was pulled along by those who fled. He fell from the horse and his whole troop passed over him. M. le duc de Lauzun took his horse" (Dumas 2018:193).

Cromot du Bourg, another aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, confirmed Dumas' and Rochambeau's source of information when he wrote that "M. de Rochambeau received a letter from M. Choisey in which he sent word that the evening before, on taking a position on the side which he occupied, he had found the enemy to the number of six hundred, attacked and driven them, and that the commanding officer of the English infantry had been killed, Mr. Tarleton badly wounded at the head of his cavalry, and that the enemy had lost fifty men in the little skirmish, while our loss was only three hussars killed and eleven wounded; Messrs. Billy Dillon and du Tertre, both officers of the hussars, slightly wounded, and the Duke de Lauzun had charged repeatedly at the head of his hussars with advantage, and that he had driven the enemy at a rapid rate into Gloucester" (Cromot du Bourg 1880:446).

Lastly, Baron Ludwig von Closen, a captain in the Royal Deux-Ponts infantry and also aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, entered into his journal that on October 3 allied forces had set out "to capture a position that Tarleton was occupying 3 miles from that place [Gloucester Point] with 400 horses and 200 infantry men. M. de Choisy's corps was composed of the Lauzun legion, the infantry from the ships, and 100 American militia. Our hussars, with the lancers preceding, attacked Tarleton so vigorously that notwithstanding the fire of his infantry, they over-whelmed him and forced his detachment to seek the protection of the Gloucester batteries, with the loss of 35 men" (Closen und Haydenburg 1958:142).

These quotes from a number of Rochambeau's aides-de-camp - "Tarleton found himself with 600 men in that position, of which 400 were cavalry and 200 men infantry" - which subsequently also found their way into Rochambeau's *Journal des operations*, and which all identify Choisy as their source, provide ample evidence that Choisy too was not above "adjusting" the numbers in his favor. In the process of transmittal some of the facts were understandably, and not necessarily intentionally, garbled. The *comte* de Lauberdiere, also aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, wrote that

> "On the Gloucester side, M. de Choisy wanted to take a position closer to the post than that which he already had. He received intelligence along the route that Colonel Tarleton was having his cavalry forage and that he was supported by the infantry. He prepared to harass the foragers and gave the order to M. de Lauzun who marched there with his hussars. His infantry and General Weeden's militiamen were supposed to follow him.
>
> Tarleton, before being overtaken, had time to arrange his wagons and to prepare for battle with 250 horses. He placed his infantry at the edge of a wood on his wings. M. le Duc de Lauzun's march was a little delayed by his infantry. Seeing that it wasn't arriving, he placed 50 horses on his right and 50 on his left to cover his flanks. He charged the until now invincible Tarleton with a squad so vigorously that a melee ensued for some time. Our hussars finally broke through Tarleton who retreated to his infantry in great haste. M. de Lauzun pursued him but, as soon as he approached, the British infantry made a very lively fire on him, Mr. de Choisy sent him an order to withdraw. This was the first action where his corps found itself since its creation, independently [verb missing in ms] demonstrations

> of the bravery of its hussars. It is one [i.e., bravery] which is only due to M. de Lauzun" (Dupont d'Aubevoye 1781).

Lieutenant Jean François Louis Lesquevin de Clermont-Crèvecœur of the Auxonne Artillery wrote into his diary on October 4 "The Duc de Lauzun at the head of his Legion charged them several times in succession with the greatest success. He pushed them back to the town, then retired under orders from M. Choisy" (Lesquevin de Clermont-Crèvecœur 1972:58).

Lastly, Lieutenant-Colonel Georges Cyr Antoine de Bellemare de Saint-Cyr of the Saintonge Regiment of Infantry recorded more or less accurately that Lord Cornwallis

> "prepared for two concurrent sorties. One against the troops who opposed him outside Gloucester, the other against the trenches [in Yorktown]. He undertook the first in broad daylight with his cavalry. It got into a pitched battle with the Legion of Lauzun and executed a charge against the party of lancers. Those received them [the British cavalry] very gallantly, but too weak to offer a long resistance they were forced to retreat toward their [American] infantry; it was hidden behind hedges and fired a salvo point blank and caused such a disorder amongst the [English] cavalry that it now moved off. As it moved away the lancers pursued it with their lances, rallying, it [the British] turned about against them, pushed it back again, and forced it to take refuge a second time next to its [American] infantry, which then threw it into such a confusion that it [the British cavalry] was forcefully pursued, [lit.: the sword in their kidneys] all the way to Gloucester, from where they did not dare to emerge any more" (Bellemare de Saint-Cyr 1815).

In the course of October 4, news of the battle, more or less accurate, also reached de Grasse's vessels riding at anchor in the bay via the communication "below the Town, under cover of the French ships" that Washington had suggested to Weedon in his letter of October 4. Lieutenant Joseph François Louis de Jacomel de Cauvigny of the Beaujolais-Infantry doing duty as part of the infantry supplement on the 74-gun Ship *Le Citoyen* wrote in his journal: "The 4th and 5th, a correspondence between the army of Rochambeau and ours has been established by ordering the continuous back and forth of a canoe which takes letters to the *Vaillant* which sends them to a convenient place on land" (Cauvigny 1996:154). Cauvigny continued: "We have news that the [British] troops in Gloucester made a sortie against ours which they repulsed with the loss of 20 men either taken, or killed, wounded or prisoners, among whom is a colonel of the English cavalry" (Cauvigny 1996:154). *Garde du Pavillon* Valentin de Mures on the 74-gun *L'Éveillé* entered into his log on October 4: "We learned today that M de Lauzun had an engagement with General Tarleton, commanding officer of 800 men in Gloucester. The latter made a sortie with 400 men cavalry against the troops of M de Lauzun who pursued him energetically with his hussars and who charged him so vigorously that that the enemy was obliged to retire into his entrenchments. General Tarleton was gravely wounded in that affair and lost about 50 men, killed as well as wounded; M de Lauzun had only four killed and 13 wounded" (Valentin Des Murs 1781). The anonymous infantry officer sailing on 74-gun Ship *Le Magnanime* recorded the same details, including the break-down of 400 cavalry and 200 infantry, and wrote that "On the 3rd [Choisy] marched forward to tighten [the ring around] Gloucester and took a post 3 miles from that place. His corps was composed of the Legion of Lauzun and twelve hundred men American militia under the orders of Baron von Weedon….The English Colonel Tarleton, chef of a legion that bore his

name, found himself posted in the environs with six hundred men, four hundred of them cavalry, the duc de Lauzun attacked him vigorously and obliged him to return to Gloucester with the loss of fifty men, Tarleton was thrown from his horse and slightly wounded, our loss was negligible" (Anonymous 1781c).

Needless to say, Major Jean Ladislas Pollerescky's claim that "in an attack on Col. Tarltons [sic] dragoons, had the command of his Colonel's light horse, had his horse, for which he gave $ 250 killed under him" hardly reflects the reality of what happened at the Hook on October 3, 1781. (Pollerescky 1823). Two of the three killed horses belonged to the hussars officers Captain Mieskwosky and *sous-lieutenant* Pierre Sonnette of the Second Escadron of Hussars; the owner of the third horse was probably that of an enlisted man, rather than that of Major Pollerescky, since he is not identified.

In the end both sides had achieved their goals. Tarleton and Lauzun had fought their duel, Tarleton's forage had safely reached their position and allied forces had tightened the siege ring around Gloucester Point. October 3 was the last day that the Crown forces garrison at Gloucester Point was able to forage for food and supplies. Richard Payne, one of Mercer's Grenadiers, deposed "That he was in an engagement at Lowell's [Seawell's] lane with a detachment of Cornwallis's Army under Tarleton and some Infantry out foraging. That they attacked the enemy, and Tarleton kept it up until their foraging wagons got out of reach, when the enemy drew in, leaving one officer on the field" (Payne 1836). "Choise established himself on the contested ground, and commenced a rigid blockade of the post of Gloucester, which continued to the end of the siege" (Lee 1827:359). Tarleton laconically observed that "The next day, General de Choisy, being reinforced by a detachment of marines, proceeded to cut off all land communications between the country and Gloucester" (Tarleton 1787:378). Two weeks later, on October 18, "the capitulation had been agreed on at York, Col. Tarleton came out and dined with Gen'l Choisy; his object seemed to be to represent that his life might be endangered if he surrendered to the militia, & [MS. torn] was so accommodating as to order that no infantry except that of the legion of Lauzun & my corps shou'd be present at the surrender. We march'd for that purpose 2 miles in front of the camp, & after the arms were piled on the outside of the breastworks, Col. Hugo of the legion & myself took possession of a redoubt & thus ended the campaign in Virginia of 1781" (Mercer 1892:61).

6. AFTERMATH OF BATTLE AND THE SIEGE AT GLOUCESTER POINT

6.1 The Human Cost of the Battle

Corpses of dead soldiers littering the battlefield, men wounded in action treated on the spot, and prisoners of war being led away into captivity typify the aftermath of almost any eighteenth-century battle. Such was also the scene that presented itself to *Sous-Lieutenant* Perron in the early afternoon of October 3, as he marched toward the scene of the Battle of the Hook. The sight had a "singular effect" on the young officer who had never been in battle before. In a strange way he was fascinated by the "first sight of the blood, the pale look of the wounded, the contented look of those who led prisoners, the trembling of those same prisoners, who took little persuasion to run on foot before their guides on horseback, the wounded and dead horses, &c.'" The sights drew him to the battlefield, made him, and his fellow soldiers, want "to get within sight of the enemy" as quickly as possible. Yet walking across the battlefield once the guns had fallen silent aroused different emotions in him. "It would be hard to imagine the curiosity with which we contemplated the dead and especially the English officer. When I arrived there, he was already nude; one man had his waistcoat, another his breeches and a third his boots. He had on his red coat buttons stamped with the number 28 and an English device. He seemed a fine figure of man about 30 years old, he had a gunshot wound in his face. What a profession ours is! No matter how good your health is, you are never sure that you will see the end of the day when you begin it. All the dead had hideous faces. The enemy took their dead and left only that officer" (Perron 1898:144).

The dead English officer was First Lieutenant Charles Moir (or Mair). Perron apparently mistook the *23* on the coat buttons for a *28*, since Moir had transferred to the 23d Regiment of Foot from the 71st Regiment on November 8, 1778 (List 1778:81). His death is recorded in "A List of all the Officers of the Army" (List 1781:93), where it under the heading "23d Regt. of Foot (or Royal Welsh Fuzileers)" is entered "First Lieutenant Charles Mair, rank in the regiment 08 November 1778, in the army 10 March 1777." In the copy held in the British National Archives, his name is struck out and followed by a handwritten notation "Kd" for "killed". On the left-hand page of the volume is entered a second, equally matter-of-fact hand-written note recording his replacement: "Walter Partridge 5 Oct 81. v Moir." Moir had led his men from the front and was killed. His men had been unable to carry him back to Gloucester Point, and by the time Perron reached the battlefield Mercer's men had already stripped him of everything even remotely valuable. By 1781, this indiscriminate stripping of corpses of their belongings had become standard procedure (Catts and Selig 2019).

The names of fallen enlisted men are often forgotten, their graves nowhere to be found. Private Enoch Breedon, born in 1759, deposed in 1832 "That his father having entered the Continental army at the beginning of the War, (from which he never returned,) this affiant and his mother, removed to King William County, where two of his brothers resided (Breedon 1832). Many soldiers, officers and enlisted men alike, however, remembered the dead British officer. Among them is Colonel Francis Mercer, who mentions Lieutenant Moir of the 23rd Regiment of Foot (Mercer 1892:59). Similarly, Richard Payne of Mercer's Grenadiers deposed, that "he was in an engagement at Lowell's lane with a detachment of Cornwallis's Army under Tarleton and some Infantry out foraging. That they attacked the enemy, and Tarleton kept it up until their foraging wagons got out of reach, when the enemy drew in, leaving one officer on the field" (Payne 1836).

Sergeant John White of Kingston Parish in Mercer's Grenadiers deposed that during the Battle of the Hook "he fired thirteen rounds and his officers thought that he killed one of the British officers", namely Lieutenant Moir (White 1832).

Besides Lieutenant Moir the British suffered additional losses in wounded and prisoners, though the numbers vary widely depending on which side is reporting them. Private William Leckie of the Caroline County Militia remembered "We joined General De Choisey who commanded the French troops on the Gloucester side. On the day subsequent to our March, we overtook the British in Sewel's land. We had a hot engagement – we killed some and took others prisoners" (Leckie 1833). Perron does not mention British casualties beyond the killed officer, and Sers d'Aulix too "did not learn how many on the part of the enemies had been killed or wounded. We only found one infantry officer who had been killed on the road" (Sers d'Aulix 1781). Tarleton and Ewald had reason to keep the reported casualty numbers low, and in his *History of the Campaigns*, Tarleton wrote that "The British troops had one officer and eleven men killed and wounded" (Tarleton 1787:378). Similar numbers for British casualties are given by Ewald, who wrote that "On our side one officer and four men were killed and nine men wounded by the lances of the French hussars" (Ewald 1979:330). Private John Oliver of Mercer's Grenadiers "was in an engagement at a place called Sowel's where we […] killed 15 of the enemy" (Oliver 1833). Private Benjamin Woody of the Fluvanna County Militia confirmed the fifteen British dead when he told the interviewer that "fifteen of the British soldiers" were killed (Woody 1834). John Oliver's and Woody's toll of "15 of the enemy" seems plausible since they may have counted every wounded Englishman lying on the battlefield – likely 12 to 14 men – as killed-in-action. British forces took their wounded with them whenever they could, but Perron reports seeing wounded prisoners taken back toward Gloucester Court House. Battle casualties – five on the British side and two hussars – were most likely buried right at, or very close to, where the men had fallen. Since the battle commenced within the triangle formed by the letters F, G and H on the map drawn by Lieutenant Perron, the KIAs of either side, probably even including Lieutenant Moir, were most likely buried in a single common grave in the vicinity of the triangle formed by these letters on his map (see Figure 3.2 and Figure 7.9 for a detail of this location).

In view of the thousands of rounds fired by the two sides, casualty numbers – between 12 and 14 men killed or wounded British soldiers - seem very low. By the end of the battle Mercer's Grenadiers had fewer than 100 rounds left between them while Sergeant White had fired 13 rounds, a very large number of rounds given that muskets tended to foul up after about half a dozen rounds. Even if every one of Mercer's 160 Grenadiers only fired 10 rounds the total adds up to 1,600 rounds. The fire by the 300+ hussars and Webb's Virginia cavalry probably added another 1,000 rounds for a total of 2,500 or more shots fired in the direction of Tarleton's forces, who returned fire as well. Nevertheless, Ewald with his customary critical tone chided the British military leadership for its choice of weaponry for the cavalry: "the whole cavalry with the English army consisted only of light dragoons, on top of which the two colonels Tarleton and Simcoe had had the unfortunate idea to completely discard the carbines and leave their Light Horse only their pistols. Consequently, both gentlemen collected the fruits of their idea in the engagement near Gloucester with the hussars of Lauzun, where many a brave English Light Dragoon was killed during skirmishing through the carbine fire of the hussars, without one being able to hurt them (the hussars) in response since one could only respond with pistol shots to the well-aimed carbine shots" (Ewald 1800:391).

The allied side reported somewhat higher British casualties. In his note to Weedon in the afternoon of October 3, Choisy wrote that "We can esteem they have 30 Men killed or wounded" (Weedon 1781). In his General Orders of October 4, Washington adjusted the numbers upwards and informed the army that the "Enemys loss in killed and Wounded exceeds Fifty including the Commanding Officer of the Infantry killed, and Colonel Tarleton badly wounded" (Fitzpatrick 1937a:172). The source of Washington's information is unknown since Weedon does not mention any casualty numbers in his letters to Washington. It is possible, however, that the higher numbers were contained in letters written by Lauzun and Choisy to Rochambeau in the afternoon of October 3. Rochambeau wrote that Lauzun had forced Tarleton "to retreat into Gloucester with the loss of 50 men. M Billy Dillon and M Dutertre, capitaine en second, were wounded there" (Rochambeau 1781). That Rochambeau shared the information in the letters with Washington is suggested by the fact that they also appear in the correspondence of Governor Nelson. In his letter to Lieutenant Governor David Jameson of October 8, Nelson not only mentioned the higher number of Tarleton's forces – 600 men – but increased the number of casualties even more. "In Gloucester, the Duke de Lauzun, with the Horse of his Legion & some Militia Grenadiers, repulsed Tarleton at the Head of 600 men—Tarleton was dismounted & wounded, the commanding officer of his Infantry killed, and at least 80 of his men killed & wounded. The Duke's Loss in killed & wounded was about twelve" (Palmer 1881:533). It was Washington's numbers, however, which found their way into the letters, journals and diaries of soldiers and civilians alike. Dr. James Thacher recorded that the British were "defeated with the loss of the commanding officer of their infantry and about fifty men killed and wounded, among the latter is Tarleton himself" (Thacher 1862:281). St. George Tucker wrote in his journal that "the Enemy lost fifty Men in kill'd and wounded - The Officer commanding the Infantry was kill'd, & Tarliton himself badly wounded", though he entered into the margin the note that "Tarliton is not wounded" (Riley 1948:383).

Tarleton also lost a number of prisoners, but again numbers are almost impossible to quantify. Lauzun claimed in his *Mémoirs* that Tarleton "lost one officer, some fifty men, and I made a rather large number of prisoners", but this statement has to be taken with caution (Méras 1912:328). Perron mentions encountering prisoners led away from the battlefield as he made his way there, but does not give any numbers. The comte de Lauberdière wrote that Lauzun "had 10 taken prisoners" (Dupont d'Aubevoye 1781). Charles Bettisworth of Mercer's Grenadiers reduced that number even further and remembered "taking 2 of the Queens Rangers prisoner before Weedens brigade got near enough to take part in the engagement" (Bettisworth 1832).

If the actual number of British casualties is unknown, so are American casualties. There are no known numbers for Colonel John Webb's cavalry attached to Lauzun's cavalry though its men are known to have fought in the battle. Samuel Smith of the Westmoreland County Militia deposed in his pension application that his "company aforesaid belonged to Colo. Webbs regt. of horse and served on the Gloster side of York River," and that "applicant was in the engagement with the British commanded by Colo. Tarlton" (Smith 1833). Mercer does not report having suffered any casualties, though Private John Oliver of his Grenadiers deposed that he "was in an engagement at a place called Sowel's where we lost a few men" (Oliver 1833). Private Benjamin Woody of the Fluvanna County Militia deposed that "in driving in the British light horse, who were out on a plundering party on the Gloucester side – in this skirmish six of our men were killed, and fifteen of the British soldiers," but it is not clear whether he is remembering the Battle of the Hook

(Woody 1834). Similarly Benjamin Long of the Caroline County Militia remembered that "he was in a smart skirmish near Gloucester Town in which several of our men were killed," but since hostile encounters with casualties on both sides, most notably the disastrous feint attack on British positions in the evening of October 14, continued up to the cessation of hostilities, and no militia was involved in the Battle of the Hook, the "smart skirmish" may not refer to the events of October 3 (Long 1833). The same probably also applies to this statement by Thomas Coghill of the Essex County Militia: "About two miles from Sowel's Tavern we had another skirmish with the enemy and forced him to retire into Gloucestown on York river. Myself, Lewis Evans & Richard Kay, were taken prisoners in this engagement, & were carried by the enemy to York Town, where they detained us one night & then put us in the prison ship, in which we were kept till the surrender of Corn Wallis in October 1781" (Coghill 1833; Hughes 1832).

The rank and file as a rule had only a general idea of casualties for their French allies. Private Gabriel Hughes of John Mercer's Grenadiers remembered that "several of the horseman got wounded in that first engagement", most likely during the initial clash between Lauzun and Tarleton (Hughes 1832). He does not tell us whether these cavalrymen were French or British, but Lauzun's casualties are fully recorded in the *contrôle* or enlistment records of the Legion. It shows the death of two hussars killed in action and a third man dying of wounds received in the Battle of the Hook almost three weeks later. The two KIAs are Jacob Colin of the First Squadron of Hussars, from Rémeldorf in Lorraine, 21 years old when he enlisted on December 22, 1778, and Pierre Didier (also listed as Pierre Dietienne but with a note giving his proper name Pierre Didier), of the Second Squadron of Hussars, from Nassau, 25 years old when he enlisted on February 13, 1779. Jean Scherrer of the Second Squadron from Waldighofen in southern Alsace, 22 years old when he enlisted on February 7, 1779, died on October 22, 1781, of wounds received on October 3 (*Contrôles* 1783). Names of wounded enlisted men are not marked or otherwise identified as such in the *contrôle*, but there seems to be a general consensus that besides Scherrer the hussars of Lauzun's Legion counted ten additional wounded, among them two officers for a total of 13 casualties, virtually identical with British losses. On the cover of the letter to Washington of October 3, 1781, in which he forwarded Choisy's note with news of the battle, Weedon already scrawled the note: "3 horse Men killed – 11 Wounded Dukes some Horses killed – Capt Dillen Slight w[oun]d" (Weedon 1781).

Washington repeated that information in General Orders of October 4, when he informed the army that "The Duke de Louzerns Legion had three Hussars killed, Captains Billy Dillon and Dutester with eleven Hussars Wounded (the Officers very slightly), three Horses killed and four wounded" (Fitzpatrick 1937a:172). The two wounded officers were Jean-Batiste Nicolas Louis du Tertre (1746-1796), *capitaine en second* of the First Squadron of Hussars and Billy Dillon (1760-1788), a brother of Colonel Robert Dillon, *capitaine en second* of the Second Squadron. The statement that three hussars were killed is found in many sources and presumably occasioned by the fact that Jean Scherrer was so badly wounded that many, including Weedon in his note, already wrote him off as dead. From there it found its way into Washington's General Orders of October 4 and into the journals, letters and accounts of contemporaries. Lieutenant William Ball Blackall of the Pennsylvania Line recorded that "Our [loss] was [three huzzars killed and three] officers and [11 huzzars] of the [Dukes, Legion] wounded all slight" (Blackall 1781). James Thacher wrote that "The Duke lost three men killed and two officers and eleven men wounded" (Thacher 1862:281). St. George Tucker wrote in his journal: Our loss was three Hussars Kill'd, eleven and an officer

wounded (Riley 1948:383). On the French side, Claude Blanchard recorded "We lost 3 men and 11 wounded, 3 of whom were officers, among whom was M. de Dillon" (Blanchard 1876:146). The numbers Tarleton gives in his history are very close to those in American and French sources. "The French had two officers and fourteen hussars killed and wounded" (Tarleton 1787:378). Peckham's numbers of two killed and 11 wounded, are misleading since he also includes French losses under the heading "American Losses" and the numbers he gives are the French losses (Peckham 1974:91).

Besides these loss in human lives, horses were killed and wounded as well. Washington had already announced to his troops the loss of "three Horses killed and four wounded". Citing an inspection report of November 1, 1782, Massoni confirms Washington's numbers that three horses killed and four wounded in the action of October 3, 1781 (Massoni 1996:20 and 26). Two of the killed horses belonged to the hussar officers Captain Mieskwosky and *sous-lieutenant* Pierre Sonnette of the Second Squadron of Hussars; the owner of the third horse was probably an enlisted man since the owner of the horse is not identified by name, rather than Major Pollerescky, who claimed the loss of his horse in his pension application (Pollerescky 1838).

The wounded received their initial treatment on the battlefield. Private Gabriel Hughes of Mercer's Grenadiers "saw the physicians sewing up the throat of one man but poor fellow he died" (Hughes 1832). He does not tell us which side the wounded soldier belonged to, but two of the wounded hussars remained in the United States and filed pension applications. Joseph Winegardner/Wingerow/ Vigneron of the First Squadron of Hussars was "engaged in a Skirmish with a detachment of British Cavalry near Yorktown a few days previous to the surrender of General Cornwallis in which skirmish deponent was severely wounded in his bridle arm by a pistol shot from the enemy" (Winegardner 1833). John Barnes claimed that he served "until after the capture of Cornwallis where he was wounded" (Barnes 1818).

One of the wounded hussars had the special privilege of being rescued and saved from becoming a British prisoner by Lauzun himself though as usual the report needs to be read with caution. Not mentioning such an event would be very unlike Lauzun, and the possibility that Lauzun would be running across the field to fight three of Tarleton's men all by himself without any of his hussars noticing it or coming to his assistance is difficult to believe. Nevertheless, *Lieutenant* Jean François Louis Lesquevin de Clermont-Crèvecœur of the Auxonne Artillery wrote into his diary on October 4: "What is infinitely to his credit and only enhances his noble conduct and the good example his bravery set his army is that, during his retreat when he saw one of his hussars assailed by three of Tarleton's cavalrymen, the Duc himself rushed to his defense and, fighting alongside his hussar, managed to rescue him. The man was badly wounded and, according to several of my comrades who have spoken with him, cannot sufficiently express his gratitude to his generous benefactor. The Duc has never mentioned this episode; it was the hussar who revealed it" (Lesquevin de Clermont-Crèvecœur 1972:58). Cromot du Bourg repeated the anecdote and wrote "The Duke de Lauzun, after charging several times at the head of his Legion, was ordered by M. de Choisey to fall back and obeyed. As he was returning with his troops he saw one of the of his Legion at some distance engaged with two of Tarleton's dragoons. Without a word to any one, he lowered his guard and went to his assistance. I only knew this incident on the 20th November from M. de Rochambeau; the modesty of M. de Lauzun had prevented his mentioning it, but I should feel that I was very wrong should I omit to write down in the Journal everything that relates to the Duke de

Lauzun, who, in those minor actions, set the best possible example to the army" (Cromot du Bourg 1880:446). The comte de Lauberdière also heard that "After receiving the order to retreat, which was accomplished, he himself being the rear-guard of his corps, he saw one of his hussars still engaged with three British dragoons. He ran to the assistance of his hussar, saber in hand, extricated him and returned him to his troop. M. de Lauzun had three men killed, eight wounded. Tarleton left 15 men on the battlefield, had about 20 wounded and had 10 taken prisoners" (Dupont d'Aubevoye 1781).

Hughes's "poor fellow he died," he was probably better off anyway. Jaeger Captain Johann Ewald does not say where the British hospital(s) were, but his description is harrowing: "Our poor sick and wounded lay without medicine and provisions in such pitiable circumstances that the hardest heart had to be moved. Their food consisted of stinking salted meat and some flour or worm-eaten biscuit. These unfortunates died like flies from want, and the amputated arms and legs lay around in every corner and were eaten by the dogs. The hearts of those who could not help them bled, and those who could have helped by a kind word would not. All hearts had turned to stone" (Ewald 1979:341).

Across the river in Yorktown, conditions must have been even worse. Walking along the beach at Gloucester Point in the evening of October 21 waiting to be picked to return to *Le Languedoc*, Perron and his fellow soldiers "walked on the sand to warm ourselves; we found at our feet several dead bodies that stank horribly and we learned that some large tents, that we saw along the shore, concealed 1,500 of the sick; so many of them died that there was no time to bury them, and they simply threw the dead out of the tents as they expired. This was where Lord Cornwallis had established his hospital during the siege" (Perron 1898:172). On the American side, where both Abingdon Church as well as the Gloucester Court House were used as hospitals, the situation was not much better. As late as January 23, 1782, three months after the siege had ended, William Reynolds informed Governor Benjamin Harrison that "the Court house, which at present is used by the French as an Hospital, the variety of disorders therein, and the disagreeable smell of the House deter'd the Gentlemen from going in" (Palmer 1883:44).

Once the battlefield cleared allied forces occupied it as their campsite. Private Enoch Breedon of the King William County Militia deposed that "This affiants regiment was not in the engagement, but was encamped on the battle ground immediately after, where it remained with the army blocking the british who were in Gloucester town until [sic] their surrender" (Breedon 1832). Nathaniel Smith of the King and Queen County Militia wrote that "at Lowells [Seawell's] old field was in an engagement with a party of the enemy whom they drove back and then encamped on the ground" (Smith 1833). The battle may have been over and won, but the war continued. Mercer ended his account writing that in the evening of October 3 he "took possession of the advanc'd redoubt on the main road, with 150 French & 150 Americans; & the French & American troops encamp'd in the fields on each side of the lane. The siege continued a tiresome, uninteresting blockade on the Gloucester side, without military incidents, except that men were repeatedly & uselessly sacrificed by the French Gen'l in idle reconnoitering" (Mercer 1892:62). What Mercer decried as "idle reconnoitering" included a reconnaissance in force on October 6. Perron wrote that "On the sixth I learned at the end of my guard duty that the general had gone to reconnoiter to the left of Gloucester that morning with 200 men and some horses. The officers and soldiers claimed to have seen the redoubts, two cannon shots were fired at them, and they came back to

camp without anyone having been touched" (Perron 1898:150). Three days later, on October 9, a detachment of Lauzun grenadiers wanted to take a British outpost by surprise at daybreak but was discovered. Three grenadiers were wounded, two of whom died later (Perron 1898:151). Corporal Denis Jacob of the Grenadier Company, from St. Loup in the Franche Comte, 27 years old when he enlisted on December 13, 1778, died on October 10, 1781, of wounds received by a "coup de feu", either a gunshot or cannon fire, on October 9, 1781. Jean Dossin of Lauzun's Grenadier Company from Rémeldorf in Lorraine, 23 years old when he enlisted on January 21, 1779, died on October 19, 1781, also of wounds received by a "coup de feu", either a gunshot or cannon fire, on October 9 (*Contrôles* 1783).

In the evening of October 14, when allied forces were planning to storm Redoubts No. 9 and 10 across the river in Yorktown, Choisy was ordered to divert British attention by conducting a false attack on Gloucester Point. Choisy, however, decided to turn it into a full-scale assault on British earthworks. In the darkness of the evening French forces got entangled in "tree trunks, branches and whole trees overturned and we advanced only with singular difficulty, falling on each other ten times over and making a great deal of noise with branches cracking under our feet" (Perron 1898:160). All of a sudden Perron and his men found themselves "between the two rows of firing, and a hail of balls hissed around our ears from behind and before us. A soldier of my picket took one through his body, several caught them in their clothing and their hats, there were two soldiers of the Maine Regiment killed outright and two wounded. An officer of the Angoumois had one ball and two buckshot in his hat" (Perron 1898:162).

The loss of the two redoubts on the right bank of the river on October 14 convinced Lord Cornwallis that the time had come to ask for terms. On October 18, *Lieutenant de Vaisseaux* Guillaume Jacques Constant de Liberge de Granchain, representing the comte de Grasse and the French navy, joined Colonel John Laurens and the vicomte de Noailles as one of the three allied negotiators of the Articles of Surrender at Yorktown (Liberge de Granchain 1781).

6.2 The Surrender of Gloucester Point

In his daily orders for October 4, George Washington had congratulated "the Army upon the brilliant success of the Allied Troops near Gloucester." The success may have been "brilliant", but not brilliant enough to warrant a line in Washington's diary. Tactically it had been a success, Tarleton remained bottled up at Gloucester Point for the rest of the siege. Whether allied forces could have prevented a break-out of Cornwallis' main forces as he had planned to do is a moot point. It never happened. On October 3, no one knew how long the siege would last, and in that context the success at Gloucester took on a second, equally important role. It immensely boosted allied morale. Learning of the victory at the Hook, the marquis de St. Simon wrote in his diary: "It is the single important event which preceded the attack, it contributed greatly to the honor of M le duc de Lauzun, his legion and was a lucky omen for us" (Rouvroy 1781). On October 9, allied artillery was finally in place and began the bombardment of Yorktown. The continuous roaring of the cannon could be heard and seen even on the vessels of the comte de Grasse out in the bay.

News of the surrender reached Gloucester late in the morning of October 19 when Washington transmitted surrender instructions to Choisy with

> “the honor with many congratulations to inform you, that One OClock this afternoon is appointed for the delivery of two of the Enemys Redoubts on the Gloucester Side, one to a detachment of french the other to a detachment of American Troops. The Garrison is to march out at three OClock with shouldered Arms, Drums beating a british or German March, the Cavalry with their Swords drawn, and the Colours of the whole cased; to a place which you will be so good as to appoint, in front of the posts, where they will ground their Arms and afterwards return to their encampment.
>
> You will be so good as to communicate this to Genl. Weedon and to make the necessary arrangements, and desire him to take every precaution to prevent the loss or embezzlement of the Arms, &c” (Fitzpatrick 1937a:241).

Shortly thereafter, possibly as late as 3:00 p.m. according to Perron, about 900 Englishmen, Scotsmen, Welshmen, Germans and American Loyalists filed out of Gloucester, the 80th Regiment of Foot with their colors cased (DeLancey 1781). They grounded their arms in front of "100 of Lauzun's men and 200 men from the American militia" (Perron 1898:168). Neither Weedon nor his militia however saw the defeated garrison lay down their arms. The exclusion of his militia forces from the surrender ceremony and the post-script in Washington’s letter to Choisy - “You will be so good as to communicate this to Genl. Weedon” - must have appeared to him as the final insult of his command in Gloucester. Choisy and Mercer would have the satisfaction of seeing British forces lay down their arms. Mercer told Sims that “We march'd for that purpose 2 miles in front of the camp, & after the arms were piled on the outside of the breastworks, Col. Hugo of the legion & myself took possession of a redoubt & thus ended the campaign in Virginia of 1781 (Mercer 1892:62). George Gibson of the Grenadiers “saw the british stack their arms at Cornwallis’s defeat he saw Tarletons Core dismount & some of them cried & he rode a horse from there taken from one of Tarletons horsemen about four miles” (Gibson 1832).

Like Lord Cornwallis, commanding officer on the York side of the river, but for different reasons, Tarleton, commanding officer in Gloucester, was not with his men as the suffered the humiliation of surrendering to the American rabble. Joachim du Perron recorded how the British "were vexed to deliver them to the Americans, for whom they showed great scorn; they called our soldiers and presented them with their guns." Tarleton was not among them: “the day before the surrender & when the capitulation had been agreed on at York, Col. Tarleton came out and dined with Gen'l Choisy; his object seemed to be to represent that his life might be endangered if he surrended to the militia, & [MS. torn] was so accommodating as to order that no infantry except that of the legion of Lauzun & my corps shou'd be present at the surrender (Mercer 1892:62). Maybe Tarleton was right in fearing retaliation. On October 21, Perron recorded that “the American militia who were cocky now that they were no longer in fear of the English and had already had some disputes with our soldiers”, and they would almost certainly have vented their anger at Tarleton (Perron 1898:172).

“After the ceremony of the surrender was over,” Lieutenant John P. Hungerford of the Grenadiers deposed in his pension application “they returned to Gloucester Town & Colonel Mercer called to me to follow him, with a detachment of about 70 men, and after taking possession of the works on the right bank and giving no instructions, he left the command to myself where I remained till the next evening, when I was relieved at the same time a detachment of Lauzun's Grenadiers marched

in and took possession of the fortifications on the left, as soon as we were finally discharged returned to our respective homes." In a footnote to this statement Hungerford added: "General Lee in his Historical account of that day has made a considerable mistake (he says) "That Lieutenant Colonel Hugo of the Legion of Mercer with the Grenadiers & Militia took possession of Gloucester point" There was no such Officer in the Regiment nor do I believe in the Army. He says nothing about Lauzun's Grenadiers which I know took possession of the left bank." Even though Hungerford misremembered, there was indeed a Colonel Hugau in Lauzun's Legion, but he nevertheless provides another detail about the surrender at Gloucester Point.

The victorious American and French flags having been raised over the earthworks at York and Gloucester, the Continental Army marched north in New Jersey and New York State. The ship garrisons re-embarked, glad to be back on their vessels. "This little taste of land war completely convinced me that it is infinitely more harsh than fighting on the sea. The sailor after his duty, which lasts only 4 hours, goes to sleep peacefully without troubling about his dinner, his tent or servants, and he is sure that he will not be awakened by the general or by an order to depart immediately; if he is anchored, he is certain to find a good dry bed, or a change of clothes; he is never tired by a forced march and ignores heat and the cold. A foot soldier is exposed a hundred times during a campaign, much more than a sailor, and a sailor's purse suffers fewer losses" (Perron 1898:176).

The comte de Grasse, who never set foot on American soil, sailed back to the West Indies. In the hold of his vessels, if we are to believe Perron, "there were many Negroes taken and sold on our return to our colonies. Entire corps indulged in this indecency and after pocketing the birds [literally the seagulls, meaning the African-Americans] secretly made fun of those who had been more scrupulous" (Perron 1898:176).

Rochambeau's infantry went into winter quarters in and around Williamsburg. On October 30, 1781, the Legion under the command of newly promoted *maréchal de camp* Claude Gabriel de Choisy, marched from Gloucester to Hampton, where it entered temporary quarters before transferring to Charlotte Court House early in 1782. Some of the militia accompanied British Prisoners of War into Maryland, the rest was simply sent home. "Weedon drew up the troops, informed them that since the capture of Cornwallis, Washington had no further use for them, and with a wave of the hand, which he will never forget, told the troops to go home" (Tisdale 1833). Charles Wickliffe from Prince William County, who had served his first tour in the militia as a 14-year-old in 1780, deposed in 1833 that "we bore our own expenses & received nothing but our rations – as compensation" (Wickliffe 1833).

On October 22, 1781, the duc de Lauzun sailed for France with the news of the victory at Yorktown. Rochambeau had selected William de Deux-Pont and the duc Lauzun as "the two superior officers who have performed the two most distinguished feats." Deux-Pont's feat was the storming of Redoubt No. 9 on the night of October 14, Lauzun's the victory over Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton in the "Battle of the Hook" on October 3, 1781, the largest cavalry engagement of the American War of Independence.

7. KOCOA TERRAIN ASSESEMENT

7.1 Overview of KOCOA Assessment

Military-historical research is integral to the battlefield interpretive process developed by the ABPP. As part of the ABPP methodology surveyors adapted the precepts of KOCOA military terrain assessment to the battlefield environment. The KOCOA acronym stands for the analytical concepts of Key Terrain/Decisive Terrain, Observation and Fields of Fire, Cover and Concealment, Obstacles, and Avenues of Approach and Withdrawal. KOCOA elements were defined using a variety of sources including historical documentation, previous battlefield surveys, maps, and the extant natural landscape. The interpretation of these features was conducted using the quantitative capabilities of the GIS in conjunction with the knowledge of team historians and other experts.

Analysis of these aspects of military movement, position, and combat – as they apply to a given battle location – combines documentary research and field survey and enables identification of the battlefield's Defining Features. Identification of a battlefield's defining features, in turn, allows for the establishment of an appropriate boundary. The research examines and analyzes primary sources for the battle (such as participants' letters, journals, and memoirs, and early post-battle accounts based on direct experience of the terrain) to discern locational references for KOCOA elements. The KOCOA process, and the supporting research, is directly applicable to archeological investigation at battle locations, providing documentation for the military actions that took place at those locations (Lowe 2000).

The KOCOA assessment is applied to all ABPP projects (Lowe 2000). KOCOA terrain analysis is applied to the study of historic battlefields to help identify the historic battlefield in the modern landscape, to understand the course of a military engagement, and to assess how a given landscape influenced the course of a battle.

Unlike a painter or a farmer, a soldier looks at terrain for military value – how terrain integrates into offensive or defensive positions and how terrains fits into plans for offensive or defensive action. This is not only important for understanding why a commander would (or would not) position infantry, artillery, and cavalry at a certain place on the terrain at a certain point during the engagement but also helps to interpret the authenticity of battlefield maps. Evaluation of terrain from a military point of view also can help to provide reasonable explanations to fill in gaps in our knowledge of events caused by a scarcity of primary sources (*e.g.*, in the case of troop movements). Effective military usage of terrain would demand that forces be re-deployed under cover of ridges or through low-lying ravines outside the view of the enemy. Similarly, depending on the task assigned to a force during any stage of the engagement, troops might be redeployed via a causeway or road (if speed is of the essence) or through a forest or circuitously (if the element of surprise is paramount). Terrain is an integral part of battle interpretation. For effective results, factors must be analyzed in light of the mission of the unit, the type of operation, the level of command, the composition of forces involved, and the weapons and equipment expected to be encountered.

To understand and interpret actions on a battlefield, both a detailed familiarity with the topography and conditions on the ground and a critical reading of a wide range of primary sources must be combined with a military analysis of the battlefield (Andrus 2004). We also applied the principle of "Inherent Military Probability" to the study of the Battle of the Hook (Keegan 1977:33-34). As initially developed by the German military historian Hans Delbrück and further refined by British historian Alfred H. Burne, this principle holds that when accounts of a particular battle are found to be impossible given the constraints of terrain, timing, and other factors, the researcher needs to consider what a soldier of the period was likely to have done in the circumstances (Burne 2005:xx; Foard and Morris 2012:18). It is important for the researcher to understand relevant historical military practices which were in force at the time of the engagement. As English archeologist Glenn Foard suggests, the principle should be termed Inherent *Historical* Military Probability (Foard 2009:141). The manuals available at the time of the American War of Independence provide specifics regarding the spacing between and among formations, rates of marching, and the specific methods applied to deploy companies, battalions, and other maneuvering or firing formations. These manuals provide a framework of the "limits of the possible" that governed the actions of commanders in the field, keeping in mind that variations to the manuals were always possible, and most likely probable, given opportunities arising from such factors as terrain, visibility, and other battlefield conditions. As one scholar puts it, "Soldiers, not manuals, fight and win battles" (Graves 1986:51).

The KOCOA process is founded on the principle that terrain has a direct impact on selecting objectives, the location, movement, and control of forces, on the effectiveness of weapons and other systems, and defensive measures. In the following section, each of the key defining features is presented, along with their relevance to the battle, their KOCOA analysis, and their location/status

Table 7.1. KOCOA Definitions (From McMasters 2016)

Term	Definition
Key terrain	Any local feature that dominates the immediate surrounding by relief or another quality that enhances attack of defense
Decisive terrain	Ground that must be controlled in order to successfully accomplish the mission
Observation	The ability to see friendly and enemy forces and key aspects of the terrain to allow management of the conflict
Field of fire	An area that weapons may effectively fire upon from a given position
Dead space	An area within the maximum range of a weapon or an observer, but which cannot be seen or fired upon from a given position
Cover	Protection from enemy fire
Concealment	Protection from enemy observation
Obstacles	Natural or man-made terrain features that prevent, impede, or divert military movement
Avenue of	Relatively unobstructed ground route that leads to an objective or key terrain
Avenue of withdrawal	Relatively unobstructed ground route that leads away from an objective or key terrain
Mobility	Area or location where movement is channeled due to terrain constrictions

Battles are temporary, albeit seminal, events fought on cultural landscapes that had a variety of cultural actions – transportation routes, agricultural development, settlement patterns, population change – already occurring before the battle and that continued to exert influences on the field after the battle. Field patterns and farmsteads are changed and subsequently replaced by subdivisions or industry; roads are altered, vacated, rerouted or widened; and woodlands are reduced or removed from the landscape. Natural disaster such as floods or avalanches can also change a landscape, and their impact also needs to flow into any interpretation of a battle since "[u]nderstanding the historic terrain of a battlefield as it was at the time of the action is critical to the understanding of any battle" (Foard 2009: 136).

Obstacles are defined as "natural or manmade terrain features that prevent, restrict, divert, or delay military movement. There are two categories of obstacles: existing and reinforcing. The presence and difficulty of obstacles determine whether terrain is unrestricted, restricted, or severely restricted. Examples include vegetation, topography, fences, stone walls, fortification features such as parapets and ditches, battle events, urban areas, drainage characteristics (natural and man-made), micro- relief, surface materials (wet and dry), abatis, ravines, and bluffs. The hindrance level of obstacles can be analyzed as "go," "slow-go," or "no-go." Existing Obstacles are already present on the battlefield. Natural examples include swamps, woods, and rivers. Cultural examples include towns, railroads, bridges, and fences. Existing obstacles are already present on the avenues of approach and/or battlefield. Reinforcing Obstacles are placed on the avenues of approach and/or the battlefield through military effort to slow, stop, or control the approach of the enemy. The KOCOA parameters, however, define a battlefield more broadly as not just as the terrain where blood was shed. The parameters Obstacles, and Avenues of Approach and Withdrawal also integrate the obstacles along the way to and from the battlefield.

As stated above, these viewpoints are of particular significance for the current project since the length, state and condition of the avenues of approach and withdrawal, including the obstacles along these avenues, invariably influence the outcome of a battle, an influence that sometimes can even be decisive, both short-term (tactically), as well as long-term (strategically). An arrival on the battlefield late in the day due to the particular avenue of approach selected by the attacker, be that because the road is too long, too difficult geographically, or too easily blocked by man-made obstacles, may make it impossible for the victor to completely consummate his victory, viz. Continental Army forces at Brandywine were saved by the arrival of darkness and the exhaustion of British forces and survived to fight again three weeks later at Germantown.

The character and condition of avenues of approach, the number and severity of obstacles, the strength and equipment of the army using them, are mutually reinforcing factors. A large number of troops with an extended artillery and wagon train pulled by hundreds of draft animals, a livestock herd for food, a train of bat (or baggage) horses for the officers, and a multitude of camp followers stretching for miles across the countryside, mutually hindering and delaying each other's movements on too narrow roads laid out for the occasional trip to the market or Court House by a farmer but not to lead an army to battle, can wreak havoc with the best battle plan. The clouds of dust raised by long columns on a hot, dry summer day will alert the enemy of an attacker's approach, while roads muddied by rain and made impassable by hundreds of carriage and wagon wheels and thousands of hoofs will exhaust the troops besides greatly delaying their arrival on the battlefield where they may be anxiously awaited.

While battles do indeed leave a lasting impact on the battlefield, the sheer presence and the movements of sometimes tens of thousands of men and their animals leaves a lasting impact on the entire region. Humans and animals need to be fed and forage over a wide area, often indiscriminately taking from friend and foe alike. Barns and houses burnt by foraging troops leave as much an archeological footprint as buildings destroyed because they happened to stand in the line of battle. These aspects, chronologically part of the Yorktown Campaign in Gloucester County and run up to the Battle of Hook, mutually interact and reinforce each other. They impact the course and outcome of battle.

The defining features were developed from the historical research and onsite landscape analysis (Table 7.2). The list of defining features was refined as additional historical research was completed. Table 7.2 presents the defining feature and offers a level of assessment of integrity for the landscape based on the revised ABPP Survey Manual (McMasters 2016). Note that as defined in the manual, the assessment of integrity is focused on the overall condition of the battlefield and it is recognized as a subjective assessment. Qualities of integrity as defined for determinations of National Register of Historic Places eligibility include the elements of location, setting, design, feeling, association, workmanship, and materials.

Table 7.2. Defining Features for the Battle of the Hook.

Feature No.	Defining Feature/Integrity Assessment	KOCOA Assessment	Level of Integrity	Historical role
1	Great Road/Lane to Gloucester Point (Modern Route 17) (*aka* York River Road, Piney Swamp Road)	Avenue of Approach; Avenue of Withdrawal– Mobility Corridor; Key Terrain	Low due to highway widening and suburban development; moderate integrity in the area around Hayes	Road used by Allied forces to approach the battlefield; road used by Crown forces to withdraw to Gloucester Point.
2	Severn Road (parts of Route 629 and 614)	Avenue of Approach – Mobility Corridor	Moderate to high integrity	Road used by Allied forces to approach the battlefield.
3	Seawell's Ordinary (John and Elizabeth Seawell)	Avenue of Approach	High integrity. While rotated and moved in the mid-20th century, the building is original and grounds likely to contain archaeological resources.	Principal building identified by Allied forces in their accounts; after the battle, served as headquarters of General Weedon; claimed damages to land.
4	Seawell's Plantation (Joseph Seawell)	Observation; Fields of Fire; Cavalry Action	Moderate to high integrity – landscape significantly altered by modern	Farm property over which portions of the battle were fought.

			subdivisions. Abingdon Park is an exception and may contain moderate integrity. The house may have been situated along State Road 636 (Providence Rd).	
5	Whiting's Plantation/Quarter	Observation; Fields of Fire; Cavalry Action	Low integrity – landscape significantly altered by modern subdivisions. Abingdon Park is an exception and may contain moderate integrity.	Farm property over which portions of the battle were fought.
6	Shacks	Cover and Concealment	No longer extant	Described in first-person accounts; situated near the southern end of the battlefield.
7	Woods	Obstacle; Fields of Fire; Cover and Concealment; Cavalry Action; Infantry Action	No longer extant, but in some locations may retain low integrity	Described in first-person accounts; infantry action on left of American line
8	Fences – Post-and-rail and worm	Obstacle; Cover and Concealment; Fields of Fire	No longer extant	First-person accounts describe fencing. Fence particularly important in the Mercer battle line.
9	Ditches	Obstacle; Cover and Concealment	No longer extant	Mentioned in first-person account as bounding the road to Gloucester.
10	Coleman Swamp	Obstacle; Cover and Concealment; Mobility Corridor	Extant – moderate integrity	Coleman Swamp provided a strong limiting boundary to the eastern side of the battlefield.
11	Cornfields and Meadows	Key Terrain; Cover and Concealment;	No longer extant; low to moderate integrity in areas	First-person accounts describe cavalry and

		Cavalry Action; Infantry Action	of minimal ground disturbance.	infantry actions in meadow and cornfields. Public Service Claims identify cornfield damages.
12	Redoubt K – situated west of Hayes Road (old York River Road), opposite the intersection with Guinea Road in Hayes.	Obstacle; Cover and Concealment; Avenue of Approach; Fields of Fire; Key Terrain	Low to moderate integrity; may contain archaeological resources.	Crown forces redoubt noted on several period maps as situated on the road.
13	Gloucester Courthouse	Avenue of Approach	High	Location used by allied forces as camping area the night before the battle
14	Dixon's Mill (aka Robins Mill) (Roanes) – located at head of Wilson's Creek on Route 629 and 614.	Avenue of Approach; Key Terrain	High	Elevated ground at this location used by Allied forces as camping area the night before the battle.
15	Ware Parish Church	Avenue of Approach	High	Location used by Allied forces as camping area the night before the battle.
16	Abingdon Parish Church	Key Terrain; Avenue of Approach; Cover and Concealment	High	Parish church enclosed by wall. Prominent landscape feature; used as Allied forces hospital after the battle and during the siege.
17	Gloucester Point	Decisive Terrain, Observation, Fields of Fire, Cover and Concealment	Moderate to high, with demonstrated archaeological potential	Principal fortified base for the Crown Forces in Gloucester County.

7.2 Battle of the Hook KOCOA Assessment

The review of contemporary campaign and battle accounts, pension applications, damage claims, secondary historical sources, historical maps and aerial images, and local topography and terrain lead the project team to conclude that the Core Area of the Hook Battlefield is situated in the area bounded by US Route 17 to the east, Powhattan Drive to the south, Crewe Road to the north, and Williams Landing Road to the west (Figure 7.1). This location is nearly 1.2 to 1.4 miles north of the current historical markers that are placed in Hayes and represents a major shift in the interpretation of the battlefield (Figure 7.2).

The larger Battlefield Boundary includes the avenues of approach and retreat and extends south from Ware Episcopal Church, through Gloucester Courthouse, to Robbins Mill, passed the Abingdon Church to Seawell's Ordinary, through the core of the battlefield and eventually terminating at Gloucester Point (Tyndall's Point).

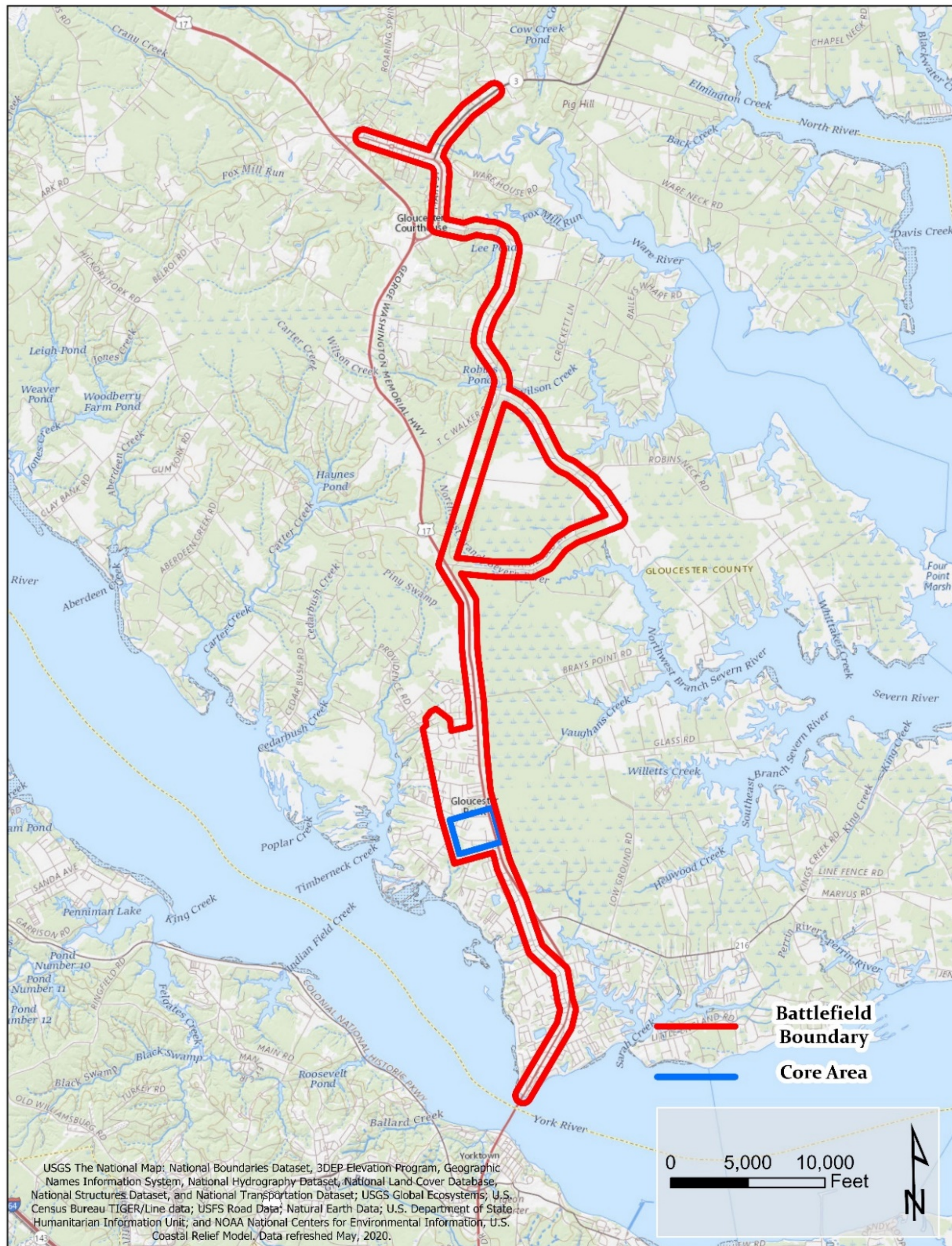


Figure 7.1. The Core Area and Battlefield Boundary for The Battle of the Hook.

Figure 7.2. The location of current historical markers for the Battle of the Hook at Hayes (unincorporated community). Markers are just south of Hook Road, along the east side of Hayes Road (photographer Wade Catts, June 10, 2019).

1. Great Road/Lane to Gloucester Point/York River Road/Piney Swamp Road (*Avenue of Approach/Retreat*). The Great Road in the area of the Hook Battlefield is essentially the route of modern US 17 and the portions of County Road 614 which intersects US 17 at White Marsh. The road has been widened and its course shifted, particularly in the area north of Gloucester Point in the unincorporated community of Hayes. The road has had many names attached to it, including the Great Lane or Road to Gloucester Point, the York Road, and the Piney Swamp Road; this latter name was used by William B. Taliaferro (Taliaferro 1894:23).

On the morning of October 3, 1781, the Allied forces moved out from their bivouacs at Dixon's Mill, Gloucester Courthouse, and Ware Church in two divisions. One division marched on the Piney Swamp or York River Road, and the other on the Severn River Road. These two roads intersected at or near Seawell's Ordinary.

This road also served as the avenue of retreat for the Crown forces. Having completed their foraging on the Seawell and Whiting plantations, the Crown forces withdrew south on the York River Road towards Gloucester Point.

The contemporary accounts of the battle describe this part of the York River road as a "lane" nearly a mile in length. In his account of the battle, Henry Lee stated that the Severn River Road and York River Road "unite in a long lane, nearly four miles from Gloucester, with inclosed [sic] fields on each side. Passing through the lane, you arrive at an open field on your right and a copse of wood on your left, lining the road for half a mile, where it terminated at a small redoubt facing the road" (Lee 1869). Mercer's account was more detailed. He recalled that "the two roads [Severn River Road and the York River Road] uniting in a lane in front, of near a mile in extent, a fence on each

side enclosing a large open field, on the right and left" (Mercer 1892:57). Mercer's description of the road and the battlefield continued. He noted that the

> "lane [York River Road] led into an extensive open old field, where the fences dividing to the right & left at right angles, separated the fields on each side from the old field in front. On the left, at the mouth of the lane commenced a wood which running to the left of the main road for more than a mile, terminated in a small advanced redoubt, commanding the main road (Mercer 1892:57-58).

2. Severn River Road (*Avenue of Approach*). The Severn Road was one of several avenues of approach utilized by the Allied forces on the day of the battle. Colonel John Mercer recalled that "…Early on the morning of the 2nd of Oct. I was order'd with my corps to join Lieut. Col. Count Robert Dillon who with 150 of the Dragoons of Lauzun was directed to gain the road that led to Gloucester by York river & to move on towards that Post: whilst Gen. Choisy & the Duc de Lauzun at the head of 150 Dragoons proceeded down the Severn road in the same direction, follow'd at a considerable interval by the French & American infantry…." (Mercer 1892:56). Writing more than a century later, William B. Taliaferro stated that the allied forces marched "in two divisions" on the morning of the battle; one division on the Saddler's Neck and the other division on the Piney Swamp road (Taliaferro 1894:23). These two roads are the Severn River Road and the York River Road, respectively. Taliaferro may be incorrect in naming this Sadler's Neck Road (Thane Harpole, electronic communication, July 14, 2021).

The Severn River road is clearly depicted on the unfinished Rochambeau map. It originates at Dixon's Mill, then heads southeast approximately 2 miles before making a hard turn to the west and inland (Figure 7.3). This route today is County Road 629 (Warner Hall Road) to approximately the intersection with County Road 614 (Featherbed Lane). The actual intersection in 1781 appears from the Rochambeau map to have been 0.43 miles further south along Warner Hall Road, and then turning west for approximately 0.5 miles to intersect Featherbed Lane.

Mercer described the intersection of this road with the York River, or Great Road. "…emerging from the wood I found the two roads uniting in a lane in front, of near a mile in extent, a fence on each side [of the road] enclosing a large open field, on the right & left. On the right were two houses, the first of which we approach'd became afterwards the quarters of Gen'l Weedon [Joseph Seawell's Ordinary], this was contiguous to the lane; the second, at some distance from the lane, became the quarters of Gen'l Choisy" [John Seawell's Plantation] (Mercer 1892:57). With these structures to Mercer's right flank, it is clear that he was moving onto the Great Road, and not a secondary road.

3. Seawell's Ordinary (*Avenue of Approach*). Seawell's Ordinary was an important advance point for Revolutionary American and French troops during the Battle of the Hook and was the headquarters of American General George Weedon following the battle (Fonzo 2011).

Seawell's Ordinary, a tavern and horse racetrack from the mid-eighteenth century to mid-nineteenth century and landmark restaurant (1956 to 2007), is a significant structure for its association with the Revolutionary War and its historic architecture. In 1675, Thomas Seawell

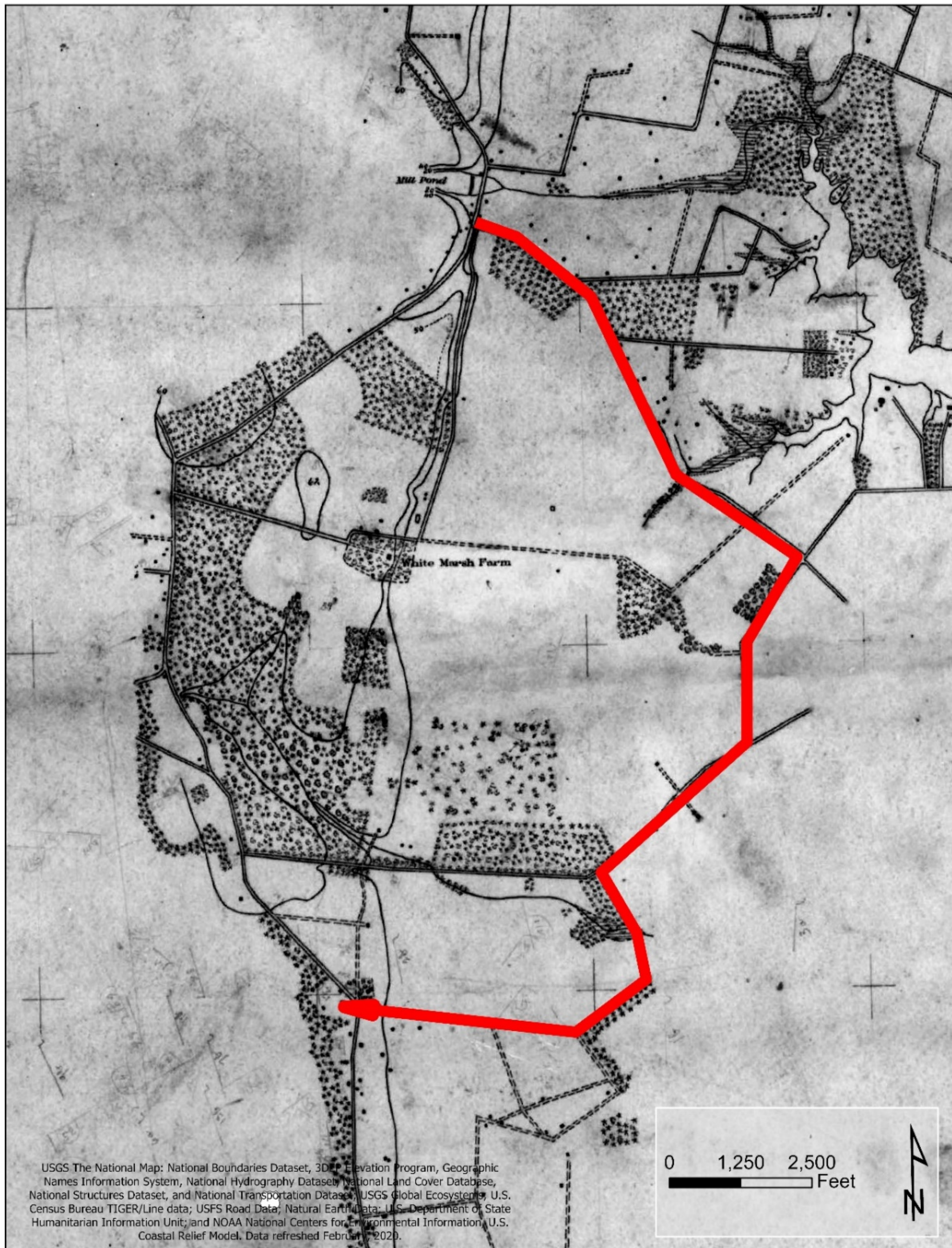


Figure 7.3. The hypothesized route followed by the Allied Forces along the Severn River Road, shown on 1906 map.

received a grant of 150 acres in Gloucester County, located in “Abingdon Parish… along the edge of the highlands and the woods,” and near the “Great Road to Tindall’s Point.” Joseph Seawell was hosting horse races on the property as early as 1739, and some of the subscription meets and related notices were advertised in the Virginia Gazette (Parks 1740). Local oral history relates that George Washington frequented Seawell’s Ordinary and attended races there while in Gloucester County visiting his grandparents at Warner Hall. The building served as an important local

landmark throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While it has been moved and reoriented, it continues to serve as an important local colonial landmark (Figures 7.4 through 7.6). The general site location also retains a high degree of archaeological potential.

The Abingdon Parish Register lists Joseph Seawell (ca. 1710 – ca. 1786) and his wife Elizabeth (d. ca. 1787). Secondary sources state that the original building at Seawell's Ordinary was constructed in 1712 as a residence, but that it was not until 1757 that owner Joseph Seawell expanded the house with an addition and opened it as a public house or ordinary.

As related by Maria Edwards "…The family resided in Gloucester County, Virginia at a place about five miles from Gloucester Town, called the Ordinary, in conversation contracted to ornary. Here my Father's great uncle Joe Seawell [son of Joseph & Elizabeth Seawell] lived through the Revolutionary War. He kept a public house [Seawell Ordinary] and billiard table, where the French officers spent a great deal of time and money…" (Edwards 2001:22). Almost ten years prior to the battle Joseph Seawell was assessed for 525 acres of land (Hunt 2001:113). After the war, in 1782, Joseph Seawell was assessed for 560 acres. The 1784 census for the county recorded Joseph as heading a family of nine "white souls" with one dwelling and three "other buildings" (Hodges 1998:35).

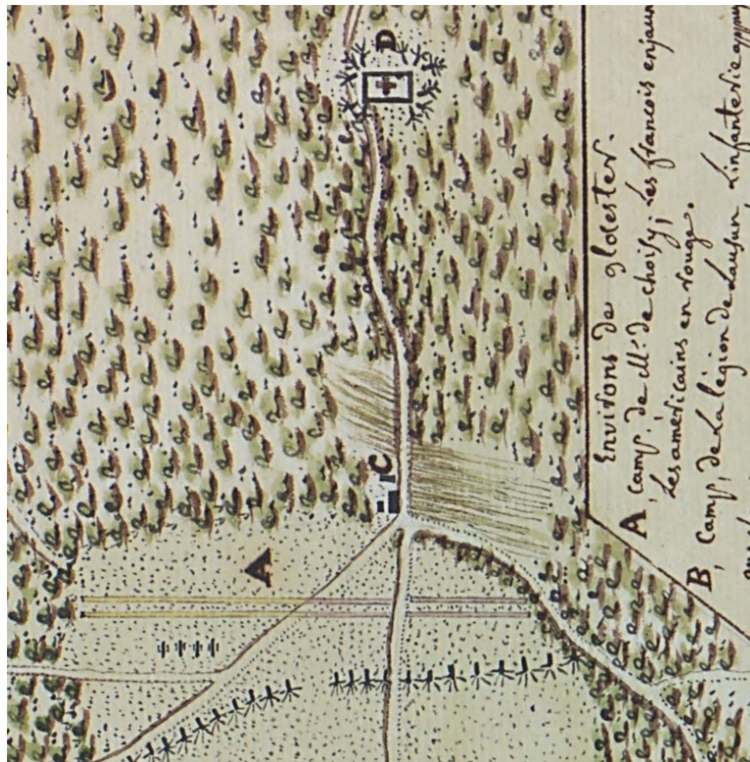


Figure 7.4. Detail of the Perron map, showing Seawell's Ordinary (noted as "C") and Abingdon Church (noted as "D") (Perron 1781).

Figure 7.5. Seawell’s Ordinary (photographer Wade Catts, June 10, 2019).

After the Battle of the Hook, Mecklenburg County militiaman Cudbud Tisdale recalled that Seawell’s Ordinary was part of the fortified line surrounding Gloucester Point. Tisdale deposed that he marched

> “…to a kind of fortification or breastwork called Sowells's Ornary, about five miles east of Yorktown, the siege of which was then commenced. At Ornary, we were placed under command of General Weedon, connected with the Legion of Lauzun and both under the command of General De Choisé. The whole number of Militia placed here under General Weedon, this declarant does not remember, but it amounted, as, he believes, to one thousand or more. The body was thus placed under General De Choisé to watch and restrain Colonel Tarlton who was fortified at Gloucester point opposite Yorktown, while Washington was pressing the siege against Cornwallis. At Sowells's Ornary this declarant remained under General Weedon till after Cornwallis surrendered” (Tisdale 1833).

Seawell’s or Sowell’s Tavern or Ordinary was a landmark on the road to Gloucester Point. Essex County militiaman Thomas Coghill recalled in his pension application that in the spring of 1781 he was attached to a cavalry command and

> “…marched to Hubbard’s old field in Gloucester County Va, thence to Gloucester Court House & thence to Sowel’s Tavern [Seawell’s Ordinary] in the same County. Here we met the enemy and had a skirmish with them and Cornett Jones was taken prisoner, and Lee Roy Dangerfield was appointed in his place. About two miles from Sowel’s Tavern we had another skirmish with the enemy and forced him to retire into Glousertown [sic] on York river. Myself, Lewis Evans & Richard Kay, were taken prisoners in this engagement, & were carried by the enemy to York Town, where they detained us one night & then put us in the prison ship, in which we were kept till the surrender of Corn Wallis in October 1781….” (Coghill 1833).

Figure 7.6. Seawell's Ordinary depicted on an 1836 property plat and superimposed on a modern quadrangle map. Note the potential location of Seawell's Plantation along Providence Road (solid red dot).

4. Seawell's Plantation (*Observation, Fields of Fire, Cavalry Action*). The principal battle action occurred on two plantations, Whiting's and Seawell's. The plantation was owned by John Seawell, brother of Joseph Seawell who owned the Ordinary. Following the battle of the Hook, the Seawell house was used by French Brigadier General Choisy as his headquarters during the Siege of Yorktown.

Du Perron provided a detailed description of the French camp at Seawell's Plantation, and his description includes observations about the surrounding area. Keyed to his manuscript map, Du Perron noted that

> "We camped in two rows of tents, in a small plain about a thousand paces wide (see the map at Point A); to our right and behind us we had a large, rather thick wood of fir trees where there were several roads that led to different homesteads in our countryside. On our left the terrain sloped down and was dotted with woods. In the middle of this small plain passed the great road of Gloucester. Before us was a large cornfield, in the corner of which there was a pretty house that M. de Choisy took for his lodging (Point E) [John Seawell's Plantation]; beyond that house was the camp of M de Lauzun who also had in front of him a cornfield, next was the plain where his skirmish had occurred. Behind us, at the edge of the wood (at Point C) was a tavern [Seawell's Ordinary] where we found some provisions. The commander of the American militia was lodged there" (Perron 1781:145).

In 1770 John Seawell was assessed for 525 acres of land (Hunt 2011:116). The number of acres had decreased to 520 when Seawell was assessed in 1782. Perron's map depicts the Seawell Plantation as a grouping of two buildings bounded by a fence situated to the west of the Great Road to Gloucester (approximate modern trace of US Route 17). Perron shows just two structures on the plantation, probably representing the principal structures, likely the dwelling house and a tobacco barn. In reality, Seawell's plantation contained considerably more buildings; in 1784 John Seawell was reported to be the head of a household of seven "white souls" with one dwelling and six "other buildings" (Hodges 1998:35). Beyond the fence appears to be cultivated fields and an orchard. The plantation complex was accessed by a lane extending west from the main road (Figure 7.7).

First person accounts offered a range of names for the general area of the fighting as Seawell's Plantation (Ewald 1979:329-330), "Seawell's Land" (Leckie 1833), Seawell's, Sowell's or Sower's Old Field (Gibson 1832; Hope 1832; Morris 1834; White 1832), and the "mouth of Sewell's Lane" (Menzies 1832). Captain Johan Ewald of the Hessian Field Jager Corps made a clear distinction between Seawell's Ordinary, Seawell's Plantation, and Whiting's Plantation, writing that on the morning of October 3 he and his detachment were to "…take a position between Seawell's plantation and Seawell's Ordinary. I was to form a chain there to protect a foraging of Indian corn between Seawell's and Whiting's plantations, which was to be undertaken for the benefit of the cavalry…" (Ewald 1979:330).

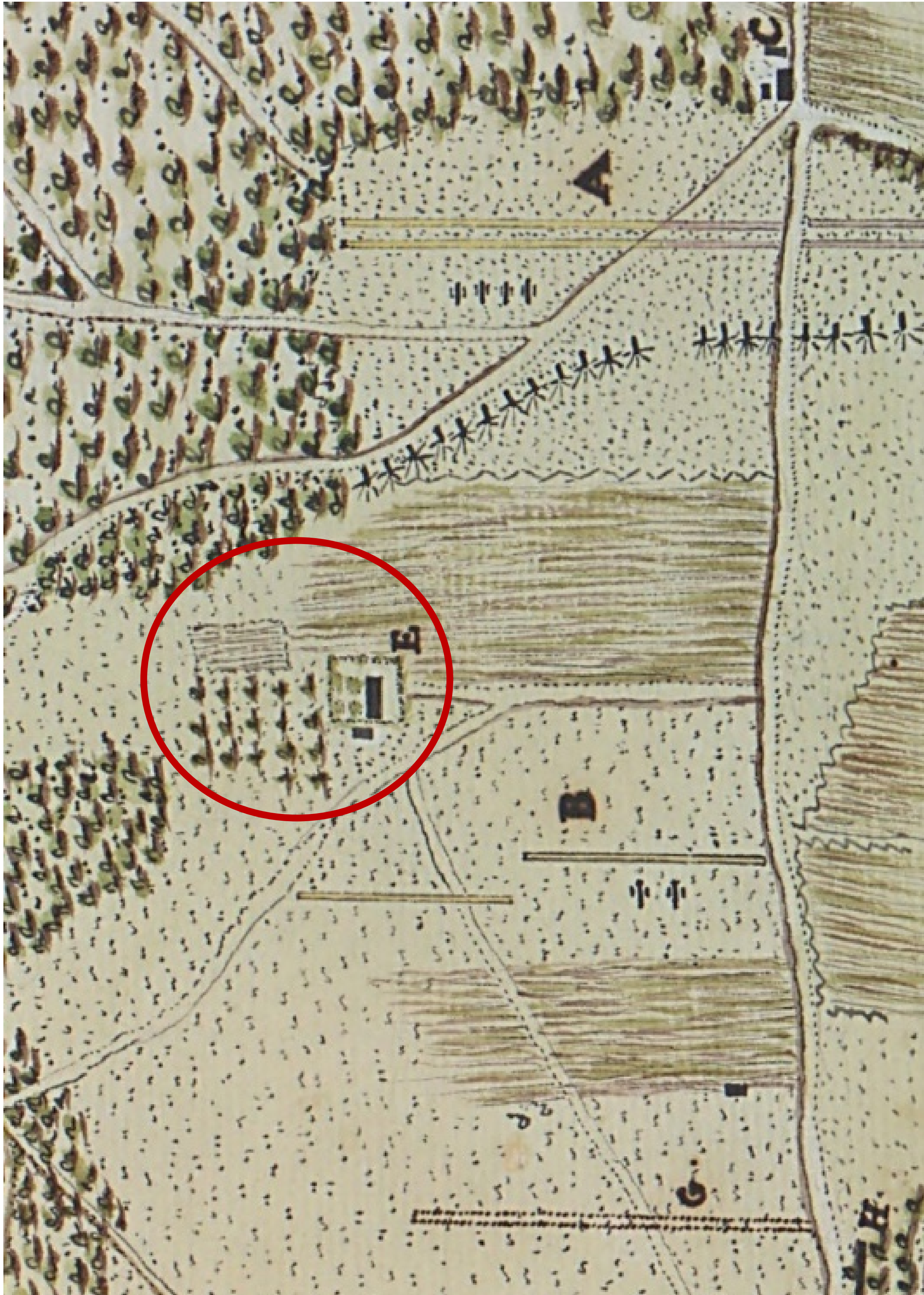


Figure 7.7. Detail of the Perron map, showing Seawell's Plantation (labelled "E" on the map) (Perron 1781).

"Gloucester Place" occupied by Allied forces (owned by John Hughes in 1859). Maria Edwards, granddaughter of John Seawell, recalled that:

> "…My great-grandfather then built in which I was born, Gloucester Place. I forget the date, but before the Revolution. His wife when he married her, was a widow Thorton. My father remembered her, and said she was handsome, with expressive black eyes. He bore her maiden name, Boswell, as his middle name. She was Jane Boswell, the sister of Dr. Thomas Machen Boswell, and an aunt of Mrs. Elizabeth Wormley (afterwards Mrs. Braxton), and of Dr. Thomas Boswell, and of Mrs. Boswell Roy. My great-grandfather was an importing merchant, and the "war" interfered sadly with his business. The American and French troops at one time camped in the field on the left-hand side as you go up to the house called the Wind-mill field, and fed to their horses, and destroyed a fine crop of corn. Many years later my uncle John Tyler found, in an old "day-book" a full account of it, in which my great-grandfather stated his grievances, and thought my father should have put it in his hands while he was in Congress…." (Tyler 1899b:54).

As remembered by Maria Edwards, Gloucester Place "…was within sight of the ornery [Seawell's Ordinary] – separated by two fields. I regret that I have forgotten the date of its building, but it was some time before the Revolutionary War…" (Edwards 2001:23).

The location of Seawell's Plantation is no longer known with certainty. Based on the Perron map and later nineteenth century property information, the site of the plantation was along Providence Road (State Road 636) and is probably situated within ½ mile west of the intersection with US 17 (Figure 7.8). This area currently contains modern subdivisions, single-family homes, and manicured lawns.

5. Whiting's Quarter (*Observation, Fields of Fire, Cavalry Action*). As noted above, the principal battle action took place on lands owned by the Whiting and Seawell families. Johan Ewald referred to the area as Whiting's Plantation, but Virginia militiaman Gabriel Hughes called the property "Whiting's Quarter" suggesting a parcel that was not the principal plantation or homeplace of [Thomas] Whiting (Hughes 1832). Colonel Thomas Whiting (died 1781) was a prominent importing merchant at Gloucester Town. He owned property in Gloucester Point and departed his home at the Point the day after Crown Forces occupied the town (Ewald 1979:320). Thomas Whiting was married to Elizabeth Seawell (Davis 2001:30; Edwards 2001:24). The 1770 land tax for Gloucester County recorded Thomas Whiting as the owner of two large tracts, one of 1,770 acres and a smaller tract of 536 acres (Hunt 2011:132). The locations of these tracts were not specified. A "John Hall" was also recorded as "Col. Whiting's overseer" in the 1770 land tax (Hunt 2011:64). By 1782, Whiting's estate was assessed for 1,410 acres of land, and his estate also owned two lots in Gloucester Town.

Three contemporary references mention Whiting's Plantation. In the morning of October 3, Captain Philip Taliaferro of Webb's dragoons reported that "…A party of the Enimy [sic] are now at Mrs. Whitings, and have sent out to collect the cattle and sheep adjacent…." (Palmer 1881:523). A second reference is from Lauzun himself when he notes that "I perceived a very pretty woman at the door of a small house, on the main road…." (Méras 1912:326). The small house is likely to be the building depicted by Perron to the right of the main road (roughly modern US Route 17),

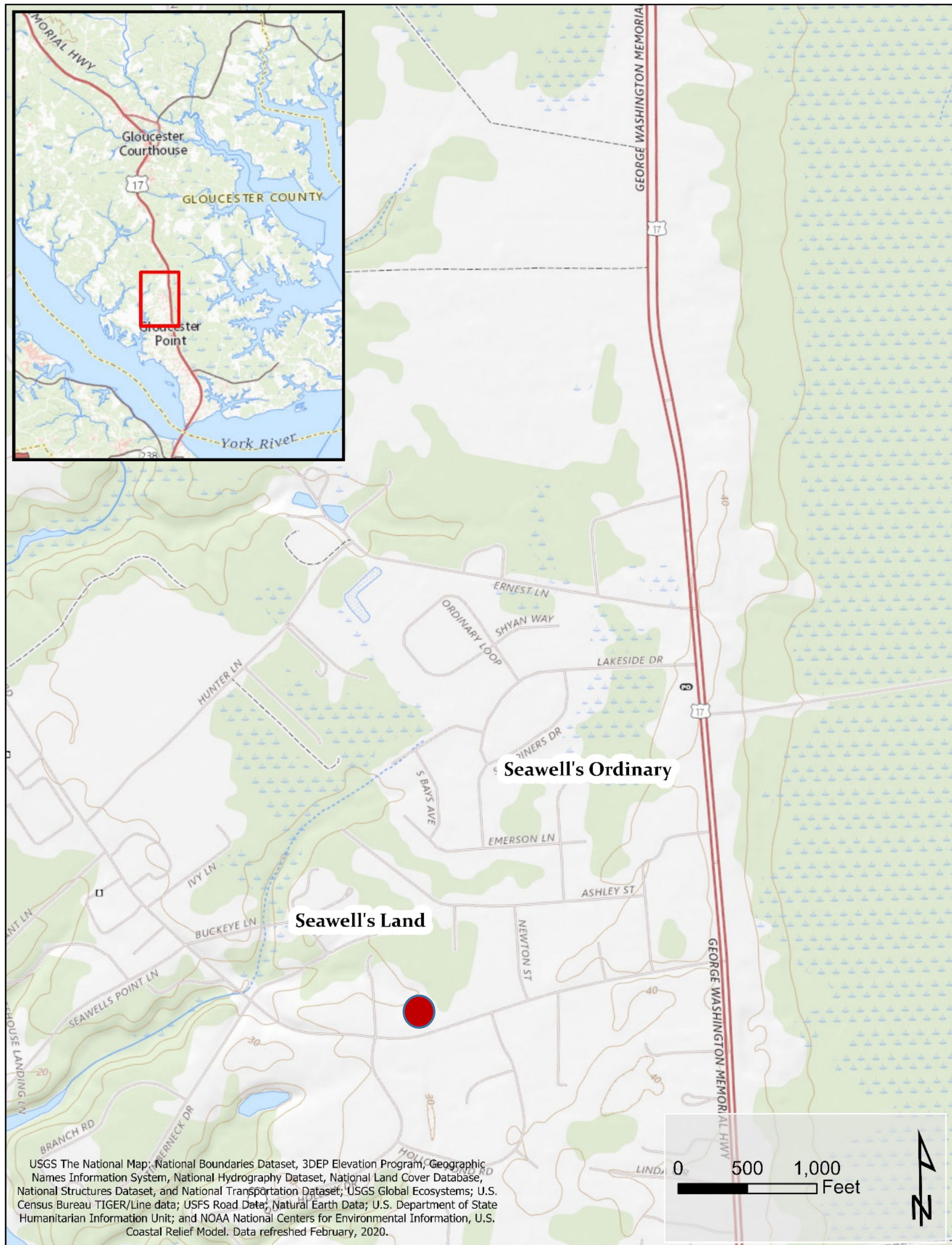


Figure 7.8. Approximate location of the site of Seawell's Plantation (red circle), based on historical sources (USGS).

above "G" on his map, and immediately adjacent to a cleared field (Figure 7.9). Perron refers to this as a "rather pretty house on the right of the road" (Perron 1898:143). Whiting's Plantation had already seen some military activity in the days prior to the battle. Captain Johan Ewald of the Hessian Jäger noted that on August 7 he was sent with a detachment of jäger, dragoons, and 100 men of the Erb Printz Regiment to "collect information about the enemy, and at the same time to protect a foraging party at Whiting's plantation…." (Ewald 1979:323). The physical proximity of Seawell's Ordinary and Whiting's plantations is evident in Ewald's journal, as he frequently mentions them together.

6. Shacks (*Cover and Concealment*). Perron mentions two "shacks" in the fields where the fighting occurred. When he arrived on the battlefield, he "…saw the legion of Lauzun in a small meadow, before a cornfield, with a wood and 2 shacks in front of them [Lauzun's Legion] within range of two shots" (Perron 1898:144). No other contemporary account notes the presence of shacks. It is likely that these two buildings were frame or log construction. Perron depicts the shacks on his map at the location "F" (Figure 7.9).

It is possible that the "shacks" described by Perron were the buildings associated with Whiting's Quarter. Quarters, since they were not the principal residence of the landowner, were often occupied by tenants, indentured servants, and/or enslaved Blacks. The term "shacks" used by Perron may be indicative of how he perceived these structures in comparison to what he was familiar with in France. Perron was new to Tidewater Virginia. Often, the quarters or out-plantations were visually unimpressive. In the 1790s, another French traveler, Moreau de St. Méry commented on the slovenly appearance of such buildings, noting that "…many of the houses are wretched and frequently an extensive piece of fenced ground will have nothing on it but a miserable dwelling made of logs or planks" (Roberts and Roberts 1947:69).

7. Woods (*Obstacle, Cover and Concealment, Fields of Fire, Cavalry Action*). Woods figure in the battle and on the Perron map. Wooded areas are depicted around the periphery of the battlefield. A "copse of woods" is mentioned as being on the American left flank, variously reported as ½ or 1 mile in length (Perron 1898; Lee 1869; Mercer 1892). The woods on the battlefield served as cover and concealment for Allied and Crown forces cavalry and infantry and limiting fields of fire. The woods on the battlefield were apparently free of underbrush and may have been well-maintained as sources of timber and wood for plantations. The first-person accounts note that cavalry sheltered and formed in the woods, so the woods do not appear to have been obstacles to cavalry action, maneuver and deployment.

Before the battle, during an aborted ambush, Johan Ewald's infantry could not hold their position in roadside ditch. As he noted, "when the ambuscade fell out and [my infantry] pursued these few people into the woods of Seawell's plantation" (Ewald 1979:330).

Bordering the wetland known as Coleman's Swamp, the woods along the east side of the Great Road to Gloucester is frequently mentioned in the first-person accounts. As Lee described the battlefield, "Passing through this lane [the road to Gloucester Point – or the current trace of US Route 17], you arrive at an open field on your right and a copse of woods on your left, lining the road for half a mile" (Lee 1869:497). Perron reported that it was from the woods along the east side of the road that Lauzun's Legion "had received a volley from a detachment of infantry lying

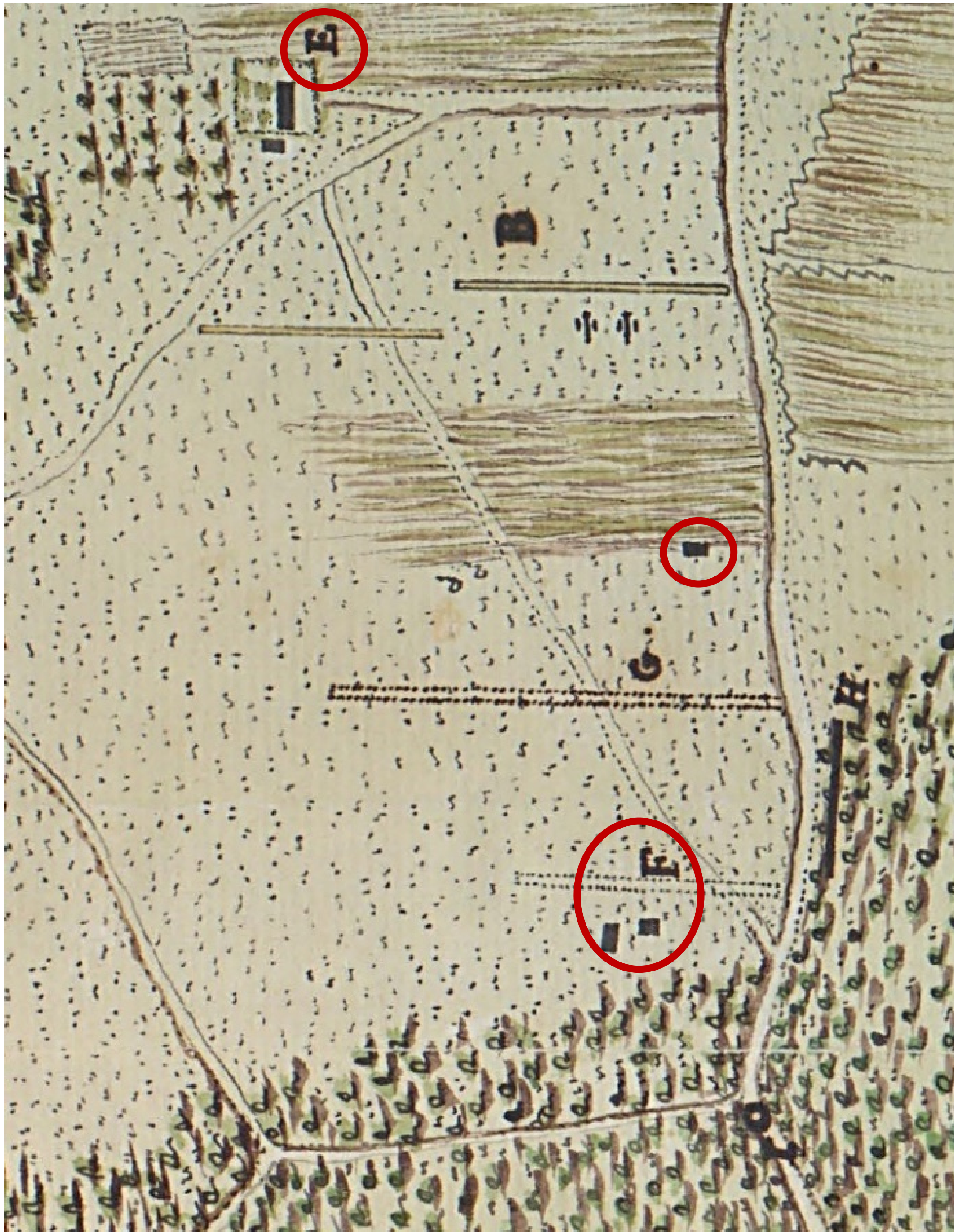


Figure 7.9. Detail of the Perron map, showing the area south of Seawell's Plantation (labelled E), where Whiting's Quarter was situated. Note the building above "G" – this is likely Whiting's Quarter. The grouping of two buildings near "F" - these are the "shacks" identified by Perron (Perron 1781).

in ambush in the wood… that killed 3 hussars and wounded several horses" (Perron 1898:144). Perron identified this location on his map as "H". Lee recounts that following the initial clash of cavalry the British dragoons retreated and "took shelter under cover of their infantry, arrayed in the wood on one side, and along a post and rail fence on the other side of the road" (Lee 1869:498). The movement of English infantry in the woods along the road or lane was an important element of the battle. As Lee recounted, The British infantry pressed "forward under cover of the wood, and incessantly delivering their fire, galled us considerably" (Lee 1869:498). Tarleton referred to this wooded area as a thicket. In his report of the fight he noted that he "dismounted forty infantry, just come up under Captain Champagne, and placed them in a thicket on his right…." (Tarleton 1787).

Upon arrival on the battlefield, Mercer describes his line of battle and notes that "a body of [enemy] infantry in the wood" were advancing (Mercer 1892). Mercer maneuvered his company "so as to push their left flank into the wood, which they did with great celerity and good order, and commenced firing, one-half on the cavalry on the right, and the other half on the infantry advancing rapidly through this wood" (Mercer 1892). Lee's remembrance of Mercer's action stated that "Mercer instantly deployed, stretching his left into the woods, and opened his fire upon the horse opposite to his right, and upon the infantry in front of his left" (Lee 1869:498). Perron's description of this part of the action noted that "a company of American grenadiers, had fired on the English infantry in the wood…." (Perron 1898:144).

The woods along the southern edge of the battlefield is mentioned in a number of accounts. Lee recorded in his memoir that in preparation for the battle, Tarelton's dragoons "halted and formed in the wood" (Lee 1869:497). Perron's map shows this woods and he recorded that Tarleton's force had formed at the woods and that Lauzun "noticed the enemy, about 150 horses strong in battle order in front of the wood" (Perron 1898:144). Perron labeled this location on his map as "F".

8. Fences (*Obstacle, Cover and Concealment, Fields of Fire*). Multiple accounts note the presence of fences, and their locations. Clearly the fields on Whiting's and Seawell's plantations were delineated by fences. Lee mentions that there were "…enclosed fields on either side of the road…" while Mercer described the area as having "…fences dividing to the right & left at right angles, separated the fields on each side from the old field in front…" (Lee 1869:496; Mercer 1892).

Mercer notes that the fence at the south end of the battlefield, where Tarleton formed his forces, was a post-and-rail fence. Mercer wrote that along the Gloucester Road there was "…a post & rail fence which running to the right, at right angles with the [York] road, enclos'd the old field in the rear…" and Lee reported a post-and-rail fence in a similar location (Lee 1869:498; Mercer 1892). Mercer added further description of the obstacle that the fence represented for his grenadier battalion, noting that there was "a very high fence in their rear" (Mercer 1892). Tarleton does not specifically refer to the fence as post-and-rail, but this type of fence is implicit in his statement when he recalled that his forces were compelled to retire "upon receiving part of their fire from behind a rail" (Tarleton 1787).

It is noteworthy that first-person participants draw a distinction among the types of fences on the battlefield. By noting that there was a post-and-rail fence in one area, but not defining the fencing type in other areas, it suggests that there were multiple fence types on the battlefield.

According to Vanessa Patrick, "During the colonial period, it [post-and-rail fencing] was employed to enclose domestic yards, cultivated fields, pastures, orchards, and, to a lesser extent, churchyards, courthouse grounds, and gardens. Posts and rails were especially favored for locations along roadways" and "property lines, in rural areas and in towns, were defined with post and rail fences" (Patrick 1983:24). The typical post-and-rail fence in Virginia consisted of five rails per eight-foot panel and stood about five feet high. Post-and-rail fences required considerable labor to build, including digging post holes, mortising and setting posts (Patrick 1983:36).

The Perron map depicts a Virginia fence (also known as zig-zag or worm fence) extending at a perpendicular line from the York Road and a second worm fence on the east side of the road bordering two fields. This type of fence was ubiquitous in Tidewater Virginia and was a distinctly American invention (Patrick 1983:32). "A worm fence might have contained as few as five or as many as twelve rails. An average of six to nine rails, or five to eight feet, is indicated by the historical record" (Patrick 1983:34). Worm fences were simple to assemble and disassemble. They needed relatively little labor to build when compared with post-in-rail fences and could be moved easily to a new location and reerected. If built well, the worm fence was an effective barrier that excluded livestock from agricultural fields (Patrick 1983:36). As such, worm fences were also effective barriers to troop movements.

By clearly illustrating a worm fence Perron underscored that there was more than one type of fence on the battlefield.

9. Ditches (*Cover and Concealment*). One participant in the battle mentions the presence of ditching along the side of the great road or lane to Gloucester Point. Before the battle, in an attempt to ambush the Virginia mounted militia and Lauzun's skirmishers, Johan Ewald placed his infantry detachment in "a ditch to the right of the road on the plain" (Ewald 1979:330).

10. Coleman's Swamp (*Key Terrain, Obstacle, Cover and Concealment*). Coleman Swamp is a significant freshwater swamp area bounding the east side of the battlefield. Principal road leading to Gloucester Point, the Great Road (precursor to US Route 17) is sited near the edge of this swamp. The Coleman Swamp is formed by an elevation change of approximately 10 feet. US Route 17 follows the Big Bethel Scarp but angles off near White Marsh and passes about 1.5 miles east of Gloucester Courthouse. The Coleman Swamp is largest area east of the scarp not cut by tidal streams.

11. Cornfields and Meadows (*Fields of Fire, Cavalry Action, Infantry Action*). Several of the contemporary accounts mention both meadow land and cornfields, and Perron's map makes a clear distinction between cultivated fields and fallow or meadow. The area in general around Gloucester Town was described as old fields and cleared land. Ewald reported that the area "The entire tract of land through which I roamed here consists of an exceedingly well cultivated and fertile plain" (Ewald 1979). Perron's map depicts this landscape by showing cultivated fields as closely spaced lines, while the meadow areas are shown as scrub. Around Seawell's Ordinary, Perron depicts two

agricultural fields, one to the east and one to the west of the road to Gloucester Town (modern US Route 17). In the vicinity of location "B", Perron shows four cultivated fields. Two of these are to the east of the main road, bounded by fencing and two are to the west, one associated with Seawell's Plantation and one with Whiting's Plantation (see discussion above).

Perron's account of the battlefield discusses both meadow and cornfield after the fighting was ended. He observed that "…we saw the legion of Lauzun in battle formation in a small meadow before a corn field, having in front of them within range of two musket shots a wood and two shacks" (Perron 1898:144). By Perron's account, Lauzun's battle line was between 200 and 300 yards from the treeline and the shacks.

As part of the documentary research undertaken for this project the Public Service Claims held at the Library of Virginia were examined. In many cases, citizens in Gloucester County filed for damages to private property caused by American, French, and Crown forces (Virginia Revolutionary War Public Service Claims 1781-83: Reports of Losses). In Gloucester County, 46 residents claimed damages against the British. Generally these damages consisted of loss of moveable property and real estate, such as confiscation of livestock, seizure of foodstuffs, notably bushels of corn, destruction of buildings and fencing, and often the removal of enslaved African Americans (whether these were forcefully or acts of self-determination on the part of the enslaved is not specified). It is likely that much of the property damage, especially to buildings, occurred in Gloucester Point and not in the larger surrounding county.

In a handful of cases, actual damage to land was reported. This damage took the form of crop loss reported as destruction of "corn hills" (Table 7.3). Several landowners claimed tens of thousands of corn hill damaged, namely the estate of John Thruston (16,470 corn hills), John Seawell (16,000 corn hills), Edward Busby (15,000 corn hills), the estate of William Busby (10,000 corn hills), and William Teagles (23,220 corn hills). Based on the research of Vanessa Patrick with Colonial Williamsburg, an acre could accommodate 2,700 corn hills, with a yield of 15 bushels per acre (Patrick 1983). Thus, the actual land damages reported in the Public Service Claims totals 22.47 acres. It is unclear whether all of the damaged corn hills and fields were located in the Battle of the Hook battlefield or part of the larger siege of Gloucester Point. But a glance at the damages claimed by John Seawell indicates that his property suffered considerable damage to buildings, fences, fields, cattle, hogs, enslaved workers, and land. The estate of John Thurston also exhibited similar damages, and to a lesser extent the properties of Edward Busby (William Busby's estate) and William Teagles.

The 1782 property tax for Gloucester County provides some additional details about these landowners and their holdings. John Thruston owned four town lots in Gloucester Point. These almost certainly are enumerated in his listing of damages and may account for the dwelling house ("pulled down and destroyed") the "large and almost new Store house" which was burned, the dairy and smokehouse, and possibly the "Large Garden destroyed" and the post and rail fencing. However, John Thruston's estate also included 350 acres that were not enumerated as town lots, and the damages to the 6.1-acre cornfield, fencing, dwelling, kitchen and storehouse may have been situated outside of the Gloucester Point community.

Other town lot owners in 1782 included Sarah Thruston (4 town lots) and the estate of Thomas Whiting (2 town lots). These owners also had tracts of land beyond the Point, Sarah Thruston holding 1001 acres and the Whiting estate with 1,410 acres; the location of this acreage is not specified in the tax list. John Seawell and Joseph Seawell were taxed for 520 and 560 acres of non-town land, respectively; the John Seawell tract is the parcel where Seawell's Plantation was located, while Joseph owned Seawell's Ordinary. Finally, the estate of Edward Busby – more correctly the estate of William Busby, with Edward Busby as administrator – was taxed for 95 acres of land. No Teagles were enumerated in the 1782 tax list.

Table 7.3. Summary of Owners claiming land damages, from the Public Service Claims.

Sufferer's Name	African Americans	Horse, Cattle, Sheep, Hogs	Dwelling, Tobacco, G rain, Spirits, Other Property
Estate of John Thruston, gentleman., deceased Proved by Jn^{o} Vaughan	1 negro man Phill (age 50) went to the enemy, returned and died in a few days	1 horse 3 years old taken & not returned	1 Dwelling House (30x20 feet), pulled down and destroyed Large & almost new Store house, burnt Dairy and Smoak House, pulled down Large Garden destroyed a parcel of new posts pails and rails and plank, destroyed Cornfield about 45 barrels [= 16,470 corn hills] with the rails etc., destroyed Dwelling House Kitchen & Store house, damaged
Elizabeth Seawell Proved by Jn^{o} Seawell	1 man Will (age 26)		Elizabeth Seawells own losses 100 fowl different kinds
John Seawell Proved by J. Seawell himself	Jacob (age 40) went to the enemy returned and died within [days] after his return. Toby (age 25) Abraham (age 20) Dick (age 55) Peter (age 20)	2 Draft oxen	100 Bushels Indian Corn 300 Bushels Barley in the Straw 60 Bushels Oats 300 fowl of different kinds 1 Horse cart
John Seawell Proved by J. Vaughan himself		29 hogs 6 Cattle	1 Dwelling house (36x26 feet), burnt down, 1 Smoak house, burnt 1 Billings (?) house & Stable, burnt 1 dwelling house (28x16 feet) pulled down ½ acre of paling destroyed, 1 kitchen (16 x12 feet), destroyed 1 Cornfield 16,000 hills with new fencing destroyed 1 ½ Lots with paling, destroyed 2 Corn houses, pulled down 5000 ^{lb} lignum vita about 5 £ worth 1 Bed 5 bedshades 3 Tables 7 Chairs 150 fowl of Different kinds
William Busbys Estate	1 Girl Rachel (age 4)	10 head Cattle 20 hogs	10,000 Corn hills and the fencing around it, destroyed

Proved by Edward Busby		1 horse 9 years old	
Edward Busby Proved by Edward Busby himself		11 Cattle 7 hogs	15,000 Corn hills and fencing around it, destroyed 1 Kitchen (12x8 feet), destroyed ½ Lot garden, destroyed
William Teagles Proved by himself	1 Woman Alice (age 60) 1 Boy Gloucester (age 14)	5 Sheep 5 Brood Sows 9 Barrows 12 Shoots 7 Pigs 2 Cows 2 Calves	20 Bushels wheat 30 Bushels Oats Framing & plank for a house (20x 28 feet) 1000 rails A field of Corn about 52 ½ Barrels [= 23,220 corn hills] 2 Barrels old Corn & small houses (?) 4 large window frames & 3 small d^o with Sashes 35 pieces of glass 8 by 10 A Garden destroyed & houses in a Lot damaged 6 m nails of different sorts

12. Redoubt K: (*Obstacle, Avenue of Approach, Cover and Concealment, Field of Fire*). The defensive work or redoubt constructed on the Gloucester Road is a prominent landscape feature on several period maps (Figures 7.10 through 7.12). Indeed, this Great Redoubt serves to link three contemporary maps – Ewald's sketch of the Gloucester Point area, Rochambeau's unfinished map, and the Perron map. The redoubt is shown on all three of these maps, providing a significant landscape feature of the Battle of the Hook Battlefield.

Redoubt K is identified on the Perron map as "the Grand French Redoubt" (Perron 1898). Lee recalls that the York Road, referred to as a long lane in this location, extended for a half-mile "…where it terminated at a small redoubt facing the road (Lee 1869:497). Mercer recalled that the lane was longer, one mile in length, but that it too "…terminated in a small advance'd redoubt, commanding the main road…" (Mercer 1892:58). He elaborated on the area around the redoubt, noting that

> to the right of this redoubt facing Gloucester appear'd a post & rail fence which running to the right, at right angles with the road, enclos'd the old field in the rear. In this old field the British horse appear'd to be form'd in line, advanc'd of the redoubt (Mercer 1892:58).

Fighting at The Hook did not include the redoubt and the Crown Forces abandoned the position at the end of the battle. The landscape feature, however, is depicted on the Perron map (Figure 7.10), Ewald's diary map (Figure 7.11), and on the unfinished map by Rochambeau (Figure 3.4). Today, this location is situated west of the former Great Road leading through Hayes, and there may still be surface evidence of this redoubt still extant in a stand of trees (Figure 7.12).

Figure 7.10. Detail of Perron map, showing placement of Redoubt K at intersection of the Great Road/Lane to Gloucester Point, at the current intersection of Hayes Road and Hook Road. Note the smaller circular redoubts at "I" and to the north of Redoubt K. North is to the top of this image.

Figure 7.11. Detail of Ewald's Map, showing the location of Redoubt K. The redoubt is shown on the road, with cleared ground around it (land that had brush and trees removed), and the belt of woods north of it.

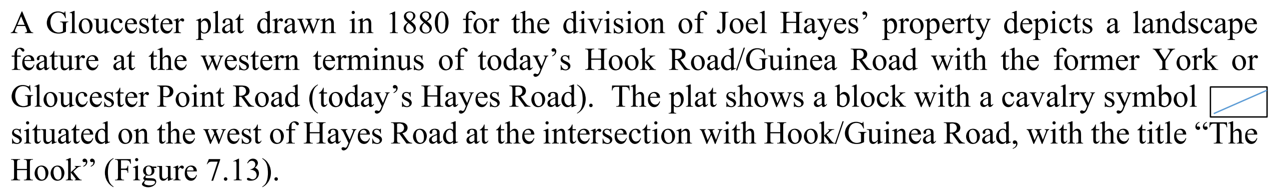
A Gloucester plat drawn in 1880 for the division of Joel Hayes' property depicts a landscape feature at the western terminus of today's Hook Road/Guinea Road with the former York or Gloucester Point Road (today's Hayes Road). The plat shows a block with a cavalry symbol  situated on the west of Hayes Road at the intersection with Hook/Guinea Road, with the title "The Hook" (Figure 7.13).

Figure 7.12. Wooded area where the project team hypothesizes Redoubt K was situated. View is looking west from the intersection of Hook Road and Hayes Road (photographer Wade Catts, June 25, 2019).

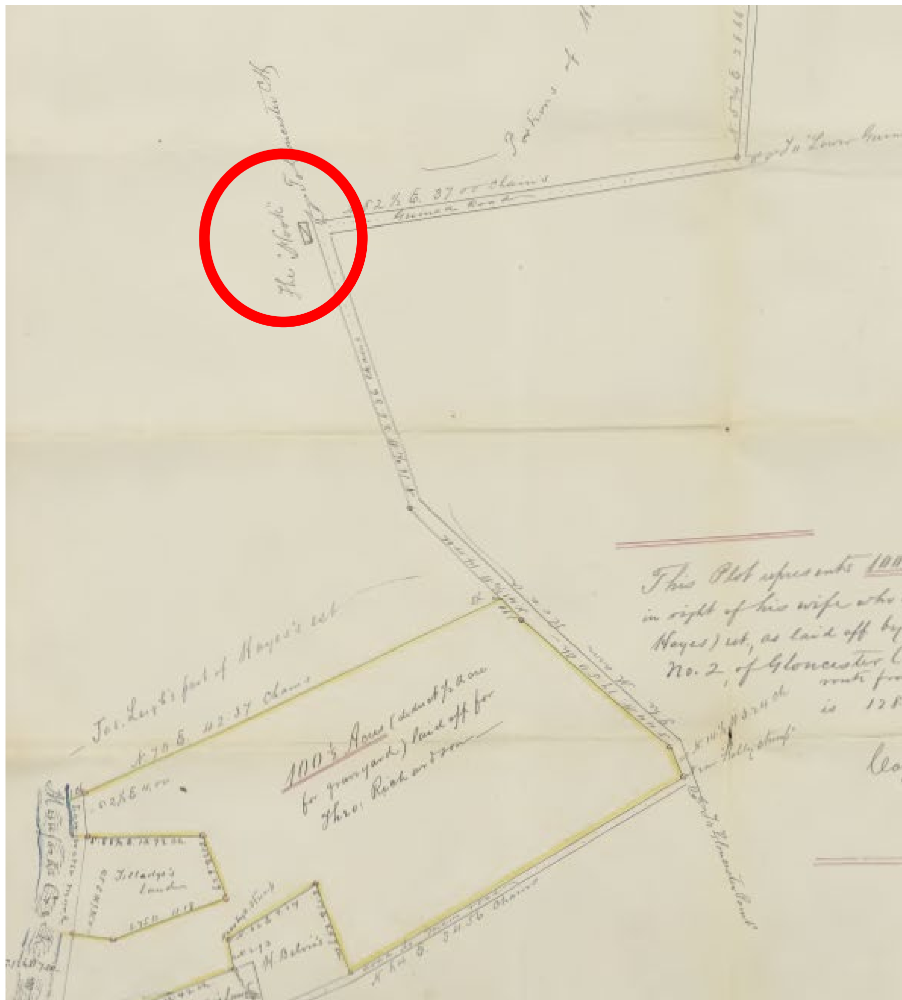


Figure 7.13. Plat of the Division of Joel Hayes' Property, showing the location of the cavalry symbol (in red) on the map identified as "The Hook". The location is currently at the intersection of Hook/Guinea Road and Hayes Road. North is to the top of this image.

This documentary record, depicting this location nearly one century after the battle and the creation of the redoubt, may be the earliest reference to the battlefield being at this place. Subsequent commemorative and informational markers were placed at this location beginning in the 1930s. The current informational markers are situated on the east side of Hayes Road, nearly opposite this location. There are Unconfirm/unverified reports that battlefield burials were discovered in the 1980s during the construction of the Hardee's restaurant at the southeast corner of the intersection of US 17 and Hook Road (Thane Harpole, electronic communication, July 14, 2021). This location is approximately 800 feet east of the possible location of Redoubt K.

13. Gloucester Courthouse (*Avenue of Approach*). Gloucester County was officially created in 1651, when it was separated from existing York County (Figure 7.14). The town of Gloucester Court House was originally named the Town of Botetourt when it as formally established in 1769. A courthouse has served the county at the site since circa 1680 and is the source of the modern-day town name. The site was originally developed as the legal and administrative center of a rural

county but has developed into the primary town of central Gloucester County, while still maintaining its legal and administrative focus. The developmental pattern of the town was firmly established after the 1766 construction of the third courthouse and the 1774 construction of the Botetourt Hotel shortly thereafter (Pollard et al. 2010).

In 1781 Gloucester Courthouse was an important rendezvous point for the County militia. In their pensions, militiamen William Armsted (Armistead), Charles Bettsworth (Bettisworth), William Callis, John Huggett, and Richard Payne all commented that Gloucester Courthouse was a clearly identifiable destination point (Armsted 1834; Bettsworth 1832; Callis 1834; Huggett 1836; Payne 1836). As militiaman Huggett deposed, he turned out with the county militia and "marched to Gloucester Court house, thence to Hubbard's Old Field, thence to Ware Church, thence to Sewell's Old Field where he was stationed some time…. (Huggett 1836). William Armsted, possible an African American, was called out twice in 1781 and deposed that the first time "…they marched to Gloucester C.H. and heard that the British has retreated so returned home…." (Armsted 1834). Richard Payne deposed that he was stationed "at and near Gloucester Court House and at a Church (Weir's) [Ware Church] …." (Payne 1836).

Like other large public buildings in the region, the Gloucester Courthouse served as a hospital following the siege. Care of the wounded and sick, whether French or Crown Forces, was a concern. Several months after the surrender, in January 1782, William Reynolds wrote to Virginia's Governor Harrison that it was not possible for the county's magistrates to conduct their business because the Courthouse "…is used by the French as an Hospital, the variety of disorders therein, and the disagreeable smell of the House deter'd the Gentlemen from going in….(Reynolds 1883:44).

Figure 7.14. Gloucester Court House (photographer Wade Catts, June 11, 2019).

14. Dixon's Mill (aka Robin's Mill) (*Key Terrain, Avenue of Approach*). Located at the head of Wilson's Creek at the modern crossroad of Roanes, Dixon's Mill was an important road intersection in 1781 (Figures 7.15 and 7.16). The unfinished Rochambeau map identifies the area and shows the mill pond associated with the mill (modern Robins Pond) (Figure 3.4). Allied forces occupied the high ground at the Mill in an encampment on the evening of October 2/3 (Dabney and Martin 1973:53; Mercer 1892:55; Taliaferro 1894:23). Militiaman Benjamin Hope deposed that him unit encamped at "John Dickson's" (Hope 1832). Dixon's Mill is depicted as a landscape feature on the Vicomte d'Arott 1781 manuscript map.

French officer Joachim du Perron described the camp at Dixon's Mill: "…We were in two lines; behind us to the right and left, we had a deep ravine; lined with woods and pools of water that turned mills. Before us we had the great road parallel to the alignment of our camp: our camp guards were placed there…. (Perron 1781:143). Virginia militiaman William Pattie recalled the militia commanded by Brigadier General Weedon relocated several times before joining French forces at Dixon's Mill. Pattie wrote that he "… marched under Captain Bumberry to Hubbard's old fields in Gloucester County – from thence to Ware Church near the Court House of said County, and there remained until joined by the French troops at Dixon's old fields – thence under William Campbell who commanded our Regiment…." (Pattie 1833).

Figure 7.15. View from the high ground at Roane, looking east at the intersection of Route 629. Allied forces encamped at this location the night before the Battle of the Hook and use the road leading east as an avenue of approach (photographer Wade Catts, June 10, 2019).

Figure 7.16. Ruin of Dixon's (Robbins) Mill (photographer Wade Catts, June 10, 2019).

Pattie's reference to "Dixon's old fields" likely refers to the high ground south of the mill and west of the road (today's Road 628/29). The ground offered an excellent point of observation and defensive position for the allied forces.

15. Ware Parish Church *(Avenue of Approach)*. The evening prior to the Battle of the Hook, Virginia militia under the command of Brigadier General Weedon bivouacked at Ware Church. Ware Church is situated about 1.3 miles north of Gloucester Courthouse, on Route 14 (Figure 7.17). Ware Parish Church is historically significant not only as one of the earliest extant churches in the state, but as an excellent example of the rectilinear form of the colonial Virginia church (McCartney 2001:112). It was long thought that Ware Parish Church was built in 1693, but more recently the date 1715 has been accepted as a more accurate date based upon the architectural evidence. The church was certainly standing during the rectorship (1679-1723) of James Clack, who lies buried just outside the chancel wall.

Brigadier General Weedon addressed a letter to General Washington on October 3 1781, identifying this location as his temporary headquarters. A number of Virginian's identified Ware Church as a camping point, including John Hope (1832), William Pattie (1833), Richard Payne (1836), James Thomas (1832), and John White (1832). As White deposed the militia formed near the border of King and Queen County and Gloucester County, at a location called Hubbards Field. As White recalled, "The standing encampment just before the siege was up Hubbard's Old Fields, thence they marched down to Weir [Ware] Church and thence to Seawell's Old Fields that were about five hundred men at Weir Church the company to which he belonged marched on ahead, got into an engagement with the enemy and drove them back into Gloucester Town before the others came up…." (White 1832). King William County militiaman George New remembered that "…we were marched to Ware Church in Gloucester County he thinks at this place they were joined by some French troops were marched from thence to Sowels on the North side of York River at which place they were joined by the French Army…." (New 1835).

Figure 7.17. Ware Parish Church (photographer Wade Catts, June 11, 2019).

16. Abington Parish Church (*Key Terrain, Avenue of Approach, Cover and Concealment*). Abington Church was built circa 1753-54, replacing an earlier nearby structure (Dabney and Martin 1973:54; McCartney 2001:110). It is located on the east side of US Route 17 approximately 0.6 miles south of the intersection with Route 614 a short distance south of White Marsh Farm (Figure 7.18).

The cruciform church building is surrounded by a chest-high brick wall. On October 4, Jäger Captain Johan Ewald observed that Abingdon Church "…is a very good position. It is built in the form of a cross, and the churchyard is enclosed by a wall of the same kind of bricks" (Ewald 1979:326).

Following the Battle of the Hook, Abington Church was used as a hospital for French and Virginian troops. The decision to convert the church to a temporary hospital was reached on the day of the battle. Joachim du Perron wrote in his journal that "After three hours of marching in a rather flat and well cultivated countryside, we passed near a church [Abingdon Church], where we left a guard; it was planned for this church to serve us as a hospital" (Perron 1781:143).

Figure 7.18. Abingdon Parish Church (photographer Wade Catts, June 25, 2019).

17. Gloucester Point (Tyndall's Point) (*Decisive Terrain, Observation, Fields of Fire, Cover and Concealment)*

The Crown Forces fortifications at Gloucester Point were decisive terrain during the Yorktown Campaign. Retention of the Point was essential to the control of both the York River and Yorktown and was an integral part of the overall defensive position of the Crown Forces. Holding Gloucester Point allowed for a possible 'escape route' for Cornwallis' army, should the need arise. Further, the position at Yorktown would be untenable if Gloucester Point fell into Allied hands (Greene 2005:37-40).

Cornwallis seized Gloucester Point on the evening of August 1 and the fortifying of the village preceded the erection of fortifications across the York River in Yorktown (Hatch 1940:267). The fortifications consisted of a series of four earthen and timber redoubts numbered (from west to east) 1 to 4 stretching across the Point from the shoreline to shoreline, effectively building a defensive line across the peninsula (Figure 7.19). This position consisted of outworks, a main defensive line with strongpoints, and several interior works. Its placement on a "shelving ridge" made it difficult for the Allied forces advancing from the land to form a good image of the defenses (Perron 1781:170). These redoubts along an outer defensive line were linked by a shallow entrenchment or ditch, a wooden palisade, and abatis (felled trees).

Figure 7.19. Detail of Gloucester Point, from "Sketch of the posts of York Town and Gloucester Point shewing the French and rebel attacks upon the former in October, 1781". Henry Clinton Papers, Map 757. William L. Clements Library Image Bank.

After the capture of the Point, Perron toured the defensive works, and described them as

> formed by four strong redoubts with a fraise and palisade, encircled by a fosse and as well constructed as was possible in such dry and sandy terrain; they [the Crown Forces] had been obliged to embank their parapets to prevent the earth from sliding down. These four redoubts … were joined together by a row of large wooden posts raised up high and planted so close together that only a gun carrel [barrel?] could be passed between them. In addition, three paces in front of all else, there was a dense abatis of well interlocked trees that followed the contour of the works and stretched on both sides to within a few fathom measures of the water. …Fifteen paces in front of each redoubt there was a heap of hay, pitch and other combustible materials that they could have set fire in case of a night attack Perron 1781:170).

Redoubts 2 and 3 were placed on either side of the Great Road leading into Gloucester Point where several roads intersected and that provided access to the interior of the peninsula. Redoubt 1 was placed west of Redoubt 2. Its placement was intended to protect avenues of approach from that

direction. Redoubt No. 4 lay to the extreme right overlooking the river and a large ravine. This was a good observation point and served to guard the shoreline (Greene 2005:38; Hatch 1940:270).

Three of the redoubts were supplied with artillery pieces: Redoubt 1 – three 24-lbers; Redoubt 2 – three 6-lbers; Redoubt 3 – one 6-lber. Redoubt 4 had no cannon (Greene 2005:38). In addition to the redoubts, the defenses were further strengthened with a series of artillery batteries. Battery 1 was situated a short distance from Redoubt 4 and contained four 6-lbers. Battery 2 as at the far western end of the line and also contained four 6-lbers. Inside the fortified line at the Point, Battery 3 was placed on the bluff to control the river approaches. Battery 3 was a powerful artillery post armed with six 18-lbers and two 12-lbers, providing some protection to the ships anchored along the shore between Gloucester Point and Sarah's Creek. Besides these principal defensive works there were two other redoubts, one south of Redoubt 1 on the bluff overlooking the tidal marshes, and a redan between Battery 3 and Redoubt 4.

Beyond the principal defensive line, north of and inland from the Point, Crown Forces also constructed a series of small earthen redans or fleches and covered their fronts with felled trees. These redans are visible on the contemporary maps of the Point (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). After the surrender of Cornwallis' Army, Perron described these redans as

> …nothing but little earth thrown up at a height that only covered a man to his waist, the ground was worn, and there seemed to have been posts there and I even thought I saw cannon tracks in one or two. The land between these redans and the entrenchments was covered with holes where fires had been made and tents placed, and I have since [learned] that they [the Crown Forces] camped there before our arrival forced them to camp inside their works (Perron 1781:170).

The fields of fire for the batteries and redoubts were also cleared of foliage, perhaps as far about 1,000 yards beyond the point (Hatch 1940:269). Tarleton reported that Gloucester Point

> …is situated on a point of land on the north side of York river, and consists at the time of about a dozen houses. A marshy creek extends along part of the right flank: The ground is clear and level for a mile in front: At that distance stands a wood: The space which it occupies is narrowed by the river on the left, and a creek on the right: Beyond the gorge the country is open and uncultivated….(Tarleton 1787:371-372).

The Crown Forces garrison at Gloucester Point found shelter inside these lines and were spread throughout the town (Figure 7.20). Officers took quarters in the available houses while the troops sheltered in tents pitched above and below the bluffs (Hatch 1940:270). Within the garrison were a large number of enslaved laborers, some of whom were freedom seekers and that had come into the British lines (Hatch 1940:283). Also within the lines were horses, cattle, and other livestock intended as mounts for the dragoons and as food for the defenders.

In the last quarter century, professional archaeological survey of a Revolutionary War resources within Gloucester Point have identified elements of British fortifications and a Revolutionary War-period cemetery (Hazzard and McCartney 1987; Higgins and McCartney 1991; Higgins et al.

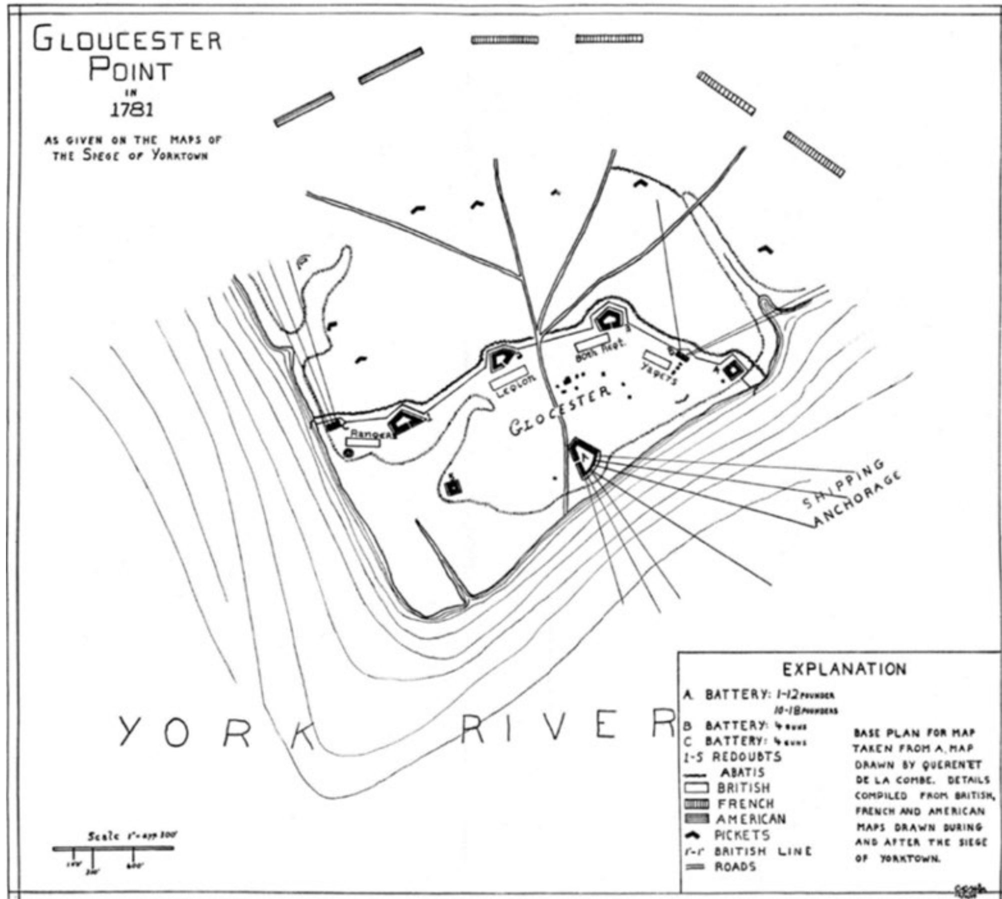


Figure 7.20. Sketch of the Gloucester Point defenses, from Charles E. Hatch, Jr., "Gloucester Point in the Siege of Yorktown, 1781", The William and Mary Quarterly 20, number 2 (April 1940), between pages 268 and 269.

1991; Higgins et al. 1992; Higgins et al. 1997; McCartney and Hazzard 1980; Sprinkle 1996:261; Harpole et al. 2003; Hazard and McCartney 2004; Torp et al. 2010). While portions of Gloucester Point have been built up and developed, and some cutting of the river bluff is reported, the integrity of some of these resources is quite high and archaeological potential is good (Figure 7.21). Archaeological resources within the Gloucester Point Archaeological District (GPAD) are extensive and include remains of the Crown Forces fortifications, burial space, and camps dating to circa 1781. Archaeological investigations in 2003 associated with the placement of an underground communications conduit resulted in the discovery of a fortification ditch associated with the Crown Forces occupation of Gloucester Point. A button stamped with a crown and an "80" was recovered during the project likely associated with the British 80th Regiment of Foot. In 2005 data recovery investigations at the site of the Seawater Research Laboratory (SRL) of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) campus at Gloucester Point, Virginia recovered archeological resources associated with prehistoric Native American occupations and nearly continuous historic occupations from the seventeenth century to the present. The VIMS campus occupies a large portion of the GPAD, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Overall, the defensive position created by the Crown Forces at Gloucester Point constituted a 'defense in depth' and was rather formidable. As Perron observed: "All the reconnaissance that [Allied forces] had been made every day had succeeded only in coming within view of the small redans, which had simply been mistaken for redoubts…" He went on to note that had the Allied forces possessed better intelligence about the layout of the fortifications, they would have realized that a direct assault on the position "…was impracticable" (Perron 1781:171).

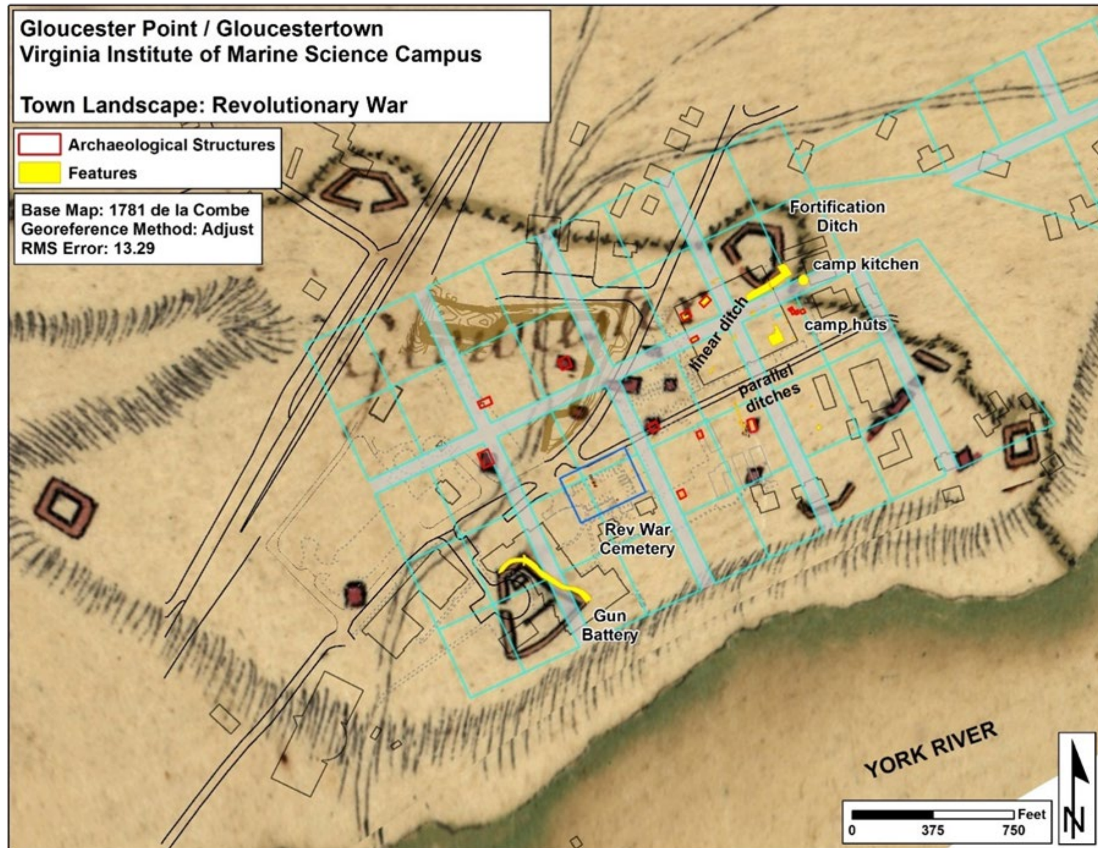


Figure 7.21. Overview map of archaeological resources dating to the Revolutionary War period at Gloucester Point. Map courtesy of Thane Harpole, Fairfield Foundation.

8. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

The study of battlefields requires a unique combination of military history, archaeology, and terrain or landscape analysis (Foard 2009; Foard and Morris 2012). Not only is it important to know the who, what, where, when, and how of the specifics of the battle, but knowledge of the historical development of the place the battle occurred is critical in order to understand the event and the subsequent changes that may have taken place.

Assessment of archaeological potential for resources associated with the battle is presented below. Since no formal archaeological survey was conducted as part of this study, this assessment is intended to review potential for battle-related artifacts. For many years the prevailing view of battlefields and archaeological potential was dominated by the opinion put forward by Ivor Noël Hume that battle sites could offer little beyond metal artifacts and burials, certainly nothing archaeologically or historically significant (Noël Hume 1968:188). In the last thirty years this view has changed dramatically, beginning with the work at the Little Big Horn National Park in the mid-1980s and now occurring with increasing regularity at Revolutionary War sites (cf. Babits 1998; Catts et al. 2014; Catts and Balicki 2019; Connor and Scott 1998; Espenshade et al. 2002; Fox 1993; Geier and Winter 1994; Geier and Potter 2000; Harper 2019; Mancl et al. 2013; Orr 1994; Scott et al. 1989; Scott and McFeaters 2011; Selig et al. 2013; Sgarlata et al. 2019; Sivilich 2009; Smith et al. 2009). Recent studies of battlefields using metal detection as a method of survey have revealed that considerable amounts of battlefield debris, such as lead shot, buckles, buttons, etc., do survive and can be useful in determining the course of the battle.

Fields of conflict are temporary, albeit seminal, events, superimposed on preexisting cultural landscapes. This landscape witnessed a variety of cultural actions - transportation systems, agricultural development, settlement patterns, population change – that exerted influence on the land prior to the engagement and that continue to exert influences on the field after the battle. Land use such as pasture and field patterns, farmsteads and husbandry buildings change as they give way to sub-divisions and commercial development; roads are altered, vacated, rerouted or widened, woodlands are reduced or removed from the landscape. Despite these landscape alterations, the archaeological evidence of conflict is often quite resilient and can be discovered through archaeological investigation.

8.1 Previous Archaeological Study of the Siege of Gloucester Point

In his overview of military sites archaeology in Virginia, John Sprinkle, Jr., notes that due to its historical importance "…Yorktown is the best known of Virginia's Revolutionary War battlefields. With three episodes of excavation in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1970s, it is also the most extensively investigated military archaeological site and is the subject of at least nine research reports" (Sprinkle 1996:260). Since the 1930s considerable archaeological work has been conducted at locations associated with the Siege of Yorktown (see Greene 2005:37-67 for an overview of the previous archaeological investigations at British positions). These efforts have, however, largely focused principally on the fortifications and entrenchments at Yorktown, but only to a lesser extent at Gloucester Point. Revolutionary War battlefields in Virginia have received even less attention, with the notable exceptions of the Spencer's Ordinary and Green Spring battlefields (Outlaw et al. 2010).

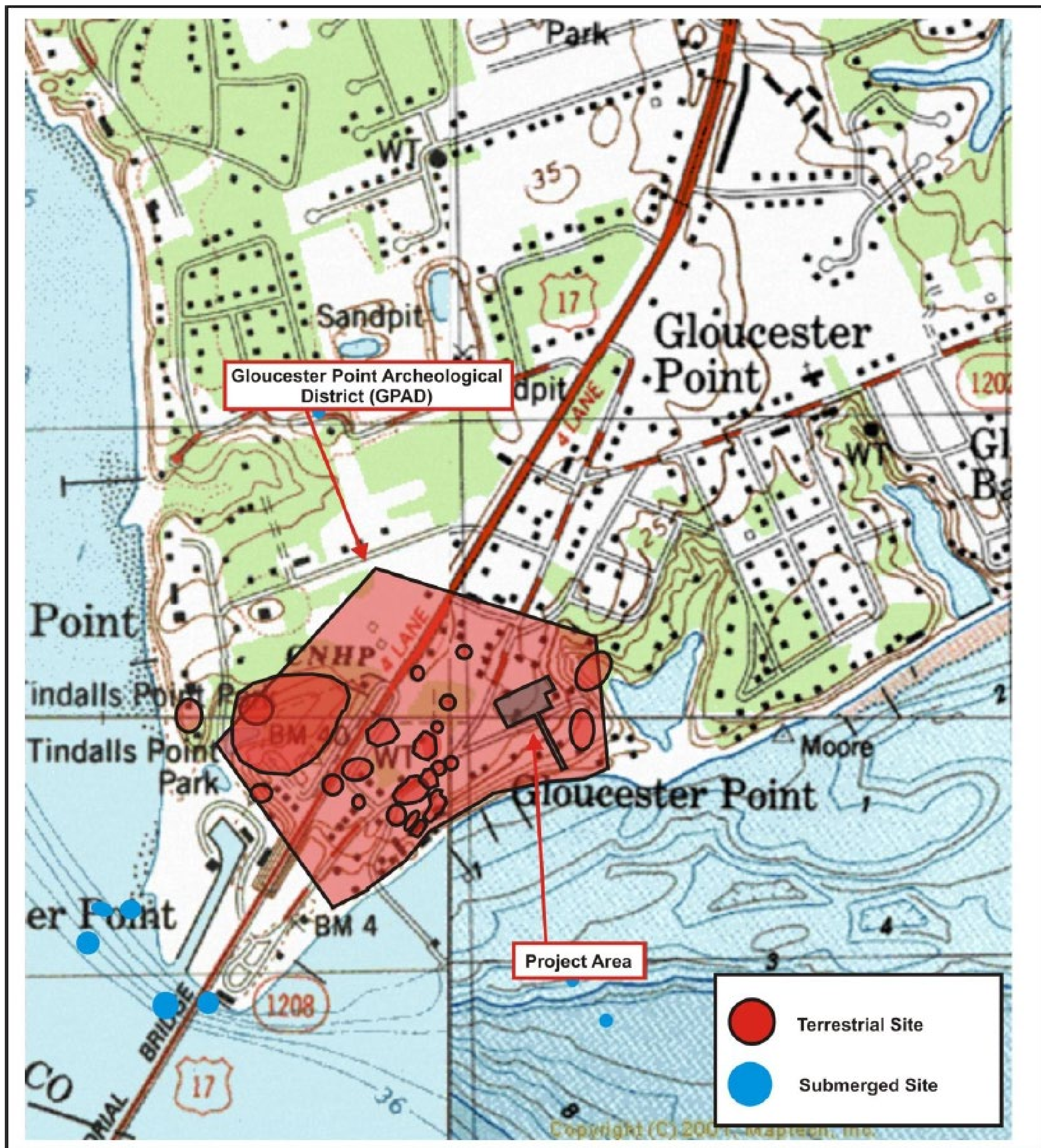


Figure 8.1 Areas of archaeological investigation at Gloucester Point, and the boundary of the Gloucester Point Archaeological District (from Torp et al. 2010).

The archaeological investigations at Gloucester Point have been undertaken since the early 1980s and are generally associated with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). These various investigations have uncovered portions of Crown Forces redoubts, camp kitchens, encampment areas, and a cemetery (McCartney and Hazzard 1980; Hazzard and McCartney 1985; Higgins and McCartney 1991; Higgins et al. 1991; Higgins et al. 1992; Higgins et al. 1997; Harpole et al. 2003; Hazzard and McCartney 2004; Torpe et al. 2010). The material remains that have been recovered

from within the British positions at Gloucester Point are remarkable and demonstrate that subsurface remains of the siege are extant. In 2010 the data recovery investigations undertaken as part of the construction of the Seawater Research Laboratory (SRL) at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) campus at Gloucester Point, Virginia identified archaeological features associated with the Revolutionary War and the 1781 Siege (Torp et al. 2010). Revolutionary War features include several structural-related features that appear to be specific military architecture, an earthen camp kitchen, and fortification features. Artifacts recovered reflect the full range of military items available to the British, Hessian and Loyalist forces at the Point. The potential for archaeological evidence of military activities is generally moderate to high for the overall fortified area at Gloucester Point.

The previous archaeological studies in Gloucester Point are summarized in the work most recently completed by the Ottery Group for the SRL at VIMS (Torp et al. 2010). The conclusions of their study are applicable to the larger study of the Battle of the Hook, the Yorktown Campaign on the Middle Peninsula, and the importance of the archaeological record as linked to a larger cultural landscape. As noted by the authors: "The [SRL] project demonstrates that sites are better understood as part of a continuum of overlapping landscapes, with the interpretation of discrete features relative to similar chronological elements across the landscape rather than solely to those within close proximity. The landscape approach not only fosters better management it also fosters better interpretation" (Torp et al. 2010:3). A second important conclusion is the need for archaeological management plan for the resources, not only within Gloucester Point but throughout the area. The work on the VIMS campus demonstrated that intact archaeological resources are still extant despite modern development and intrusions. The archaeological resources associated with the siege are not only found in undeveloped areas or between buildings, but instead are located under early structures with smaller footprints and shallow foundations. Third, the Ottery Group recommended that the artifact assemblages from the Gloucester Point sites needs to be more fully analyzed, interpreted, and reported to the public. "The extensive artifact assemblage [from SRL] underscores the need for the analysis of other significant artifact collections, specifically the large assemblages from David Hazzard's salvage excavations in 1979 and 1981 (Hazzard and McCartney 2004) as well as other salvage excavations that have never been catalogued and analyzed" (Torp et al. 2010:3). Finally, the work within the Gloucester Point National Register Archaeological District should be brought to the attention of the public to raise awareness of the fragile archaeological record and to develop an interest in stewardship and the buried past.

8.2 Allied Encampments

Short-term camps occupied for several days are distinguishable by their more robust archaeological signature, since large numbers of soldiers and camp occupants leave physical evidence of their passing in the form of excavated pits or kitchens, lost or discarded ammunition, lost or discarded personal items, uniform parts, and food remains, and that signature can be present for years. For example, the American camp occupied by Washington's Army for eight days (18-26 September 1777) in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania was still marked by physical remains nearly six decades after the event. In a reminiscence of the "camp at Pottsgrove" written at the beginning of the twentieth century, the landowner recalled that in his childhood (circa 1820s) the area occupied by the American camp was characterized by "…enough leaden musket balls and grape and canister balls and pieces of shell to fill an old straw bread basket full" and that the

butchering area for livestock to supply the troops was still readily apparent (Bertolet 1903:3).

Researchers conducting archaeological surveys of the series of short-term camps occupied by the French Army as it marched through Connecticut in 1781-82 and Virginia in 1782 have developed an archaeological "signature" for identifying French encampments (Comer 2013; Harper et al. 1999:135-136, 145-153; Harper 2019). Professional armies of the period, such as the British, French, and by this time in the war, the Americans, had prescribed methods of encamping that were well-defined and regimented (Comer 2013:95-98; Whitehorne 2006). Based on field investigations and historical data, the researchers at the French camps in Connecticut and Virginia concluded that short-term camps – in this case usually about four days in duration – would contain artifacts associated with uniforms (buttons, buckles), arms and ammunition (including sword and scabbard parts), personal items (coins, knives, lead seals, eating utensils, ceramics and glass), iron animal shoes, a variety of iron hardware, and artillery parts. As the authors noted, "short-term camps had minimal impact on the landscape and their remains are ephemeral" (Harper et al.:1999:153). Given the nature of these camps, artifacts marking these places are likely to exhibit a wide distribution and a low density and to be found "quite shallow [in the ground], having been simply dropped on the ground surface" (Harper et al. 1999:136). These two examples are for camps that were occupied for several days.

While the encampment in this vicinity would have left strong physical evidence immediately after its occupation, over time the evidence of the American camps would have diminished. This is particularly true with the post-World War II suburbanization which engulfed the US Route 17 corridor. The ground disturbance caused by subdivision construction and commercial development likely obliterated much of the evidence of the encampment. Physical evidence, such as regimental and/or plain buttons of various sizes, metal fixtures for polearms and flags, unfired lead shot, sword and scabbard parts, cannon balls, horse furniture (saddle or bridle parts, horseshoes), wagon furniture, and personal artifacts may be present, but due to the subsequent landuse and land alteration these sorts of artifacts or features will be a rarity, and artifacts will likely be isolated finds. With the exception of obviously military artifacts (marked regimental buttons, accoutrement plates, etc.), it will be difficult to distinguish other types of artifacts dating from the period of the camp from local civilian artifacts of the same period such as ceramics and glass.

In the Hook Battlefield area, we as yet have no traditional or printed accounts of the recovery of artifacts associated with the camps or the battle actions. Inquiries and communications from the project team with local metal detectorists did not result in anyone coming forward to report recovery of battle-related artifacts from within the Core Area. However, artifacts that could relate to the battle have been found from several different areas within the Battlefield Boundary over the years (Thane Harpole, electronic communication, July 14, 2021). To date, there has been no systematic effort to reach out to the local community to identify artifacts related to the Battle of the Hook and identify sites where they were found; such an effort is recommended by the authors of this report. Within the encampment position for the Crown Forces at Gloucester Point, archaeological resources have been identified and mark the British lines. Perron reports that the British forces apparently encamped outside of their entrenchment line prior to the investment of the Point – he noted that presence of holes where fires and tents had been placed north of the entrenched line. It is likely that features associated with the Allied and Crown Forces camps are

still extant within the Battlefield Boundary.

8.3 Battlefield Burials

The number of casualties at the Battle of the Hook varies according to who and when the report was made. Tarleton reported English losses as Lieutenant Moir and eleven men, with Allied losses of fourteen (Lee 1998:498). Jäger Captain Johan Ewald, who was present in the fight, recorded that Crown Forces losses were "one officer and four men killed and nine men wounded by the lances of the French hussars" while "of the French, Comte Dillon, lieutenant colonel with the hussars, was wounded and twelve to fourteen men were killed and wounded" (Ewald 1979:330). Pennsylvanian Richard Butler (not present at the battle) reported French losses as not more than six men killed, six wounded, and three officers wounded, while Tarleton had one officer killed and several wounded (Butler 1864:107). General Choisy, penning a note to General Washington at 2pm from Seawell's Ordinary on the afternoon of the battle, estimated that "…We can esteem they have 30 Men killed or wounded…. (Choisy 1781). The person who would have had the best information, Colonel Francis Mercer, unfortunately did not give report casualties for either Crown of Allied forces, with the exception of Lieutenant Moir of the 23rd Regiment of Foot (Mercer 1892:59).

Within a day of the action, the casualty numbers reported among the allies were solidified in the various diaries and official reports and it is likely that the duc de Lazun controlled the narrative. Known for self-aggrandizement and exaggeration, the duc de Lazun's numbers should perhaps be discounted, as he boasted that Tarleton "…lost one officer, some fifty men, and I made a rather large number of prisoners…." (Lauzun 1912:327). However, Rochambeau reported Tarleton's overall losses as fifty men, while he was more detailed in reporting French casualties as "…the Sieur Billy Dillon, and Dutre, second captain, were wounded; three hussars were killed, and eleven wounded" (Rochambeau 1877:226). Claude Blanchard, noting that he "learned these details on the 4th" [October, the day following the engagement] dutifully stated that Tarleton was wounded and thrown from his horse with fifty men killed and wounded, while French casualties were three killed and eleven wounded (among the later three officers and Count Dillon) (Blanchard 1876:146). Virginian St. George Tucker also reported Tarleton's losses as fifty killed and wounded and the French losses "three hussars (French dragoons) killed, and eleven, with an officer, wounded" (Coleman 1877:214-215). Diarist William Ball Blackall also recorded the same numbers of killed and wounded reported by Rochambeau, Blanchard, and Tucker (Blackall 1781).

8.4 General Burial Context (much of this discussion is derived from Selig and Catts 2019)

Where and how were the dead buried? All armies had and have regulations for the burial of soldiers, but the demands of war and nature such as the vicinity of the enemy or the time available for burial frequently overruled these regulations. The time of year of the battle (e.g., is the ground frozen or soft), the composition of the ground (e.g., does it contain many stones), how many dead have to be buried, were the dead soldiers friend or foe, officer or enlisted man, and who buried the dead all impacted how, when and where battle casualties were buried – or more accurately, disposed of.

As Selig and Catts (2019) have noted in their historical context for Revolutionary War burials:

> "Historical documentation describing burial practices at battlefields of the American War of Independence provides a range of first-person accounts on how armies and battle survivors dealt with the corpses lying on their fields. Compiling the written record for the treatment of bodies is essential for understanding the potential archaeological evidence that may survive for battlefield burials. Given the number of historically reported battlefield dead, it is noteworthy that only a handful of battlefield burials have been excavated archaeologically."

We are making a distinction here between dead buried on the actual battlefield and dead buried as a result of wounds or hospitalization. Our research indicates that these are often treated very differently. Previous archaeological investigations at the VIMS campus, a location that was situated within the Crown Forces lines at Gloucester Point, has identified likely military burials. Contemporary Crown Forces accounts mention that they carried off some of their wounded, so it is reasonable to assume that some soldiers who died from wounds during the Battle of the Hook were buried within the defensive lines at the Point, while others were likely buried closer to the battlefield. Archaeological testing in the 1980s and in the early twenty-first century has identified a number of graves in what may be a fairly extensive cemetery (Hazard and McCartney 2004; Thane Harpole, electronic communication, July 14, 2021). The burials uncovered are arranged in rows, spaced closely together, and appear to have been buried fairly shallow, which fits the signature of hasty military burials that is more fully detailed below. At Gloucester Point, none of the burials have been fully excavated, so we don't know who these graves are (British, Hessian, Loyalist, civilian), and if they were buried before or after the surrender.

We know very little about the burial of the dead at the Hook. There are unverified reports that human remains were uncovered when the Hardee's restaurant was constructed at the intersection of US Route 17 and Hook Road (Thane Harpole, electronic communication, July 14, 2021). Lacking first-hand documentation or physical remains within the Hook Battlefield, we can turn to descriptions of the burial practices at other battlefields of the American War of Independence to provide suggestions on how the army may have dealt with the corpses lying on their fields.

Most casualties were buried soon after the battle. If they occupied the battleground for any length of time, the military took on that task. At Cooch's Bridge and at Brandywine British pioneers as well as other regiments and formations were responsible for burials. Lieutenant Gilbert Purdy, who served under Samuel Holland in the Corps of Guides and Pioneers in 1777-1778, wrote after the Battle of Brandywine on 11 September 1777: "In the time we Laid their Dead that was Buryed (sic) By Us on the Day After the Battle were 55 By our [Battalion] Besides What was Buryed (sic) By the rest of the Army" (Purdy 1777-78). In other cases, the burial was carried out by the local population. Such a situation may occur if the number of casualties was particularly high or the contending armies had moved on. After the Battle of Brandywine, for example, local Quaker Joseph Townsend recorded that after Howe's army had moved on that: "The ground which they [i.e., the British army] had lately occupied at Birmingham, being now cleared and left in a desolate condition, exhibited a scene of destruction and waste. Some few of the inhabitants who remained thereon, and some others who were returning to the places of abode, found it necessary to call in the assistance of their neighbors to rebury many of the dead, who lay exposed to the open air and

ravages of beasts and wild fowls, having, in consequence of the late heavy rains, been washed bare, and some few of them had never been interred. I was one among a number who attended and performed that duty" (Futhey and Cope 1881: 77).

Were the dead stripped of their clothes and buried naked or were they thrown into their graves as they were found? At the Hook, almost before the battle was ended, stripping of the dead occurred. According to Joachim Perron,

> It would be hard to imagine the curiosity with which we contemplated the dead and especially the English officer. [Lieutenant Moir, 23d Regt of Foot] When I arrived there, he was already nude; one man had his waistcoat, another his breeches and a third his boots. He had on his red coat buttons stamped with the number 28 and an English device. He seemed a fine figure of man about 30 years old, he had a gunshot wound in his face… All the dead had hideous faces. The enemy took their dead and left only that officer (Perron 1781:144-145).

At the Hook it was likely Mercer's Virginia Grenadier detachment that did the stripping. At the other battlefields such as Brandywine, Paoli, and Princeton, the locals were Quakers who had little use for military-style clothing or accoutrements. However, the general rule seems to have been that if the burials were done by the army, the usable clothing and equipment, shoes, etc. were taken off the bodies and they would be buried in their shirts and possibly their trousers or breeches, but again the historical evidence is inconclusive.

Scavenging by unauthorized people for clothing, money, and arms has long been an element of battlefield cleanup. Following the Battle of Bemis Heights, Private Ezra Tilden of Colonel Benjamin Gill's Massachusetts Militia Regiment wrote in his diary on 7 October 1777 that he "saw several dead and naked men, Regulars, or the Enemy lying Dead in the woods close by or even where the battle was fought" (MacKerron 2009: 50). On 24 June 1780, the day after the Battle of Springfield, Ashbel Green's "route homeward led me over the whole of this ground, and for the first, and I hope for the last time of my life, I saw the yet unburied corpses of the victims of war. Two or three of these corpses, stripped as naked as when they were born, lay at the bridge which the British attempted to force, and on the side adjoining the town. If they had been Americans, I think their countrymen would not have stripped them; and, for the like reason, if they had once been British or Hessian soldiers, their comrades, in their hasty retreat, would probably not have denuded them" (Jones 1849: 119).

Despite their seeming difference in social status conferred by rank, the bodies of dead officers often received the same treatment as enlisted men. Colonel Donop was interred with military honors and received a headstone after he had been killed at Fort Redbank in November 1777, and Americans buried Captain William Leslie, mortally wounded at Princeton, with full honors in Pluckemin on 5 January 1777. However, Leslie's fellow officer Captain Francis Tew of the 17th Regiment, a Princeton veteran, was not so fortunate. Following the capture of Stony Point by General Anthony Wayne's forces on 16 July 1779, Ensign Frederick Philipse Robinson of the 17th Regiment of Foot, taken prisoner by American forces, recorded in his journal that

> "as soon as it was light, my attention was attracted by a Sight which I confess struck me dumb with horror. Near me I saw the naked body of my old friend Captain Tew of the 17th Regt. a man whom I loved and respected in the highest degree; I almost Sickened at the Sight, and was rivitted [sic]to the Spot. An Officer who witnessed this, took me by the arm and led me amongst the Dead and Wounded in order, as he said afterwards, to familiarise me to Such Sights" (Robinson 1777).

Thomas Mellen recalled how following the Battle of Bennington "Not more than a rod from where I fought, we found Captain McClary dead, and stripped naked. We scraped a hole with sticks and just covered him with earth" (Butler and Houghton 1849: 29). Nahum Parker and his detachment "found two dead men on our road" on the march to Bennington on 17 August. Surely did not leave them there but buried them probably by the side of the road (Parker 1777). Chauncey Rice in Captain Barnes' Company of Massachusetts Militia wrote that "the Lieutenat [sic] was killed and buried" where he had fallen: "at the foot of a tree" (Rice 1832).

It is perhaps a given that treatment of the dead varied according to time, topographic and weather conditions, and the vagaries of war. William Boutelle recorded that on August 16, 1777 following the Battle of Bennington "Night came on and [we] were forbidden to pursue the enemy. We continued to our quarters bringing with us the body of Thomas Joslin who was killed in the first onset; he was tied up in a sheet and swung on a pole, and two of us had to carry him at a time and changed often." A bit later on he recorded: "17th – Sabbath Day. I went and helped to make a coffin for Thomas Joslin, Dec's'd, and went to the funeral. […] The deceased was conveyed in a wagon to Bennington and decently buried in their burying ground, the minister of the town attended and went to pray at the grave; the whole company followed the corpse to the grave as mourners" (Gabriel 2016: 22-31).

But these were fellow American soldiers. Enemies, especially if they were Loyalists, were unceremoniously dumped. An anecdote regarding Deacon Nathaniel Harmon following the Battle of Bennington gives an idea about the procedures:

> "It was a rude transaction, but the time was urgent. It was better that the dead bodies of the slain foe should be buried in any manner than left to breed pestilence upon the surface of the earth. There were two large excavations for wintering potatoes — left open in the summer time until another harvest — near by; Mr. Harmon took his rope slip-noose halter from his horse's neck, and dragged the dead bodies of the slain enemy therewith into the excavations and covered them with earth. There were some sixty bodies thus buried in each of the two excavations. They were near where the Barnet house now stands; parts of the action of that eventful day were fought there" (Jennings 1869: 273).

Evidence from the Paoli battlefield shows, however, that time and circumstances permitting, those buried by Quakers could also expect a minimum of respect. The 52 dead who were buried on 22 September 1777 "were interred in a trench about 12 by 60 feet. The soldiers were placed in two rows of twenty-six." Facing east toward Jerusalem, "The hats, shoes, clothing and armour [accoutrements] of the gallant, though unfortunate wearers, have been consigned to the grave with them." The Paoli Monument Committee Report in 1817 stated that when they moved the bodies of four of the Paoli dead in order to build a foundation for the monument, they were still in their

clothes, shoes, caps, and "armor" and that some bayonets were thrown in with them. Quakers had no use for those (McGuire 2000: 185-6).

During the siege of Yorktown/Gloucester Point, burials of the dead were possible for both Crown and Allied forces. In some instances, the burial was inside of the fortifications. On the night of 14 October, two French soldiers from the Maine Regiment were killed. Joachim Perron wrote in his diary that "…We stopped at our outpost where we buried the two poor soldiers from the Maine Regiment. A square redoubt was being constructed at this spot under the direction of an American engineer…. (Perron 1781:164). Across the York River in the Fusiliers Redoubt, archaeological investigations in the 1936 uncovered human remains. Project Superintendent A.E. Booth reported that in the floor of the redoubt

> "… a grave containing three bodies was found, presumably those of three of the defenders which had to be buried at once as a large number of shell fragments were found among the bones. The bones were placed in separate concrete caskets, numbered and reburied in the same spot where they were found…." (Greene 1976:92-93).

Weather conditions and the time of year that the battle took place were important considerations. The Battle of the Hook and the subsequent siege of Gloucester Point were fought in October when the weather is still relatively warm. The odor of death would have soon become apparent and may have been one reason that expedient burials were necessary. The stench or "stink" of the aftermath of battle was something that Nicholas Creswell wrote about while on Staten Island. Creswell, writing on a warm June 22, 1777 commented that he was "[a]lmost bit to death with Mosquitoes and poisoned with the stink of some Rebels, who have been buried about three weeks in such a slight manner that waggons have cut up parts of the half corrupted carcases and made them stink most horribly" (Creswell 1924: 240). Corporal Fox of the 47th Regiment of Foot used not quite as crude a language when he wrote on 26 July 1777 about the casualties of the Battle of Fort Ann that they exuded a "smell so offensive of the hill that a party of us were ordered to go and bury the dead bodies of the 9th regt and the rebels" (Houlding and Yates 1990: 158). Neither British nor Americans had been buried, which in extreme cases could even mean thrown into a pond. Chaplain Dr. Timothy Dwight visited Forts Clinton and Montgomery with a group of officers in the spring of 1778, some six months after the battle and recorded what he witnessed:

> "[The] first object that met our eyes, after we left our barge and ascended the bank, was the remains of a fire kindled by the cottagers of this solitude, for the purpose of consuming the bones of some of the Americans who had fallen at this place, and had been left unburied. Some of those bones were lying partially consumed round the spot where the fire had been kindled; and some had evidently been converted into ashes. As we went onward, we were distressed by the odor of decayed human bodies. To me this was a novelty, and more overwhelming and dispiriting than I am able to describe. As we were attempting to discover the source from which it proceeded, we found, at a small distance from Fort Montgomery, a pond of moderate size, in which we saw the bodies of several men, who had been killed in the assault upon the fort. They were thrown into this pond, the preceding autumn, by the British, when probably the water was sufficiently deep to cover them. Some of them were covered at this time, but a depth so small, as to leave them distinctly visible. Others had an arm, a leg, and a part of the body above the surface. The clothes, which they wore

> when they were killed, were still on them; and proved that they were militia, being the ordinary dress of farmers. Their faces were bloated and monstrous; and their postures were uncouth, distorted, and in the highest degree afflictive (Dunwell 1991: 24-5)."

Pitching the dead into bodies or water, while clearly disrespectful and not at all in keeping with the proper treatment of the dead, was quite common. After the siege at Gloucester, Joachim Perron was appalled to see bodies in the shoreline below the town of Gloucester Point. "We walked on the sand to warm ourselves" he wrote in his diary, "we found at our feet several dead bodies that stank horribly and we learned that some large tents, that we saw along the shore, concealed 1,500 of the sick; so many of them died that there was no time to bury them, and they simply threw the dead out of the tents as they expired. This was where Lord Cornwallis had established his hospital during the siege" (Perron 1781:173).

Where were the dead buried? The first answer that comes to mind is in a mass grave or graves on the battlefield, but that may not necessarily be the case. Sometimes, individual corpses were buried where they were found. Archaeological work conducted in 1940 on the battlefield of Bemis Heights unearthed two gravesites containing the remains of four soldiers killed or mortally wounded on October 7, 1777 and later buried in an abandoned redoubt. "[T]heir bodies appeared to have been carefully placed side by side on their backs. The arms of both were bent as though the hands had been folded across the chest or abdomen. […] Ten pewter buttons, probably from the soldier's waistcoat, came from the grave associated with burial 3. […] The remains had been laid carefully, and evidently with respect, in the ditch and covered with wood from the fortification wall" (Valosin 2016: 211-2). Captain Jonathan Buel of the Connecticut militia remembered about the battle of Bemis Heights how "Early the next morning […]as I passed over the battle-ground of the previous day, I saw the British dead lying scattered and mostly stripped of their clothes. This practice of stripping the dead of the enemy seems to have been considered proper at that time. The American dead were not stripped. They lay where they had fallen, and were buried with their clothes on near the place where they were found, two or three in the same hole…. The burial took place the day after the battle.... Two of our men were killed by a cannon ball. I was present when one of them was buried. A shallow grave was dug, a little grass thrown in, then the body, almost cut in two by a cannon ball, was laid in, all bloody as he fell, then a little grass and the earth thrown in to fill up the grave" (Hibbard 1897: 147).

Some remains were never buried. Joseph Plum Martin found many of the dead unburied and wrote on July 1778 while on duty at White Plains: "Here were Hessian skulls, thick as a bombshell. Poor fellows! They were left unburied in a foreign land" (Martin 2011: 89). When Anthony Wayne's forces camped around Fort Ticonderoga in December, 1776, he compared it to "The Ancient Golgotha a place of skulls – they are so plenty here that our people for want of Other Vessels drink out of them" (Ketchum 1997: 29). In the hours following the battle of Hubbardton on 16 August 1777, Crown forces collected their dead and burying parties dug graves for between 34 and 50 fallen British NCOs and enlisted men and the 10 dead Brunswickers (Bradford 1962: 300, 303; Williams 1988: Appendix 1). The American corpses apparently were left to rot where they had fallen. "In the spring of 1784 the inhabitants turned out and made a general search over the battle-ground and woods adjoining, gathering up what bones they could find, which had lain bleaching in the sun, wind and rain for 7 years (amounting to many bushels) and buried them. Since that time

there have not been many found. But, occasionally, when they have been discovered, they have been carefully taken care of and buried" (Hemenway 1877: 751).

More often than not, the bodies of the dead, friend and foe alike, received an expedient burial in whatever spot was convenient, even in the entrenchments in front of a fortification. Sergeant John Smith of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment who wrote in his diary on the day following the Hessian attack on Fort Mercer (Red Bank): "[October 23] -- in the morning we began to strip & bury the Dead of our men & Hessians -- we buried 75 Hessians in one Grave in the intrenchment & Covered them over & 8 or 10 more below the bank by the River -- it took us all Day to bury the Dead" (Smith 1777). When in need any opening in the ground would do. At Bennington, Asa Fitch wrote that "previous to the battle [there had] been a log hut near the Tory's breastwork, and a small outdoor cellar formed of slabs covered with earth. The house was gone, and the slabs had rotted and let the dirt tumble down into the cellar hole. Into this cellar hole those [Tories] who were killed…at this breast work were thrown in a promiscuous heap, & dirt thrown over them. Seventeen bodies were thus thrown in here this being the number of Tories left dead upon the hill on the day of the battle" (Fitch 1777). In the center of the battlefield "were the remains of two potato holes, at the time of the battle. The dead bodies to the number of thirty, according to Austin Wells' statement were drawed [sic] together from this part of the ground and were thrown into these potato holes & covered, whilst a tory also found here was interred half way between the two holes" (Fitch 1777).

To summarize, treatment of the dead and wounded following American War for Independence battles varied according to a range of factors. Variables included 1) The location of the battle; 2) weather; 3) time of year; 4) who controlled the battlefield; 5) how much time was available for battlefield cleanup; 6) the character of the surrounding community; 7) the customs and attitudes regarding the dead of those responsible for burial; 8) whether a friend or foe; and 9) whether officer or other rank (Selig and Catts 2019).

Many of the factors that influenced the treatment of the dead following a battle are similar to those reported for English and French battlefields of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, reflecting a remarkable continuity in methods of battlefield cleanup over the space of several centuries (Curry and Foard 2017). A further similarity between the medieval battlefield and the Revolutionary War battlefield is the remarkable lack of burials and graves actually found on the battlefields, despite the large numbers of reported dead and the burying of corpses on the field.

From the documentary sources available, it appears that there existed no clear pattern regarding battlefield clean-up and the disposition of corpses. They do, however, permit a reconstruction of what most likely happened during the days after the battle:

a) The burials were carried out by Allied forces who occupied the area after the battle and during the siege.

b) As documented in the treatment of Lieutenant Moir's body, the dead were stripped of clothing, weapons, and accoutrements, and would have been buried naked or in their small clothes.

c) There could be multiple grave sites on the battlefield, but they are likely in the immediate vicinity of the fight.

d) It is highly improbable that the dead found on the battlefield proper were buried in the Abingdon Church cemetery, but possible that soldiers who subsequently died while in the army hospital at the church were buried there.

e) It is possible that the dead of both armies were buried indiscriminately in the same grave.

f) Unless additional information comes to light it must be assumed that officers and enlisted men were buried in a common grave or graves.

8.5 Archaeological Evidence of Combat

Battlefield archaeology is an integral component of the study of fields of conflict. Combining the physical remains of the battle with the documentary record and battlefield topography, archaeology strives to reconstruct the events of a military engagement. Studies of battlefields using metal detection as a method of survey have revealed that considerable amounts of battlefield debris, such as lead shot, buckles, buttons, etc., do survive and can be useful in determining the course of the battle (Figure 8.2).

No systematic archaeological survey has been conducted to date within the Core Area of The Hook Battlefield. While the project team contacted local metal detectorists, no detectorists communicated regarding private collections from the field, but there have been reports of recovered battle-related artifacts from various areas within the Battlefield Boundary for years. Currently we do not know if archaeological evidence of the Battle of the Hook is present though it seems highly likely. The Core Area of the Battle of the Hook battlefield is situated in a suburban area with considerable commercial and residential development. However, there are some areas within the Core that remain undeveloped, or minimally developed, ground where archaeological evidence of the battle may be extant. The public open space at Abingdon Park is an area retaining archaeological potential for battlefield evidence.

The documentary, and potential archaeological, records of the battle still have details to divulge. Archaeological survey can address identified threats by documenting the existence of archaeological battlefield resources and establishing a basis for protection of the resources. In addition, by raising public awareness of the significance of archaeological resources in the Park, the project will foster long-term stewardship through more sensitive park use and maintenance.

Archaeological studies of the battlefield could seek to identify artifact density and distribution patterns, so that locations of American and British battle lines, Seawell plantation structures and landscape features, and potential burial locations could be more fully investigated and interpreted to the public. Archaeological survey, including metal detection and other forms of geophysics, could investigate specific areas of the battlefield, particularly the Abingdon Park.

Figure 8.2. A sample of military artifacts recovered from the VIMS investigations (Torp et al. 2010). Artifacts such as these are likely to be present within the Battle of the Hook Core Area. Top, left to right: British Legion insignia; 63rd Regiment of Foot cartridge box plate. Middle, left to right: musket balls; Queen's Rangers button; Bottom: bayonet.

9. SUMMARY AND PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Core Area and the Battlefield Boundary

The Battle of the Hook, October 3, 1781 was a historically significant military action of the Yorktown Campaign. The largest cavalry action of the War of Independence, the battle played a critical role in forcing the surrender of Cornwallis. The fighting marked the last "open field" action before the Crown Forces fortified positions at Gloucester Point and Yorktown were invested and laid siege to by the Allied Forces. The battle provided a boost for Allied morale. After the fight Tarleton's soldiers stayed bottled up in Gloucester Point. Crown Forces were no longer able to collect critical foodstuffs and forage from the Middle Peninsula. Tactically, General Cornwallis' possible "escape route" for his army at Gloucester Point was blocked. Sixteen days after the Battle of the Hook, Britain's last operational field army laid down its arms. The battle contributes to the successful siege and surrender at Yorktown yet is generally overshadowed by that larger action south of the York River.

The KOCOA assessment presented in this report is a valuable tool for planning and interpretation purposes, as it identifies extant features that still define the battle/battlefield. Protecting those battle-related resources is paramount among the efforts to preserve and/or interpret the battlefield, examine the battle's role in the American Revolution, and understand the battle as a foundational element of the Middle Peninsula's historical legacy. Future actions affecting lands within the Core Area and Battlefield Boundary of the Hook Battlefield should be made with consideration and focus on protection of KOCOA identified features and battle-era resources, their associated context, and historic landscapes.

Important elements – structures, landscape components, and other historical resources – of the battlefield are still intact and visible for interpretation. Principal among these are Seawell's Ordinary, the overall road system between Gloucester Court House and Gloucester Point, Abingdon Church, Ware Church, the high ground at Roane, and the remnant Crown Forces earthworks and archaeological data at Gloucester Point. The natural area at Coleman Swamp serves to bound the eastern side of the battlefield. While previous and ongoing suburban and commercial development is present within the US Route 17 corridor, the road essentially follows the trace of the earlier eighteenth-century road trace.

The Core Area of the Battlefield is an approximate square centered on the area of Crewe Road to the north, Powhatan Drive to the south, US Route 17 to the east, and Williams Landing Road to the west (Figure 9.1). The area accounts for the ground over which the battle was fought and includes areas east of US Route 17 along the margins of Coleman Swamp. Within this area considerable previous ground disturbance has occurred. The area contains strip malls, shopping centers, residential subdivisions, a school and public parkland. Overall, the area contained within the Core Area consists of approximately 6,509,706.69 ft. sq. (604,771.54 m sq).

The Battlefield Boundary for the Battle of the Hook is considerably more extensive. It ranges from Ware Church to Gloucester Point, a distance of more than 12 miles. It is focused on the road network used by the Allied and Crown forces (Figure 7.1).

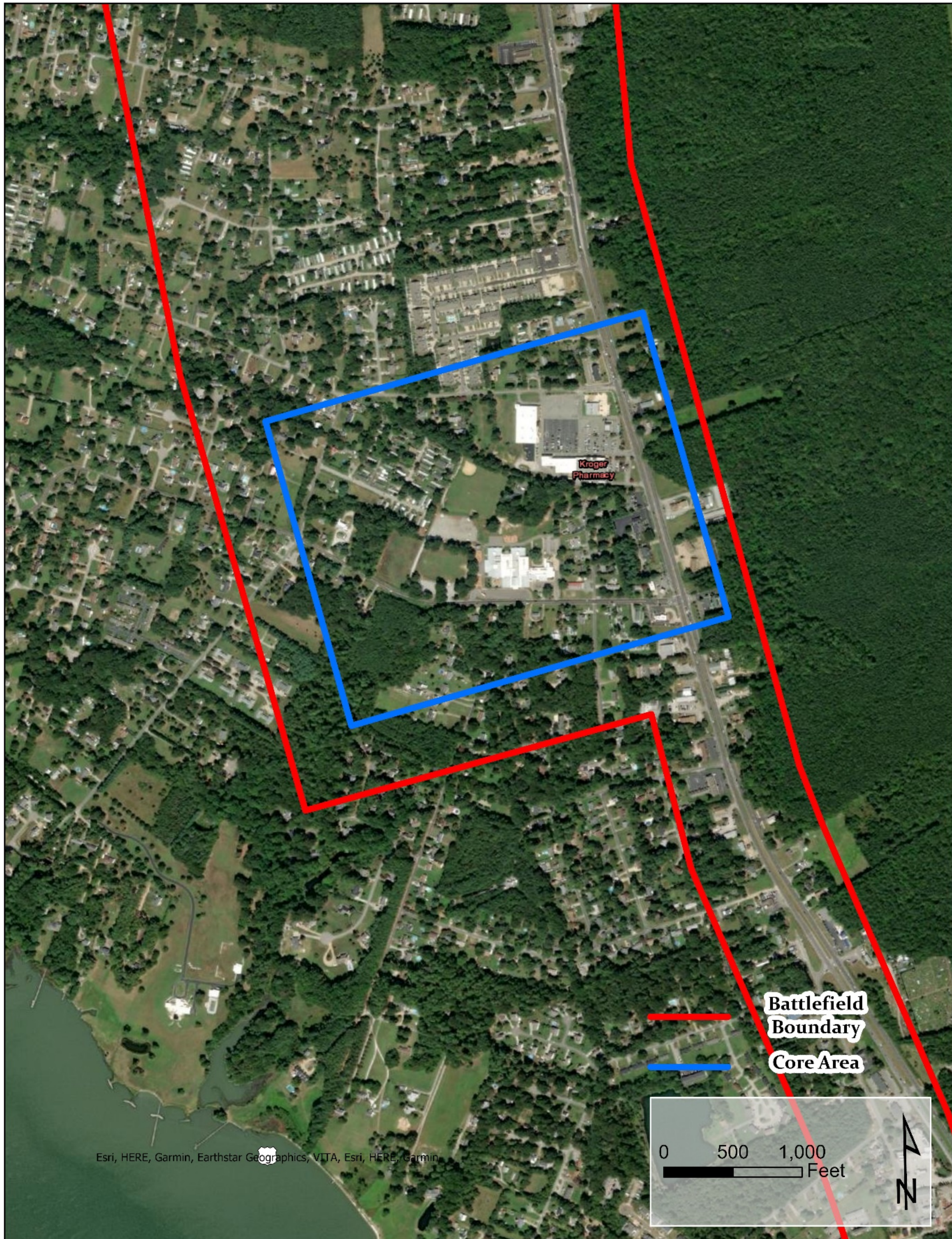


Figure 9.1. Battle of the Hook Core Area (Google maps).

9.2 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Eligibility Recommendation

The Battle of the Hook (3 October 1781) is potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under criteria A, B, and D. The battle is potentially eligible under Criterion A as part of the decisive Yorktown Campaign of 1781. The Battle of the Hook was the only major action outside of the siege lines at Yorktown and at Gloucester Point. The fight marked the end of the ability of the Crown Forces to forage, move and maneuver at will in the countryside of York and Gloucester counties and closed off the last potential escape route for Lord Cornwallis. The battle was the largest cavalry action of the American Revolutionary War and marked one of only two actual military land actions between Crown Forces and French forces – the second being the storming of Redoubt 9 of Lord Cornwallis' defenses on 14 October 1781.

The Battle is also potentially eligible under Criterion B as an important event in the lives of three individuals – the duc de Lauzun, Banastre Tarleton, and John F. Mercer. The battle helped define the military character and careers of the first two officers, one French and one English. Tarleton's reputation was tarnished by the outcome of the battle, and he ended the American Revolutionary War with a defeat and captivity. For the duc de Lauzun, his performance in the battle gained praise and recognition, and Rochambeau rewarded him with the honor of carrying the news of Cornwallis' surrender to the King of France. Colonel Mercer's success at the Hook, his most important action during the American Revolutionary War, added to his reputation and paved the way to his later political career in Virginia and Maryland. In Virginia, Stafford County elected him to serve as one of its two representatives to the Virginia House of Delegates (1782), and his fellow legislators selected him as one of the state's delegates to the Continental Congress (1783 and 1784). Upon moving to Maryland, Mercer was selected a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, and a delegate to the Maryland State Convention in 1788. He served in the Maryland State Assembly (1788-89 and 1791-92), in the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland's second and third districts from 1792 to 1794, and two terms as governor (two one-year terms in 1801 and 1803).

The battlefield is also potentially eligible under Criterion D as it is likely to yield information important to the history of the battle. While no archaeological data have been recovered within the Core Area of the battlefield to date, archaeological data have been documented at Gloucester Point as part of the Crown Forces defenses. Further, the various encampment and hospital areas at Roane, Ware Church, Gloucester Courthouse, and Abingdon Church that are associated with the Allied forces movements are likely to retain archaeological data.

A battlefield is defined as an area that includes avenues of approach and retreat (located within the Battlefield Boundary) and the Core Area. The potential National Register boundary would include the area encompassed within the Battlefield Boundary (see Figure 7.1). The Hook Battlefield retains several of the qualities or aspects of integrity, including location, association, and feeling. In some areas, particularly east US Route 17 along Featherbed Lane, the areas around Roane, and the less developed areas within the Battlefield Boundary, the aspect of setting is also retained, allowing an understanding of the landscape through which the battle was fought.

9.3 Recommendations for Planning

This report recommends the following:

1. Update 2011 Gloucester Point/Hayes Village Area Development Plan and the 2016 Gloucester County Comprehensive Plan to reflect the results of the ABPP battlefield study and the KOCOA assessment. The former area is identified as a development area in the county, thus putting remaining battle-related resources – namely archaeological resources – at risk to future development.

2. Provide updated information to battlefield neighborhoods and communities, particularly those where the Core Area and Battlefield Boundary are located. This information can be used in developing local histories, for the County Historical Committee resources identification and documentation purposes, and for educational and outreach efforts.

3. Provide updated information to state and local heritage sites (Gloucester County Historical Society, Preservation Virginia, Rosewell and Fairfield Foundations) and environmental stewardship organizations so they can incorporate the information into their historic interpretation, education, and stewardship outreach and efforts.

4. Provide updated information to land conservation groups and planning organizations for use in coordinating and bolstering land conservation and open space preservation to enhance quality of life, and possible public access and interpretation of historic landscapes.

5. Develop an archaeological resource management plan for the Gloucester Point and Battle of the Hook. Such a plan could be used to identify potentially significant archaeological and historical resources for inclusion in future planning and development in the Middle Peninsula.

9.4 Recommendations for Historical and Archaeological Resource Research and Protection

This report recommends expanding on the County's successful historical resource protection that has occurred to date.

1. Preparation of a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Battle of the Hook, with focus of the overall campaign in the Middle Peninsula and culminating with the Crown Forces surrender at Gloucester Point (see 9.2 above).

2. Encourage adoption of consistent or at least compatible definitions for historic resources in ordinances.

3. Consider adopting a historic battlefield protection zoning overlay, or apply the Historical and Cultural Preservation Overlay already part of the County's zoning to the Core Area of the Battlefield. This overlay would address protection of historic resources in the core of the battlefield, particularly archaeological resources. Consider possible land conservation options for battlefield lands via this overlay as well.

4. Little England (Perrin's) at the mouth of Sarah's Creek may be a candidate for an Historical and Cultural Preservation Overlay. Listed to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1970, Little England stands at the end of a narrow point of land bounded on the north by Sara's Creek, and on the south by the York River. The NRHP nomination notes that Little England survives as one of Virginia's least altered and best-preserved colonial plantation houses. Its form, brickwork and interior paneling are classic examples of mid-Georgian design and craftsmanship. This very-well maintained, privately owned home and farm of some 36 acres was important as an outpost of the allies, from which observations of Yorktown, Gloucester, and shipping on the York River was reported.

5. Include the Battlefield Core Area as a key feature to be addressed in land development designs and allow the Gloucester County Historical Committee the ability to review and recommend historical and/or archaeological investigations prior to approval of permits.

6. As recommended by Torp et al. (2010), undertake to fully catalog and interpret the archaeological assemblages recovered from the more than 30 years of archaeological work within the Gloucester Point Archaeological District. The Revolutionary War component of this work could be cataloged and presented to the public as part of the 250th anniversary of the War for American Independence.

7. The public lands at Abingdon Park (Figure 9.2) are an excellent location to place wayfinding markers and/or exhibits explaining the Battle of the Hook. The 14.07-acre Abingdon Park, leased land located next to Abingdon Elementary, primarily hosts athletic events. The park is situated in the proposed Core Development Area of the mixed-use village center proposed for Gloucester Point-Hayes Village (Gloucester County 2011: Map iv). Much of the lands in the park are open space and may still contain archaeological evidence of the battle and/or of the Allied camps in the area. An ongoing archaeological program could be developed that engages the community in the history and archaeology of their neighborhood and helps to foster stewardship of cultural resources.

8. Conduct archaeological surveys within the Core Area battlefield lands to identify and document the archaeological resources associated with the battle and the subsequent siege. Areas that could be investigated include the lands at Abingdon Park and Elementary School (see 9.4, number 7 above), the location of Seawell's Plantation, the site of Redoubt K, and the area of Seawell's Ordinary. Such archaeological survey would include traditional archaeological methods of excavation as well as metal detection.

9.5 Recommendations for Land Conservation and Acquisition

Many battlefield communities promote land conservation in their municipal policy. These recommendations focus on historic landscape conservation intertwined with historic resources protection.

1. Work to protect battlefield lands through land acquisition and/or conservation easements. within the Core Area and larger Battlefield Boundary. Organizations that do provide

Figure 9.2. Abingdon Community Park. The Park offers a location to interpret the battlefield on public lands associated with the battle of the Hook (photographer Wade P. Catts, June 25, 2019).

funding and management advice for such undertakings include the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), the American Battlefield Trust (ABT) the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), and the Archaeological Conservancy. The ABPP funds interpretation and planning grants as well as land acquisition grants. The VDHR provides funding under several categories including Threatened Sites Grants, the Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund, and Cost Share Grants. In addition, The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation provides funding through the Land Conservation Fund, which can be applied to battlefield conservation and preservation.

2. Protect smaller parcels to link larger conservation tracts. In the coming years, many larger open lands may either be protected or developed, leaving smaller lots available for conservation. Such lots are already beginning to become more of a conservation priority in villages and other more established settings. While the available acreage may be relatively minimal, the value of conservation can be significant due to extant historic resources, battlefield interpretation opportunities, and/or the ability to link existing protected lands.

3. Work to protect lands as part of a larger open space network that extends throughout the battlefield. There are protected and unprotected lands throughout the battlefield without a specific battle-related story, but these lands serve to form a larger network to link key areas of the battlefield and display a representation of the battle-era landscape feel/setting.

4. Protect and promote agriculture as an industry and historic land use in the battlefield.

5. Coordinate natural resource protection and battlefield land conservation.

6. Publicize and celebrate land conservation efforts at battlefield-related heritage sites to publicly display the inherent relation between battlefield protection and land conservation.

7. Consider acquisition by public sources or non-profit funds of Seawell's Ordinary (Figure 9.3) and the undeveloped lots to the south and west of the 10-acre property currently used as car dealership and the small Ordinary Post Office. Despite relocation of the building, previous archaeological investigations at this site in the 1970s (reported by Fonzo 2011) demonstrate the existing archaeological potential of this property. As is demonstrated in the present document, Seawell's Ordinary was the location of the headquarters and major encampments of the allied forces – particularly the French Naval Infantry (marines) and artillery, and the Virginia militia. It also functioned as the site of the Gloucester County terminus of the courier route established for dispatches to and from Washington's headquarters outside Yorktown.

Figure 9.3. Seawell's Ordinary, view to the west along Bray Point Road (Photographer Wade P. Catts, June 25, 2019).

The tavern is an important part of the Yorktown campaign, particularly from October 3 to October 19, when Cornwallis surrendered his forces in York and Gloucester. Prior to the battle, it was visited by Crown forces during their numerous foraging excursions from Gloucester Point to near Gloucester Court House. Funding for purchase of this site could be provided by the American Battlefield Protection Program or the American Battlefield Trust.

9.6 Recommendations for Heritage Tourism

This report recommends building on successful heritage tourism and interpretation efforts in the region. This is a tool that can provide outreach, develop a stewardship ethic, raise awareness of the role of the battle in the nation's founding, provide key economic development in appropriate public areas.

1. Identify interpretive sites associated with the Battle of the Hook and the Siege at Gloucester Point and undertake heritage interpretation with emphasis on interpretation from public corridors and places.

2. The 100-acre Woodville Park (Figure 9.4) offers an opportunity to provide wayfinding and/or exhibits for the public that tell the history of the role of Gloucester County in the Siege of Yorktown. It is likely that some allied forces marched over this land, so the signage is appropriate in this location. Woodville Park is the County's largest park and has been partially developed, with other areas currently under construction. Existing facilities include seven (7) athletic fields, three (3) of which are lighted, two (2) ponds, a sand soccer/volleyball court, memorial garden, raised boardwalk, a playground, and community garden. The park's master plan includes expanded trails and community buildings.

Figure 9.4. Entrance to Woodville Park (Photographer Wade P. Catts, June 25, 2019).

3. The 4-acre parcel at Tyndall's Point Park (Figure 9.5) illustrates the area's military history through preserved earth works built by Confederate Soldiers during the Civil War. While the current interpretation at the park spans the Revolution and the Civil War, the principal physical remains are those that date from the latter war. New interpretive panels/exhibits

could serve to link this site with other Revolutionary War wayfinding at the above two park locations, thus establishing a "Revolutionary Trail" of sorts. Such a trail would be an addition to the three historical trails currently in the County.

Figure 9.5. Tyndall Point Park (Photographer Wade. P. Catts, June 24, 2019).

4. Create thematic brochures and information to be available at the Gloucester Museum of History, the Gloucester Visitors Center, and other interpretive sites. This could include developing a historic walking, bicycling, and/or driving tour of the battlefield that focuses on the battlefield landscape, ranging from Ware Church to Gloucester Point. Such a trail could conceivably extend across the York River to the Yorktown Battlefield Colonial National Historical Park.

5. Work with the NPS to incorporate Gloucester County's role in the Yorktown Campaign into the interpretation of the Yorktown National Battlefield Colonial National Historical Park. Currently such coordination is underway with the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in Virginia.

6. Publicize and celebrate land conservation efforts to publicly recognize the inherent relation between battlefield protection and land conservation.

7. Coordinate with agencies in Gloucester County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Tidewater Region to recognize and interpret battle-related sites and locations.

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