



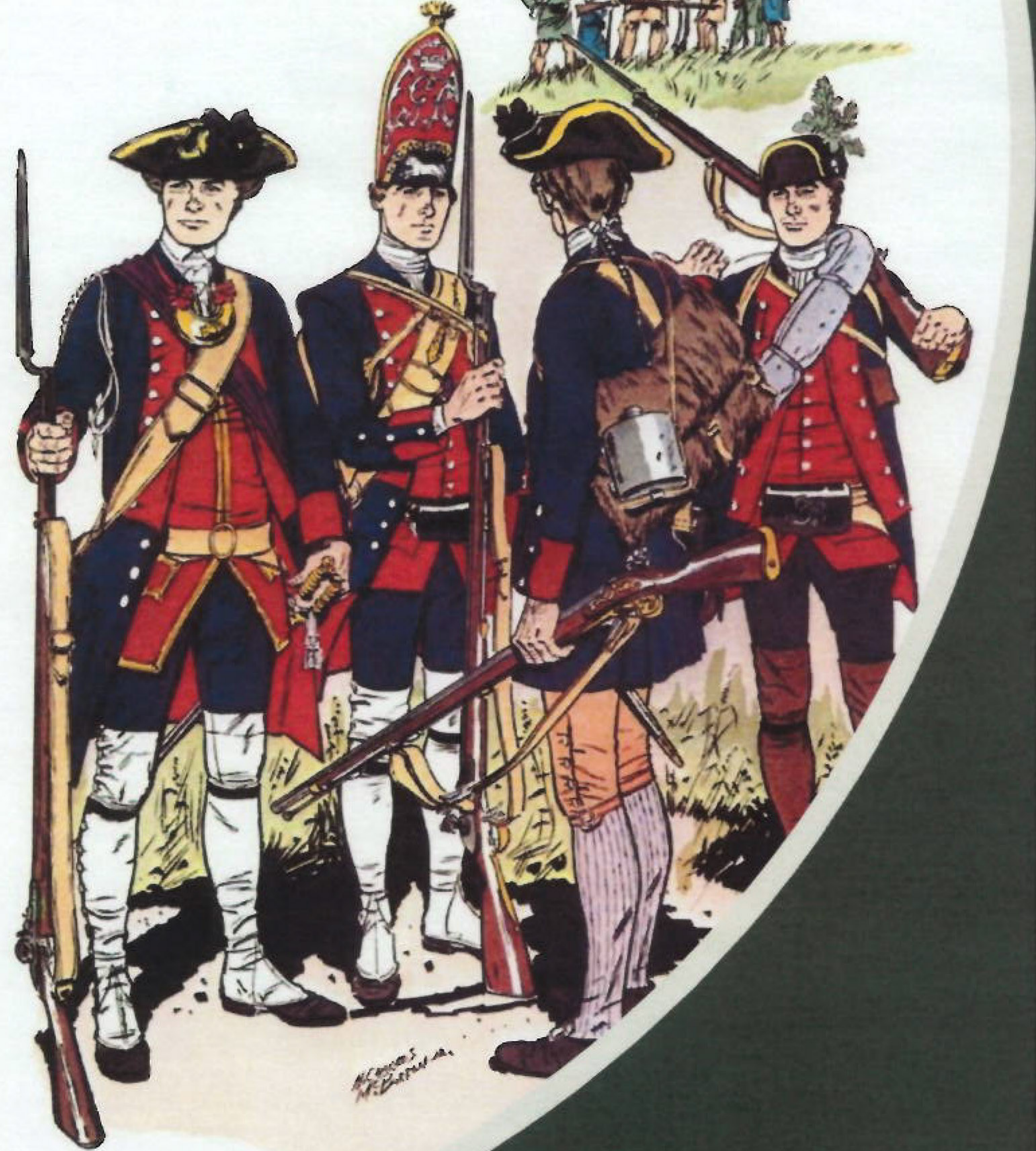
A Soldier's Tale

The Military Career of Hunterdon's Captain John Vought

New Jersey Soldiers

- After the outbreak of hostilities in April 1775, the colony (and soon to be state) of New Jersey raised four regiments of Continental infantry, as well as additional regiments, to serve in Washington's Army. These would be the professionals. They were supplemented by thousands of militia, organized along county lines. These were the citizen soldiers, serving locally for brief periods, usually no more than one month at a time. But New Jersey was far from unanimous in its Revolutionary zeal, and would also raise thousands of other soldiers... for King George III!





Company Officer and Grenadier, parade side

Colonial Precedent

- The British had raised thousands of Provincial troops for all previous conflicts on the continent, most recently the French & Indian War. The American Revolution would prove no different.



Provincials

- The need for troops on a regular establishment, those who would serve for the duration of the war and better supplement the British Regulars, quickly became apparent. The answer became the Provincial Establishment.
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Loyal American Regulars

• Provincial Forces would receive the same pay, arms, provisions, quality of uniforms and be under the same discipline of His Majesty's Regular Forces. They would be raised in every colony in North America, from Newfoundland to the West Indies to Detroit...

ALL persons willing to serve his Majesty KING GEORGE the III^d. in a regiment now raising by Col. JOHN MORRIS, to serve during the present rebellion in America, are desired to apply to Mr. Waldron Blaau, in Little-Doek-street, near the Exchange, who will give them every encouragement, and convey them to the regiment; where they will receive Five Dollars bounty, a new suit of cloaths, with hat, shirt, shoes and stockings, and every other necessary. And as a further encouragement, each man shall be entitled to 50 acres of land in this province, at the expiration of this rebellion, for which he will receive a deed free of every expence.

The New Jersey Volunteers

- The largest Provincial regiment of the war would be the six battalions of New Jersey Volunteers. Created on 1 July 1776, the battalions would be raised on a more or less county basis, with leading Loyalists commissioned to nominate the inferior officers and raise the men. The remainder of 1776 would be spent in doing just that.

Soldiers in Green

The first uniforms of all Provincials raised in the New York City area would be green coats, rather than those of red like most British. Uniforms, issued every year, would change several times during the war. In addition to the soldier's uniform, shipped annually from England, each company officer, such as Captain Vought, would be responsible for purchasing his men additional clothing, known as "necessaries." This additional clothing typically consisted of spare shirts, shoes, stockings, trousers, etc. Each soldier would pay the captain back for this clothing, through deductions in his pay.



Cortland Skinner



- Last Royal Attorney General of New Jersey, Skinner was given the rank of Brigadier General and command the New Jersey Volunteers until the end of the war. Although one of the senior officers in the Provincial Forces, Skinner seldom directly led his men in the field. The general was found more useful in administration and more particularly running a network of spies throughout New Jersey, providing the British with the bulk of their intelligence on the west side of the Hudson River. He died in Bristol, England in 1799.

6th Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers

- **Hunterdon County was primarily recruited by the 6th Battalion of General Skinner's Brigade, and would be commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Allen. The County at the time extended south to include such towns and cities as Princeton and Trenton. The 6th Battalion, consisting of only three companies instead of the establishment of ten, was nonetheless well led and highly disciplined, suffering but few desertions during its time of service.**

Where Did One Find Recruits?



- Captain Vought and his fellow officers needed to recruit a minimum number of men to entitle them to their commissions. These were generally local friends, neighbors or often relatives who knew him from before the war and trusted to his knowledge, leadership and abilities.

Lieut. Colonel Isaac Allen



- A thirty-eight year old lawyer from Trenton, Allen would command his battalion of NJV the whole war. Referred to as “the little colonel” by one of his men, he would prove the most capable field officer of all the regiment. This portrait shows his son, Isaac Allen, Jr. in the early Nineteenth Century.

New Brunswick & the Bennett's Neck Outpost

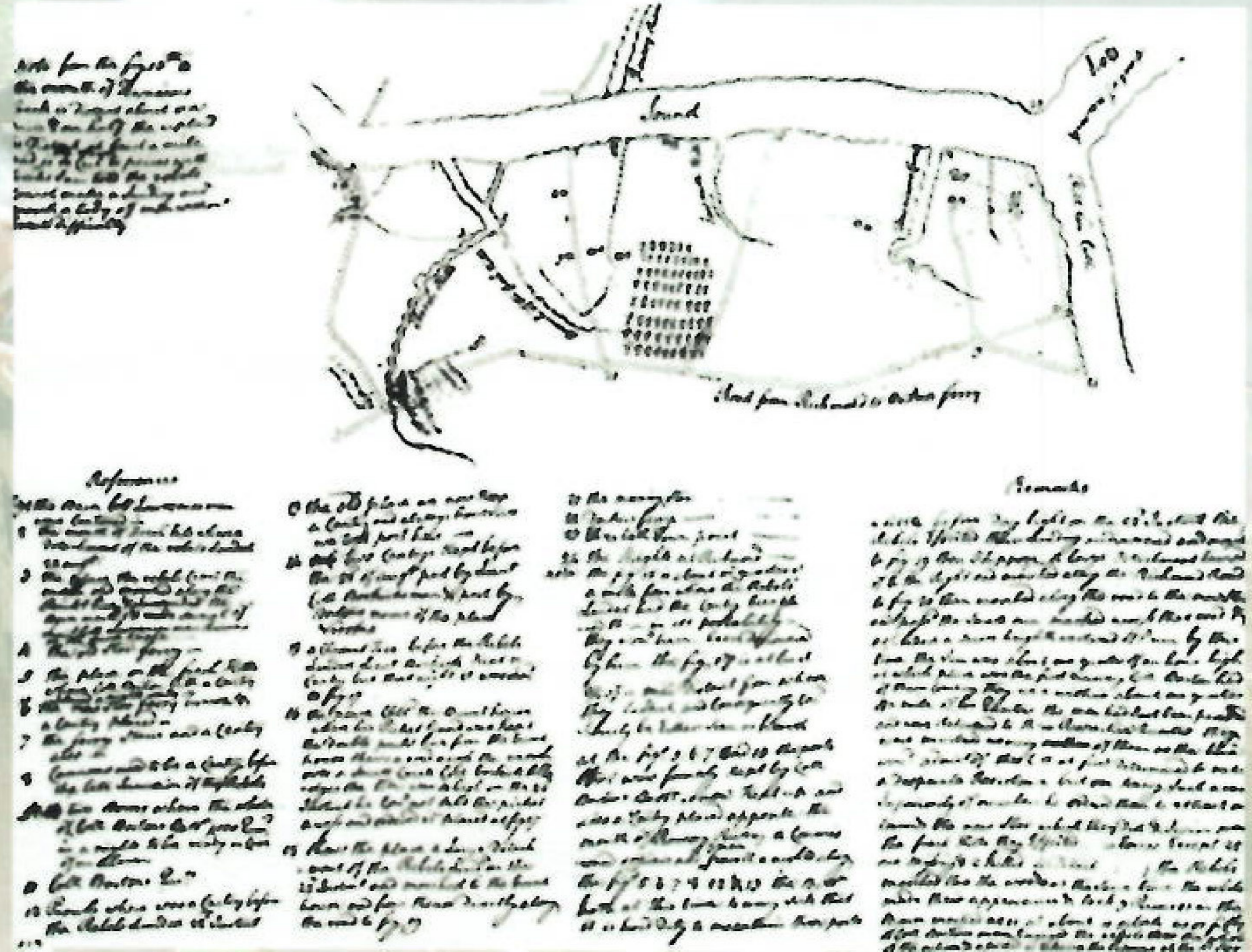
18 February 1777



- The British Army in New Jersey in early 1777 was centered around New Brunswick, including an outpost of New Jersey Volunteers at Bennett's Neck on the south side of the Raritan River. This post of 63 officers and men, commanded by Major Richard Witham Stockton of the 6th Battalion, was surprised and captured by 200 rebel troops under Colonel John Neilson of New Jersey. Captain Voight was not present.

Sullivan's Raid 22 August 1777

- Captain Voight's baptism of battle was most likely the largest engagement ever fought by the New Jersey Volunteers, when they fought 2000 Continental Troops under Major General John Sullivan. The 6th Battalion was distinguished in the action, losing several men, including Major John Barnes of Trenton.



Sir Henry Clinton's Grand Forage September 12-16, 1777

Most of the inhabitants, except for a few women, had left. Nevertheless, it was necessary to remain under arms the entire night. Here our troops also enjoyed a comical scene. One of the rebels found himself on this side of the Second River. Because it was pitch black, he believed our troops were his comrades, and he called to them that he had a prisoner and he did not want the regulars (by whom he meant Clinton's troops) to catch him. This speech was heard by the Green Rangers, and as he continued to shout, "God damn the King!" and "God save the Master Washington!" they disguised themselves and promised him that they would meet him with a boat, if only he would swim part way across the river. Therefore, he immediately jumped in the river, completely naked, after he received several shots directed at the place of his embarkation. While in the water, he lamented and asked for help, finally arriving on the bank near our and the Waldeck grenadier companies, where the Rangers pulled him out. Here he could no longer contain himself and cried out, "God damn the Hessians! God damn the Germans!", for which he had to sit the entire night by other prisoners, just as he had arrived. He was, as one sometimes meets, one of those who betrayed the houses of loyal citizens for a small reward.

Johann Conrad Döhla, Anspach Bayreuth Grenadiers



In Garrison on Staten Island Winter 1777-1778



- The ensuing months saw numerous raids on Staten Island, often involving the New Jersey Volunteers, such as the large raid of 27 November 1777 led by General Philemon Dickinson of the New Jersey Militia. These raids often resulted in small numbers of men killed, wounded or taken prisoner, but generally without reprisals into New Jersey.

Consolidation

With New Jersey in possession of the rebel government and no prospect of the British ever holding possession of it again, at least in the immediate future, it was decided to consolidate the six battalions of New Jersey Volunteers into four. None of the battalions had recruited their full compliment of men, and they had all suffered numerous casualties during their time of active service. Therefore, on 25 April 1778, the Sixth Battalion was merged into the Third, and the Fifth with the First. All the excess officers were retired upon half-pay. Among them, was Captain John Vought. For him, the war was as good as over.

MUSTER ROLL of Captain John Vought's Company of New Jersey Volunteers
Allen's Indian Island, N. York, 1778

RANK	NAME	Date of Commission, or Term of Enlistment	By whom listed	For what Service listed	Presented
Captain	John Vought				
Squadron	John Baskley				
Comdr	Nathaniel Brown				
Sergeant	Robert Young				
1 st	Thomas Hutton				
2 nd	John Seake				
3 rd	Samuel Withers				
4 th	William Stone				
5 th	William Taylor				
6 th	Nathaniel Hunter				
7 th	Daniel Allen				
8 th	John Morris				
9 th	Henry Leger				
10 th	Mathew M. Cord				
11 th	James Bailey				
12 th	Neal Crofton				
13 th	John O. Neal				
14 th	Isaac Doughty				
15 th	Geoffrey Webb				
16 th	Isaac Kemarshott				
17 th	John Mitchel				
18 th	William Neal				
19 th	John Coats				
20 th	Conrad Lihbo				
21 st	Arthur Burns				
22 nd	Michael Perry				
23 rd	Michael Dennis				
24 th	George Casner				
25 th	George Tullard				

Note: The 25th rank is marked as "Absent" in the original document.

Half-Pay, Boredom and Oblivion



- There was little for John Vought to do the remainder of the war but collect his 5 Shillings a day, half-pay for a captain, and sit around awaiting the outcome of the war. While some of these half-pay officers found new corps to serve with, or returned to active duty in the New Jersey Volunteers, there is no evidence Vought ever actively served again. The war would be decided, and America eventually lost, without his further participation.