

= Battle of Long Island =

The Battle of Long Island , also known as the Battle of Brooklyn and the Battle of Brooklyn Heights , fought on August 27 , 1776 , was the first major battle of the American Revolutionary War to take place after the United States declared its independence on July 4 , 1776 . It was a victory for the British Army and the beginning of a successful campaign that gave them control of the strategically important city of New York . In terms of troop deployment and fighting , it was the largest battle of the entire war .

After defeating the British in the Siege of Boston on March 17 , 1776 , General George Washington , commander @-@ in @-@ chief , brought the Continental Army to defend the port city of New York , then limited to the southern end of Manhattan Island . Washington understood that the city 's harbor would provide an excellent base for the British Navy during the campaign . There he established defenses and waited for the British to attack . In July , the British , under the command of General William Howe , landed a few miles across the harbor from Manhattan on the sparsely @-@ populated Staten Island , where , during the next month and a half , they were slowly reinforced by ships in Lower New York Bay , bringing their total force to 32 @,@ 000 troops . With the British fleet in control of the entrance to the harbor at the Narrows , Washington knew the difficulty in holding the city . Believing Manhattan would be the first target , he moved there the bulk of his forces .

On August 22 the British landed on the shores of Gravesend Bay in southwest Kings County , across the Narrows from Staten Island and more than a dozen miles south from the established East River crossings to Manhattan . After five days of waiting , the British attacked American defenses on the Guan Heights . Unknown to the Americans , however , Howe had brought his main army around their rear , and attacked their flank soon after . The Americans panicked , resulting in twenty percent losses through casualties and captures , although a stand by 400 Maryland troops prevented a larger portion of the army from being lost . The remainder of the army retreated to the main defenses on Brooklyn Heights . The British dug in for a siege but , on the night of August 29 ? 30 , Washington evacuated the entire army to Manhattan without the loss of supplies or a single life . Washington and the Continental Army were driven out of New York entirely after several more defeats , and forced to retreat through New Jersey and into Pennsylvania .

= = Background = =

= = = Boston to New York = = =

In the first stage of the war the British Army was trapped in the then @-@ peninsular city of Boston and , on March 17 , they abandoned it , setting sail to Halifax , Nova Scotia , to await reinforcements . Washington then began to transfer regiments to New York City where he believed that the British would next attack because of its strategic importance . Washington left Boston on April 4 , arrived at New York on April 13 , and established headquarters at the former home of Archibald Kennedy on Broadway facing Bowling Green . Previously , in February , Washington had sent his second in command , Charles Lee , ahead to New York to establish the city 's defenses . Lee remained in New York City until March , when the Continental Congress sent him to South Carolina ; the defenses ' construction was left to General William Alexander (Lord Stirling) . Troops were in limited supply , so Washington found the defenses incomplete , but Lee had concluded that with the British validly commanding the sea it would be impossible to hold the city . Lee reasoned that the defenses should be located with the ability to inflict upon the British heavy casualties if any move was made to take and hold ground . Barricades and redoubts were established in and around the city , and across the East River , in Brooklyn Heights facing the city , the bastion of Fort Stirling . Lee also saw that the immediate area was cleared of Loyalists .

= = = Strategy = = =

Washington began moving troops to Brooklyn in early May so that , within a short time , there were a few thousand of them in Brooklyn . On the eastern side of the East River , three more forts were under construction to support Fort Stirling , which stood to the west of the hamlet of Brooklyn Heights : Fort Putnam (named for Rufus Putnam , not to be confused with the later Fort Putnam at West Point) , Fort Greene (named for Nathanael Greene) and Fort Box (named for Major Daniel Box) . They lay from north to south , with Fort Putnam furthest to the north , Greene slightly to the southwest and Box slightly further southwest . Each of these defensive structures were surrounded by a large ditch , all connected by a line of entrenchments and a total of 36 cannons (mostly 18 @-@ pounders) .

Fort Defiance was also being constructed at this time , located further southwest , past Fort Box , near present @-@ day Red Hook . In addition to these new forts , a mounted battery was established on Governors Island , cannons were placed at Fort George facing Bowling Green and more cannons placed at the Whitehall Dock , which sat on the East River . Hulks were sunk at strategic locations to deter the British from entering the East River and other waterways .

Washington had been authorized by Congress to recruit an army of up to 28 @,@ 501 troops ; he had only 19 @,@ 000 troops when he reached New York . Military discipline was inadequate : routine orders were not carried out , muskets were fired in camp , flints were ruined , bayonets were used as knives to cut food , and firearm readiness was lax . Petty internal conflict was common under the strain of so many people from different environments and temperaments in relative closeness .

The commander of the artillery , Henry Knox , persuaded Washington to transfer 400 to 500 soldiers , who lacked muskets or guns , to crew the artillery . In early June , Knox and Greene inspected the land at the north end of Manhattan and decided to establish Fort Washington . Another fort , Fort Constitution , later renamed Fort Lee , was planned for opposite Fort Washington on the Hudson River . The forts were hoped to discourage the British ships from sailing up the Hudson River .

= = = Opposing forces = = =

July 12 , 1776 , two months before the Battle of Brooklyn , the New York Provincial Army began recruiting men . However , the contribution of manpower in New York was low because many New Yorkers were uninterested in the revolution or sided with the Crown . This caused for most of the volunteers seen at the battle to come from the New England area , upstate New York , New Jersey , Pennsylvania , Delaware and Maryland . These men were a part of the colonial militia , which more or less meant that white male volunteers between the ages of 16 to 70 years old . Unlike the trained British soldiers , these men were citizen soldiers , an unorganized and untrained source of immediate manpower . The colonial militia was composed of eight different states under thirteen different authorities , meaning that each regiment reflected different terms of service , regulations , training experiences , and equipment . The majority of the militia was composed of untrained men with no form of standardized weapons , uniform or ammunition .

Meanwhile , across the river , on Staten Island , the British army was growing by the day . By the time of the battle the Continental Army was compiled of about 10 @,@ 000 troops and faced the British mass of nearly twice its size .

= = = British arrival = = =

On June 28 , Washington learned that the British fleet had set sail from Halifax on June 9 and were heading toward New York . On June 29 , signals were sent from men stationed on Staten Island , indicating that the British fleet had appeared . Within a few hours , 45 British ships dropped anchor in Lower New York Bay . Less than a week later , there were 130 ships off Staten Island under the command of Richard Howe , the brother of the general . The population of New York went into panic at the sight of the British ships , alarms went off and troops immediately rushed to their posts . On

July 2 , British troops began to land on Staten Island . The continental regulars on the island took a few shots at the British before fleeing and the citizens ' militia switched over to the British side .

On July 6 , news reached New York that Congress had voted for independence four days earlier . On Tuesday , July 9 , at 18 : 00 , Washington had several brigades march onto the commons of the city to hear the Declaration of Independence read . After the end of the reading , a mob ran down to Bowling Green , where , with ropes and bars , they tore down the gilded lead equestrian statue of George III of Great Britain . In their fury , the crowd cut off the statue 's head , severed the nose , and mounted what remained of the head on a spike outside a tavern , and the rest of the statue was dragged to Connecticut and melted down into musket balls .

On July 12 , two British ships , the Phoenix and the Rose , sailed up the harbor toward the mouth of the Hudson . The American batteries stationed at Fort George , Red Hook and Governors Island opened fire , and the British returned fire into the city . The ships sailed along the New Jersey shore and continued up the Hudson , sailing past Fort Washington and arrived by nightfall at Tarrytown , the widest part of the Hudson . The goals of the British ships were to cut off American supplies and encourage Loyalist support . The only casualties of the day were six Americans who were killed when their own cannon blew up .

The next day , July 13 , Howe attempted to open negotiations with the Americans . Howe sent a letter to Washington delivered by Lieutenant Philip Brown , who arrived under a flag of truce . The letter was addressed " George Washington , Esq . " Brown was met by Joseph Reed , who , on Washington 's orders , had hurried to the waterfront accompanied by Henry Knox and Samuel Webb . Washington asked his officers whether it should be received or not , as it did not recognize his rank as general , and they unanimously said no . Brown was told by Reed that there was no one in the army with that address . On July 16 , Howe tried again , this time with the address " George Washington , Esq . , etc . , etc . " , but it was again declined . The next day , Howe sent Captain Nisbet Balfour to ask if Washington would meet with Howe 's adjutant face to face , and a meeting was scheduled for July 20 . Howe 's adjutant was Colonel James Patterson . Patterson told Washington that Howe had come with powers to grant pardons , but Washington said , " Those who have committed no fault want no pardon . " Patterson departed soon after . Washington 's performance during the meeting was praised in parts of the colonies .

Meanwhile , British ships continued to arrive . On August 1 , 45 ships with generals Henry Clinton and Charles Cornwallis arrived , along with 3 @, @ 000 troops . By August 12 , 3 @, @ 000 more British troops and another 8 @, @ 000 Hessians had arrived . At this point the British fleet numbered over 400 ships , including 73 war ships , and 32 @, @ 000 troops were camped on Staten Island . Faced with this large force , Washington was unsure as to where the British would attack . Both Greene and Reed thought that the British would attack Long Island , but Washington felt that a British attack on Long Island might be a diversion for the main attack on Manhattan . Washington broke his army in half , stationing half of it on Manhattan , and the other half on Long Island ; the army on Long Island was commanded by Greene . On August 20 , Greene became ill and was forced to move to a house in Manhattan where he rested to recover . John Sullivan was placed in command until Greene was well enough to resume command .

= = = Invasion of Long Island = = =

At 05 : 10 , on August 22 , an advance guard of 4 @, @ 000 British troops , under the command of Clinton and Cornwallis , left Staten Island to land on Long Island . At 08 : 00 , all 4 @, @ 000 troops landed on the shore of Gravesend Bay , unopposed . Colonel Edward Hand 's Pennsylvanian riflemen had been stationed on the shore , but they did not oppose the landings and fell back , killing cattle and burning farmhouses on the way . By noon , 15 @, @ 000 troops had landed on shore along with 40 pieces of artillery . As hundreds of Loyalists came to greet the British troops , Cornwallis pushed on with the advance guard , advancing six miles onto the island and establishing a camp at the village of Flatbush ; Cornwallis was given orders to advance no further .

Washington received word of the landings the same day they occurred , but was informed that the number was 8 @, @ 000 to 9 @, @ 000 troops . This convinced Washington that it was the feint he

had predicted and therefore he only sent 1 @, @ 500 more troops to Brooklyn , bringing the total number of troops on Long Island to 6 @, @ 000 . On August 24 , Washington replaced Sullivan with Israel Putnam who commanded the troops on Long Island . Putnam arrived on Long Island the next day along with six battalions . Also that day the British troops on Long Island received 5 @, @ 000 Hessian reinforcements , bringing their total to 20 @, @ 000 . Although there was little fighting on the days immediately after the landing , some small skirmishes did take place with American marksmen armed with rifles picking off British troops from time to time .

The American plan was that Putnam would direct the defenses from Brooklyn Heights while Sullivan and Stirling and their troops would be stationed on the Guan Heights . The Guan were up to 150 feet high and blocked the most direct route to Brooklyn Heights . Washington believed that by stationing men on the heights that heavy casualties could be inflicted on the British before the troops fell back to the main defenses at Brooklyn Heights . There were three main passes through the heights ; the Gowanus Road furthest to the west , the Flatbush Road slightly farther to the east , in the center of the American line where it was expected the British would attack , and the Bedford Road farthest to the east . Stirling was responsible for defending the Gowanus Road with 500 men , and Sullivan was to defend the Flatbush and Bedford roads where there were 1 @, @ 000 and 800 men respectively . Six @-@ thousand troops were to remain behind at Brooklyn Heights . There was one lesser @-@ known pass through the heights farther to the east called the Jamaica Pass . This pass was defended by just five militia officers on horses .

On the British side , General Clinton learned of the almost undefended Jamaica Pass from local Loyalists . Clinton drew up a plan and gave it to William Erskine to propose to Howe . Clinton 's plan had the main army making a night march and going through the Jamaica Pass to turn the American flank while other troops would keep the Americans busy in front . On August 26 , Clinton received word from Howe that the plan would be used , and that Clinton was to command the advance guard of the main army of 10 @, @ 000 men on the march through the Jamaica Pass . While they made the night march , General James Grant 's British troops along with some Hessians , a total of 4 @, @ 000 men , were to attack the Americans in front to distract them from the main army coming on their flank . Howe told Clinton to be ready to move out that night , August 26 .

= = Battle = =

= = = Night march = = =

At 21 : 00 , the British moved out . No one except the commanders knew of the plan . Clinton led a crack brigade of light infantry with fixed bayonets in front , followed by Cornwallis who had eight battalions and 14 artillery pieces . Cornwallis was , in turn , followed by Howe and Hugh Percy with six battalions , more artillery , and baggage . The column consisted of 10 @, @ 000 men who stretched out over two miles . Three Loyalist farmers led the column toward the Jamaica Pass . The British had left their campfires burning to deceive the Americans into thinking that nothing was happening . The column headed northeast until it reached what later became the village of New Lots when it headed directly north , toward the heights .

The column had yet to run into any American troops when they reached Howard 's Tavern (also known as Howard 's Half @-@ Way House) , just a few hundred yards from the Jamaica Pass . The tavern keeper , William Howard , and his son William Jr. were forced to act as guides to show the British the way to the Rockaway Foot Path , an old Indian trail that skirted the Jamaica Pass to the west (located today in the Cemetery of the Evergreens) . Five minutes after leaving the tavern , the five American militia officers stationed at the pass were captured without a shot fired , as they thought the British were Americans . Clinton interrogated the men and they informed him that they were the only troops guarding the pass . By dawn the British were through the pass and stopped so that the troops could rest . At 09 : 00 , they fired two heavy cannons to signal the Hessian troops below Battle Pass to begin their frontal assault against Sullivan 's men deployed on the two hills flanking the pass , while Clinton 's troops simultaneously flanked the American positions from the

east .

= = = Grant 's diversionary attack = = =

At about 23 : 00 on August 26 , the first shots of the Battle of Long Island were fired , near the Red Lion Inn (near present @-@ day 39th Street and 4th Avenue) . American pickets - part of Samuel John Atlee 's Pennsylvania regiment - fired upon two British soldiers who were foraging in a watermelon patch near the inn .

Around 01 : 00 on August 27 , the British approached the vicinity of the Red Lion with between 200 ? 300 troops . The American troops fired upon the British and after approximately two fusillades , fled up the Gowanus Road toward the Vechte @-@ Cortelyou House . Major Edward Burd , who had been in command , was captured along with a lieutenant and 15 privates . This first engagement was fought in the vicinity of 38th and 39th streets between 2nd and 3rd avenues near a swamp located adjacent to the Gowanus Road .

Newly promoted brigadier general , Samuel Holden Parsons , a lawyer from Connecticut who had recently secured a commission in the Continental Army , and Colonel Atlee , in command of the First Regiment of Pennsylvania Musketry - a veteran of the French and Indian War - were stationed further north on the Gowanus Road . Putnam had been awakened by a guard at 03 : 00 and told that the British were attacking through the Gowanus Pass . Putnam lit signals to Washington who was on Manhattan and then rode south to warn Stirling of the attack .

Stirling led two units of Colonel John Haslet 's , 1st Delaware Regiment under the immediate command of Major Thomas Macdonough , and Colonel William Smallwood 's 1st Maryland Infantry under the immediate command of Major Mordecai Gist - both Haslet and Smallwood were on courts @-@ martial duty in Manhattan . Following close behind was Parson 's Connecticut regiment with 251 men . Stirling led this combined force to reinforce Parsons and Atlee and stop the British advance . Stirling had a total of 1 @, @ 600 troops at his command .

Stirling placed Atlee 's men in an apple @-@ orchard owned by Wynant Bennett on the south side of the Gowanus Road near present @-@ day 3rd Avenue and 18th Street . Upon the approach of the British the Americans ...

took possession of a hill about two miles from camp , and detached Colonel Atlee to meet them further on the road ; in about sixty rods he drew up and received the enemy 's fire and gave them a well @-@ directed fire from his regiment , which did great execution , and then retreated to the hill .
- General Parsons

Stirling , along with the Delaware and Maryland regiments , took up positions just to the north of Atlee 's men on the slopes of a rise of land between 18th and 20th streets . Some of the Maryland troops were positioned on a small hill - called " Blokje Berg " (Dutch : cube or block hill) by the local Dutch ? near 23rd Street . At the base of this hill the Gowanus Road crossed a small bridge over a ditch which drained a marshy area . When the British advanced up the Gowanus Road the American troops fired upon them from positions on the north side of the ditch . To the left was Colonel Peter Kachline 's Pennsylvania regiment .

Just to the southeast of Blokje Berg were a few hills , amongst them was a hill which is the highest point in King 's County at 220 feet which came to be known as " Battle Hill " ? in what is today Greenwood Cemetery by the cemetery 's boundary of 23rd Street and 7th Avenue . The British attempted to outflank the American positions by taking this hill . The Americans , trying to prevent the British move , also sent troops under Parsons and Atlee to take the hill . The British got there first but the Americans were able to dislodge them in fierce fighting .

Battle Hill was the site of especially brutal fighting , with the Americans inflicting the highest number of casualties against the British troops during the entire Battle of Long Island . Among those killed was a British colonel , James Grant , which led the Americans to erroneously believe that they had killed General James Grant . He was alleged to have been shot by a Pennsylvanian rifleman who had been sniping at the British from up in a tree . Amongst the American dead was a Pennsylvanian colonel , Caleb Parry , who was killed while rallying his troops .

In part due to the ferocity of the fighting and the number of British troops engaged , the Americans

were still unaware that this was not the main British attack .

= = = Battle Pass = = =

The Hessians , in the center under the command of General von Heister , began to bombard the American lines stationed at Battle Pass under the command of General John Sullivan . The Hessian brigades , waiting for the pre @-@ arranged signal from the British , who at that time were in the process of outflanking the American lines , did not attack . The Americans , still under the assumption that Grant 's attack up the Gowanus Road was the main thrust had Sullivan send four @-@ hundred of his men to reinforce Stirling .

Howe fired his signal guns at 09 : 00 and the Hessians began to attack up Battle Pass while the main army came at Sullivan from the rear . Sullivan left his advance guard to hold off the Hessians while he turned the rest of his force around to fight the British . Heavy casualties mounted between the Americans and the British and men on both sides fled out of fear . Sullivan attempted to calm his men and tried to lead a retreat . By this point the Hessians had overrun the advance guard on the heights and the American left had completely collapsed . Hand @-@ to @-@ hand fighting followed with the Americans swinging their muskets and rifles like clubs to save their own lives . Many of the Americans who surrendered were bayoneted by the Hessians . Sullivan , despite the chaos , managed to evacuate most of his men to Brooklyn Heights though he himself was captured .

= = = Vechte @-@ Cortelyou House = = =

At 09 : 00 , Washington arrived from Manhattan . Washington realized that he had been wrong about a feint on Long Island and he ordered more troops to Brooklyn from Manhattan . Washington 's location on the battlefield is not known , because accounts differ , but most likely he was at Brooklyn Heights , where he could view the battle .

On the American right , to the west , Stirling still held the line against Grant . Stirling held on for four hours , still unaware of the British flanking maneuver , and some of his own troops thought they were winning the day because the British had been unable to take their position . However , by 11 : 00 , Grant , reinforced by 2 @,@ 000 marines , hit Stirling 's center and Stirling was attacked on his left by the Hessians . Stirling pulled back but British troops were , at this point , coming at him in his rear south down the Gowanus Road . The only escape route left was across a Brouwer 's millpond on the Gowanus Creek which was 80 yards wide , on the other side of Brooklyn Heights .

= = = Maryland 400 = = =

Stirling ordered all of his troops , except a contingent of Maryland troops under the command of Gist , to cross the creek . This group of Maryland troops became known to history as the " Maryland 400 " , although they numbered about 260 ? 270 men . Stirling and Gist led the troops in a rear @-@ guard action against the overwhelming numbers of British troops which surpassed 2 @,@ 000 supported by two cannons . Stirling and Gist led the Marylanders in two attacks against the British who were in fixed positions in and in front of the Vechte @-@ Cortelyou House (known today as the Old Stone House) . After the last assault , the remaining troops retreated across the Gowanus Creek . Some of the men who tried to cross the marsh were bogged down in the mud and under musket fire and others who could not swim were captured . Stirling was surrounded and , unwilling to surrender , broke through the British lines to von Heister 's Hessians and surrendered to them . Two hundred fifty six Maryland troops were killed in the assaults in front of the Old Stone House , and fewer than a dozen made it back to the American lines . Washington , watching from a redoubt on nearby Cobble Hill (intersection of today 's Court Street and Atlantic Avenue) , reportedly said , " Good God , what brave fellows I must this day lose . "

= = = Disengagement = = =

After those American troops not killed or captured escaped behind the fortified American positions centered on Brooklyn Heights , Howe , in a move considered controversial to this day , ordered all of his troops to halt the attack , despite the protestations of many of the officers in his command who believed that they should push on to Brooklyn Heights . Howe had decided against a direct frontal assault against the entrenched American positions choosing instead to begin a siege and setting up lines of circumvallation around the American positions , which he believed to be essentially trapped , with his troops blocking escape by land and the Royal Navy in control of the East River , which they would have to cross to reach Manhattan Island .

Howe 's failure to press the attack , and the reasons for it , have been disputed . He may have wished to avoid the casualties his army suffered when attacking the continentals under similar circumstances at the Battle of Bunker Hill . He may also , in the European gentleman @-@ officer tradition , have been giving Washington an opportunity to conclude that his position was hopeless and surrender . Howe told Parliament in 1779 that his essential duty was to avoid excessive British casualties for insufficient purpose , and capturing Brooklyn Heights would likely not have meant capturing the entire American army . " The loss of 1 @,@ 000 , or perhaps 1 @,@ 500 British troops , in carrying those lines , would have been but ill repaid by double that number of the enemy , could it have been supposed they would have suffered in that proportion . "

= = Aftermath = =

= = = Retreat to Manhattan = = =

Washington and the army were surrounded on Brooklyn Heights with the East River to their backs . As the day went on , the British began to dig trenches , slowly coming closer to the American defenses . By doing this , the British would not have to cross over open ground to assault the American defenses as they did in Boston the year before . Despite this perilous situation , Washington ordered 1 @,@ 200 more men from Manhattan to Brooklyn on August 28 . The men that came over were two Pennsylvania regiments and Colonel John Glover 's regiment from Marblehead , Massachusetts . In command of the Pennsylvanian troops was Thomas Mifflin who , after arriving , volunteered to inspect the outer defenses and report back to Washington . In these outer defenses , small skirmishes were still taking place . On the afternoon of August 28 , it began to rain and Washington had his cannons bombard the British well into the night .

As the rain continued , Washington sent a letter instructing General William Heath , who was at Kings Bridge between Manhattan and what is now the Bronx , to send every flat @-@ bottomed boat and sloop without delay , in case battalions of infantry from New Jersey came to reinforce their position . At 16 : 00 , on August 29 , Washington held a meeting with his generals . Mifflin advised Washington to retreat to Manhattan while Mifflin and his Pennsylvania regiments made up the rear guard , holding the line until the rest of the army had withdrawn . The generals agreed unanimously with Mifflin that retreat was the best option and Washington had orders go out by the evening .

The troops were told that they were to gather up all their ammunition and baggage and prepare for a night attack . By 21 : 00 , the sick and wounded began to move to the Brooklyn Ferry in preparation for evacuation . At 23 : 00 , Glover and his Massachusetts men , who were sailors and fishermen , began to evacuate the troops .

As more troops were evacuated , more were ordered to withdraw from the lines and march to the ferry landing . Wagon wheels were muffled , and men were forbidden to talk . Mifflin 's rear guard was tending campfires to deceive the British and convince them that nothing was going on . At 04 : 00 , on August 30 , Mifflin was informed that it was his unit 's turn to evacuate . Mifflin told the man who had been sent to order him to leave , Major Alexander Scammell , that he must be mistaken , but Scammell insisted that he was not and Mifflin ordered his troops to move out . When Mifflin 's troops were within a half mile of the ferry landing , Washington rode up and demanded to know why they were not at their defenses . Edward Hand , who was leading the troops , tried to explain what had happened , but Mifflin arrived shortly . Washington exclaimed " Good God . General Mifflin , I

am afraid you have ruined us . " Mifflin explained that he had been told that it was his turn to evacuate by Scammell ; Washington told him it had been a mistake . Mifflin then led his troops back to the outer defenses .

Artillery , supplies , and troops were all being evacuated across the river at this time but it was not going as fast as Washington had anticipated and daybreak soon came . A fog settled in and concealed the evacuation from the British . British patrols noticed that there did not seem to be any American pickets and thus began to search the area . While they were doing this , Washington , the last man left , stepped onto the last boat . At 07 : 00 , the last American troops landed in Manhattan . All 9 @, @ 000 troops had been evacuated with no loss of life .

= = = Conclusion of the campaign = = =

The British were stunned to find that Washington and the army had escaped . Later in the day , August 30 , the British troops occupied the American fortifications . When news of the battle reached London , it caused many festivities to take place . Bells were rung across the city , candles were lit in windows and King George III gave Howe the Order of the Bath .

Washington 's defeat revealed his deficiencies as a strategist who split his forces , his inexperienced generals who misunderstood the situation , and his raw troops that fled in disorder at the first shots . However , his daring nighttime retreat has been seen by some historians as one of his greatest military feats . Other historians concentrate on the failure of British naval forces to prevent the withdrawal .

Howe remained inactive for the next half month , not attacking until September 15 when he landed a force at Kip 's Bay . The British quickly occupied the city . On September 21 , a fire of uncertain origin destroyed a quarter of New York City . In the immediate aftermath of the fire Nathan Hale was executed for spying . Although American troops delivered an unexpected check to the British at Harlem Heights in mid @-@ September , Howe defeated Washington in battle again at White Plains and then again at Fort Washington . Because of these defeats , Washington and the army retreated across New Jersey and into Pennsylvania .

= = = Casualties = = =

At the time , it was by far the largest battle ever fought in North America . If the Royal Navy is included , over 40 @, @ 000 men took part in the battle . Howe reported his losses as 59 killed , 268 wounded and 31 missing . The Hessian casualties were 5 killed and 26 wounded . The Americans suffered much heavier losses . About 300 had been killed and over 1 @, @ 000 captured . As few as half of the prisoners survived . Kept on prison ships , then transferred to locations such as the Middle Dutch Church , they were starved and denied medical attention . In their weakened condition , many succumbed to smallpox .

= = Legacy = =

The most significant legacy of the Battle of Long Island was that it showed there would be no easy victory , and that the war would be long and bloody .

Commemorations of the battle include :

The Altar to Liberty : Minerva monument : The battle is commemorated with a monument , which includes a bronze statue of Minerva near the top of Battle Hill , the highest point of Brooklyn , in Green @-@ Wood Cemetery . The statue was sculpted by Frederick Ruckstull and unveiled in 1920 . The statue stands in the northwest corner of the cemetery and gazes directly at the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor . In 2006 , the Minerva statue was invoked in a successful defense to prevent a building from blocking the line of sight from the cemetery to the Statue of Liberty in the harbor . The annual Battle of Long Island commemoration is held inside the main Gothic arch entrance to Green @-@ Wood Cemetery .

The Prison Ship Martyrs ' Monument : A freestanding Doric column in Fort Greene memorializing all

those who died while kept prisoner on the British ships just off the shore of Brooklyn , in Wallabout Bay .

Soldiers ' Monument - Milford , Connecticut . Memorializes the 200 seriously ill prisoners of the Battle of Long Island who were dumped on the beach at Milford the night of January 3 , 1777 .

The Old Stone House : A re @-@ constructed farmhouse (c.1699) that was at the center of the Marylanders ' delaying actions serves as a museum of the battle . It is located in J.J. Byrne Park , at Third Street and Fifth Avenue , Brooklyn , and features models and maps .

Prospect Park , Brooklyn , Battle Pass : along the eastern side of Center Drive in Prospect Park , Brooklyn , is a large granite boulder with a brass plaque affixed , and another marker lies near the road for the Dongan Oak , a very large and old tree felled to block the pass from the British advance . In addition , in the park resides the Line of Defense marker erected by the Sons of the American Revolution and , near the eastern edge of Long Meadow , the Maryland Monument & Maryland Memorial corinthian column .

There are only thirty currently existing units in the U.S. Army with lineages that go back to the colonial and revolutionary eras . Five Army National Guard units (101st Eng Bn , 125th MP Co , 175th Inf , 181st Inf and 198th Sig Bn) and one Regular Army Field Artillery battalion (1 @-@ 5th FA) are derived from American units that participated in the Battle of Long Island .