

= Battle of Hubbardton =

The Battle of Hubbardton was an engagement in the Saratoga campaign of the American Revolutionary War fought in the village of Hubbardton , Vermont . Vermont was then a disputed territory sometimes called the New Hampshire Grants , claimed by New York , New Hampshire , and the newly organized and not yet recognized but de facto independent government of Vermont . On the morning of July 7 , 1777 , British forces , under General Simon Fraser , caught up with the American rear guard of the forces retreating after the withdrawal from Fort Ticonderoga . It was the only battle in Vermont during the revolution . (The Battle of Bennington was fought in what is now Walloomsac , New York .)

The American retreat from Fort Ticonderoga began late on July 5 after British cannons were seen on top of high ground , Mount Defiance (aka Rattlesnake Mountain and Sugar Loaf Hill) that commanded the fort . The bulk of General Arthur St. Clair 's army retreated through Hubbardton to Castleton , while the rear guard , commanded by Seth Warner , stopped at Hubbardton to rest and pick up stragglers .

General Fraser , alerted to the American withdrawal early on July 6 , immediately set out in pursuit , leaving a message for General John Burgoyne to send reinforcements as quickly as possible . That night Fraser camped a few miles short of Hubbardton , and the German General Friedrich Adolf Riedesel , leading reinforcements , camped a few miles further back . Rising early in the morning , Fraser reached Hubbardton , where he surprised some elements of the American rear , while other elements managed to form defensive lines . In spirited battle , the Americans were driven back , but had almost succeeded in turning Fraser 's left flank when Riedesel and his German reinforcements arrived , eventually scattering the American forces .

The battle took a large enough toll on the British forces that they did not further pursue the main American army . The many American prisoners were sent to Ticonderoga while most of the British troops made their way to Skenesboro to rejoin Burgoyne 's army . Most of the scattered American remnants made their way to rejoin St. Clair 's army on its way toward the Hudson River .

= = Background = =

General John Burgoyne began his 1777 campaign for control of the Hudson River valley by moving an army of 8 @, @ 000 down Lake Champlain in late June , arriving near Fort Ticonderoga on July 1 . On July 5 , General Arthur St. Clair 's American forces defending Fort Ticonderoga and its supporting defenses discovered that Burgoyne 's men had placed cannons on a position overlooking the fort . They evacuated the fort that night , with the majority of the army marching down a rough road (now referred to locally as the 1776 Hubbardton Military Road) toward Hubbardton in the disputed New Hampshire Grants territory . The day was hot and sunny , and the pace was rapid and grueling ; most of the army marched 30 miles (48 km) to Castleton before making camp on the evening of July 6 .

= = British troops give chase = =

The British general , a Scotsman named Simon Fraser discovered early on July 6 that the Americans had abandoned Ticonderoga . Leaving a message for General Burgoyne , he set out in pursuit with companies of grenadiers (9th , 29th , 34th , and 62nd Foot) and light infantry (24th , 29th , 34th , 53rd , and 62nd) , as well as two companies of the 24th Regiment and about 100 Loyalists and Indian scouts . Burgoyne ordered Riedesel to follow ; he set out with a few companies of Brunswick jägers and grenadiers , leaving orders for the rest of his troops to come as rapidly as possible . Fraser 's advance corps was only a few miles behind Colonel Ebenezer Francis ' 11th Massachusetts Regiment , which acted as St. Clair 's rear guard .

American general St. Clair paused at Hubbardton to give the main army 's tired and hungry troops time to rest while he hoped the rear guard would arrive . When it did not arrive in time , he left Colonel Seth Warner and the Green Mountain Boys behind , along with the 2nd New Hampshire

Regiment under Colonel Nathan Hale , at Hubbardton to wait for the rear while the main army marched on to Castleton . When Francis ' and Hale 's men arrived , Warner decided , against St. Clair 's orders , that they would spend the night there , rather than marching on to Castleton . Warner , who had experience in rear @-@ guard actions while serving in the invasion of Quebec , arranged the camps in a defensive position on Monument Hill , and set patrols to guard the road to Ticonderoga .

Baron Riedesel caught up with Fraser around 4 pm , and insisted that his men could not go further before making camp . Fraser , who acquiesced to this as Riedesel was senior to him in the chain of command , pointed out that he was authorized to engage the enemy , and would be leaving his camp at 3 am the next morning . He then advanced until he found a site about three miles (4 @.@ 8 km) from Hubbardton , where his troops camped for the night . Riedesel waited for the bulk of his men , about 1 @,@ 500 strong , and also made camp .

= = Attack = =

Fraser 's men were up at 3 am , but did not make good time due to the darkness . Riedesel left his camp at 3 am with a picked group of men , and was still behind Fraser when the latter arrived at Hubbardton near dawn and very nearly surprised elements of Hale 's regiment , which were scattered in the early fighting . A messenger had arrived from General St. Clair delivering news that the British had reached Skenesboro , where the elements of the retreating army had planned to regroup , and that a more circuitous route to the Hudson River was now required . St. Clair 's instructions were to follow him immediately to Rutland . Francis ' men had formed a column to march out around 7 : 15 when the British vanguard began cresting the hill behind them . Rapidly reforming into a line behind some cover , the Massachusetts men unleashed a withering volley of fire at the winded British . General Fraser took stock of the situation , and decided to send a detachment around to flank the American left , at the risk of exposing his own left , which he hoped would hold until Riedesel arrived . Riedesel reached the top of another hill , where he observed that the American line , now including parts of Hale 's regiment , was in fact pressing on Fraser 's left . He therefore sent his grenadiers to support Fraser 's flank and directed the jägers against the American center .

At some point early in the conflict , St. Clair was made aware of the gunfire off in the distance . He immediately dispatched Henry Brockholst Livingston and Isaac Dunn to send the militia camped closest to Hubbardton down the road in support of the action . When they reached the area of those camps they found those militia companies in full retreat away from the gunfire in the distance , and no amount of persuasion could convince the men to turn around . Livingston and Dunn continued riding toward Hubbardton .

Falling back to a secure position on Monument Hill , the Americans repulsed several vigorous British assaults , although Colonel Francis was hit in the arm by a shot . He soldiered on , directing troops to a perceived weakness on Fraser 's left . The tide of the battle turned when , after more than an hour of battle , Riedesel 's grenadiers arrived . These disciplined forces entered the fray singing hymns to the accompaniment of a military band to make them appear more numerous than they actually were . The American flanks were turned , and they were forced to make a desperate race across an open field to avoid being enveloped . Colonel Francis fell in a volley of musket fire as the troops raced away from the advancing British and scattered into the countryside .

= = Aftermath = =

The scattered remnants of the American rear laboriously made their way toward Rutland in order to rejoin the main army . Harassed by Fraser 's scouts and Indians , and without food or shelter , it took some of them five days to reach the army , which was by then nearing Fort Edward . Others , including Colonel Hale and a detachment of 70 men , were captured by the British as they mopped up the scene . Colonel Francis , in a sign of respect from his opponents , was buried with the Brunswick dead .

Baron Riedesel and the Brunswickers departed for Skenesboro the next day , much to General Fraser 's chagrin . Their departure left him in " the most disaffected part of America , every person a Spy " , with 600 tired men , a sizable contingent of prisoners and wounded , and no significant supplies . On July 9 he sent the 300 prisoners , under light guard but with threats of retaliation should they try to escape , toward Ticonderoga while he marched his exhausted forces toward Castleton and then Skenesboro .

Livingston and Dunn , the two men sent toward the battle by St. Clair , were met by retreating Americans on the Castleton road after the battle was over . They returned to Castleton with the bad news , and the army marched off , eventually reaching the American camp at Fort Edward on July 12 .

= = Losses = =

The official casualty return for the Hessian troops gives 38 Hessian soldiers and 1 French @-@ Canadian killed and 125 Hessians and 2 French @-@ Canadians wounded . A separate return for the German troops has 10 killed and 14 wounded , for a grand total of 49 killed and 141 wounded . Historian Richard M. Ketchum gives different British casualties of 60 killed and 168 wounded . The American casualties were 41 killed , 96 wounded and 230 captured .

= = Legacy = =

A local body commissioned the erection of a monument on the battlefield site in 1859 , and the state began acquiring battlefield lands in the 1930s for operation as a state historic site . The battlefield was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 , and is the site of annual Revolutionary War reenactments .