

= Battle of Pell 's Point =

The Battle of Pell 's Point (October 18 , 1776) , also known as the Battle of Pelham , was a skirmish fought between British and American troops during the New York and New Jersey campaign of the American Revolutionary War . The conflict took place in what is now part of Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx , New York City .

On October 12 , British forces landed at Throgs Neck in order to execute a flanking maneuver that would trap Gen. George Washington , commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the American revolutionary forces , and the main body of the Continental Army on the island of Manhattan . The Americans thwarted the landing , and Gen. Sir William Howe , commander @-@ in @-@ chief of British forces in North America , looked for another location along Long Island Sound to disembark his troops . On October 18 , he landed 4 @, @ 000 men at Pelham , 3 miles (4 @. @ 8 km) north of Throgs Neck . Inland were 750 men of a brigade under the command of the American Col. John Glover . Glover positioned his troops behind a series of stone walls and attacked the British advance units . As the British overran each position , the American troops fell back and reorganized behind the next wall . After several such attacks , the British broke off , and the Americans retreated .

The battle delayed British movements long enough for Washington to move the main army to White Plains and avoid being surrounded on Manhattan . After losing to the British in a battle at White Plains , and losing Fort Washington , Washington retreated across New Jersey to Pennsylvania .

= = Background = =

After a victory at the Battle of Long Island in late August , the commander @-@ in @-@ chief of British forces in North America , Gen. Sir William Howe landed his troops at Kip 's Bay , on the eastern shore of present @-@ day Manhattan , on September 15 . George Washington and his army retreated to Harlem Heights , a plateau situated on the north end of Manhattan Island . Washington was in a good defensive position , with his rear guarded on two sides by rocky heights and the Hudson and Harlem Rivers , and with more rocky heights to the south between his forces and the British . The next day , the British attacked the Americans and were defeated at the Battle of Harlem Heights . There was very little action for the next month , while the two forces remained in their fortified positions , each unable to decide upon their next move . The Americans believed Howe would either attack Fort Washington or attempt to flank the Americans with a landing at some point on Long Island Sound . A council @-@ of @-@ war decided to guard against both possibilities ; Washington kept 10 @, @ 000 men to defend Harlem Heights and Fort Washington , while Maj. Gen. William Heath took 10 @, @ 000 troops to defend Kingsbridge , and Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene was given 5 @, @ 000 troops to defend the other side of the Hudson River , near Fort Constitution .

After 26 days of contemplation , Howe decided against a frontal attack on Harlem Heights and Fort Washington , and chose instead to attempt a flanking maneuver . On October 12 , leaving behind three brigades under the command of Lord Hugh Percy on Manhattan Island , Howe embarked his main army in 80 vessels and proceeded up the East River , through Hell Gate , and landed at Throgs Neck . Throgs Neck ? originally known as Throckmorton 's , and also known as Throck 's , Frog 's Neck , and Frog 's Point ? is a narrow spit of land that sits between the East River and Long Island Sound . Conveniently for Howe , there was a road running from Throgs Neck to Kingsbridge , directly behind the American forces . Howe hoped to use this road to flank the Americans and pin them against the Hudson River .

Under the cover of fog , an advance force of 4 @, @ 000 men under the command of General Henry Clinton was landed on Throgs Neck . To their dismay , they found they were not on a peninsula , but on an island , separated from the mainland by a creek and a marsh . There were two ways to get to the mainland : a causeway and bridge at the lower end , and a ford at the other . The Americans were guarding both . Col. Edward Hand and a detachment of 25 men from the 1st Pennsylvania Regiment positioned themselves behind a length of cordwood along the causeway , after having removed the planks of wood from the bridge . They surprised the British troops , who

fell back and made an attempt to cross at the ford , which was guarded by another detachment . The Americans guarding both positions were quickly reinforced , and the defenders soon numbered over 1 @, @ 800 men . Howe decided it would be better to retreat and land somewhere else . He made camp on Throgs Neck and remained there for six days while supplies and reinforcements , including 7 @, @ 000 Hessian soldiers under the command of Gen. Wilhelm von Knyphausen , were brought up from New York . Just after midnight on October 18 , Howe embarked his army again and decided to land at Pell 's Point near the town of Pelham , a few miles to the north .

After hearing of the landing on Throgs Neck , Washington knew he risked entrapment on Manhattan . He made the decision to move his army to White Plains , where he believed they would be safe . By October 17 , the Continental Army was on its way to White Plains , leaving behind 2 @, @ 000 men to garrison Fort Washington .

= = Battle = =

At dawn , the British began to land on the shore , Clinton 's advance guard of 4 @, @ 000 British light infantry and Hessian jägers landing first . Inland , opposing them , was a brigade of some 750 men under the command of John Glover . Glover was atop a hill with a telescope when he noticed the British ships . Glover sent an officer , Major William Lee , to report to Charles Lee , Washington 's second in command , and ask for orders . However , Lee did not give any orders , and in the absence of orders Glover chose to attack . Glover turned out his brigade , which consisted of the 14th , 13th , 3rd and the 26th Continental Regiments . Glover left the 150 men of the 14th Continentals behind in reserve . Glover had not closed half the distance when he ran into approximately 30 skirmishers . Glover ordered a Captain and his 40 @-@ man company forward as an advance guard to hold the British in check , while Glover organized the rest of the force .

Glover prepared an ambush by placing the main body in staggered positions behind the stone walls that lined either side of the laneway leading from the beachhead to the interior . Glover instructed each of the regiments to hold their position as long as they could and then to fall back to a position in the rear , while the next unit took up the fighting . Glover then rode up to take command of the advance guard . The advance guard and the British began to engage each other , both sides taking casualties . After a little while the British were reinforced , and Glover ordered a retreat , which was done without confusion . The British troops began to advance at the retreating Americans . However , the 200 troops of the 13th Continentals that Glover had stationed behind the stone wall stood up and fired at the British when there were only 30 yards away . The ambush worked , and the column of British troops took heavy losses and fell back to the main body of the invading army .

The British waited half an hour before attacking again . This time when they attacked , they attacked with all 4 @, @ 000 men and seven cannon . The British bombarded the American position behind the stone wall as their infantry advanced . The cannon fire was ineffective , and when the British were 50 yards away the Americans fired a volley which stopped the British infantry . The British returned fire , and musket and rifle fire ensued for 20 minutes , the British supported by cannon , at which point the lead American regiment fell back under cover of the next reserve regiment . The 3rd Continental Regiment was stationed behind the stone wall on the opposite side of the road .

The British attacked the position of the 3rd Continentals , and an engagement ensued . Both sides kept up constant fire , the Americans breaking the British lines several times . However , after 17 volleys , the British numbers began to overwhelm the Americans , and Glover ordered a withdrawal to another stone wall on the crest of a hill while the next regiment in line , the 26th Continentals , engaged the British .

A reconnaissance party of 30 men was sent out from behind the third stone wall to see if the British would try and flank the American position . The party ran into the British , who had continued to advance , and they fell back to the stone wall . The Americans behind the wall fired one volley before Glover gave the order to retreat . The Americans retreated across a bridge over the Hutchinson stream , their retreat covered by the 150 men of the 14th Continentals who engaged in an artillery duel with the British . Howe camped on a hill on the opposite side of the stream but made

no attempt to cross the stream .

= = Aftermath = =

The next day , Glover and his force retreated to the town of Yonkers . American casualties were 8 killed and 13 wounded . British and Hessian casualties are not known . Howe 's official dispatch listed British casualties as 3 killed and 20 wounded , although the report did not include Hessian casualties . As the Hessians made up the majority of the landing force , it is reasonable to expect they made up the majority of the casualties . Over the next few days , from knowledge collected from British deserters , the Americans estimated that the British lost between 800 and 1 @,@ 000 killed or wounded , likely an exaggeration . Colonel Loammi Baldwin , who was present at the battle , estimated that the Americans had killed 200 British and Hessians , but historian David McCullough says this was " undoubtedly an exaggeration . " Historian George Athan Billias argues in support of Baldwin 's estimates , due in part to the corroborating admission of another British deserter . Regardless , the combined British and Hessian casualties were almost certainly larger than those of the Americans .

With the British advance delayed , the main American army under Washington was able to safely evacuate from Harlem (on the island of Manhattan) to White Plains . Howe slowly moved his army through New Rochelle and Scarsdale . On October 28 , he sent 13 @,@ 000 men to attack the Americans , resulting in a minor victory over Washington at the Battle of White Plains . Fort Washington , the last American stronghold on Manhattan , fell on November 16 . With these defeats , Washington and his army retreated across New Jersey and into Pennsylvania , paving the way for the Battles of Trenton and Princeton .