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the Battle of Saratoga

Surrender of General Burgoyne's British Army to the American Patriots on 17th October 1777, bringing France and Spain into the war



the Surrender of the British at the Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: print by Fauvel: [buy this picture](#)

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Saratoga

American Revolutionary War

the Battle of Saratoga: 17th October 1777

the Battle of Saratoga: Saratoga on the Hudson River in New York State.

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troops at the Battle of Saratoga: British and German troops against the Americans.

Commanders at the Battle of Saratoga: Major John Burgoyne commanded the British and German force. Major General Horatio Gates and Brigadier Benedict Arnold led the American army.

The armies at the Battle of Saratoga: The British force comprised some 5,000 regulars, Hessians, Canadians and Indians. After the surrender the American army numbered around 12,000 to 14,000 militia and regulars.

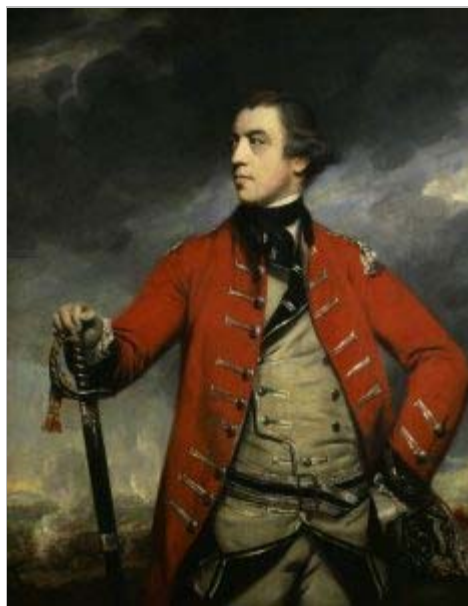
Uniforms, arms and equipment at the Battle of Saratoga: The British wore red coats, with buff caps for the grenadiers, tricorne hats for the battalion companies and caps for the militia.

The American infantry wore blue coats and the Prussian style grenadier mitre with a brass front plate.

The Americans dressed as best they could. As the war progressed regular regiments of the Continental Army wore blue or brown uniform coats, but the militia continued in rough clothing.



General Benedict Arnold: Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: [buy a picture of Benedict Arnold](#)



Major-General John Burgoyne: Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: picture by Joshua Reynolds: [buy this picture](#)

The British and German troops were armed with muskets and bayonets. The Americans carried muskets, largely without bayonets. Virginia and Pennsylvania regiments, particularly Morgan's men and other men of the woods carried long, small calibre, rifled weapons. cannons, mostly of small calibre.

Winner of the Battle of Saratoga: The Americans forced the surrender of Burgoyne's force.

British Regiments at the Battle of Saratoga:

The senior officers were Major General William Phillips, Baron Riedesel, Brigadier Simon Fraser and Brigadier Hamilton.

Major Lord Balcarres commanded the light companies of the regiments of foot.

Major Acland commanded the grenadier companies of the same regiments.

The battalion companies of the 9th, 20th, 21st, 24th, 29th, 31st, 47th, 53rd and 62nd

the 1st Jägers, Riedesel's Regiment, Specht's Regiment, Rhetz's Regiment and Captain Hesse Hanau Company of artillery

stopped at the battlefield of Flodden, 9th September 1513, the ... [\[Read More...\]](#)

Coppinger of Jutland

and three others lived in a cottage in Twyford Hampshire for our last year at Southampton ... [\[Read More...\]](#)

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and Canadians.

American Army at the Battle of Saratoga:

g:

personal command of General
ates:

Glover's Continental Brigade, Colonel
ontinental Regiment and Brigadier
s Continental Brigade

Learned's Continental Brigade,
Massachusetts Regiment, Jackson's
Massachusetts Regiment, Wesson's
Massachusetts Regiment and Livingston's New
ment

:

led by Major General Benedict Arnold
Poor's Brigade, Cilley's 1st New
e Regiment, Hale's 2nd New
e Regiment, Scammell's 3rd New
e Regiment, Van Cortlandt's New York
, Livingston's New York Regiment,
ut Militia, Morgan's Riflemen and
's Light Infantry



Major-General Horatio Gates: Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: [buy this picture](#)

Lead to the Battle of Saratoga: Over the winter of 1776/7, the British Government in revised a plan to send a strong army down the Lake Champlain route from Canada east of the rebellious American Colonies, isolating New England.



John St Leger: Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: [buy a picture of Colonel St Leger](#)

The British Governor of Canada, Sir Guy Carleton, with his experience of campaigning in North America, would have been a sound appointment for this command, particularly after his determined and resourceful defence of Canada in 1775 and 1776. Instead, Lord Germaine, the minister in London with direct control of the British war policy, persuaded King George III to appoint Major-General John Burgoyne, Carleton's subordinate during 1776, as commander-in-chief of the expedition from Canada. Burgoyne took the precaution of returning to London during the winter to lobby for the command.

Strong reinforcements of British and Brunswick regiments of foot and artillery were sent to Canada.

Germaine's instructions to Burgoyne were to take the best of these regiments down Lake Champlain, capture Fort Ticonderoga, advance to the Hudson River and progress south.

Lord Germaine's and Burgoyne's expectations were that a second British force under Major General Clinton would move north, up the Hudson River from New York, and meet Burgoyne, but no proper orders were sent to General Howe, commanding the British forces in New York, to ensure that he complied with this expectation. General Howe, the British commander-in-

the central colonies had his own plans to invade Pennsylvania and take Philadelphia.

His army set off from the St Lawrence River down Lake Champlain at the end of June, capturing Fort Ticonderoga on 1st July 1777. The American commander abandoned the fort (see [the Battle of Ticonderoga 1777](#)) as the British and Brunswickers arrived.

Then Colonel St Leger advanced down the Mohawk River from Lake Erie with a British diversionary raid.

In July 1777, Burgoyne's army moved from Skenesboro, at the southern end of Lake Champlain, and concentrated on clearing a path to the north for supplies and a route to the south for the advance. The terrain was a wooded country, crossed by trails rather than roads, unsuitable for an army having to transport quantities of supplies and



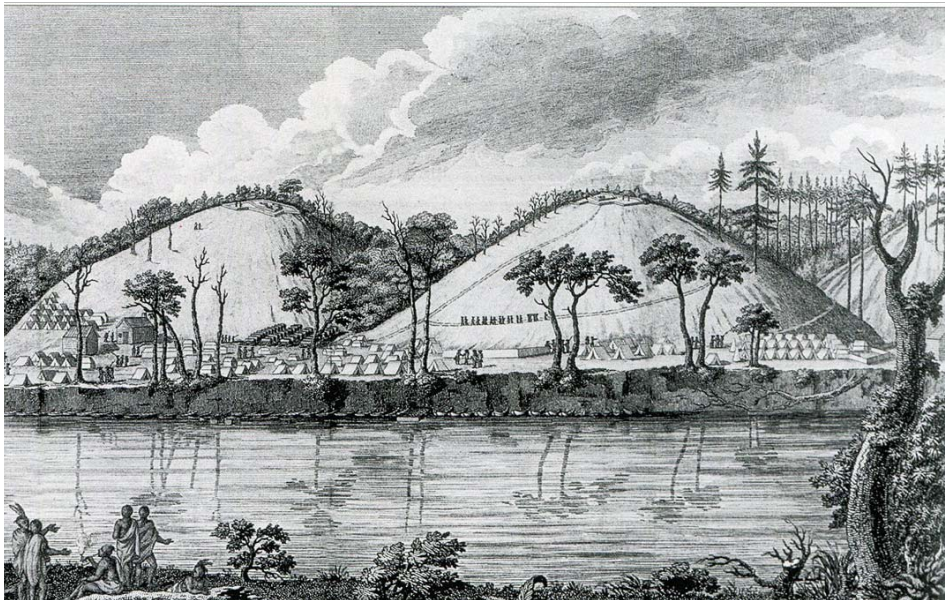
Movement by river: Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War

General Burgoyne, the American commander, withdrew to a position about thirty miles north of Saratoga, which was Burgoyne's primary target.

American authorities made determined efforts to raise the New England militia and to implement a scorched earth policy in the path of the British advance.

In addition to supplies and horses for his Brunswick dragoon regiment, Burgoyne sent Colonel Baum, with 500 men on a raid to Bennington, New Hampshire.

Meanwhile, Burgoyne moved his army down the Hudson River to Saratoga, where he established a substantial fortified camp.



British lines at Saratoga seen from across the Hudson River: Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War

The camp was attacked by American militia and overwhelmed. A relieving force led by Colonel Breymann was repelled with some loss (see [the Battle of Bennington](#)).

found that difficulties with his Indian allies and the vigorous resistance of Brigadier Arnold forced him to abandon his advance down the Mohawk River.

was in a perilous position. The presence of his army was arousing the local militia in great numbers. He was short of food. Germaine's imperative orders to march south left Burgoyne from remaining where he was, from retreating northwards or from marching to the East.

Burgoyne until 13th September 1777 to secure sufficient supplies, dragged through the mountains down rudimentary roads, to enable his army to continue the advance south.

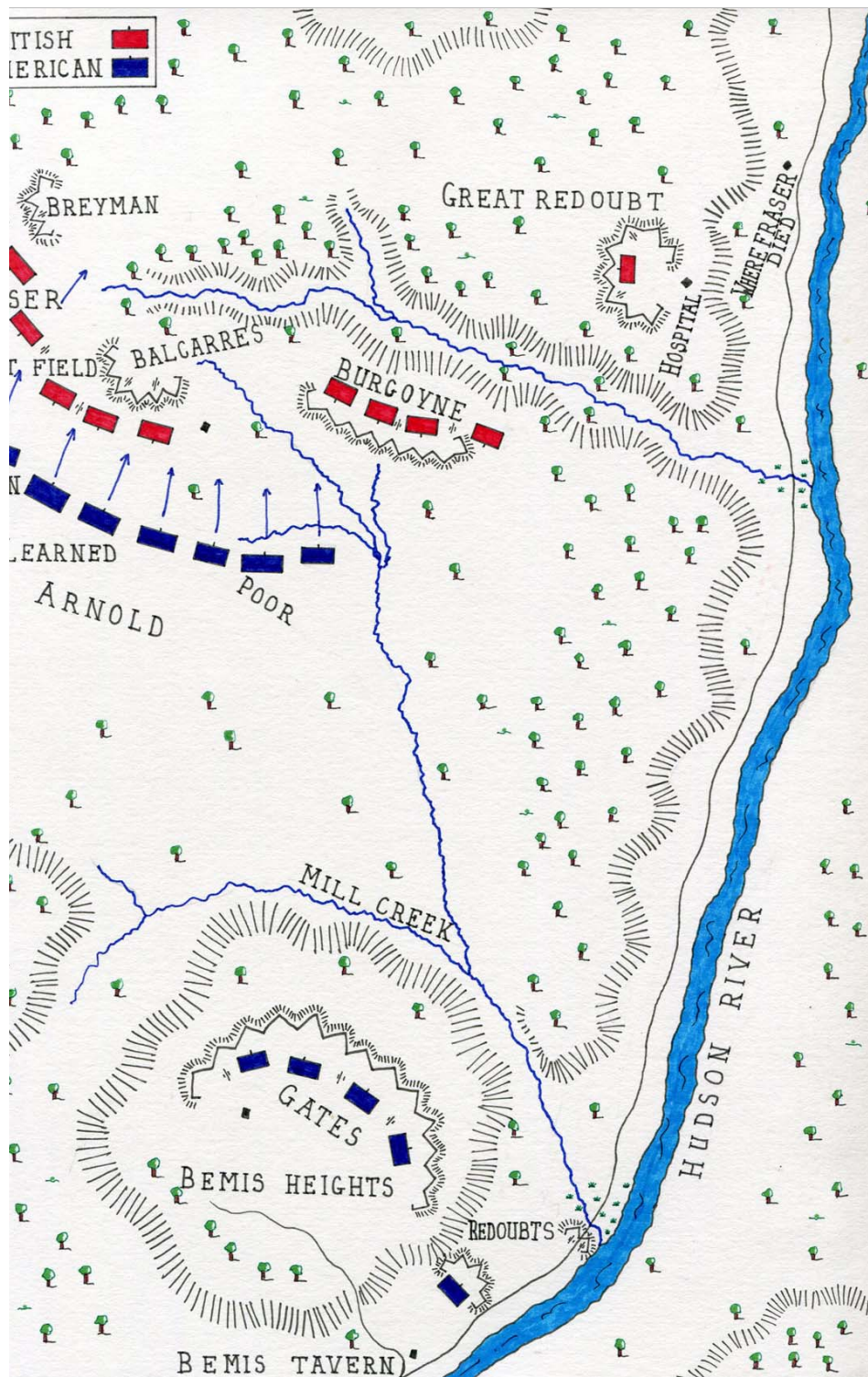
In September 1777, Burgoyne's army surrounded the fortified American camp on the west bank of the Hudson River at Bemis Heights.

The British force advanced on the American camp commanded by the ex-British officer, General Horatio Gates, in three columns, one down the river under the German officer, Baron von Mifflin, the main force in the centre led by Burgoyne himself, and the third, a flanking detour to the American left, led by Brigadier Simon Fraser, making a flanking detour to the American left. The plan of the British was to take the unfortified camp West of the American positions on Bemis Heights.

General Gates pressed Gates to leave his entrenchments on the west bank of the British but he was reluctant to do so because he saw as the risk of moving out of his camp.



**Brigadier Simon Fraser of Balnairn:
Battle of Saratoga on 17th October
1777 in the American Revolutionary
War**



the American attack on 7th October 1777 at the Battle of Saratoga in the American Revolutionary War: map by John Fawkes

deployed his battalions for the attack; the 9th, 21st, 62nd and 20th Foot. Fraser on the right, with the Grenadiers, Light Companies and the 24th Foot, towards the American left, and Riedesel began his approach along the riverbank. This the battle was known as [the Battle of Freeman's Farm](#) and was hard fought, leaving in occupation of the ground at nightfall.

of the Battle of Saratoga: The next day, 20th September 1777, several of Burgoyne's aides urged him to renew the attack on the American positions. It is suggested that if he had done so he would have taken advantage of the disarray into which the previous day's

ing had thrown Gates's army. Although initially tempted by the proposal, Burgoyne rejected it and remained in his camp by the Hudson River.



Arnold leading the American attack at the Battle of Saratoga on 7th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War

me day, Burgoyne received word that the Americans had captured one of his supply lines at Lake George. He was tempted to abandon the whole enterprise and withdraw to Fort Mifflin, but information that Major-General Clinton was advancing to meet him, up the Hudson River from New York, caused Burgoyne to remain in his camp.

October 1777, despite considerable success in the southern reaches, Clinton had not made any real progress up the Hudson River. Burgoyne determined to launch the delayed attack on the American positions on Bemis Heights. By this time, Gates had been heavily reinforced and his army comprised some 12,000 men against around 4,000 British and German soldiers.

Gates described the operation as a reconnaissance in strength, designed to see if he could take the hill to the West of the American fortifications on Bemis Heights.



Benedict Arnold wounded at the Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: [buy this picture](#)

ican piquets sent word that the British had advanced and were forming up in a field near the old Freeman's Farm battlefield. Morgan's riflemen were committed to the fight, quickly supported by the other regiments of Arnold's division. The Americans far outnumbered the British "reconnaissance" party and the British Grenadiers and Light Infantry were pressed back.



wounding of Brigadier Simon Fraser of Balnairn at the Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War

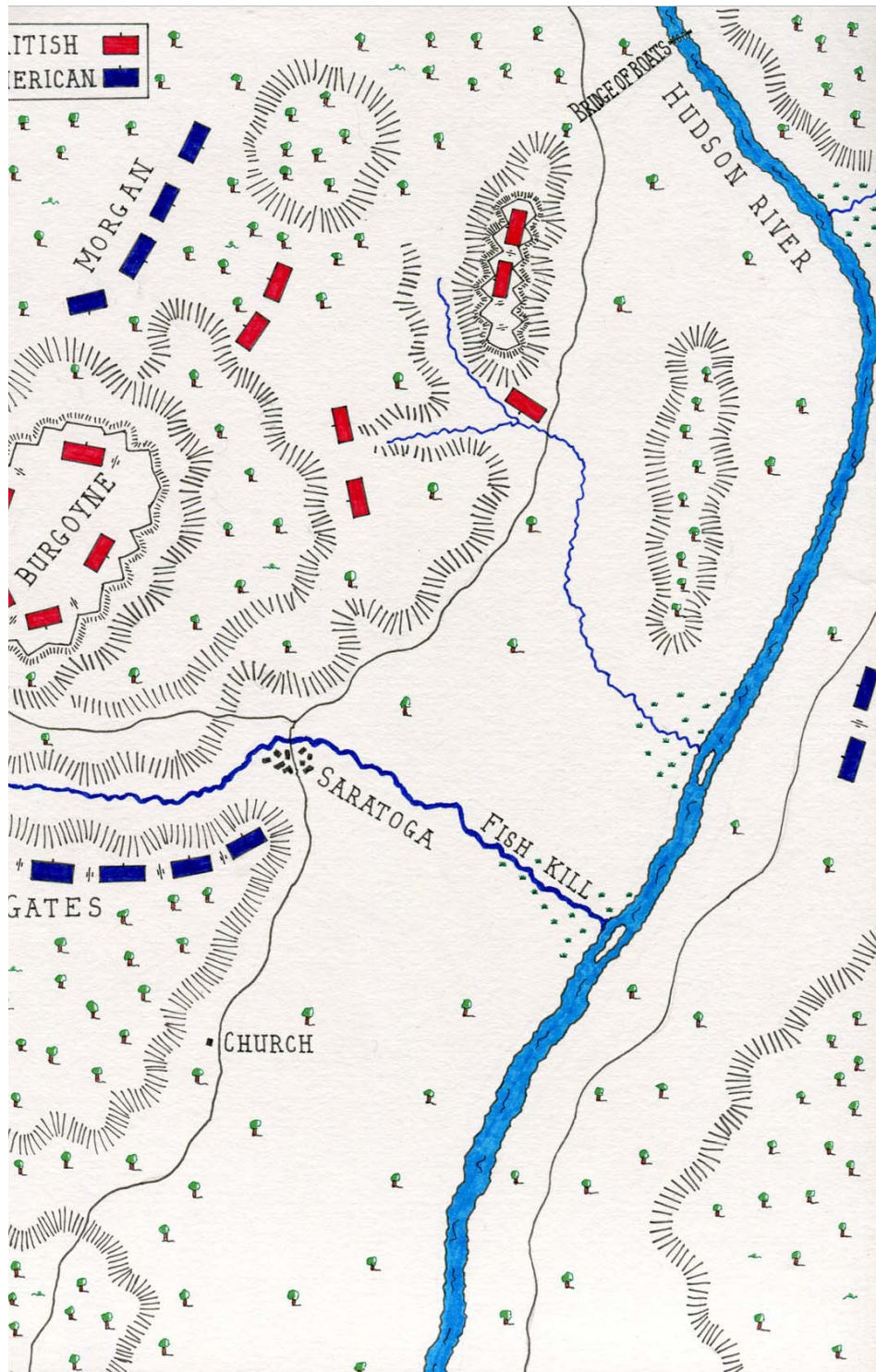
At a critical moment in the fighting, Brigadier Simon Fraser was mortally wounded by one of

riflemen. Arnold spurred the Americans to continue the attack and was himself wounded. The British and Hessian troops began to give way and, after the redoubt Colonel Breyman and his regiment was taken, Burgoyne withdrew the force to his camp above the Hudson River.



Order of General Burgoyne and the British Army to General Gates at the Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War

On 8th October 1777, Burgoyne withdrew his army up the river to the camp they had at Saratoga. The American army followed and enveloped the British positions, but let the last opportunities to retreat north to Ticonderoga go by, hoping that another army would come up the Hudson River from the South to his relief. A major problem in the campaign was communication between the two British forces. Almost all the messengers attempting the journey between Burgoyne and Clinton were caught and hanged by the Americans.



of the the Battle of Saratoga in the American Revolutionary War on 17th October 1777 at the time of Burgoyne's surrender: map by John Fawkes

awaited news of Clinton's advance until 17th October 1777, when he was forced to convention by which his troops surrendered to Gates, who had by then between d 20,000 men.

s at the **Battle of Saratoga**: Of the 7,000 British and Germans who marched from nly 3,500 were fit for duty at the surrender.



of Brigadier Simon Fraser at the Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: picture by John Graham: [buy this picture](#)

to the Battle of Saratoga: The consequences of Burgoyne's surrender were historic for Britain. France entered the war on the side of the American colonists in 1778, followed by Spain in 1779, and the American effort in the war was galvanized.

Stories and Traditions from the Battle of Saratoga:

It is said that Benedict Arnold pointed out Brigadier Simon Fraser as a prominent wounded British officer to Daniel Morgan and ordered him to have one of his riflemen shoot him. Morgan reluctantly ordered Timothy Murphy to shoot Fraser which he did.

General Burgoyne was known to the British troops as '*Gentleman Johnnie*'. Burgoyne made his name in the Seven Years War in Portugal commanding a regiment of light dragoons.

Major Lord Balcarres, the commander of the British Light Infantry at the [Battle of Freeman's Farm](#) and the Battle of Saratoga, after the American Revolutionary War met Benedict Arnold in England. Balcarres snubbed Arnold for being a traitor to the American cause by deserting to the British and the two men fought a duel. Neither was injured.

General Burgoyne was so confident of his success attacking down the Lake Champlain route that he bet Charles James Fox £10 that he would return to London victorious within the year. In later life, General Burgoyne became a successful playwright with '*The Maid of the Oaks*' and '*The*



**Major Lord Balcarres
commander of the British Light
Infantry at the Battle of
Saratoga on 17th October 1777
in the American Revolutionary
War**

iress'. He wrote the libretto for the opera *'The Lord of the Manor'*.
 th the loss of the Battle of Saratoga, General Burgoyne insisted that he would not
rrrender' to the Americans. He would only enter into a *'Convention'*. General
 ratio Gates agreed. By the terms of the convention the British officers were
 rmitted to return to Britain, but could not take any further part in the war. The
 diers were interned by the Americans. General Washington repudiated the terms
 the Convention when he was informed and the British soldiers became prisoners of
 ir. The British continued to act as if the Convention was in force. The British
 giments held by the Americans were counted as part of the British active army.
 idiers from these regiments who escaped from American captivity were labelled by
 e British authorities as deserters!



Capitulation of the British at the Battle of Saratoga on 17th October 1777 in the American Revolutionary War: picture by John Trumbull: buy this picture

ajor General Horatio Gates: Gates was an English officer who served in North
 erica, commanding one of the Independent Companies from New York in General
 addock's ill-fortuned attempt to capture Fort DuQuesne in 1755, and becoming a
 end of George Washington. After the French and Indian War, Gates married an
 erican and bought an estate in Virginia. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War,
 tes' experience in military administration with the British Army and Washington's
 luence ensured him the appointment of Adjutant General of the Continental Army.
 tes sought a field command and was appointed to command the American army at
 rt Ticonderoga in 1776. With the withdrawal to Canada of the British force in the
 tumn of 1776, Gates joined Washington in New Jersey. Gates lobbied hard to be
 en command of the American field army in place of Washington, but Washington's
 ccesses at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton confirmed his position and Gates
 urned to the Hudson to resist the advance of Burgoyne and there received
 rgoyne's capitulation. Following this success, Gates again plotted to acquire the
 mmand in chief of the American army from George Washington, but was
 successful. In 1780 Gates was appointed to command the American forces in North
 rolina and was soundly defeated by the British under General Cornwallis at the
 ttle of Camden. Gates was replaced in command by General Nathaniel Green and
 ished the war on Washington's staff. Gates retired to Manhattan with his second
 fe.

is for the Battle of Saratoga:

the British Army by Sir John Fortescue

of the Revolution by Christopher Ward

ican Revolution by Brendan Morrissey

oy Richard Ketchum

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