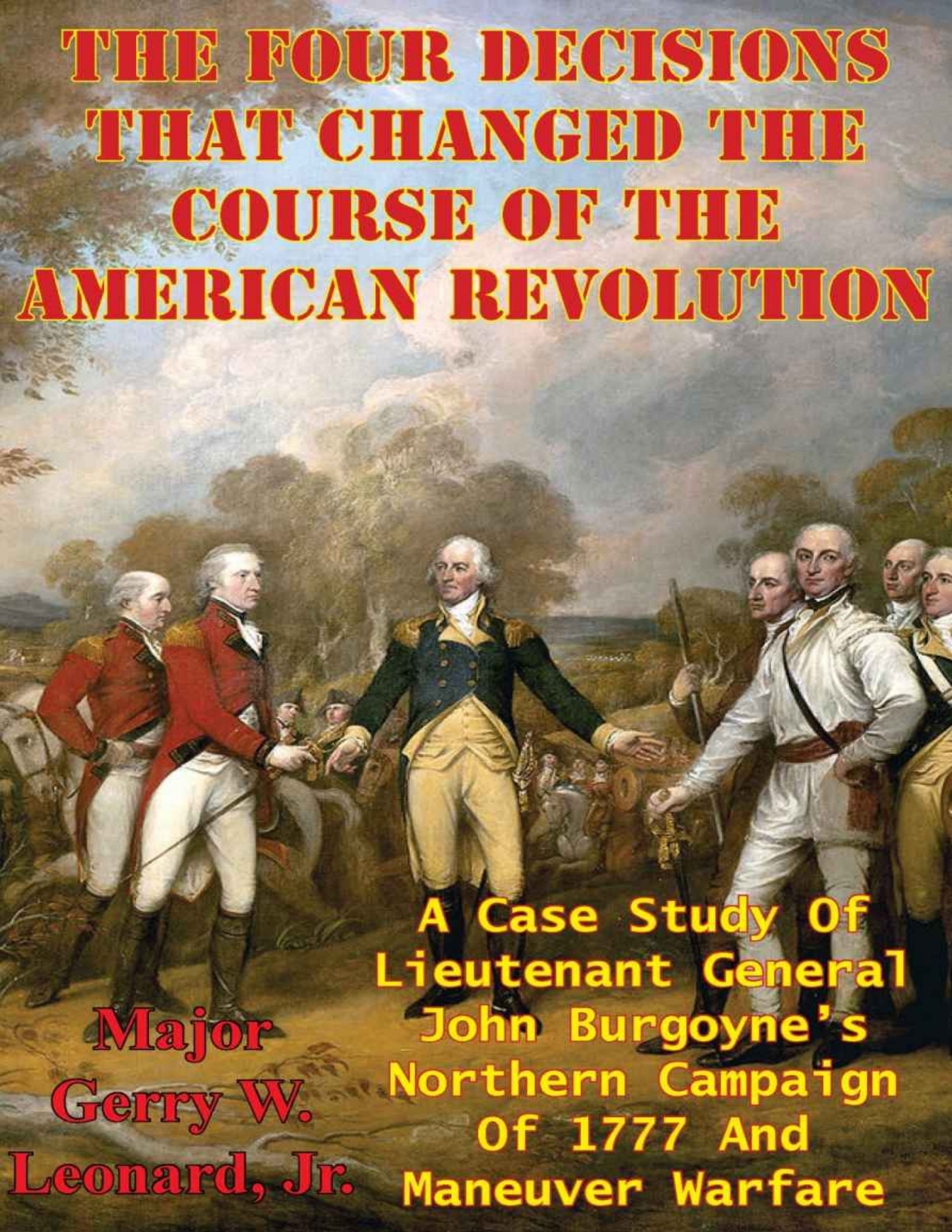
THE FOUR DECISIONS THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



A Case Study Of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's Northern Campaign Of 1777 And Maneuver Warfare

Major Gerry W. Leonard, Jr.

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Publisher's Note

Although in most cases we have retained the Author's original spelling and grammar to authentically reproduce the work of the Author and the original intent of such material, some additional notes and clarifications have been added for the modern reader's benefit.

We have also made every effort to include all maps and illustrations of the original edition the limitations of formatting do not allow of including larger maps, we will upload as many of these maps as possible.

The Four Decisions that Changed the Course of the American Revolution — A Case Study of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's Northern Campaign of 1777 and Maneuver Warfare

Major Gerry W. Leonard, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thesis: This historical study examines the British Northern Campaign of 1777 with particular emphasis on the four critical decisions Lieutenant General John Burgoyne made during the conduct of the campaign that resulted in his surrender to the Americans near Saratoga, New York. The Marine Corp's maneuver warfare doctrine is used to analyze the four decisions.

Discussion: During the winter of 1776-1777, Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, who at the time was second in command of Britain's Northern Army (based in Canada), proposed his "Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada" to King George III. Unhappy with the lack of success during the Northern Campaign of 1776, King George approved Burgoyne's campaign plan and chose Burgoyne to lead the Northern Army. Burgoyne's plan was a simple two-pronged attack from Quebec to seize Albany and secure the Lake Champlain-Lake George-Hudson River Waterway. After seizing Albany, Burgoyne expected to linkup with a third force attacking north from New York City.

While strategic policies and decisions negatively affected Burgoyne's campaign and the third force from New York City never really materialized, Burgoyne's campaign concept was both feasible and achievable. Of the two forces attacking south from Canada, Burgoyne commanded the main attack force of 9,000-plus soldiers and Brigadier General Barry St Leger commanded a 2,000 man diversionary force. In his "Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada," Burgoyne intended to seize Fort Ticonderoga and develop a theater logistics base before advancing, via Lake Champlain-Lake George-Hudson River waterway, on Albany. Simultaneous with Burgoyne's advance on Albany from the north, St Leger was advancing on Albany from the west, using the St Lawrence River-Lake Erie-Mohawk River waterway as a his axis of advance. Ultimately, Burgoyne believed that both attacks would make the Americans to split their forces in order to defend Albany.

Burgoyne's campaign progressed smoothly until the fall of Fort Ticonderoga. After his quick and easy rout of the Americans at Fort Ticonderoga, Burgoyne began making decisions that deviated from him campaign plan. Rather than halting his army at Fort Ticonderoga, Burgoyne decided to pursue the fleeing American army. Shortly after this decision (pursue), Burgoyne's army ran out supplies and consolidated near Skenesboro, New York. At Skenesboro, Burgoyne made a second decision that further deviated from his original plan. At Skenesboro, Burgoyne decided to continue the advance on Albany by a land rather than water. Both his decision to pursue the Americans after the capture of Fort Ticonderoga and his decision to travel by land vice water, exacerbated Burgoyne's supply problems. Relying on re-supply from Quebec rather than Fort Ticonderoga, Burgoyne's advance slowed the further his army moved south. Eventually, the Northern Army's advance ground to a halt on the east side of the Hudson River because of supply shortages and overextended lines.

While the British tackled supply problems, the Americans seized the initiative by harassing and delaying the British and destroying the only usable roads. By September, the Americans were dictating the terms of each engagement and controlling the tempo of the campaign. On 12 September 1777, Burgoyne made a third critical decision — he crossed the Hudson River and cut his escape and his supply route. Burgoyne had no recourse from this decision because he could not return to Quebec or Fort Ticonderoga before winter froze Lake Champlain. Burgoyne made his last critical decision on 7 October when he ordered a reconnaissance in force attack on the Americans located near Bemis Heights (near Saratoga, NY). In hindsight, Burgoyne's forth decision, which was more of a tactical vice an operational decision, highlights the extent of his desperation and his army's supply woes.

Conclusion: The defeat of Burgoyne's army changed the American Revolution. By using maneuver warfare concepts to examine Burgoyne's four decisions, it is very apparent that Burgoyne's surrender could have been avoided had Burgoyne stuck to his original campaign plan. Because Burgoyne decided to deviate from his original amphibious campaign plan, in favor of a land campaign, the Americans stole the initiative and dictated the tempo for the campaign.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

At 1000, on the morning of 17 October 1777, Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's defeated Northern Army marched out of their positions, in strict formation and drums beating, towards Fort Hardy. On the plain adjacent to the old fort, the 5,895 British and German soldiers that remained of Burgoyne's once potent combined joint task force, parked their artillery, grounded their muskets and emptied their cartridge boxes, while two American staff officers from the headquarters of Major General Horatio Gates observed. Shortly afterwards, the two officers, joined by a mounted company carrying the new flag of stars and stripes, led Burgoyne's once powerful and confident army across the Fishkill Creek and into the American camp, where the army was drawn up in two long lines. As the British and German soldiers passed, the Americans stood erect and disciplined, without any sign of hate, malice or disrespect. At a dinner that Gates hosted for Burgoyne later that night, the defeated British general proposed a toast to "George Washington."[1]

In June, when Burgoyne's Northern Army commenced its campaign to seize Albany and secure the Lake Champlain-Lake George-Hudson River waterway, few generals or statesmen anywhere in the world would have predicted Burgoyne making a toast to George Washington.[2] Before Burgoyne's surrender, the prospect of the Americans winning their independence was dismal. The loss of Fort Ticonderoga and Philadelphia, combined with the occupation of New York and Newport, convinced Britain's enemies that it was impossible for a rag-tag band of militia to resist a professional army. Before word of Burgoyne's defeat reached Europe, a French statesman told American diplomats in Paris that, "America must accommodate or submit."[3]

While few predicted Burgoyne's defeat in 1777, the aftershocks reverberated around the world. After word of Burgoyne's surrender reached Paris, the French agreed to enter the war on the side of America, ultimately setting the stage for Washington's decisive victory over Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781. Above all, Saratoga was a watershed event for America and the world because:

It proved that Americans could fight.[4]

It sent a signal, especially to the French, that America would win the war.[5]

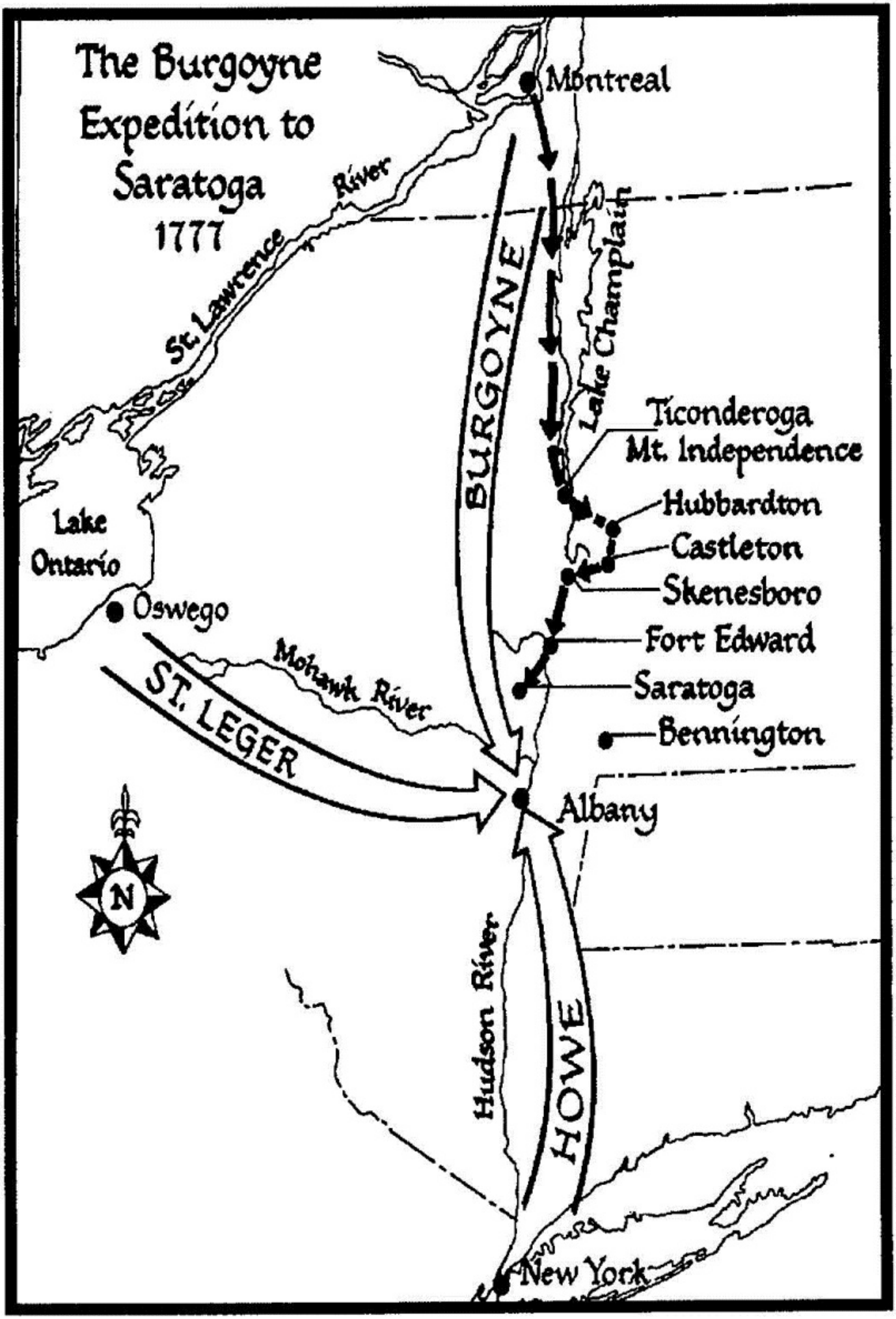
It established that America, as a country, was "armed and dangerous. "[6]

By most European military standards, Burgoyne's combined joint task force possessed every military advantage necessary to crush the rag-tag Americans that stood between Canada and Albany. His main force, consisting of 9,078 professional soldiers, 700 sailors, 500 to 1000 Indians

(reinforcing), 400 to 600 loyalists (reinforcing), 138 artillery pieces, 9 ships, 24 gunboats (154 cannons), and over 200 riverboats (bateaux), was an impressive arrangement of combat power.[7] In addition, a 2,000-man diversionary force supported the main force by attacking Albany from the west, using the Mohawk River as its axis of advance.[8] When the Northern Army crossed the line of departure on 20 June 1777, it — like its commander — was destined for glory. Why they failed to reach Albany and gain glory is the focus of this paper.

This paper will analyze the British Northern Campaign of 1777 with particular emphasis on Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's four critical decisions. While it is assumed that the reader is familiar with the Northern Campaign, the four decision points, listed sequentially, were:(1) pursuit to Hubbardton and Skenesboro; (2) travel by land instead of water to Fort Edward; (3) cross the Hudson River; (4) conduct a "reconnaissance in force" at Saratoga. *The analysis will show that Burgoyne's original plan was both reasonable and feasible, and that his decisions, which deviated from the plan, led to his defeat.*

Figure 1: Burgoyne's Campaign Concept


The Burgoyne Expedition to Saratoga 1777
Montreal
River
St. Lawrence
BURGOYNE
Lake Champlain
Ticonderoga
Mt. Independence
Hubbardton
Castleton
Skenesboro
Fort Edward
Saratoga
Bennington
Albany
Lake Ontario
Oswego
Mohawk River
ST. LEGER
N
Hudson River
HOWE
New York

Unlike most campaign examinations, which tend to analyze the British Northern Campaign from an academic perspective, this paper evaluates Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's four decisions through the experienced eyes of a field grade officer with twelve years' service in the United States Marine Corps. To provide granularity to the analysis, the Marine Corps' maneuver warfare doctrine is used to frame and assess Burgoyne's four decision points. While Britain's Northern Campaign of 1777 certainly predates the Marine Corp's maneuver warfare doctrine, the concepts within the doctrine are timeless, and, when used as an examination tool, expose the tactical and operational flaws of Burgoyne's battlefield decisions. Before proceeding, it is necessary to define the specific maneuver warfare concepts used throughout the paper.

Maneuver Warfare Concepts

Maneuver warfare doctrine is a *warfighting philosophy that seeks to reduce the enemy's will to resist by shattering his moral, mental, and physical ability to fight and function as an effective, coordinated force*.[9] Ultimately, gaining and exploiting spatial, temporal, psychological or technological advantages over the enemy accomplishes this. Inherent in maneuver warfare are certain tenants that allow an army to gain and exploit these advantages on the battlefield. The key tenants used throughout this paper are: centers of gravity, critical vulnerabilities, surfaces and gaps, initiative, speed and tempo, and boldness. They serve as the basis for the analyzing Burgoyne's four decision points.

Centers of Gravity. A military organization is composed of many parts. While many parts make up the whole, they do not necessarily carry the same weight — some parts are more important than others are. Those parts that are critical to an organization — where it draws its strength — are centers of gravity. They exist at all levels of war. Centers of gravity may be tangible, such as an artillery unit or a critical logistics node; they may be intangible, such as morale or leadership, depending on the situation. There may be more than one within the same organization. Ultimately, military organizations seek to protect their own centers of gravity while reducing or avoiding the enemy's center of gravity.[10]

Critical Vulnerabilities. The converse of a center of gravity is a critical vulnerability. While all organizations have weaknesses, some weaknesses, if attacked, lead to collapse of an organization's cohesion more rapidly and efficiently than others do. These weaknesses are critical vulnerabilities. Moreover, centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities are complementary concepts, if properly linked. For example, if an armor formation is a center of gravity, a refueling capability may be a critical vulnerability. Likewise, it may be wiser to attack the refuelers that feed the armor. Ultimately, attacking critical vulnerabilities should reduce or take away centers of gravity.[11]

Surfaces and Gaps. Surfaces represent enemy strengths or hard spots; gaps represent enemy weaknesses or soft spots with respect to time, space, capabilities or the environment. Conceptually, the goal of maneuver warfare is to penetrate the enemy's combat system by pitting friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses or gaps. Ultimately, bypassing surfaces preserves friendly combat power; attacking gaps enhances friendly combat power and improves the potential for a decisive result.[12]

Initiative. In war, organizations seek to impose their will on their opponent. To accomplish this end, organizations try to dictate the terms of the conflict by forcing the enemy to react. Striking or attacking the enemy usually does this. However, while the attack is generally preferred, it is not always true that the attacker possesses the initiative. For the purpose of this paper, therefore,

initiative means *setting and dictating the terms of a fight or operation.*

A second concept closely connected to initiative, as it relates to the attack, is the concept of a *culminating point*. No organization can attack continuously. When an organization in the attack runs out of steam, be it physical, mental or moral, it is said have reached its culminating point. It is at this moment when an organization is most vulnerable because its opponent can wrest the initiative. Culminating points, like the initiative, exist at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war.{13}

Speed and Tempo. Pure speed is the ability to move quickly. In war, relative speed matters because moving faster than one's opponent, whether it be physical, mental or moral, has a way of creating an environment in which the adversary cannot cope. Speed may be a physical capability, such as an Ml A1 tank formation that encircles a slower moving T-72 tank formation. Speed may be a mental capability, such as a commander who makes and acts on decisions faster than his opponent. When properly used, speed is a combat multiplier. Closely related to speed, is the concept of tempo. Tempo is the ability to operate at a faster pace or rhythm than the enemy does in a combat environment. Tactical tempo is the pace of events within an engagement; operational tempo is the pace between engagements. Ultimately, the goal of maneuver warfare, and the essence of tempo, is to create an environment in which events occur faster than the enemy can respond.{14}

Boldness. Much like speed, boldness is a weapon and a source of combat power. Clausewitz called it "a genuinely creative force," because it exists in mind and soul of the commander.{15} Essentially, boldness is the commanders' ability to see through the fog and friction of war, accept risk, and decisively exploit fleeting opportunities.{16} It takes a commander with judgment and guts to leverage and employ boldness as a weapon.

Having defined the tools for our examination of the British Northern Campaign of 1777, let us now reach back in time and assess Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's four decisions, which ultimately changed the course of the American Revolution.

Chapter 2: Pursuit to Hubbardton and Skenesboro

Fort Ticonderoga

On July 1, 1777, the British forces under Burgoyne occupied their final attack position, Three Mile Point, which was less than a day's march from Fort Ticonderoga. The previous day Burgoyne ensured that each man received eight days of rations. Additionally, Burgoyne issued his general order for the upcoming assault: "This army must not retreat".{17} Their mission was: *At H-Hr on 02 July, attack to seize Fort Ticonderoga (and Fort Independence) in order to establish a logistics base to support follow-on operations*.

Burgoyne's logistics concept for surmounting the inherent problem of campaigning over extended lines in the American interior was to establish a theater supply base between Quebec and Albany.{18} At Fort Ticonderoga, Burgoyne intended to build up his combat power — food, supplies, and ammunition — and reconstitute his force, before proceeding to Albany. Thus, Fort Ticonderoga became the intermediate objective for the British, with its seizure critical for campaign success.{19}

Fort Ticonderoga, the 'Gibraltar of the Wilderness', designed by the French during the French and Indian War (Seven Years War) to prevent British invasions north, sat astride the narrowest point on Lake Champlain. Ideally situated on key terrain, Fort Ticonderoga controlled — in conjunction with Fort Independence — all northbound traffic into Canada and the important portage between Lake George and Lake Champlain. Attacking Fort Ticonderoga from the south (New York) was a difficult and almost insurmountable task. Attacking Fort Ticonderoga from the north (Canada), however, was both feasible and achievable because Fort Ticonderoga faced the wrong direction.{20} For an aggressive commander with the appropriate number of forces, Fort Ticonderoga's vulnerable exposure to the north represented an opportunity.

The American commander at Fort Ticonderoga, Major General Arthur St. Clair, planned to delay the British advance south for as long as possible, but not at the loss of his force.{21} The Americans under St. Clair represented the preponderance of forces in Schuyler's Northern Department. Schuyler could not afford to lose this force, nor could he afford to allow Burgoyne to move south unopposed. Schuyler needed St. Clair to buy him time so he could recruit and build a more robust force. St. Clair would accomplish this by slowing the British juggernaut and disrupting Burgoyne's timetable.{22}

Major General St. Clair chose to strongpoint Fort Ticonderoga, but he had Schuyler's permission to abandon the famous fort if the enemy arrived in force.{23} His basic plan was to delay the enemy at Fort Ticonderoga, withdraw to Fort Independence on the east side of Lake Champlain, and delay again. After delaying at Fort Independence, St. Clair intended to break contact and withdraw south,

protecting his line of retreat by using the east side of the Lake and the Hudson River.

St. Clair's engineers constructed a twelve-foot wide bridge across Lake Champlain to facilitate the movement from Fort Ticonderoga to Fort Independence. To prevent British naval forces from interdicting (or providing naval surface fires) the movement across the bridge, his engineers laid a heavy log boom (obstacle) across the lake, well north of bridge. To prevent the British ground forces from pursuing by foot, St. Clair intended to destroy the bridge after his forces were safely across.[24] British actions and human error prevented the withdrawal from occurring as St. Clair planned.

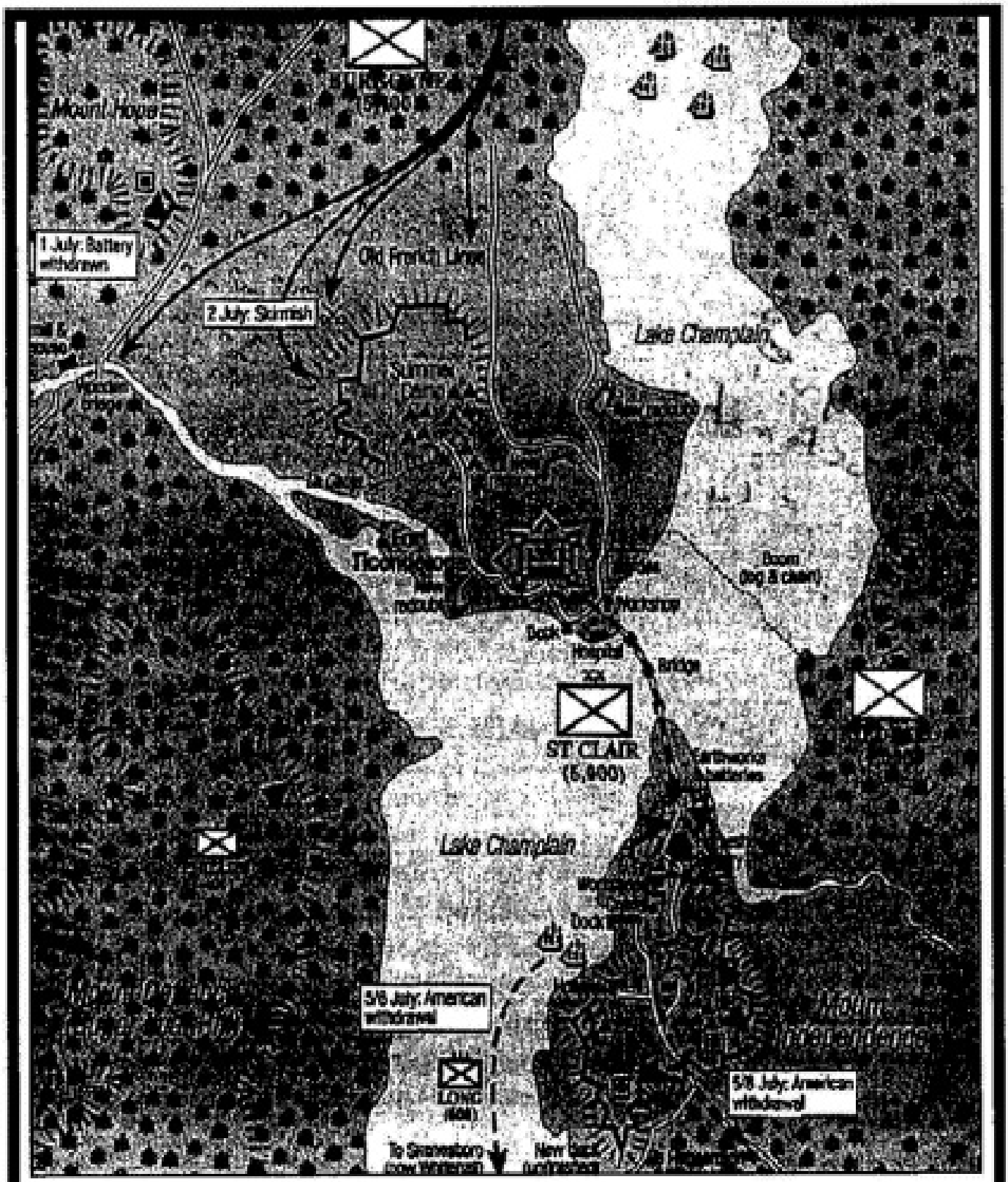


Figure 2: The British Attack on Fort Ticonderoga

Burgoyne assumed that the Americans would defend Fort Ticonderoga, but for the reasons previously discussed, he believed that it was vulnerable to an attack from the north. Burgoyne

advanced on Fort Ticonderoga on 2 July with his Left Wing (the German forces under Riedesel) on the east side of the Lake Champlain and his Right Wing (British forces under Phillips) on the west side. Leading the advance on the west side, Burgoyne's Advance Guard (Brigadier General Simon Fraser) neutralized St. Clair's security forces and cleared the way for Burgoyne's Right Wing. On 4-5 July, while waiting for Riedesel's forces to envelope Fort Independence, Phillips moved his artillery up Mount Defiance. This move, unexpected by the defenders, exposed both forts to long-range artillery fire.

At 800 feet, Mount Defiance dominated both forts and represented the key terrain in battlespace. General St. Clair chose not to occupy Mount Defiance because he lacked the time and manpower to properly defend it, and he assumed that Defiance's steep gradient and thick vegetation would prevent the British from occupying her crest.[25] After positioning their cannon on the hill, the British could fire on both forts with impunity. On the night of 5 July, St. Clair made a wise and timely decision.[26] Under the cover of darkness, he withdrew from Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Independence. Sending his supplies, non-combatants, and 600 combat troops from Fort Independence to Skenesboro by water, and his main force by land towards Castleton (New Hampshire Grants or present-day Vermont), St. Clair was gone before Burgoyne could trap him and win a decisive victory.[27]

Decision Point #1: Pursuit to Hubbardton and Skenesboro

As the sun rose on 6 July, Burgoyne received word that St. Clair's forces had withdrawn. Burgoyne immediately ordered Fraser's Advance Guard to cross the bridge and pursue St. Clair's main force with Riedesel's Left Wing in support.{28} On the Lake, Burgoyne ordered the navy to breach the water obstacle (log boom) and pursue St. Clair's waterborne detachment. By 9:00 A.M., Burgoyne's naval and ground forces were in full pursuit.{29}

On the water, the British forces reached Skenesboro at 3:00 P.M., two hours after the American detachment. The Americans, not expecting the British navy to break through the water obstacle, conducted a leisurely withdrawal.{30} They were unprepared to defend Skenesboro when the British arrived. Abandoning their non-combatants, wounded and sick, as well as St. Clair's critical combat trains and supplies, the American detachment commenced a disorganized retreat by foot towards Fort Ann.{31} By the evening of 6 July, the British amphibious force had seized Skenesboro, as well as the supplies, boats, and personnel that the Americans had abandoned.{32}

On the land, Fraser's Advance Guard located St. Clair's rear-guard near Hubbardton on the night of 6 June, thanks to aggressive reconnaissance by his Indians and poor security measures by the Americans. In the pre-dawn hours of 7 July, Fraser's forces closed with the Americans, using the enemy's campfires to guide their movement.{33} After the Indians overwhelmed the pickets, Fraser's light infantry and grenadiers struck the main lines of the American rear-guard, driving them back towards the Castleton Road.{34} The Americans regrouped on Monument Hill, which controlled all foot traffic heading south on the Castleton Road towards Skenesboro (and St. Clair's main force). The ensuing fight near Monument Hill lasted for roughly three hours with each side striking, parrying, and counterattacking. Both commanders (Fraser versus Colonel Francis and later Colonel Warner) fought aggressively and both forces, by chance or design, controlled the initiative at different times during the battle. The battle, which could have gone either way, remained an even fight until Fraser's reinforcements arrived to offset the balance.

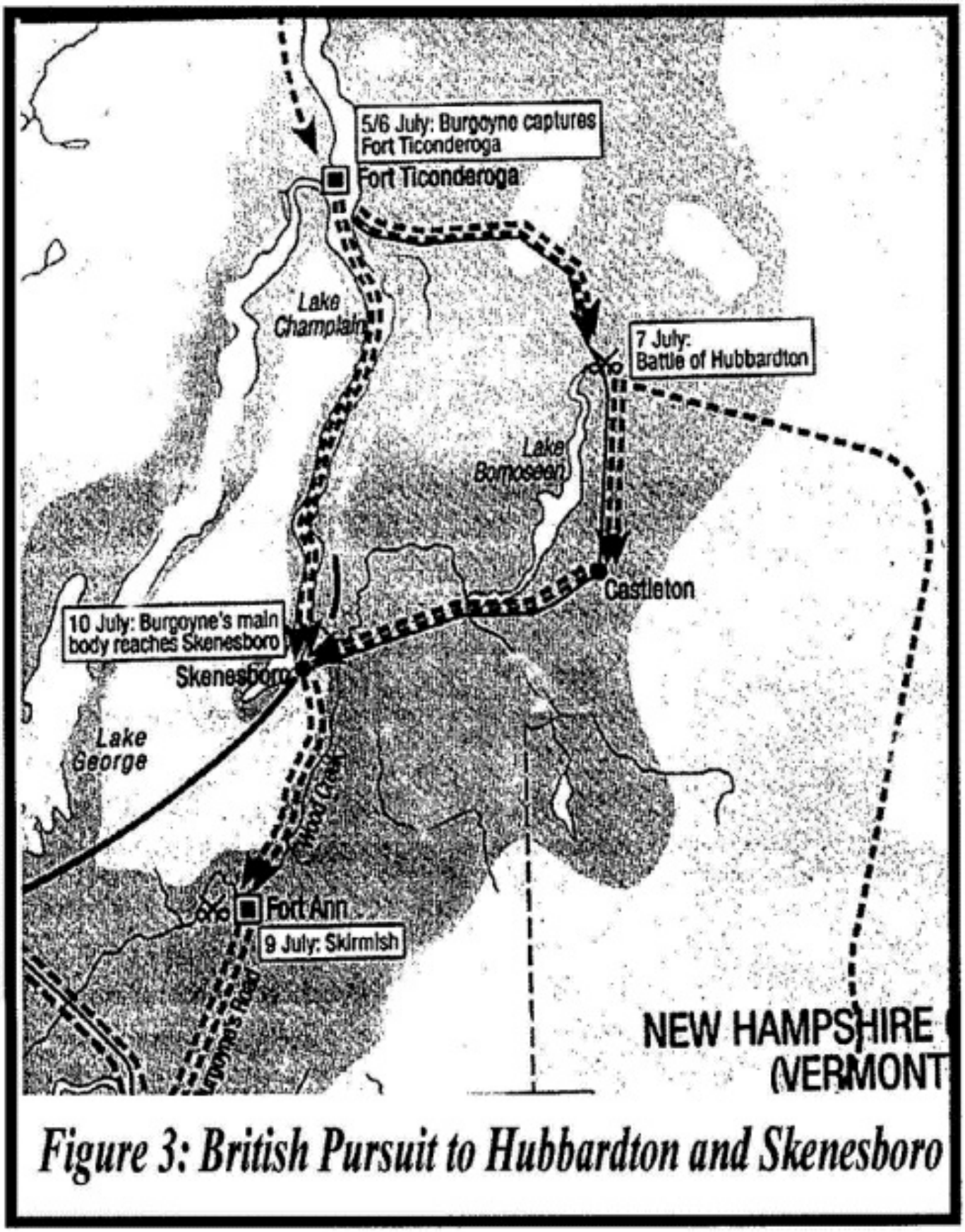


Figure 3: British Pursuit to Hubbardton and Skenesboro

Anticipating the need for reinforcements before the fight began, Brigadier General Fraser requested that Major General Riedesel's forces (located between Hubbardton and Fort Independence) march quickly towards Hubbardton and reinforce his Advance Guard. Although Francis had not requested reinforcements, St. Clair tried to reinforce the fight with two militia

companies. However, St. Clair could not coordinate the reinforcement effort because his distant location greatly reduced his situational awareness. The arrival of Riedesel's reinforcements, an hour after the battle began, decided the outcome and sealed the fate of St. Clair's rear-guard. The Americans, with their line of retreat cut-off and their flanks under pressure, withdrew in small groups towards the New Hampshire Grants (Vermont).{35}

St. Clair, now without a rear-guard, ordered his main body to march towards Rutland (present day Vermont) before the British could capitalize on their Hubbardton victory.{36} The British, exhausted from the forced march the previous day, lacked the stamina to pursue St. Clair's main body or the remnants of his rear-guard. Fraser's Advance Guard spent 7 and 8 July collecting prisoners, gathering the wounded, and burying the dead from both sides.{37}

By 11 July 1777, Burgoyne's army had produced tremendous results. They had seized Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Independence, Skenesboro, 200 vessels, 100 canons, a number of prisoners and St. Clair's critical combat trains (supplies). Fort Edward, twenty-three miles south of Skenesboro, now represented Schuyler's main line of resistance and America's northernmost outpost.{38}

However, the decisive action Burgoyne envisioned at Fort Ticonderoga never materialized because St. Clair never gave him the opportunity. St. Clair preserved the American northern army by abandoning Fort Ticonderoga on 5 July.{39} After consolidating at Skenesboro and Castleton, Burgoyne waited eighteen more days before executing his second operational decision.

Analysis of Decision Point #1

Surfaces and Gaps. In an operational sense, attacking Fort Ticonderoga meant attacking an American surface. However, Burgoyne's army needed Fort Ticonderoga to sustain the campaign and to control the critical portage between Lake Champlain and Lake George, so bypassing it was impractical. Burgoyne's tactical concept for seizing the objective, however, clearly demonstrated that he sought to attack a tactical gap by maneuvering his forces to the rear and flanks of St. Clair. Because of his maneuvering, Burgoyne forced St. Clair to withdraw without a fight.

Specifically, Burgoyne's use of local intelligence sources and his employment of his Advance Guard to conduct a reconnaissance pull enabled him to locate St. Clair's western flank (gap) and avoid a surface (frontal attack on Fort Ticonderoga).{40} Burgoyne's Advance Guard screened and "pulled" Phillip's Right Wing, enabling it to move and occupy Mount Defiance undetected. As a result, St. Clair was not aware of Burgoyne's local strength, form of maneuver, or the location of his army wings. When he discovered that Phillip's had occupied Mount Defiance on 5 July, it was too late to counter.

Lieutenant General Burgoyne's tactical concept of seeking a gap through a reconnaissance pull shaped the Fort Ticonderoga action. The employment of his Advance Guard, combined with his envelopment, produced better results then he envisioned. After watching the enemy fight at Breed's Hill in 1775, Burgoyne did not expect the Americans to withdraw without a fight.{41} Consequently, Burgoyne was ill prepared to conduct a pursuit.

Had he expected a pursuit, his distribution of forces and allotment rations (8 days) would have been different. Burgoyne needed a more mobile force (Fraser's Advance Guard vice Riedesel's Left Wing) on the east side of Lake Champlain to cut the enemy's line of retreat or exploit its withdrawal. As it was, Fraser's mobile force had to cross the bridge, thus delaying the pursuit. However, in deciding to pursue, Burgoyne was exploiting a gap he created through maneuver and a reconnaissance pull

Initiative. From 13 June to about 5 July, the British essentially blinded the American commander at Fort Ticonderoga. St. Clair lacked a naval force to impede the British on water and he lacked the requisite (and skilled) infantry forces to counter British reconnaissance and security operations. Burgoyne dictated the terms of the battle by attacking and by blinding St. Clair simultaneously. He set the conditions for the battle and chose the time and location of the attack. St. Clair reacted to the British, never fighting the Ticonderoga-Independence strongpoint defense the way he envisioned.

The same is true of the pursuit towards Hubbardton and Skenesboro — the British possessed the

initiative. However, Burgoyne's forces reached their tactical culminating point at Hubbardton and south of Skenesboro because their offensive momentum dissipated. This occurred as their combat formations dispersed, their lines of communication became extended, and their sustainment contracted.{42}

In the case of Fraser's Advance Guard and Riedesel's Left Wing, they were physically exhausted after attacking for eight days over rugged terrain and under extreme weather conditions from Crown Point to Hubbardton.{43} They went into battle on 1 July with 8 days of rations per man. They were incapable of sustaining the force beyond Hubbardton (8 July), particularly as they moved away from their primary line of communication (Lake Champlain) and source of re-supply (navy). Finally, Burgoyne's ability to command, control, and sustain the force collectively, weakened as his forces over-pursued the enemy on two separate and non-mutually supporting axes.

Speed and Tempo. From 13 June until they landed at Crown Point, the British advanced at a rate of 9—20 miles a day on the water.{44} After landing at Crown Point, the speed of Burgoyne's advance slowed substantially and varied by unit. His heavy forces (Phillips and Riedesel) hampered by their cumbersome combat and artillery trains, by the rugged terrain and weather, and by their organizational design, advanced as little as one mile on some days.{45} Burgoyne's heavy formations, particularly the Germans, were organized and designed to fight European armies on open battlefields. Only Burgoyne's light forces (Fraser's Advance Guard), task-organized for the campaign, possessed the ability to move rapidly and fight in close terrain.

In combat, relative speed matters. Burgoyne enjoyed a relative speed advantage from 2 to 5 June because he eliminated St. Clair's security forces, won the reconnaissance fight, and attacked a fixed position. Once St. Clair decided to withdraw, this situation changed. Burgoyne's army, with exception of Fraser's force, was too heavy to pursue and overtake St. Clair while traversing unfamiliar terrain. Burgoyne's navy, in this situation, was ideally suited to pursue and they did succeed in catching St. Clair's detachment at Skenesboro. They, however, lacked the foot speed and combat power (embarked forces or marines) to destroy the fleeing American detachment on the trail between Skenesboro and Fort Ann.

Boldness. Burgoyne's decision to pursue St. Clair's forces demonstrated his confidence in his army, his recognition of a fleeting opportunity, and his willingness to take a risk for the chance at a major return. MCDP-1 states: "*boldness is based on strong situation awareness.* "{46} On 6 July, when he made the decision, Burgoyne's situation awareness was high. He knew, based on intelligence reports from loyalists, captured prisoners, and his own effective reconnaissance, that he possessed superior combat power vis-à-vis the enemy. He also had a good feel for Schuyler's manpower

situation and probably assumed (correctly) that destroying St. Clair's force would severely degrade the Northern Department.

Overall, his decision to pursue made sense if one assumes that the destruction of St. Clair's army was his true objective. His writings, however, suggest that his objective was the seizure of Fort Ticonderoga. He achieved that objective in brilliant fashion, with a minimal loss of life and combat power. MCDP-1 stresses, "*To devote forces to unnecessary efforts violates the principle of focus and is counterproductive to the true objective.* "[{47}] Burgoyne nearly captured St. Clair's army the day he seized Fort Ticonderoga. He missed, but decided to pursue the enemy deep into the interior anyway. That decision, while bold, lacked focus and set the stage for his eventual surrender.

Chapter 3: Burgoyne's Road

Operational Pause at Skenesboro

Burgoyne established his headquarters in Skenesboro on 8 July. He waited 18 more days before he executed his next operational move. Until then, British forces celebrated. On their first Sunday together, divinity services included the firing of canon and small arms in a *feu de joie* at sunset at Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Skenesboro, and Castleton.{48} Burgoyne, supremely confident, dispatched letters to Lord Germain and General Howe boasting his accomplishments. In one letter he expressed regret that his orders did not provide him the latitude to move on New England, so he could conquer it before winter.{49} In an immodest letter to Howe, Burgoyne indicated that he expected to be in Albany soon and would meet Howe there in the fall, implying that he expected to take Albany without Howe's assistance.{50} Howe received Burgoyne's letter eight days before he sailed for Philadelphia.

Burgoyne's brilliant successes in the first eleven days of the campaign affected his perception of the enemy. Although he believed his professional forces were far superior to the untrained Americans, Burgoyne did not expect the seizure of Fort Ticonderoga to come so cheaply. Before Ticonderoga, he had developed a degree of respect for their ability to fight tenaciously from a fortified position after observing Howe's attack on Breed's Hill.{51} After Fort Ticonderoga, his prudent appraisal of American capabilities evaporated. Shortly after the battle he wrote, "The manner of taking up the ground at Fort Ticonderoga convinces me that they have no men of military science."{52}

Boosting his confidence more, and confirming his 1776 assumption about a bed of loyalism in New York, was the arrival of several hundred loyalists to his camp in Skenesboro. Also joining his force were an additional 500 Indians from the western tribes (present day northwest New York and Ontario). During the eighteen days at Skenesboro, Burgoyne's emissary, Phillip Skene, traveled the hinterland (present day Vermont) spreading Burgoyne's carrot-and-stick proclamation of fair treatment in return for allegiance to the King or the threat of brutal Indian attacks.{53} Oath-takers were expected to provide food and fodder, and not impede the British advance. Burgoyne's threats, Skene's recruitment drives, and Indian violence, had the unintended consequence of polarizing the majority of New York and Vermont's disinterested populace against the British.{54} Besides the initial influx, the swarm of loyalists never materialized. On the contrary, local opposition grew as Burgoyne advanced south. It took him three months before he recognized that his proclamation backfired.

Historians have long criticized Burgoyne's decision to halt at Skenesboro. Noted historian Richard Ketchum states that the self-assured Burgoyne believed "that he was the master of the situation and

could move when and where he wanted, at his own pace."[55] While Burgoyne's overconfidence and euphoria certainly clouded his vision and affected his judgment, it does not completely explain his decision to halt. After exhausting and over-extending his forces, the stop at Skenesboro was more than just a celebration. The halt at Skenesboro was also an operational pause; his army reached its (tactical) culminating point on 8 July.[56]

Burgoyne had outrun his tenuous supply line; the business of providing food, ammunition, and basic necessities to a force of over seven thousand men, plus women, camp followers, and animals was beginning to take its toll. Until Fort Ticonderoga developed into a mature theatre logistics point, Burgoyne's supply line ran from Skenesboro to Quebec.[57] To protect the supply line, he dispatched forces to guard important logistics nodes.[58] The net effect was a gradual loss of combat power. Additionally, he halted because the preponderance of his artillery was moving from Fort Ticonderoga towards Fort Edward by way of Lake George. This took time. If Burgoyne required all his artillery, as he believed he did, than he had to wait for its arrival.[59] Burgoyne remained at Skenesboro until he was satisfied his supply line was adequate, his on-hand stores replenished, and his artillery within his reach.[60]

On 8 July, Burgoyne was 70 miles away from Albany and 23 miles away from Fort Edward, his next aiming point. While Burgoyne paused, Schuyler's forces were busy making the primitive, one-cart wide path from Skenesboro to Fort Edward impassable. The more time Burgoyne gave Schuyler's pioneers, the more they impeded the trail. They felled trees and dammed the Wood Creek, flooding the trail the British would travel. By the time, Burgoyne's forces entered the dense wilderness on 24 July, Schuyler's axmen and engineers had completed their task. Their work, coupled with Burgoyne's complacency, poor planning, and heavy combat trains (with nonessential baggage), bogged the British army down in the mud. It took Burgoyne twenty-four days to travel twenty-three miles.[61] When they finally reached Fort Edward, Schuyler was gone and the fort destroyed. The British eventually trudged south seven more miles stopping at Fort Miller, on the east side of the Hudson. There, with their morale sagging, they remained until 13 September.

Decision Point #2: Burgoyne's Road

In a letter dated 11 July, Burgoyne informed Germain that he intended to travel by land from Skenesboro to Fort Edward.[{62}] This decision contradicted the campaign plan that he promoted in England the previous February. At that time, he told Germain that the water route to Albany was operationally the most advisable because the Americans would oppose any land movement by felling trees and destroying bridges.[{63}] In addition, in his campaign plan, *Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada,* he specifically stated that the Lake George—Hudson River route was "the most expeditious and most commodious route to Albany."[{64}] Before 11 June, the land route to Fort Edward was his least preferred course of action.

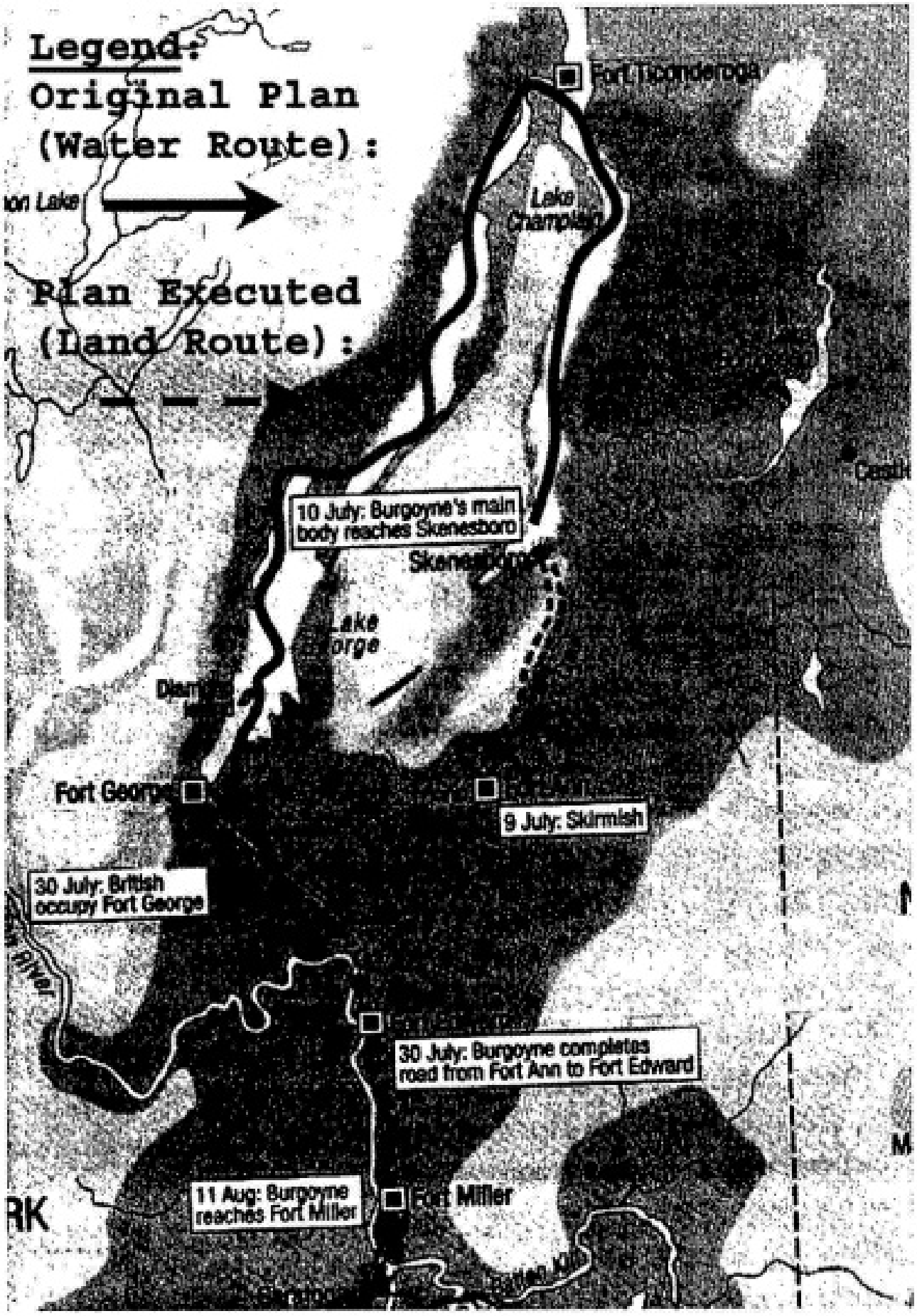


Figure 4: Two Options at Skenesboro: Land Route or Water Route

As his 11 July letter indicates, Burgoyne changed his plan. In fairness to his decision, the water route was not without problems. If he executed the water option, he would have to pass his army over a steep portage between the lakes and make a ten-mile overland march from the south end of Lake George to the Hudson.{65} This reasoning however, does not hold up to scrutiny because he still ordered Phillips, who was located at Fort Ticonderoga, to send provisions, baggage, ammunition, thirty-three canon, horses, and everything else by way of Lake George.{66} Perhaps, as some historians suggest, Burgoyne was heavily influenced by Phillip Skene, who owned 56, 000 acres in the area and had much to gain from a developed road between Skenesboro and the Hudson.{67}

The reason Burgoyne gave two years after his surrender provides some insight into his decision. He claimed his primary concern was the negative impact a retrograde movement would have on his army's morale. Returning to Fort Ticonderoga meant retracing their movement, sacrificing territorial gains, and relinquishing offensive momentum. Furthermore, Burgoyne hinted that a retrograde might embolden the enemy and discourage the loyalists.{68} Perhaps most of all, however, his decision was personal. He was a slave to his ambition and honor. To conduct a retrograde in the face of the enemy would tarnish his reputation; to conduct one when he knew the Americans were within his grasp at Fort Edward was cowardly.{69} His growing logistics problems aside, Burgoyne made the decision to travel by land because he was supremely confident in his army and their ability to overcome any obstacle they faced. Burgoyne advanced from Skenesboro on 24 July bent on destroying Schuyler's force at Fort Edward.

Analysis of Decision Point #2

Surfaces and Gaps. Gaps, like St. Clair's flanks and rear at Fort Ticonderoga, may be physical soft spots in an enemy's disposition or they may also be enemy weaknesses with respect to time, space, capabilities or the environment.{70} Recognizing surfaces and gaps takes judgment. Burgoyne in his *Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada* recognized the American strengths as their ability to fight from fortifications and their ability to exploit close terrain and wilderness. He designed his army to counter these American strengths. For the fortifications, he brought 138 artillery pieces; for the wilderness, he built Fraser's Advance Guard.

Burgoyne's strengths were many, but they were also situation-based. For example, in open terrain, against an enemy that chose to fight, he possessed a significant heavy infantry and artillery advantage. In the wilderness (close terrain) of New York against Schuyler's lighter forces, Burgoyne's heavy infantry and artillery formations became weaknesses. Burgoyne's decision to modify his campaign plan and push his heavy forces overland to Fort Edward was a tactical mistake with severe operational consequences. Today, his decision would be equivalent to pushing an armored formation through the jungle without the capability of refueling once it reached the far side. Rather than attacking a gap on the road to Fort Edward, Burgoyne's forces slammed into a surface made by nature and ruined by Schuyler. When he finally reached Fort Edward, his logistics situation was at a breaking point. Once again, Burgoyne halted, this time on the east bank of the Hudson River, mainly because of horse, cart, and supply shortages.{71}

What were Burgoyne's alternative courses of action? Besides the decision made, two other options stand out. The first one would have been to push Fraser's Advance Corps ahead of his army, well before 24 July, to seize Fort Edward and secure the Skenesboro-Fort Edward road. Fraser's light force possessed the agility and the combat power to accomplish such a task.{72} For Fraser's light force, the close terrain did not represent a surface. Instead of this option, Burgoyne kept his army *en masse* as the advanced on Fort Edward, neutralizing Fraser's strength.

The second alternative was a return to his original plan. While Burgoyne discounted the retrograde option, the operational benefits made sense.{73} His original plan meant staying on New York's waterways. Besides Fraser's force, Burgoyne's other operational strength was his naval component. Burgoyne possessed naval superiority and New York's waterways represented gaps.{74} By using the water route (gap) and bypassing the land route (surface), Burgoyne would have preserved his combat power (heavy infantry and artillery formations), protected his tenuous supply lines, and pitted his strength against Schuyler's weakness. Additionally, a return to Fort Ticonderoga may have provided Burgoyne the time and the capability to build a mature theatre logistics point before continuing south.

Ultimately, the operational benefits of exploiting the water gaps and developing a theatre logistics point at Fort Ticonderoga may have prevented Burgoyne's final fate at Saratoga.

Initiative. Burgoyne possessed the initiative when he reached his first tactical culminating point on 8 July. During the operational pause that followed, Schuyler chose not to attack and "steal" the initiative. Thus, during the period of inactivity that followed Burgoyne's halt at Skenesboro, neither side possessed the initiative. However, Schuyler capitalized on the period of inactivity by shaping the battlespace for the next fight. When Burgoyne resumed the attack on 24 July (Phase II of the Northern Campaign), the initiative should have belonged to the British. Instead, it was yet to be settled.

MCDP-1 states, "We normally associate the offense with initiative." Conversely, we associate the defense as a reaction or response, implying that the attacker possesses the initiative.{75} This concept works well when two opponents fight symmetrically. Schuyler chose not to resist Burgoyne's attack directly with his American army. Instead, he let Burgoyne fight the terrain and the weather. In the end, Schuyler dictated the terms of the conflict by shaping the battlespace and avoiding direct combat. Somewhere on the road to Fort Edward, the British "attacked" the initiative away.

By 11 August, Burgoyne had once again reached a tactical culminating point as the momentum of the British advance ground to a halt because of food and fodder shortages. Exasperating the situation was Burgoyne's inability to re-supply his army with any degree of alacrity because the British relied on one poor (land vs. water) and over-extended line of communication.{76} As a result, Burgoyne was forced him assume a defensive posture with his army while his logisticians tried desperately to overcome the supply quandary. Adding to the logistics crisis was Howe's decision to attack Philadelphia rather than Albany (3 August) and the defeat of Burgoyne's resupply expedition at Bennington (16 August). The combination of the all three factors — the logistics crisis, Howe's decision, and the defeat at Bennington — suggest that Burgoyne's Northern Army may have reached its operational culminating point sometime in late August.{77} Meanwhile, Schuyler, lacking the combat power to exploit Burgoyne's situation, moved south, husbanding his resources and recruiting an army.

Speed and Tempo. Speed over time is tempo; speed over distance is the ability to move rapidly. Both forms of speed generate combat power.{78} Burgoyne's decision to move overland to Fort Edward generated absolutely no combat power because his army traveled at a speed of less than one mile per day. In fact, at that speed, Burgoyne reduced his combat power. Schuyler's relative speed advantage enabled him to simultaneously harass Burgoyne's movement and foul the road without reprisal. When Burgoyne reached the Hudson, Schuyler's speedier forces were gone. *Burgoyne's decision to conduct a land advance instead of an amphibious advance enabled the Americans to*

dictate the tempo of the conflict.

Boldness. Taking risks to achieve decisive results is a characteristic of boldness. Accepting a risk, however, implies that the commander possesses situation awareness and applies judgment before making a decision. Conversely, accepting a risk blindly, without situation awareness, is a gamble bordering on recklessness. Burgoyne anticipated Schuyler's scorched earth policy long before the Northern Campaign of 1777 began. At Skenesboro, intelligence reports confirmed his assumption: Schuyler's engineers were tearing up the road to Fort Edward.{79} In an earlier life, Burgoyne earned a reputation as a bold risk-taker, even a gambler.{80} His decision to march overland, however, was not a gamble. Burgoyne's situation awareness was high and he probably weighed the risks. Unfortunately, his perception of his army's invincibility, vis-à-vis the Americans, clouded his judgment. If his army had pushed through to Fort Edward as rapidly as he probably assumed they would and captured Schuyler's army, historians would have called Burgoyne's decision bold.{81}

Chapter 4: Crossing the American Rubicon

Operational Pause on the East Bank of the Hudson

Sometime on or about 11 August Burgoyne's army halted near Fort Miller, on the east bank of the Hudson, just north of Saratoga.[82] During the previous twenty-four days, the Americans had harassed and obstructed Burgoyne's army. Throughout the advance Schuyler's forces stayed just out of the Burgoyne's reach, at times as little as 4 miles separated the two armies.[83] For Burgoyne, knowing the American army was so close must have been just as frustrating as Schuyler's scorched earth tactic. His army's morale had suffered during the wet and dark wilderness march from Skenesboro to Fort Edward. The openness of the terrain along the Hudson, however, must have been a welcome relief to the British army and its commanding general. On the other side, the way to Albany passed through cleared and open (farming) land, much better suited for Burgoyne's heavy formations.[84]

Even though the sights on the Hudson were appealing, crossing the river was problematic. Before he could contemplate such an action, Burgoyne needed to build up his stores. Crossing the Hudson meant severing his supply line to Quebec.[85] For that reason, he needed enough supplies to support his army all the way to Albany. Burgoyne's logistics effort became his priority; the toll on both man and beast was extraordinary.[86]

Decisions and assumptions Burgoyne made before and after leaving Canada began to negatively effect his logistics problem. For one, Burgoyne left Quebec knowing he lacked the horses, oxen and carriages required to sustain the campaign. He accepted the risk because he assumed that loyalists would provide support. Compounding his long haul deficiency was the poorly built two-wheeled Canadian carriages Carleton provided. They carried less than half the poundage of the four-wheeled British variant and they proved unfit for combat operations on the frontier.[87] Burgoyne's decision to take 138 field artillery pieces seemed logical in Canada, but he should have reassessed his decision after Fort Ticonderoga.[88] Both his artillery and his combat trains required horses. Rather than reallocating them, Burgoyne sent an expedition into Bennington, Vermont to raid an American supply depot in order to collect cattle, horses, and food, as well as recruit loyalists.[89]

The expedition consisted of 374 Germans from the Prinz Ludwig Dragoon Brigade, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Baum. Attached to Baum's force was a detachment of loyalists, Indians, and Canadians. The combined strength of the force was 723. Burgoyne's political emissary, Phillip Skene, accompanied Baum to recruit loyalists and to offset the language barrier within the. force.[90] Expecting to face a 300-man militia force at the supply depot, Baum instead ran into a force of roughly 2,000 militia and 350 Continental Rangers under the command of Brigadier General John

Stark. In the late afternoon of 16 August, Stark split his force, enveloping and then annihilating the Germans. Meanwhile, a relief column of 644 Germans under the command Lieutenant Colonel Breymann, sent by Burgoyne the previous day, arrived on the scene too late to prevent the disaster. Ultimately, Breymann's relief force suffered the same fate as Baum's Dragoons.[91]

Burgoyne's decision to make the raid into Vermont cost him fifteen percent of his army, reducing his strength to roughly 5,346 effectives.[92] In a letter to Germain, Burgoyne revealed another lesson he learned after Bennington: "the great bulk of the country is undoubtedly with the Congress in principle and zeal, their measures are executed with secrecy and dispatch not to be equaled." Not only were the rebels many, they were formidable.[93] Bennington invalidated one of Burgoyne's two critical planning assumptions — that Americans would augment his army and offset his manpower deficiency. His loyalist strength never exceeded six hundred. His second assumption — that his professional British army was far superior to the Americans — remained valid. For him, the Bennington defeat was a German defeat.

Compounding Burgoyne's problems was St. Luc's announcement on 5 August. His Indians, dissatisfied with Burgoyne's futile prohibitions against scalping and plundering, decided to go home. By the time Burgoyne established his camp at Fort Miller hardly any of the western tribes remained. Their departure stripped Burgoyne of the expert scouting, reconnaissance, and security they provided. From then on, Schuyler (and later Gates) won the reconnaissance fight.[94]

In addition to the Bennington defeat, the Indian's departure, and the loyalist deficiency, Burgoyne received two other pieces of bad news as he struggled to surmount his logistics problem. On 3 August, he received a letter from General Howe informing him of the latter's decision to march on Philadelphia.[95] On 28 August, he received word of St. Leger's defeat.[96]Burgoyne later claimed that he would have crossed the Hudson in late August had Carleton sent a force to garrison Fort Ticonderoga, thus freeing his own forces (roughly 1,000 soldiers from Phillip's Right Wing guarded the Fort) to move south and protect a bridge across the Hudson. Burgoyne's claim illuminates that not only was his army in want of horses, cattle, and supplies, his army suffered manpower shortages.[97]

On 12 September, the Burgoyne's army crossed the Hudson River with twenty-five days of rations and ammunition. By the thirteenth, his entire army of 5, 346 effectives had crossed and the advance on Albany had begun. After his army crossed, Burgoyne ordered the bridge across the Hudson, his last link to Quebec, dismantled.[98] In an act of boldness, Burgoyne declared, "Britons never retreat."[99]

Decision Point #3: Crossing the American Rubicon{100}

Before 12 September, Burgoyne essentially had two courses of action from which to choose. One course of action was a withdrawal back to a defensible position (Fort Edward or Ticonderoga), wait out the winter, and resume the offense the following year. Although feasible, Burgoyne probably never seriously considered this course of action because it meant mission failure during the 1777 campaigning season. More importantly for Burgoyne, it meant censure in Parliament; something his ambition and honor could not stand. In a letter to Germain after the Bennington fiasco, Burgoyne claimed that his orders did not provide him the latitude to return to Fort Edward or Fort Ticonderoga.{101}[101] More than anything, this letter suggests that Burgoyne chose to interpret his orders literally because it absolved him of failure, if in fact he failed.

Burgoyne's second course of action was crossing the Hudson River and continuing the advance south. Based on his final decision, this was his preferred course. However, within this course of action, Burgoyne had two options: cross the Hudson north of the Mohawk River or cross the Hudson south of the Mohawk. Crossing the Hudson north of the Mohawk meant his army would conduct two river crossings — one on the Hudson and the other on the Mohawk. While two river crossings was an extreme challenge, this option allowed Burgoyne to separate himself from the Hampshire Grants (present-day Vermont), which he told Germain contained, "the most active and most rebellious race on the continent and hangs like a gathering storm on my left (eastern flank)."{102} After Bennington, Burgoyne became increasingly alarmed by his exposed left (eastern) flank. In addition, somewhere on west side of the Hudson, between him and Albany, was the American army.{103} The sooner he crossed, the sooner he could defeat them.

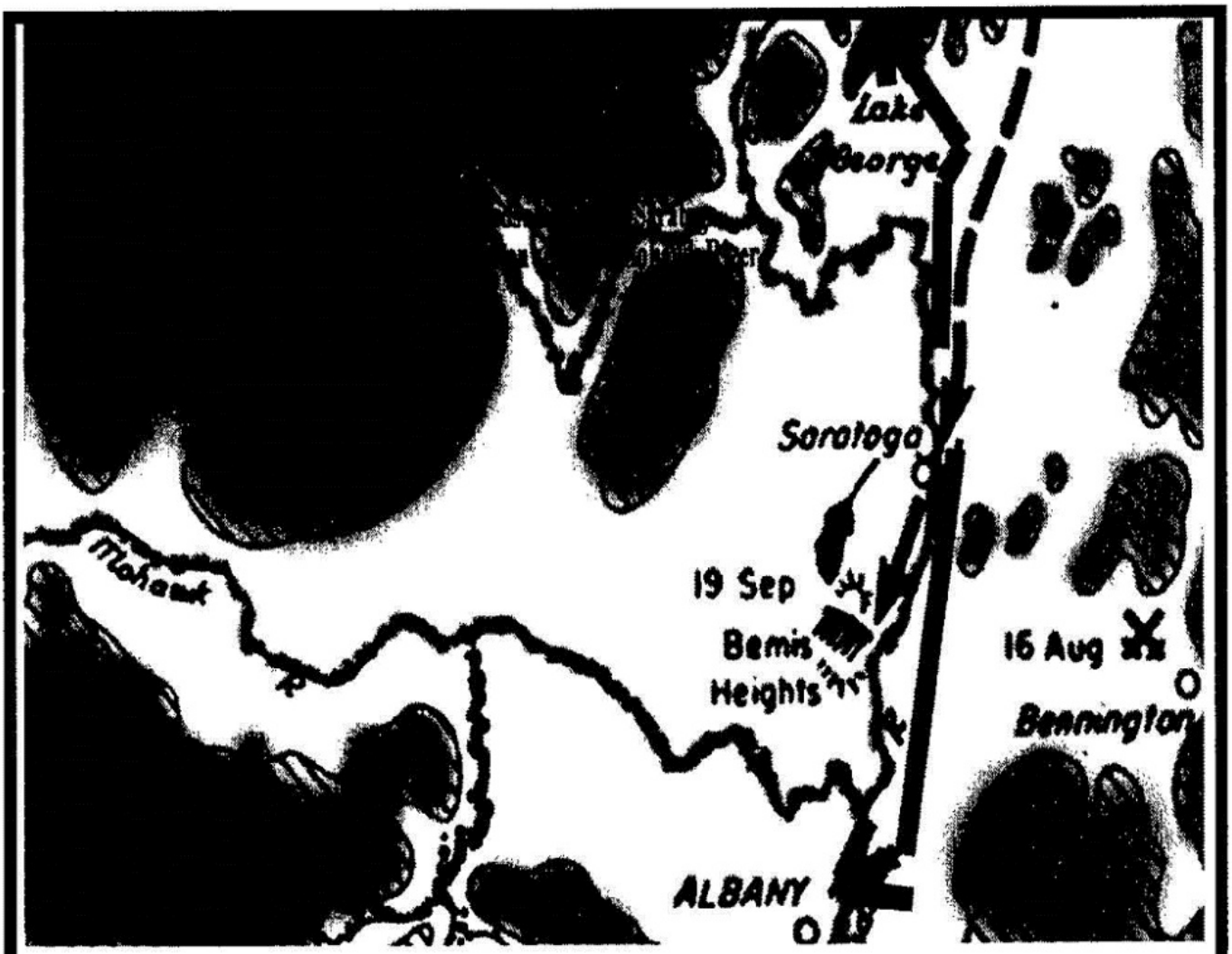


Figure 5: Crossing the Hudson River

The obvious advantage of crossing below the Mohawk was it meant one river crossing. Conversely, it meant moving south on the eastern bank of the Hudson, and for Burgoyne, that meant keeping his eastern flank exposed for a longer period. Ultimately, he had to fight the American army in order to reach Albany. With winter approaching and the American army increasing in size, the longer he waited, the worse the odds for a positive outcome became.[{104}] Burgoyne crossed the river with twenty-five days of supplies and cut his line of retreat, when and where he did, *because he was trying to make the scheme of maneuver fit the situation instead of planning in harmony with the situation.*

On the American side of the Hudson, events transpired in August to change the appearance of the army. Congress relieved Schuyler on 14 August (Washington refused to relieve him) and replaced him with General Horatio Gates, who thirty-two years before, had served with Burgoyne in the same regiment.[{105}] Arriving on 19 August, Gates immediately rejected Schuyler's strategy of a fighting withdrawal in favor of a deliberate defense. By mid-September, Gate's army had moved north and occupied positions at Bemis Heights, near Saratoga.

Additionally, during the months of August and September, the size of the American army grew. First, Colonel Daniel Morgan's elite rifleman, dispatched by Washington at Schuyler's request, arrived about the same time as Gates. Second, after defeating St. Leger's diversionary attack at Fort Stanwix and eliminating the British threat from the West, Benedict Arnold's 1,200 Continentals returned to join Gates in Saratoga. Third, in mid-September, Gates recalled General's Lincoln and Stark (Stark later returned to Vermont to seize Fort Edward with an independent command.). The Northern army had grown from a paltry number 2,000 effectives in July to a sizeable force of 5,600 Continentals and 1,500 militia (with more on the way) in September.{106} Simultaneously with the developments on the west side of the Hudson, militia forces continued to threaten Burgoyne on the east side. Between 14 and 18 September, American forces conducted a series of successful probes on Skenesboro, Mount Independence, Fort George, and Fort Ticonderoga. Burgoyne would learn about these attacks on 24 September. While Burgoyne may not have known the details of the American build-up or Gate's intentions, he knew that their combat power was improving exponentially. In a desperate letter to Howe requesting assistance, Burgoyne acknowledged that their numbers were "superior to mine" and that they were well equipped with artillery.{107}

Analysis of Decision Point #3

Surfaces and Gaps. Burgoyne faced a dilemma in late August. The American militia was threatening his eastern flank and the size of the American Northern Army on the west side of the river was growing. His logistics and manpower situation was tenuous at best. In terms of combat power, his army's situation was only going to deteriorate. On 3 August, he learned that Howe would not be coming north in force and, on 28 August, he learned that St. Leger's supporting effort had failed. After those two events, the prospect of a second force turning Gate's army and exposing an operational gap for Burgoyne to exploit appeared remote. His only hope would be that Lieutenant General Henry Clinton, then in command of the garrison force Howe left in New York, would conduct some type of action in the Hudson Highlands to distract Gates. However, communication with Clinton was non-existent and with winter approaching, time was turning against Burgoyne.

By mid-September, the only operational gap available to Burgoyne was to his rear (north) — essentially hugging the Hudson River to avoid the wilderness (surface) and moving north to avoid the Americans. By retrograding, Burgoyne's tenuous lines of communication would improve and he could mass his flotilla of bateaux to support the movement north. He still possessed a dominant naval advantage, but because of his extended lines of communication, his flotilla was scattered from Fort Ticonderoga to Fort Miller.{108} For Burgoyne, however, a withdrawal was out of the question, particularly after he lambasted Carleton's decision to withdraw the previous year.{109}

Because a withdrawal was out of the question, Burgoyne's remaining two choices — crossing the Hudson now or crossing the Hudson further south — meant attacking a surface. On his east, the wilderness and the militia represented a surface; on his west, Gate's army represented a surface. By crossing the river where he did, Burgoyne was essentially trading one surface for another. For Burgoyne, Gate's army was the lesser of two evils because his heavy formations could not counter the hit-and-run tactics of the militia in the wilderness. Additionally, the openness of the terrain on the west side better supported his heavy formations and his own preferred method of fighting.

When Burgoyne crossed the American Rubicon, he attacked an operational surface. After he crossed however, the formation he chose indicates that he intended to create a tactical gap (Fraser conducting a flank attack while Phillip's artillery fixed the Americans.). However, finding the flank would be a challenge. Unlike Fort Ticonderoga, Burgoyne was without his eyes, for only sixty Indians remained in his army and they were terrified of Morgan.{110} The British advanced south completely blind. Waiting for him near Bemis Heights was Gates, who had deployed his forces on canalizing terrain to prevent any attempt by the British to create a gap by turning a flank.

Initiative. Once Burgoyne crossed the Hudson River, severing his line of communication and

dismantling the bridge, he had no other option besides attacking. He could not assume the defense and wait for Gates to take action. Without rationing, he had enough supplies to sustain his army for twenty-five days. Additionally, his situational awareness was low because he lacked sufficient reconnaissance. Lastly, for practical reasons, Burgoyne could not afford to move too far away from the Hudson. It protected his flank, and in combination with the River Road running parallel, it guided his axis of advance (and move his artillery and combat trains).

Because Burgoyne was operating on a timetable and attacking blindly along one axis of advance, Gates ultimately decided when and where the next fight would occur. Burgoyne had little chance of stealing the initiative by surprising Gates. Perhaps, his only chance of stealing the initiative would be by conducting a violent attack using the speed of Fraser's force and the shock of Phillip's artillery to overwhelm the Americans. In early July, against an unseasoned and undermanned American force, that may have been possible. By September, however, the American's confidence, experience, and combat power had drastically improved. Like the march from Skenesboro to Fort Edward, the American commander on Bemis Heights dictated the terms of the next fight. Thus, the initiative favored Gates.

Speed and Tempo. Burgoyne's extended halt along the Hudson River provided Gates the opportunity to move north from the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers in late August to the ground he eventually occupied in September. During that period, Gates reconnoitered the ground, picked the most advantageous terrain, and prepared the battlespace. At Bemis Heights, Gates selected terrain that canalized and prevented the enemy from massing their combat power in the European sense. Additionally, the terrain he chose denied the enemy from massing on his left (western) flank.

By the time, Burgoyne crossed the Hudson; Gate's army was ready. In spite of how fast Burgoyne closed on the Americans after he crossed, speed was irrelevant. Burgoyne lost the opportunity to achieve a speed advantage vis-à-vis the Americans by waiting a month at Fort Miller before crossing the Hudson. During his operational pause, the Americans repositioned forces and built a formidable defense. In short, they made things happen over time faster than the British did, essentially controlling the tempo (speed over time).

Boldness. If Burgoyne's decision to cross the Hudson is nothing else, it was bold, bordering on recklessness. He understood the broad picture and knew the risks. Unfortunately for the men he led, Burgoyne probably never truly considered any other option. The odds for achieving a decisive outcome were stacked against him — he was attacking a surface against an enemy that possessed the initiative and controlled the tempo. Chance and possibly an odd turn of events (Clinton sailing north) were his only hope…and hope is not a course of action. Burgoyne, frankly, was throwing caution to

the wind in a last ditch effort to save his honor and reputation. His decision to cross the Hudson would have been analogous to Marine General Oliver P. Smith attacking north at the Chosin Reservoir, instead of retrograding to the south.

Chapter 5: Reconnaissance in Force

Operational Pause at Sword's House

On the morning on 21 September, two days after his army's costly victory at Freeman's Farm, Burgoyne received a letter from Lieutenant General Henry Clinton, who was General Howe's deputy and who was in charge of all forces in New York City while Howe campaigned in Pennsylvania. This was the first letter Burgoyne received from the south since Howe's ominous letter on 3 August. Two days before, on 19 September, the British army swept the Americans from the Saratoga battlefield after an exhausting and hard fought battle that was undecided until Riedesel's counterattack in the closing hours of daylight. While the Americans left Burgoyne's army as the "masters of the field", the victory at Freeman's Farm came at a great cost.{111} Burgoyne's army, which never fought as a team at Freeman's Farm because the undulating terrain and thick vegetation separated the army into three uncoordinated columns, suffered 160 dead, 364 wounded, and 42 missing. For an army already suffering from manpower shortfalls, the victory gained nothing but the indecisive ground where the engagement began.{112} The Americans, who suffered half as many losses as the British and retired to their defensive works at Bemis Heights in an organized manner, still blocked Burgoyne's path to Albany.

As his army readied itself for an exploitation attack on 21 September, Burgoyne read Clinton's letter from New York with great interest and a new sense of optimism. Written before Burgoyne crossed the Hudson River (12 Sept), Clinton informed his friend in Saratoga that he would make a push at Fort Montgomery (near present day Peekskill, New York) in about ten days with a 2,000-man force. Based on time and distance factors, the earliest Burgoyne could expect Clinton to reach the Albany area was the last week of September.{113} However, it was obvious from the letter — although Burgoyne may have hoped otherwise — that Clinton did not intend to make it all the way to Albany. Fort Montgomery was his limit of advance. Nevertheless, after reading the letter, Burgoyne called off the exploitation attack and ordered his army to build-up their breastworks. Burgoyne's hope that an attack by a 2,000-man diversionary south of Saratoga could alter his predicament, demonstrated his desperation. For an army nearing starvation, the prospect for a positive outcome looked dim.{114}

While Burgoyne waited for Clinton to attack, his army's situation worsened. On 24 September, Burgoyne discovered that an American force had conducted a series of raids against his important rear area communication and logistics nodes at Fort Ticonderoga, Fort George, Skenesboro, and Fort Independence. They destroyed his supplies, bateaus, and arms; they drove off his livestock and horses. The raids had a great psychological impact on both armies. For the Americans, the raids raised their morale, confidence and audacity. For the British, the raids exposed their vulnerable line

of retreat. The message every British soldier received was that the only way to escape their predicament was to break through Gate's lines.{115}

Besides the threat to his rear (Fort Ticonderoga), Burgoyne had other of problems with which to contend. By 3 October, his ability to feed his army had reached a breaking point. The twenty-five days of salt pork and flour rations that he crossed the Hudson with on 12 September had nearly run out. Foraging became his army's highest priority of work, which diluted the manpower available for reconnaissance and breastwork construction. As the days passed, the size of the foraging parties grew because the intensity of the American threat escalated.{116} Finally, on 3 October, Burgoyne ordered his army on half-rations in order to preserve what food remained — and to buy more time for Clinton.

Additionally, Burgoyne's effective strength declined during this period because of high capture, desertion and illness rates. Numbers of inattentive sentries, foragers, and small units fell captive to the American's nightly harassment attacks. As a force protection measure, Burgoyne required that the entire army to conduct Stand-To from an hour before sunrise until the fog lifted at 9:00 A.M.; the officers rarely passed a night with complete rest.{117} Because of the constant pressure and many sleepless nights, fatigue consumed the army. Fatigue, along with poor diets and harsh weather, produced a higher rate of illness, which added to Burgoyne's already high number of sick and wounded.{118} Because of all four factors—enemy pressure, fatigue, poor diet, and illness — morale dropped and desertion rates climbed. For the soldiers, particularly the Germans, deserting to the American side meant better food, more rest, and relief from the constant pressure. On 3 October, Burgoyne tried to rekindle the spirit that had existed in July by announcing to his soldiers that "other powerful armies of the King" were cooperating with them.{119} The powerful army Burgoyne was referring to was Clinton's paltry diversionary force.

On 5 October, Clinton landed at Verplanck's Point, south of Fort Montgomery. After he landed, a messenger gave him a letter from Burgoyne. The contents of the letter must have shocked Clinton. In his last correspondence, dated 6 August, Burgoyne optimistically informed Clinton that he expected to reach Albany by 23 August! In that same correspondence, Burgoyne suggested that Clinton make a *diversionary* attack towards Albany to confuse the Americans, which is why he was now landing at Verplanck's Point.{120}

In this new letter, dated 20 September, Burgoyne painted an entirely different picture. He informed Clinton that he had lost between five and six hundred men at Freeman's Farm and that the effective size of his army was now five thousand. He estimated that Gate's army, which was within a mile and a half of his own, had expanded from roughly five thousand to about thirteen thousand and that a sizable force threatened his rear. He also estimated that his supplies would last until 20 October.

Burgoyne concluded his letter with two bombshells. First, he told Clinton that he only reason he crossed the Hudson and cut his supply line was that he expected an army from the south to join him in Albany. Second, he requested that Clinton give him orders to either attack towards Albany or retreat to the lakes. Burgoyne told Clinton that if he did not get a positive response by 12 October, he would retreat.{121}

The letter reveals that Burgoyne's estimate of the situation was quite accurate—Gate's army greatly outnumbered his own, the enemy threatened Fort Ticonderoga, and his supply line with Canada was cut.{122} More importantly, however, the letter exposed his state of mind. Burgoyne was now requesting orders from Clinton, a man he never considered in his chain of command!{123} By seeking orders and rationalizing his decision to cross the Hudson, Burgoyne must have sensed that his situation was hopeless. Now he was trying to shift the blame and save his reputation.

On the American side, Gate's numbers increased daily as more and more militia funneled into his breastworks on Bemis Heights. By 3 October, Gate's army consisted of 11,000 soldiers and more than half were Continentals. The only real problem Gates faced was internal to his command. After Freeman's Farm, a feud broke between him and Major General Benedict Arnold regarding the latter's role in the 19 September fight. Eventually, Gates relieved Arnold of command and replaced him with Major General Benjamin Lincoln. In an unusual display of insubordination, every officer besides Lincoln signed a petition asking for Arnold's retention. As a result, Gates allowed Arnold to remain with the Northern Department, but in an unspecified capacity.{124} From 26 September until the campaign ended, Lincoln commanded the Northern Department's Left Wing, Gates retained control of the Right Wing, and Arnold waited impatiently on the sidelines.

After Freeman's Farm, Gate's battlefield estimates improved immeasurably. A constant flow of deserters provided a gloomy picture of the British camp. Gate's scouts attacked outposts and militia forces intercepted messages between Burgoyne and Fort Ticonderoga. For the first time in the campaign, the Americans enjoyed a significant operational and tactical intelligence advantage.{125} In a letter to his wife, Gates stated that one-week would decide the campaign. To his troops, who also recognized Burgoyne's perilous situation, Gates declared that the enemy's only hope was to make "one rash stroke", which he said was doomed to fail.{126} With winter approaching, Gates knew that time was on his side. He decided to let Burgoyne make the next move.

Decision Point #4: Reconnaissance in Force

On the evening of 4 October and the day after placing his army on half rations, Burgoyne called Phillips, Fraser, and Riedesel — for the first time in the campaign — to a council of war. Two weeks had passed since Burgoyne ordered his army to dig in and wait for Clinton.{127} Although Burgoyne tried to convince them otherwise, these men probably knew that Clinton's actions would have little impact on their predicament.{128} The officers that gathered at Burgoyne's table understood better than most that something had to be done: winter was approaching and their food stores would soon be depleted.{129}

At the meeting, Burgoyne provided his commander's estimate and he proposed new course of action. The Americans blocked River Road, which was the only high-speed avenue of approach to Albany.{130} Trying to attack south along the road was suicidal because the American's right flank, which was anchored on the key terrain overlooking the Hudson River, was simply too strong.{131}131 Therefore, based on his assessment, Burgoyne proposed moving the majority of his troops, roughly 4,000 men, through the woods to the west in order to envelop the American's left flank. To protect his stores, hospital, and floating bridge, Burgoyne planned to leave 800 men behind (vicinity of River Road and the Hudson, roughly three miles north of Gate's right flank).{132}

General Riedesel disapproved of Burgoyne's plan. He suggested that it would take three to four days to move a four thousand-man force, with cumbersome artillery, through the woods. During that time, Riedesel believed that the Americans, once they discovered Burgoyne's movement, would conduct a spoiling attack against the eight hundred-man rear party to seize the floating bridge and their rations. Both the bridge and the rations constituted their last hope for escape and survival. Riedesel argued that the army's situation was so critical that if the movement took longer than a day, it should not be contemplated.

Rather than attacking, Riedesel recommended that they conduct a tactical withdrawal to Batten Kill, on the east bank of the Hudson. At Batten Kill, they could re-establish their lines of communication with Fort Ticonderoga and wait there for Clinton. Furthermore, if Clinton never appeared, the army would be in a better position to retire to Fort Ticonderoga for winter.{133} Surprisingly, Burgoyne's primary confident, General Fraser, supported Riedesel's proposal.{134}

On 5 October, Burgoyne reconvened his officers to inform them of his decision. Riedesel again argued his point, but Burgoyne would not countenance a retreat and he began spreading rumors that Clinton was quickly approaching.{135} Because his top lieutenants had raised enough doubts, however, Burgoyne modified his previous proposal. Rather than attacking with 4,000 men and leaving his rear vulnerable, Burgoyne announced that he would conduct a reconnaissance in force with 1,500 regulars

and 500 auxiliaries on 7 October.

The purpose of the effort, he told his detractors, was to reconnoiter the enemy's left (western) flank to determine its composition, disposition and strength. After conducting the reconnaissance, if a general advance seemed feasible, Burgoyne planned to attack on 8 October.{136} To assuage Riedesel's concerns, he said that the army would retreat to Batten Kill on 11 October (no reasons were given for the 3 day delay) if the enemy's left flank appeared too strong.{137}

Burgoyne lacked any intelligence about the enemy's left flank, to include its location.{138} Burgoyne must have known that it was impossible to maintain any type of stealth while moving 2,000 men, with horses and artillery, through the American frontier without a clear aiming point. Burgoyne clouded the concept further by telling his men that he intended to *dislodge* the enemy's left flank (which would facilitate their retreat north) and secure food for the army's horses. Calling his tactical concept a "reconnaissance in force" was highly questionable.{139} Burgoyne's willingness to expose his men to destruction by superior numbers and leave his rear area open to attack, coupled with other statements, suggests that he intended to reach Albany at all costs.

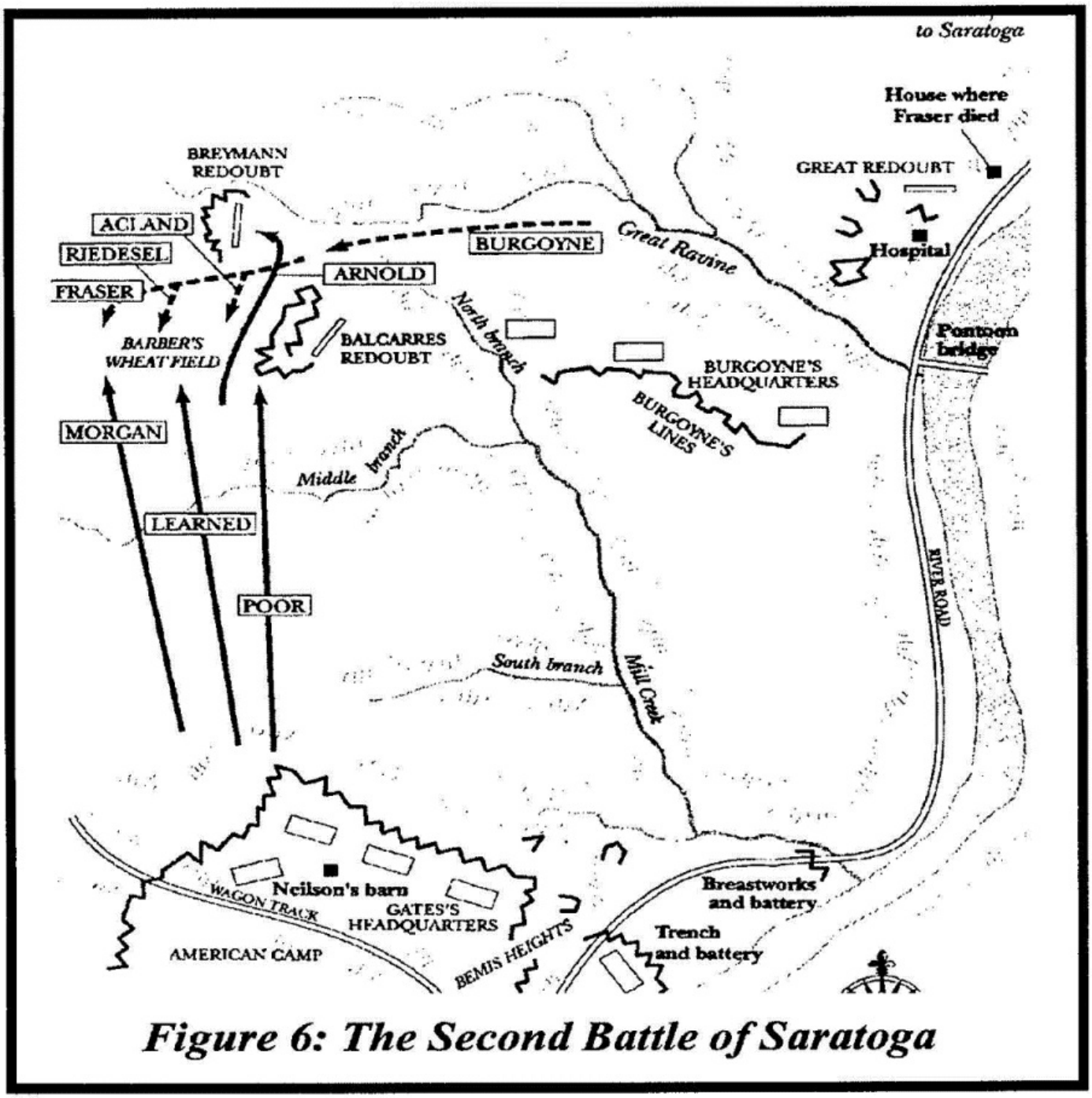


Figure 6: The Second Battle of Saratoga

Desperation and good sense rarely co-exist, and Burgoyne was a desperate man.{140} On 6 October, he ordered that twelve barrels of scarce rum be distributed to raise his army's sagging spirits. On the eve of the attack, he ordered a rocket fired to make his men believe that it was a signal that Clinton was approaching.{141} At 10:00 A.M. on 7 October, Burgoyne's handpicked force commenced what was to be their final assault in America. Two hours later and only 800 yards from their step-off point, Burgoyne's three columns halted — dreadfully confused and unsure where Gate's breastworks at Bemis Heights were located. Shortly thereafter, the Americans sensing Burgoyne's confusion, struck like a predator that smells blood on its prey. There in the woods between Saratoga and Bemis Heights, Major General Gate's Northern Department extinguished Lieutenant General Burgoyne's dream of glory and Britain's hope for a final resolution to the war of rebellion. By 4:30 P.M. on 7

October 1777, Burgoyne's once proud and powerful Northern Army was defeated and driven from the field.

Analysis of Decision Point #4

Surfaces and Gaps. At the operational level, Burgoyne's Canada Army was isolated.{142} By 7 October, General Gates had roughly 12,000 soldiers blocking Burgoyne's line of advance to Albany. South of Gate's dominant defense, Burgoyne knew that Clinton lacked the authority (see Howe's 3 August letter), the combat power (vis-à-vis the Gate's Northern department) and the will to reinforce Burgoyne.{143} Based on the American's raids on his rear area communication and logistics nodes, as well as the tremendous militia build-up on the east side of the Hudson River, Burgoyne probably knew that his line of retreat was cut.{144} Lastly, Burgoyne no longer possessed the naval capability to use the Hudson River as an axis of advance or retreat.{145} Burgoyne was isolated because the enemy's disposition of forces left him no operational gaps to exploit and he was impotent to create one because he lacked sufficient combat power and sustainment.

However, desperate men make irrational decisions. Burgoyne refused to believe, as his 7 October decision demonstrates, that he could not create an operational advantage by attacking a tactical gap. While, Burgoyne disingenuously called the 7 October operation a "reconnaissance in force", it was far from that. The composition (2,000 soldiers) and capabilities (10 canons) of the force suggest that Burgoyne was conducting a movement to contact oriented at Gate's left (west) flank, a traditional battlefield gap. Additionally, he used of the term "dislodge" to describe his intent for "reconnaissance in force". Ultimately, Burgoyne hoped to dislodge Gate's right (east) flank, for it blocked the only path to Albany, by attacking the left flank. Burgoyne's decision to make the movement was equivalent to the "Hail Mary" in football: it was a desperation play against an enemy who knew it was coming, and was well prepared to stop it.

For Burgoyne, Gate's left flank did not constitute a tactical gap because his 2,000-man force lacked the ability, for a number of reasons, to attack it. First, the British force was too cumbersome to move stealthfully through the woods without being detected. On 7 October, the Americans, who possessed a tremendous intelligence advantage, knew the moment Burgoyne's army crossed the line of departure. As a result, they quickly massed against him. Second, the British lacked the combat power to affect Gate's flank, even if they reached it. When the more mobile Americans countered Burgoyne on 7 October, they did so by pushing 4,000 soldiers forward to meet the British in the security zone. This gave the American's a 2:1 manpower advantage at the decisive point. Furthermore, with an additional 8,000 soldiers defending the main battle area at Bemis Heights, the Americans possessed a tremendous reserve capability and a formidable backstop, in the unlikely event that Burgoyne broke through the 4,000-man security force. Third, Burgoyne's force needed to move roughly 3 miles — through the woods — before it reached Gate's flank. As the British learned

on their march from Skenesboro to Fort Edward in July, the American wilderness was a surface that worked against their heavy formations. Burgoyne's formation on 7 October was no exception. After two hours of movement, Burgoyne's army had moved 800 yards. For Burgoyne's army, the 7 October fight was over before it began because the Americans provided no gaps and the British lacked the ability to create one.

Initiative. As the attacker, Burgoyne should have possessed the initiative. However, ever since Burgoyne crossed the Hudson, his intelligence picture had steadily worsened. By early October, his intelligence picture was morbid. The American counter-reconnaissance efforts, combined with their nightly harassment attacks, prevented Burgoyne's forces from venturing far from their redoubts.{146} As a result, Burgoyne was not privy to the same quality of intelligence that Gates was receiving. Compounding the intelligence mismatch were the constant flow of deserters that provided Gates with "behind the scenes" reports about Burgoyne's food and manpower shortages, as well as British morale problems. Based on his intelligence picture, Gates knew that time was on his side. He could afford to wait for Burgoyne to make "one rash stroke."

While Burgoyne's movement to contact on 7 October highlights the magnitude of his desperation, it also highlights his terrible intelligence picture. Two weeks had passed since his Pyrrhic victory at Freeman's Farm and the enemy's position on the ground — less than three miles from his own — remained unchanged. Yet, besides the American's easternmost unit (far right flank), Burgoyne really had no idea where the enemy was located. This fact helps explain why Burgoyne conducted a movement to contact rather than a deliberate attack against an enemy located *less than three miles from his own lines*.

While Burgoyne may have hoped to steal the initiative, it was Gates who dictated the terms of the 7 October fight. As soon as Burgoyne's force stepped off at 1000, Gate's outposts began reporting the movement. By 1200, Gate's ordered Daniel Morgan's elite rifleman forward, supported by General Poor and Learned's brigades. By 1430, Morgan, Poor, and Learned's forces turned Burgoyne's right (east) flank and by 1530, the British were in full retreat.{147} Burgoyne never enjoyed the initiative on 7 October, even though he initiated the attack, because the American's dominant intelligence picture gave them the flexibility to check and overwhelm any British move—with more mobile forces and superior numbers — when and where they desired.

Speed and Tempo. As mentioned during the discussion about gaps and surfaces, any time the British attacked through wooded and broken terrain, their movements were labored. Two hours after stepping off on 7 October, Burgoyne's heavy forces, weighed down by 10 artillery pieces, had moved only 800 yards. When Morgan, Poor, and Learned's brigades struck the British, they "poured down

like a torrent from the hill."{148} The Americans enjoyed a relative speed advantage because they were lighter and more mobile, and because they were fighting on ground that they had reconnoitered for over a month.

Increasing the speed differential further was the American's unorthodox tactics. As soon as the two forces collided, the Americans began targeting British officers and horses. As a result, the British were not able to organize an effective counterattack to slow the Americans, nor were they able to coordinate an effective retreat. Their relative speed advantage, combined with superior numbers and their initial success, gave the Americans the momentum to drive the British from the field in less than three hours. Based on his previous experiences during the campaign, Burgoyne made the decision to attack fully aware that the Americans possessed a significant speed advantage.

Boldness. General Burgoyne gained prominence during the Seven Years War for his "remarkable valor, conduct, and presence of mind."{149} He cemented his reputation as an intrepid battle captain at the battle of Valencia d'Alcantara, where he accepted tremendous risk by leading an unsupported cavalry charge against a defended city.{150} When Burgoyne crossed the Hudson after suffering tactical setbacks at Bennington and at Fort Stanwix, he displayed the same boldness that he did at Valencia d'Alcantara. However, that was a different time, in different war, and against a different opponent. There is reason to believe that the overly cautious Gates, who served with Burgoyne years before and knew his strengths and weaknesses, recognized that a fine line separated a gamble from an audacious battlefield decision.{151} Just before Burgoyne conducted his 7 October attack, Gates declared that the "old gamester" would risk all upon one throw of the dice.{152}

Burgoyne's situation on 7 October was perilous. His food stores were almost gone. His effective strength lessened each day. Based on his officer's comments during the 4 October council of war, confidence was waning. As mentioned previously, Burgoyne had few options. Operational and tactical gaps were non-existent: the Americans had his army surrounded. Furthermore, the Americans controlled the initiative and they possessed a significant speed advantage. While an escape to Batten Kill, as Riedesel advocated, may have brought temporary relief, it would not have changed the outcome. Burgoyne's blind attack on 7 October was a desperate gamble by a man hoping for a miracle. In the final analysis, Burgoyne subjected his army to needless punishment because his ego clouded his judgment.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The defeat of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's combined joint task force shocked the Old World and re-energized the 'Spirit of 75' in the hearts of Americans in the New World Before General Horatio Gate's decisive victory over the British Northern Army on the wooded plain north Bemis Heights, the odds against the new nation's bid for independence had nearly reached insurmountable heights. Perhaps no one understood the gravity of the situation better than a young captain on General George Washington's Staff did. The young captain was Alexander Hamilton and he accurately and succinctly captured the essence of the situation when he wrote, "if we are saved, France and Spain must save us."{153}

Throughout 1777, American diplomats were unsuccessfully canvassing the capitals of Europe for a suitor that would join the new nation in an open alliance and turn the table against Britain and her powerful armies that were imposing their will on the feeble American forces. Both Congress and the governments of Europe recognized that the young nation could not win its independence alone, yet no leader in the Old World wanted to sign his country up to a losing cause. When word of Burgoyne's defeat reached the capitals of Europe and the homes of Americans, the course of the war changed forever. Burgoyne's defeat proved that Americans could fight; to Europe, it proved that America would win, and to Britain, it proved that her former colonies were "armed and dangerous." Burgoyne's defeat was more than a battlefield loss; his defeat was a strategic failure that set the conditions for Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown in 1781.

During the Northern Campaign of 1777, Lieutenant General Burgoyne failed to recognize and exploit his operational center of gravity to achieve a decisive result. Burgoyne's operational center of gravity was his amphibious forces. They provided him a capability — relative speed and firepower — that the Americans could not counter. Yet, when he decided to deviate from his published plan and pursue St. Clair's forces by foot, Burgoyne left behind the one capability that gave him a distinct advantage. That decision changed the nature of the conflict from amphibious to ground maneuver and it allowed the Americans to steal the initiative. After Fort Ticonderoga, the Americans set the tempo for both the tactical and operational fight. Unfortunately, for Burgoyne, his failure to see his amphibious forces as anything more than an enabling force cost him his glory.

In order to dictate the terms and pace of a fight, a commander must not only exploit his centers of gravity, he must also protect his critical vulnerabilities. At the operational and tactical levels of war, Burgoyne's failure to stick to his original plan exposed his critical vulnerability, and as his army advanced south, that critical vulnerability became more pronounced. Burgoyne's critical vulnerability at the operational level was his extended lines of communication; at the tactical level, it was his

heavy formation's lack of speed and his heavy formation's enormous appetite for sustainment.

Because Burgoyne decided to deviate from his amphibious campaign, he became dependent on land lines of communication rather than the water lines of communication, which slowed the speed of his advance and amplified his critical vulnerability. Eventually, when his army had reached the bank of the Hudson River, much later than he anticipated, Burgoyne's ability to reach back to Fort Ticonderoga for logistical sustainment was non-existent. As a result, Burgoyne's army conducted an operational pause to replenish and build its stores before crossing the Hudson. Because Burgoyne deviated from his original plan, he forfeited his ability to create a mature waterborne line of communication to feed and sustain his army's advance. During the same period, the Americans began shaping the battlespace for the final fight at Bemis Heights by building their defenses and interdicting Burgoyne's vulnerable lines of communication. Clearly, Burgoyne's failure to stick to his amphibious plan cost him the initiative and the ability to dictate the tempo of the campaign.

Historians have accurately described how strategic decisions and policies, such as the theater commander's unwillingness to cooperate with Burgoyne and the minister of war's faulty strategic assumptions, negatively affected Burgoyne's campaign. Despite these facts, Burgoyne's campaign plan was feasible and his campaign goal of seizing Albany was achievable. Burgoyne's failure to adhere to the tenants of maneuver warfare, however, led to his demise and the catastrophic defeat of his army. Specifically, his inability to set the tempo, to control the initiative and to attack operational gaps, helped create an operational environment better suited for the Americans. Finally, as the campaign progressed, the magnitude of Burgoyne's four decisions became more pronounced, ultimately creating a situation where he was incapable of influencing events, first at the operational level, and later at the tactical level.

In a final analysis, Burgoyne's inability to exploit his strengths and protect his weaknesses cost him the campaign. While his original plan was by no means without challenges, his failure to stick to it and conduct an amphibious-type campaign cost Burgoyne his glory. Seizing Albany would have been possible had Burgoyne used his amphibious forces to attack the one operational gap between Canada and Albany: the Lake Champlain-Lake George-Hudson River waterway. By sticking to his original game plan, Burgoyne's army would have controlled the initiative and set the tempo for the entire campaign. Rather than toasting George Washington, Lieutenant General John Burgoyne should have been toasting King George III from the governor's mansion in Albany.

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[{1}] Christopher Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels: The American Revolution through British Eyes* (New York: Avon Books, 1990), 199.

[{2}] Max M. Mintz, *The Generals of Saratoga* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 225. Of the 9,078 men who marched down from Canada: 5,895 surrendered, 1,728 regulars were killed or captured, 1,297 were left behind to garrison Fort Ticonderoga, and 158 were unaccounted.

[{3}] Mintz, 235.

[{4}] Doctor John Matthews, untitled lecture presented in American Revolution class at Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, January, 2002. Matthew's lecture synthesized the historical findings of numerous 20th century American Revolution historians. Matthews attributes this idea to esteemed historian Richard M. Ketchum.

[{5}] Matthews lecture, January 2002.

[{6}] Matthews lecture, January 2002. Matthews attributes this idea to esteemed historian John Shy.

[{7}] Brendan Morrissey, *Saratoga 1777: Turning Point of a Revolution* (Oxford, England: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2000), 21.

[{8}] Burgoyne's concept for the campaign was to conduct a two-pronged attack from Canada in order to seize Albany, New York. After seizing Albany, Burgoyne intended to conduct a linkup with a third force from New York City, which he believed would attack north on or about the same time his own forces attacked south. Of the two forces under his command, Burgoyne's main force (commanded by Burgoyne) attacked Albany from the north using the Lake Champlain-Lake George-Hudson River waterway as an axis of advance, while his diversionary force (commanded by St. Leger) simultaneously attacked Albany from the west using the St. Lawrence-Lake Ontario-Mohawk River as an axis of advance.

[{9}] U.S. Marine Corps, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1, *Warfighting*. (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, June 1997), 73. Cited hereafter as MCDP 1.

[{10}] MCDP 1, 45-47.

[{11}] MCDP 1, 45-47.

[{12}] Ibid, 92-94.

[{13}] Ibid, 32-35.

[{14}] MCDP 1, 40-45, and U.S. Marine Corps, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-2, *Campaigning* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, August 1997), 73-75. Cited hereafter as MCDP 1-2.

[{15}] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 190.

[{16}] MCDP 1, 44.

[{17}] George Athan Billias, *George Washington's Generals and Opponents* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 174.

[{18}] Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga: Turning Point of America's Revolutionary War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 84. This concept, combined with his admonishment of Carleton's Crown Point decision and his specific manpower requests, confirms Burgoyne's plan to establish as a series of advance force bases along the LOC (he intended for Crown Point to be the secondary supply point.).

[{19}] Ibid, 84.

[{20}] Ketchum, 32. Additionally, while researching this paper, the author visited Fort Ticonderoga. While visiting the Fort, it became apparent from a military perspective why Fort Ticonderoga was vulnerable to an attack from the north and nearly impenetrable from the south. Fort Ticonderoga sits atop terrain that allows her guns to range and control the narrows (read: bottleneck) of Lake Champlain. When traveling on Lake Champlain (the 18th century highway), one cannot avoid Fort Ticonderoga. To attack Fort Ticonderoga from the south, however, one must also contest with Fort Independence and Mount Defiance simultaneously. All three positions -- Mount Defiance, Fort Independence, and Fort Ticonderoga -- mutually support each other. In military jargon, we call the combination of the three positions a "firesack" because attacking one position exposes you to fires from the other two positions. However, when attacking Fort Ticonderoga from the north, Mount Defiance and Fort Independence are generally irrelevant because they are located south of Fort Ticonderoga and cannot provide simultaneous supporting fires. In other words, one can attack Fort Ticonderoga from the

north without dealing with Mount Defiance or Fort Independence first.

{21} Ibid, 33.

{22} It is debatable whether Burgoyne established a specific timetable. However, he planned to join forces with Howe in the early fall and the campaign season for European forces ended before winter. This being the case, Burgoyne knew he must secure Albany by early fall.

{23} Morrissey, 33.

{24} Morrissey, 32-34.

{25} Morrissey, 33. To defend Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Independence, and Mount Defiance, St. Clair needed 10,000 men. St. Clair had roughly 2,000 men in his command and only two weeks to prepare before Burgoyne attacked. He took command of Fort Ticonderoga on 19 June 1777.

{26} If he had waited an additional day, Riedesel's forces would have cut off his line of retreat and Burgoyne's navy would have been in position to interdict an escape by water and to provide naval surface fires.

{27} Ibid, 33.

{28} Ibid, 34. Brigadier General Fraser delivered the order to the senior MGen Riedesel.

{29} Ibid, 34.

{30} Ketchum, 165.

{31} Morrissey, 34.

{32} Ibid, 34.

{33} Ibid, 35.

{34} John Williams, *The Battle of Hubbardton: The American Rebels Stem the Tide* (Vermont: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 1988), 13- 20. For a lucid and detailed account of the Hubbardton battle, read William's work

{35} Morrissey, 35-41.

{36} Ibid, 38.

{37} Ibid, 38.

{38} Ibid, 39-42. St. Clair's forces reached Fort Edward on 12 July. While he marched towards Fort Edward, via Bennington, his Skenesboro detachment had razed Fort Ann to prevent its use by the British.

{39} [9] Unknown Author, "Arthur St. Clair: 9th President of the United States in Congress Assembled," *Virtualology,* URL: <http://arthurstclair.net>, Accessed 30 April 2002. When word of the abandonment of Fort Ticonderoga reached Philadelphia, Congress relieved St Clair. At his 1778 court-martial, Congress acquitted St. Clair "with the highest honor of the charges against him." While Burgoyne's defeat probably dissuaded Congress from convicting St. Clair, from a historical perspective, the charges made against him unfairly tarnished his reputation. After his acquittal, St. Clair commanded units at Yorktown and in the Carolinas. After the war, St. Clair served as the President of Congress and the Governor of the Northwest Territories.

{40} William S. Lind, "The Theory and Practice of Maneuver Warfare" for *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology,* ed. Richard D. Hooker, Jr. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), 10. A *reconnaissance pull* is essentially a technique used to bypass enemy strengths (*surfaces)* and attack enemy weaknesses *(gaps).* A reconnaissance pull is accomplished by positioning an advance force in front of an army's main force in order to locate where the enemy is located (surfaces) and the enemy is not located (gaps). As the advance force locates the enemy, it "pulls" or steers the army *through the gaps,* minimizing contact with enemy surfaces and preserving friendly combat power until the main fighting forces can be decisively committed.

{41} Ketchum, 166-168.

{42} They did not reach their operational culminating point however, because they still possessed the ability to conduct offensive operations.

{43} Morrissey, 38.

{44} Ketchum, 123-130. Noteworthy was the fact that the British attained these rates of movement traveling against the current, as Lake Champlain and her northern tributaries flow towards the St. Lawrence River. Conversely, Lake George's tributaries and the Hudson River flow south.

{45} Ibid, 166-168. This is particularly true in the case of Riedesel's formation. They did not have the luxury of Fraser's reconnaissance pull to their front. This may explain why the Left Wing arrived at Fort Ticonderoga last.

{46} MCDP 1, 44

{47} Ibid, 41.

{48} Ketchum, 231

{49} Billias, 175.

{50} Ketchum, 233-261. Burgoyne was not the only one confident about the future. Riedesel, the most grounded and most experienced officer on Burgoyne's staff, believed that even if the Americans raised an additional 5,000 men, it would come to nothing because Burgoyne captured most of the American artillery after the fall of Fort Ticonderoga. Riedesel's appraisal suggests he did not *initially* understand the nature of fighting on the American frontier. However, his estimate of the situation radically changed and matured as the campaign unfolded. Riedesel seemed to be the only high ranking officer in Burgoyne's army who re-assessed his assumptions and re-appraised his estimate.

{51} Billias, 175

{52} Ibid, 175.

{53} Ketchum, 236-239

{54} Ibid, 236 and Billias, 176

{55} Ketchum, 233 .

{56} This issue was addressed in Chapter 2. The term tactical culminating point is used here because Burgoyne still maintained the ability to conduct offensive operations at the operational level. A discussion on his operational culminating point occurs in later chapters.

{57} It is doubtful that Ticonderoga ever became a mature logistics point.

{58} Ketchum, 242-245. Burgoyne left two full regiments from Phillips Right Wing at Fort Ticonderoga. He also spent a great deal energy requesting more manpower from Carleton in Quebec. Carleton's manpower support was minimal.

{59} Phillips reached Fort Edward around the same time as Burgoyne.

{60} Ketchum, 244

{61} Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1971), 190.

{62} Ketchum, 244.

{63} Ibid, 240. He also wanted to clear Lake George in order to protect his flank, before moving on Albany.

{64} Ibid, 84.

{65} Ibid, 240.

{66} Ibid, 240.

{67} Ibid, 240-241 and Morrissey, 42.

{68} Ibid, 240 and Billias, 176-177.

{69} Billias, 176-177

{70} MCDP 1, 92-94.

{71} Higginbotham, 190-191.

{72} Ibid, 190. Higginbotham believes that an early attack (10-12 July) by Fraser would have increased the gloom of the dispirited Northern army

{73} U.S. Marine Corps, Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0, *Operations.* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, September 2001), F-18. A retrograde is a movement of an army to the rear or away from the enemy. A retrograde may be forced by the enemy, or, as the case would have been here, a voluntary movement.

{74} The British destroyed Benedict Arnold's navy on Lake Champlain in the fall of 1776. The seizure of the 200 American bateaux at Skenesboro probably eliminated any hope Schuyler had to counter the British.

{75} MCDP 1, 32-34.

{76} It is important to note that Burgoyne's logisticians (Phillip's was supervising the effort) were busy trying to open a second line of communication using the Lake George and the Hudson River waterway. Opening a second line of communication, however, took time and it created inefficiencies by dispersing manpower and resources. Ultimately, Burgoyne created two mutually exclusive and mutually competing re-supply efforts: one by land (operational but poor condition) and one by water (non-operational until early September).

{77} On 3 August, Burgoyne received General Howe's letter (written in July) informing him of Howe's decision to invest Philadelphia and that *reinforcements were unlikely*. The Battle of Bennington occurred on 16 August, two days after Burgoyne deployed a sizable German expedition towards the New Hampshire Grants to raid an American supply depot in order to capture the food, fodder, and horses contained within the depot. The Battle of Bennington is critically important for two significant reasons. One, the decision to launch the divergent excursion demonstrated the magnitude of Burgoyne's logistics crisis. From a military perspective, it is highly doubtful that Burgoyne would have dispatched the expedition had his logistics situation been positive. Second, the defeat at Bennington of German expedition heightened the enormity of the logistics crisis -- *Burgoyne lost 15% of his effective strength on 16 August and he lacked the ability to replace those losses.* On 20 August, Burgoyne sent a Situation Report to Germain that described the failed Vermont excursion. The letter was noteworthy because, for the first time, Burgoyne's prose lacked its familiar confident exuberance.

{78} MCDP 1, 40-42.

{79} Mintz, 161. Burgoyne himself conducted a leader's reconnaissance of the route from Skenesboro to Fort Ann. An American deserter provided him details on Schuyler's disposition; loyalists informed him that the Americans abandoned Fort George on 21 July. Burgoyne's intelligence estimate west and southwest of Skenesboro was superb.

{80} Billias, 144-147.

{81} Mintz, 157-158. Mintz agrees with Burgoyne's decision to advance to Fort Edward by land because he believed it had the potential of cutting off American forces at Fort George.

{82} Morrissey, 58.

{83} Mintz, 163.

{84} Ibid, 163.

{85} Ibid, 167. Burgoyne's biographer, Max M. Mintz, provides a wonderfully vivid description of Burgoyne's supply line. In short, supplies moved from Montreal to Fort Ticonderoga by water. At Ticonderoga, they moved over the portage to Lake George, where they traveled by bateaux across the Lake. At the head of Lake George, the British supplies moved overland ten miles to Fort Edward. After transferring the supplies to bateaux, they were floated down the Hudson to Fort Miller. At Fort Miller, the supplies moved by land to the Burgoyne's bridge across the Hudson. Essentially, Burgoyne did not use the road from Skenesboro to Fort Edward as an LOC.

{86} Ibid, 163.

{87} Ketchum, 131-132 and Mintz, 133-135. Burgoyne made his thirty-day estimates for Days of Supply (DOS) based on the

European four-wheeled cart.

{88} Morrissey, 15. Burgoyne had previously transferred horses earmarked for hauling supply carts to his artillery corps, which had crossed the line of departure at just over 50 percent of the horse strength required

{89} Mintz, 167-169.

{90} Morrissey, 22-53.

{91} Ibid, 22-53.

{92} Mintz, 177.

{93} Ibid, 175.

{94} Ibid, 164

{95} Mintz, 164

{96} Ibid, 177. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Introduction), Burgoyne's concept for seizing Albany included a two-prong attack from Canada. One prong was Northern Army's main attack, which Burgoyne led himself. This attack used the Lake Champlain-Lake George-Hudson River as its axis of advance. The second prong was the Northern Army's diversionary attack, which Brigadier General Barry St. Leger led. The diversionary attack used the St. Lawrence River-Lake Ontario-Mohawk River as its axis of advance. Americans forces under the command of General Herkimer defeated St. Leger's 2,000-man diversionary force (which consisted of mainly Indians) at Fort Stanwix, along the Mohawk River, in late August. This American victory was critical because it forced St' Leger's withdrawal and eliminated the threat to General Schuyler's (and Gates) western flank. Following St. Leger's defeat, Gates reinforced Saratoga with forces formerly assigned to the Fort Stanwix.

{97} Ibid, 176. Burgoyne probably made this comment, after his Saratoga defeat, to shift the blame from himself to Carleton.

{98} Ibid, 177. Burgoyne dismantled the bridge because he needed the rafts to cross the Mohawk River (north of Albany). It is also within reason to assume that he dismantled to prevent the American militia from using it and to prevent his own forces from fleeing. Burgoyne did not have the manpower to defend it and continue the attack.

{99} Fredericka von Riedesel, *Baroness von Riedesel,* trans. William Stone (Gansevoort, NY: Corner House Historical Publications), 47

{100} Mintz, 156-166. The phrase is borrowed from a chapter by the same title in Mintz's book, *The Generals of Saratoga.*

{101} Mintz, 176.

{102} Mintz, 176

{103} Morrissey, 59. Although Burgoyne lost a good deal of his reconnaissance capability with the departure of the western tribes (Indians), he still received intelligence reports from loyalists, deserters, British scouts, and the Canadian Indians still by his side.

{104} Mintz, 176. Mintz suggests that Burgoyne has a personal reason for ending the fight: he personally might not survive the winter.

{105} Gates appointment pleased the New Englanders, who sought Schuyler's relief because of the loss of fort Ticonderoga. This change in commanders helped recruit New Englanders to the Northern Department.

{106} Morrissey, 56.

{107} Mintz, 175.

{108} Additionally, Burgoyne was using his boats to raft or bridge the river.

{109} Ketchum, 73-88. During the British Northern Campaign of 1776, Burgoyne served as the second in command of the Northern Army. The campaign ended in the fall of 1776 when the commander of the Northern Army, Lieutenant General Guy Carleton, decided that he had overextended his supply line and with winter approaching, he withdrew the army back to Canada. Burgoyne disagreed with the Carleton's decision and let his superiors in England know how he felt about the 1776 campaign when he returned to London (December 1776). It was at this time that Burgoyne, sensing King George's own

displeasure with Carleton, downplayed Carleton's campaign concept for 1777, which he was in London to promote, and proposed his own ideas instead ("*Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada*").

{110} Mintz, 189.

{111} Ketchum, 368-369

{112} Ibid, 368.

{113} Ibid, 375-376.

{114} Ibid, 375-376.

{115} Ibid, 379.

{116} Ibid, 380-381.

{117} Stand-To is a military term that means that the soldiers are awake (one hundred percent alert) and in their battle positions (weapons in hand), ready to refuse an enemy attack.

{118} Ibid, 380-383.

{119} Ibid, 282.

{120} Morrissey, 68.

{121} Ketchum, 3 83

{122} However, his estimates, based on what he knew (he penned the letter on 20 September) seem embellished. Burgoyne did not know about the raids on his rear area, so it is hard to see how he knew that his line of retreat was cut. Additionally, Gate's army on 19 September numbered just over 6,000. Most likely, Burgoyne was being disingenuous with his estimates in order to get Clinton to act promptly.

{123} Ketchum, 3 83 .

{124} Ketchum, 387.

{125} Morrissey, 73.

{126} Ketchum, 381-387.

{127} Ibid, 387.

{128} Morrissey, 73.

{129} Ketchum, 3 87.

{130} River Road paralleled the Hudson and Burgoyne needed the road to move his combat trains south. The Hudson River was no longer an option as an avenue of approach because Burgoyne no longer possessed the necessary bateaus to move his army

{131} Ketchum, 387-388.

{132} Morrissey, 73-74

{133} Ibid, 73 and Ketchum, 388.

{134} Morrissey, 73.

{135} Ibid, 73.

{136} Ketchum, 387-389.

{137} Morrissey, 73.

{138} Ketchum, 3 89.

{139} Ibid, 388-389.

{140} Ibid, 389.

{141} Morrissey, 73.

{142} Ketchum, 417. Ketchum makes the case that Burgoyne's army was surrounded on 13 October when John Stark's forces moved across the Hudson (west bank) and blocked Burgoyne's last hope for a retreat. However, based on Burgoyne's estimate of the situation on 5 October, he probably knew that the Americans could seal the "backdoor" any time they chose.

{143} His decision to dig-in after receiving Clinton's letter on 21 September demonstrated Burgoyne's hopeless desperation.

{144} Morrissey, 28-29. Although Burgoyne did not know the size of the enemy forces east side of Hudson River or the enemy forces in his rear during October, he knew that the Americans were intercepting his messages to Canada. (It is important to note that Gates, who possessed no authority over the militia forces, did not know the size of the American forces on the east side of the Hudson either.) Furthermore, in his last dispatch to Germain in late August (post-Bennington), Burgoyne wrote about the "gathering storm" on his right flank. Based on what he wrote and the decisions he made, Burgoyne must have assumed that his line of retreat was cut when he attacked on 7 October.

{145} Ketchum, 417.

{146} In today's vernacular a redoubt is a called a field fortification.

{147} Morrissey, 75.

{148} Ketchum, 3 98.

{149} Mintz, 19.

{150} Ibid, 11.

{151} Billias, 181.

{152} Ibid, 182.

{153} John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 24