

Continued History of the 3rd New Jersey “The Jersey Blues”

After passing muster as one of “the finest in the Continental American Army”, the regiment was sent North to reinforce the ill-fated invasion of Canada. At Albany, the regiment was diverted to the Mohawk Valley to arrest Sir John Johnson. Later that year, the regiment constructed Fort Dayton at German Flats, rebuilt Fort Stanwix at Rome, New York, and wintered at Fort Ticonderoga.

In the spring of 1777, the Third returned to Morristown, NJ. Since enlistments were for one year, the soldiers were discharged and the regiment was re-established. The “Jersey Blues” participated in the Battle of the Short Hills at Scotch Plains, NJ (June 26) and moved South to meet the British moving toward Philadelphia. The regiment saw heavy action at the battles of Brandywine (Sept. 11) and Germantown (Oct. 4) before wintering at Valley Forge.

In 1778 General von Steuben and his Lt. Colonel, Francis Barber who was on Von Steuben’s staff, trained the Regiment at Valley Forge. Following the French Alliance, the British decided to withdraw from Philadelphia to New York and the Third was dispatched to New Jersey to harass and impede the British. This culminated in the Battle of Monmouth at Freehold (June 28). At the end of the campaign season, the Third took up garrison duty around Elizabethtown.

British-led Indian raids along the Western frontier spurred plans for an expedition in 1779 against the Iroquois. General Sullivan led the expedition and he requested the participation of the Jersey Brigade. Under General William (Scotch Willie) Maxwell, the Jerseys marched into the Finger Lakes region of New York and participated in the Battle of Newtown. In the fall of 1779, the Third went into winter quarters at Jockey Hollow, Morristown, NJ.

In 1780 the Third New Jersey Regiment assumed defensive positions around Elizabethtown. They were the first to engage the British and Hessian invasions from Staten Island in June. The Regiment, joined by local militia and the rest of the Jersey Brigade, fought a delaying action at Connecticut Farms (Union, NJ). A few days later, on June 23, the Regiment was engaged again and fought valiantly as a leading element in the Battle of Springfield, NJ. Later that year the army was re-organized and New Jersey was to provide only two regiments instead of three. The men of the Third were incorporated into the First and Second Regiments.

In 1781 Colonel Dayton was promoted to Brigadier General of the Jersey Brigade and Lt. Colonel Francis Barber took command of the New Jersey Light Infantry. The Jersey Brigade moved South to Virginia and participated in the siege and victory at Yorktown. This was not the end of their service. The Jersey Brigade returned to garrison duty in the Morristown-Elizabeth area in 1782.

In 1783 the Jersey Brigade was at the New Windsor Cantonment in New York. With the declaration of peace, the veterans of the Third were discharged.