



# AMERICAN WARRIOR:

## Major General Anthony Wayne

By Daniel S. Marrone

On August 26, 1985, the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution erected a bronze marker in Parc Champlain, Quebec, Canada, honoring Patriots killed at the Battle of Three Rivers on June 8, 1776. There, Anthony Wayne faced combat for the first time after raising a Pennsylvania regiment to fight in Canada.

Although the Continental Army's invasion of Canada ended in a complete calamity for the Americans, Wayne led his regiment successfully in a rear-guard action that protected the retreating Patriot soldiers until they reached Fort Ticonderoga. Wayne would continue to serve his nation in courageous ways, but his event-filled life also was marred by leadership controversies and financial difficulties.

### Early Life

Born on January 1, 1745, Wayne lived a comfortable youth in Chester County, near Paoli, Pa., on the 500-acre Waynesborough estate that his Irish immigrant father, Isaac Wayne, had inherited. Wayne studied in the arts and sciences at the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), where he displayed excellent mathematical skills, and later became a surveyor. In 1765 he met Benjamin Franklin, who employed him to survey a large tract of land in Nova Scotia that had been purchased for a new colony. Although the settlement was unsuccessful, Wayne was recognized for his service by Nova Scotia Governor Montague Wilmot.

After spending time in Nova Scotia, Wayne returned to Pennsylvania and began courting Mary "Polly" Penrose, the daughter of prominent Philadelphia merchant Bartholomew Penrose. The couple married on March 25, 1766. They settled on the Waynesborough family estate where Wayne farmed and opened a tanning business while still surveying for clients.

His life took a dramatic turn in 1774 when he was elected to represent Chester County at the Pennsylvania Provincial Convention. The purpose of this gathering was to formulate a response to England's heavy-handed treatment of its American Colonies and specifically to the imposition of martial law upon Boston's citizens. In January 1776, Continental Congress promoted Wayne to the rank of colonel of the 4th Battalion of the Pennsylvania line.

## Promotion and Controversy

By the end of 1776, following the Battle of Three Rivers, Wayne was ordered to serve as the commander of the garrison stationed at Fort Ticonderoga. Wayne likely was elated to have his first independent military command and honored when he was promoted to brigadier general for his leadership and valor during the Canadian campaign. However, inadequate food and clothing made him and his troops miserable until he left the

clear his name. The court-martial board declared Wayne not guilty on November 1, commending him as “an active, brave and vigilant officer.”

## Raid and Mutiny

Wayne served with distinction at the Valley Forge encampment during the arduous winter of 1777–1778 and spring of 1778, and he and his Pennsylvania regiment performed admirably at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. Of even greater significance to his

mutinied to protest their conditions. After killing one of their officers and wounding two others, the mutineers marched to Philadelphia. Extremely tense negotiations ensued between the mutineers and Joseph Reed, the president of the Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. After all of the mutineers’ demands were met, including a general amnesty for the rebellion, the conflict ended. The agreement also allowed for the soldiers to leave military service if they so chose. Wayne now faced the additional task of recruiting replacements for these departing troops.

## War Victories Shadowed By Financial Difficulties

In mid-1781, Wayne continued to serve as the commander of the Pennsylvania line under the leadership of Nathanael Greene and, occasionally, the Marquis de Lafayette. However, now Wayne and his troops were constantly on the move throughout Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. In September and October 1781, Wayne’s regiment helped secure the decisive defeat of Lord Cornwallis’ army at Yorktown, Va. Subsequently, Wayne was ordered further south to sever the alliances that the Creek and Cherokee American Indian tribes had with the British forces. In the closing days of the war in 1783, Wayne was promoted to the rank of major general.

In September 1783, Wayne shifted his focus toward advocating for Pennsylvania constitutional reform and running for political office. In and out of local Pennsylvanian politics for the rest of the decade, Wayne was elected to Congress in 1791. His tenure there lasted only six months, as Congress voted to overturn the election results due to voting irregularities.

The political troubles he faced paled in comparison to his financial difficulties. Debts mounted because of complicated and frequently



Gen. Wayne’s American troops captured the British garrison at Stony Point, N.Y., with a surprise bayonet attack.

fort in the spring of 1777 to join General George Washington’s forces.

Wayne then served with distinction at the battles of Brandywine and Germantown in September and October 1777. Between these battles, however, Wayne came under harsh criticism for inadequately protecting his troops while they were camped at the village of Paoli. On the evening of September 20, the British stormed the Patriot camp and bayoneted hundreds of unprepared American soldiers, an event that came to be known as the Paoli Massacre. Ever-protective of his reputation, Wayne demanded a court-martial hearing to

military career was his carefully planned and successfully executed raid on July 15–16, 1779. During the night, Wayne’s troops launched a surprise bayonet attack on the British encampment at Stony Point, N.Y., on the Hudson River. Some say Wayne viewed this raid as pay-back for the Paoli Massacre.

From late 1779 through the beginning of 1781, Wayne commanded troops at encampments throughout New Jersey and New York. Life at these encampments was difficult, and soldiers often went without food, clothing or pay for more than a year. On January 1, 1781, many soldiers of the Pennsylvania line

unsuccessful business dealings, and creditors sought to arrest him and send him to debtors' prison for nonpayment. As a consequence, Wayne was forced to flee his home state in order to evade his Philadelphia creditors. By 1792, he began to recover financially after the lucrative sale of a Georgia rice plantation that he had been granted because of his military service. However, his health began to deteriorate rapidly, with recurring bouts of fevers as well as acute gout in both of his arms and legs.

### Organizing and Taking Command of The Legion Army

The Treaty of Paris in 1783 ended hostilities between Great Britain and the United States. However, the treaty had little effect in stopping the continual bloodshed occurring in the Old Northwest Territory that today encompasses large parts of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. American Indian tribes, agitated by the defeated but still ever-present British at strategic forts along the border regions, fiercely defended their ancestral tribal lands from encroachment by new settlers. Intense, years-long negotiations went on between the various American Indian tribes and the Washington Administration. With negotiations going nowhere, Washington sent out American armies to quell the violence in the Old Northwest Territory, but the American troops sent out in 1790 and 1791 both met with failure.

In 1792, Wayne was appointed commander of the American military forces to address the challenge. The Pennsylvanian used a significantly different strategy than employed in two previous attempts to suppress the American Indian rebellions. First, he organized his forces into a "legion" that combined ground forces, mounted soldiers and artillery into one military unit. Wayne also provided substantial basic military training to his legion prior to entering battle. As always,



Gen. Wayne's Legion Army defeated the American Indian tribal forces at the 1794 Battle of Fallen Timbers on the banks of Ohio's Maumee River.

Wayne was a stickler concerning military discipline—in his view, it was an essential component of a winning fighting force. (In fact, the extreme bravery he demonstrated in battle earned him the nickname "Mad" Anthony Wayne.)

With the right military organization, adequate training and superlative leadership by Wayne, the Legion Army was able to defeat the American Indian tribal forces at the pivotal Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794. The tribes, weakened militarily and abandoned by the British, signed the Treaty of Greenville in August 1795, ceding vast territories to the new nation in return for various forms of compensation from the U.S. government.

### Last Years and Legacies

Following the signing of the Treaty of Greenville, Wayne returned home to widespread acclaim. However, his second-in-command, Brigadier General James Wilkinson, sent President George Washington a barrage of acid-toned letters excoriating Wayne's leadership in the Northwest Territory. Knowing Wayne's skill and dedication firsthand, Washington essentially disregarded these letters. Wilkinson was later implicated in several questionable activities, including service as a paid agent of the Spanish government. However, before

all this damning evidence surfaced, Wayne had to deal with Wilkinson's constant undermining of his authority. Because Wayne could not rely on his subordinate to properly lead the administration of the Northwest Territory, he was obliged to travel there repeatedly himself to attend to important matters. Returning from one such trip, he became violently ill with a fever at Presque Island near today's Erie, Pa. On December 15, 1796, he died from his illness.

The impact of Wayne's military accomplishments is reflected by the fact that more than 100 cities, towns, villages, counties, forests and parks, rivers, schools and colleges, and streets and highways have been named after him. Although Wayne was frequently overly severe with military discipline, and perhaps too arrogant when he should have been more modest, his highly effective military leadership helped to establish and protect the new nation. 🇺🇸

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