

Rhode Island Units in the Revolutionary War

- 1st Rhode Island Regiment
- 2d Rhode Island Regiment
- Rhode Island Train of Artillery
- Church's Regiment
- Richmond's Regiment
- Lippitt's Regiment

The 1st Rhode Island Regiment in the Revolutionary War

UNIT LINEAGE

Earlier history of this unit, includes this ancestry:

May 6, 1775, Authorized in the Rhode Island Army of Observation as Varnum's Regiment.

May 8, 1775, Organized as Varnum's Regiment to consist of 8 companies from kings and Kent Counties.

June 14, 1775, Adopted into the Continental Army as 12th Continental Regiment.

June 28, 1775, Reorganized to consist of 10 companies.

July 22, 1775, Assigned to Nathanael Greene's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

January 1, 1776, Reorganized and redesignated as the 9th Continental Regiment, to consist of 8 companies.

January to March, 1776, Siege of Boston

August 12, 1776, Nathanael Greene's Brigade redesignated as Nixon's Brigade, consisting of 9th, 11th, 12th Rhode Island, and the 4th Massachusetts.

August 27, 1776, Battle of Long Island, NY

September 16, 1776, Battle of Harlem Heights, NY

October 1776, Lt. Col. Archibald Crary assumes command

October 28, 1776 Battle of White Plains, New York

November 20, 1776, Ft. Lee (aka Ft. Constitution) New Jersey lost to British, retreat across New Jersey

December 22, 1776, Nixon's Brigade redesignated as Hitchcock's Brigade.

January 1, 1777, Reorganized and redesignated as the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, Col. Christopher Greene commander, most of the officers and men came from the 9th Continental Regiment, who in turn came from Varnum's 12th Continental Regiment (see above).

January 2, 1777, Battle of Trenton, New Jersey

January 3, 1777, Battle of Princeton, New Jersey

January 13, 1777, Relieved from Hitchcock's Brigade.

January 1777, 1st Rhode Island Regiment, Continental Line, created from many of the officers and men of Varnum's disbanded 9th Continental Regiment; Col. Christopher Greene commander

March 12, 1777, Assigned to the Highlands Department .

April 1777 part of Varnum's Brigade, also consisting of 2nd Rhode Island, and the 4th and 8th Connecticut

July 10, 1777, Assigned to the Rhode Island Brigade, an element of the Highlands Department .

September 14, 1777, Rhode Island Brigade relieved from the Highlands Department and assigned to the Main Continental Army.

October 7, 1777 Ft. Montgomery, NY, was lost to British

October 22, 1777, Battle of Red Bank (Ft. Mercer) New Jersey, Col. Christopher Greene received a sword from Congress for his action.

December 1777, Valley Forge Winter Quarters

January 2, 1778, Relieved from the Rhode Island Brigade and assigned to the Eastern Department.

February 1778, 1st Rhode Island Regiment was merged into the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment. Col. Christopher Greene and other officers return to Rhode Island to raise a new 1st Rhode Island Regiment of freed slaves.

Spring 1778, 1st Rhode Island Regiment was reorganized at Providence with Black enlisted men

June 28, 1778, Battle of Monmouth, as part of the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment

August 1778, The 1st Rhode Island Regiment, now including the freed slaves, joined Varnum's Brigade, also consisting of the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment and the regiments of Sherburne, Webb and Livingston

August 29, 1778, Battle of Rhode Island

September 1778, Encamped at Bradford's Hill in Bristol, Rhode Island, as part of Lafayette's Division, also at Windmill Hill in Warren (map of Lafayette's Aide de Camp); probably guarded Bristol Neck up to Miles; Bridge in Swansea, Massachusetts; Provided pickets on Mount Hope, Poppasquash Point, Bristol Ferry and possibly the Narrows

December 1778, Winter quarters at wharves and warehouses in Warren, Rhode Island

1779, The 2nd Rhode Island Regiment was moved over the Bay to Tower Hill in Kingston, then called Barber's Heights until the British left Newport.

October 1779, The British withdraw from Newport. The 1st Rhode Island Regiment remained in Rhode Island until consolidation in Jan 1781, but the rest of the Brigade left Rhode Island and marched south at this time.

January 1, 1781, Consolidated with the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment and redesignated as the Rhode Island Regiment, Col. Christopher Greene commanding, also relieved from the Eastern Department and assigned to the New Hampshire Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

May 14, 1781, Col. Christopher Greene, Major Ebenezer Flagg and six black soldiers killed, Lt. Ebenezer Macomber, Ensign Jeremiah Greenman and 22 men taken

prisoner at Croton River, New York* Lt. Colonel Jeremiah Olney succeeded Greene as commanding officer

June 9, 1781, The French left Newport

June 18, 1781, Relieved from the New Hampshire Brigade and assigned to the 2nd Connecticut Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

June 24, 1781, Washington was encamped near Peekskill

July 2, 1781, Washington advanced to valentine's Hill, four miles above King's Bridge

July 4, 1781, Washington withdrew to Dobb's Ferry with his entire force

July 6, 1781, Rochambeau joined Washington at Dobb's Ferry

August 28, 1781, The entire Allied Army halted in the vicinity of Chatham and Springfield, New Jersey. Relieved from the 2nd Connecticut Brigade and assigned to Hazen's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

August 29, 1781, The deception over, they marched for Princeton, New Jersey

September 2, 1781, the allied army reached Philadelphia

September 24, 1781, Relieved from the Hazen's Brigade and assigned to New Jersey Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

September 28, 1781, The Allied Army marched from Williamsburg to within a mile of Yorktown

October 1781, Battle of Yorktown [At this time the Rhode Island Battalion was under the command of Lt. Colonel Jeremiah Olney, and was part of Colonel Elias Dayton's Brigade (along with the 1st and 2nd New Jersey Regiments), and Drayton's Brigade was part of Benjamin Lincoln's Division (along with the 1st and 2nd New York Regiments)]

October 17, 1781, General Cornwallis and his Army surrendered

December 22, 1781, Relieved from the New Jersey Brigade and assigned to the Middle Department.

May 15, 1782, Relieved from the Middle Department and assigned to the Main Continental Army.

August 29, 1782, Assigned to the 2nd Connecticut Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

October 28, 1782, Relieved from the 2nd Connecticut Brigade and assigned to the Northern Department.

March 1, 1783, Reorganized and redesignated as the Rhode Island Battalion, to consist of 6 companies.

June 16, 1783, Reorganized to consist of 2 companies.

December 25, 1783, Disbanded at Saratoga , New York.

Lineage taken from Robert K. Wright, Jr., Army Lineage Series: The Continental Army (Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D.C. 1986) page 227; Anthony Walker, So Few the Brave (Rhode Island Continentals 1775-1783), (Seafield Press, Newport, Rhode island, 1981) pages 111, 128; and other sources

* *American Journal* newspaper, July 4, 1781, page 1; *Diary of a Common Soldier*, the Diary of Jeremiah Greenman, p. 224

Colonel Christopher Greene, Killed in Action: May 14, 1781
Lt. Col. Archibald Crary, transferred to State's Brigade, April 1777
Lt. Col. Adam Comstock, Detached, April 1778
Lt. Col. Samuel Ward, Jr.
Major Ebenezer Flagg, Captured: May 14, 1781

UNIT ENGAGEMENTS

1. Siege of Boston, July 1775-March 1776
2. Battle of Long Island, NY, 27 Aug. 1776
3. Battle of Harlem Heights, NY, 16 Sept. 1776
4. Battle of White Plains, NY, 28 Oct. 1776
5. Second Battle of Trenton, NJ, 2 Jan. 1777
6. Battle of Princeton, NJ, 3 Jan. 1777
7. Red Bank (Ft. Mercer) NJ, 22 October 1777
8. Battle of Rhode Island, 29 Aug. 1778
9. Battle of Yorktown, Oct. 1781

UNIT HISTORY

The 1st Rhode Island Regiment also known as Varnum's Regiment was authorized on 6 May 1775 in the Rhode Island Army of Observation and was organized on May 8, 1775 under Colonel James Mitchell Varnum consisting of eight companies of volunteers from the counties of Kent and King of the colony of Rhode Island. It was adopted into the Continental Army on 14 June 1775 and then on 28 June it was re-organized to ten companies. On 28 July 1775 it was assigned to Greene's Brigade of the main Continental Army. On 1 January 1776 it was re-organized to eight companies and re-designated as the 9th Continental Regiment. The regiment would see action at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The 1st Rhode Island Regiment was re-formed on 1 January 1777 when the 9th Continental Regiment of Hitchcock's Brigade was redesignated. It was relieved from this brigade on 13 January 1777 and assigned to the Highland's Department on 12 March 1777. It was then assigned to the Rhode Island Brigade on 10 July 1777. This brigade was relieved on 14 September 1777 from the Highland's Department and re-assigned to the main Continental Army. On 2 January 1778 the regiment was relieved from this brigade and assigned to the Eastern Department. During the spring of 1778 the regiment was re-organized as an all African-American volunteer (enlisted) regiment. On 1 January 1781 the regiment was consolidated with the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment and redesignated as the Rhode Island Regiment in the New Hampshire Brigade of the main Continental Army.

The 2d Rhode Island Regiment in the Revolutionary War

UNIT LINEAGE

Earlier history of this unit, includes this ancestry:

Authorized on May 6, 1775 in the Rhode Island Army of Observation as Hitchcock's Regiment.

Organized on May 8, 1775 to consist of 8 companies from Providence County.

Adopted on June 14, 1775 into the Continental Army as the 14th Continental Regiment.

Reorganized on June 28, 1775 to consist of 10 companies.

Assigned on July 22, 1775 to Greene's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

Reorganized and redesignated on January 1, 1776 as the 11th Continental Regiment, to consist of 8 companies.

Greene's Brigade redesignated on August 12, 1776 as Nixon's Brigade.

Nixon's Brigade redesignated on December 22, 1776 as Hitchcock's Brigade.

Reorganized and redesignated on January 1, 1777 as the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment.

Most of the officers and men came from the 11th Continental Regiment, who in turn came from Hitchcock's 14th Continental Regiment (see above).

Relieved on January 13, 1777 from Hitchcock's Brigade.

Assigned on March 12, 1777 to the Highlands Department .

Assigned on July 10, 1777 to the Rhode Island Brigade, an element of the Highlands Department .

Rhode Island Brigade relieved on September 14, 1777 from the Highlands Department and assigned to the Main Continental Army.

Relieved on July 19, 1778 from the Rhode Island Regiment and assigned to the 1st Massachusetts Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army

Relieved on July 21, 1778 from the 1st Massachusetts Brigade and assigned to the Rhode Island Brigade, an element of the Eastern Department.

Reorganized on June 1, 1779 to consist of 9 companies.

Relieved on November 17, 1779 from the Rhode Island Brigade and assigned to Stark's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

Consolidated on January 1, 1781 with the 1st Rhode Island Regiment and redesignated as the Rhode Island Regiment.

Lineage taken from "The Continental Army" by Robert K Wright

Colonel Israel Angell

Lt. Col. Jeremiah Olney

Major Simeon Thayer

UNIT ENGAGEMENTS

1. Siege of Boston, July 1775-March 1776
2. Battle of Long Island, NY, 27 Aug. 1776
3. Battle of Harlem Heights, NY, 16 Sept. 1776
4. Battle of White Plains, NY, 28 Oct. 1776
5. Second Battle of Trenton, NJ, 2 Jan. 1777
6. Battle of Princeton, NJ, 3 Jan. 1777

7. Red Bank (Ft. Mercer) NJ, 22 October 1777
8. Battle of Monmouth, NJ, 28 June 1778
10. Battle of Rhode Island, 29 Aug. 1778
11. Battle of Springfield, NJ, 23 June 1780

UNIT HISTORY

The 2nd Rhode Island Regiment also known as Hitchcock's Regiment was authorized on May 6, 1775 under Colonel Hitchcock in the Rhode Island Army of Observation and was organized on 8 May 1775 as eight companies of volunteers from Providence county of the colony of Rhode Island. The regiment was adopted into the Continental Army on 14 June 1775. The regiment was re-organized to ten companies on 28 June 1775 and assigned to Greene's Brigade on 22 July 1775. The regiment was re-organized and combined with the 1st Rhode Island Regiment to eight companies and redesignated as the 9th Continental Regiment on 1 January 1776. The regiment would see action at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Rhode Island Train of Artillery

LINEAGE

Authorized on May 6, 1775 in the Rhode Island State Troops as the Rhode Island Train of Artillery.

Organized between May 8- June 3, 1775 at Providence with recruits from Providence County.

Adopted on June 14, 1775 into the Continental Army and assigned to the Main Army.

Consolidated on January 1, 1776 with the Continental Regiment; expanded and redesignated as Capt. Ebenezer Stevens' and Capt. Steven Badlam's Companies, Continental Artillery Regiment.

ENGAGEMENTS

1. Defense of Philadelphia
2. Lake Champlain

Church's Rhode Island Regiment in the Revolutionary War

UNIT LINEAGE

(June to December 1775)

Authorized on May 6, 1775 in the Rhode Island Army of Observation as Church's Regiment.

Organized on May 8, 1775 to consist of 7 companies from Newport and Bristol Counties.
Adopted on June 14, 1775 into the Continental Army.

Reorganized on June 28, 1775 to consist of 10 companies.

Assigned on July 22, 1775 to Greene's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

Disbanded on December 31, 1775 at Roxbury, Massachusetts

Many officers and men volunteered for the new 9th and 11th Continentals, which became respectively the 1st and 2nd Rhode Island Continental Line

Lineage taken from "The Continental Army" by Robert K Wright

Col. Thomas Church Commander

Lt. Col. William T. Miller

Major John Forrester (detached July 1775)

Major Henry Sherburne

UNIT ENGAGEMENT

1. Siege of Boston, June to December 1775

Colonel William Richmond's Regiment of Rhode Island State Troops
in the Revolutionary War
(November 1775 - January 1777)

UNIT LINEAGE

Authorized on October 31, 1775 in the Rhode Island State troops as Richmond's Regiment.

Organized in November 1775 to consist of 8 companies.

Adopted in November 1775 into the Continental Army and assigned to the Eastern Department.

Reorganized on January 8, 1776 to consist of 12 companies.

Companies 1 through 8 Were discharged at New London, Connecticut upon their return from Long Island November 6, of 1776

Artillery Company was discharged on December 1, 1776.

Companies 9 through 12 Were sent to bolster Col. John Cooke's R.I. forces then assembled at Newport, R.I and discharged January 1777.

Lineage taken from "The Continental Army" by Robert K Wright

Colonel William Richmond

Lt. Col. Benjamin Tallman

Major Caleb Gardner

UNIT ENGAGEMENTS

While Most of the engagements were generally small in scale, number of participants and duration. Perhaps most are now forgotten. There were however contests that involved numbers over two hundred as on Prudence Island and at Setauket. Submitted by, and written by Jerome J. Levans.

January 13, 1776 Prudence Island, Rhode Island. The British landed on the Island on the 12th drove off a company of militia and began burning homes, barns and confiscating supplies. On the 13th, the Regiment engaged the British raiding party of over two hundred for three hours near the Farnham Farm. They were successfully led by Captain William Barton of the 6th Company. The British force was driven back to its ships loosing 14 dead and suffering many wounded. Four of the Regiment were wounded, one mortally wounded and one was taken prisoner.

April 6th, 1776 New Port, Rhode Island. Place two 18 pound cannon in range of Captain Wallace's fleet which force the fleet to weigh anchor and leave the harbor.

April 7, 1776 New Port, Rhode Island. Engaged H.M.S. Glasgow and a hospital ship from Fort Brenton's Point, Rhode Island.

April 10, 1776 New Port, Rhode Island. Engaged H.M.S. Scarborough and H.M.S. Cimetar from Fort Brenton's Point, Rhode Island as the two ships entered the bay.

April 14, 1776 New Port, Rhode Island. Engaged H.M.S. Scarborough and H.M.S. Cimetar from Fort Brenton's Point, Rhode Island as the two ships exited the bay.

October 28, 1776 Mastic [Setauket]. Assisted William Floyd, a member of Congress from New York, to help his family flee, from Mastic Long Island to Connecticut in conjunction with Lt.-Colthere they capture H.M. Sloops Princess Mary and Lily that lay at dock, bearing cargoes of cordwood destined for the British Army in New York.

November 2, 1776 Brookhaven [Setauket]. In company with New York Continentals led by Lt.-Col. Henry B. Livingston, conducted an amphibious landing at Brookhaven [Setauket] and captured 23 of Oliver DeLancy's Loyalist Brigade and their commanding officer, Captain Jacob Smith. The Loyalists lost six killed and an unknown number of wounded. Richmond's Regiment lost one killed, and had five wounded.

Rhode Island State Troops

October 31st, 1775 (R. I. General Assembly authorizes the raising of a 500 man regiment)

November 6, 1775 (Eight Companies are raised)

December 22nd, 1775 (began active duty in Newport, R.I., building fortifications)

January of 1776 (Enlarged by four Companies to conform to the Continental Regimental Army structure - now 763 men and designated as State Troops, part of the Eastern District Command of the Continental Army for 1776)

January 8th, 1776 (Bristol R.I. - 3rd Company led by Captain Job Pearce is called to alarm as Captain Wallace's fleet approaches.)

January 13th, 1776 (Prudence Island, R.I.- Battle of Farnham's Farm)

February 1776 (9th Company led by Captain Josiah Gibbs ordered to Quidnessett Neck to relieve a number of minute men at this post)
April 6th, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Fort at Brenton's Point, engage H.M.S. Rose and tender)
April 7th, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Fort at Brenton's Point - Engage H.M.S. Glasgow and hospital ship)
April 11th, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Fort at Brenton's Point - Engage H.M.S. Scarborough and H.M.S. Cimetar as they enter Bay)
April 14th, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Fort at Brenton's Point - Engage H.M.S. Scarborough and H.M.S. Cimetar as they exit Bay)
April 21, 1776 (Col. Richmond writes Admiral Hopkins upon receipt of ordnance and warlike stores from the Continental ship Cabot.
April 22, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Work at Fort Brenton's Point complete; Begin repairing fortifications on Fort Island, Newport Harbor)

In Continental Service

May 11th, 1776 (Continental Congress passes resolve Richmond's Regiment is taken into Continental pay)
May 11th, 1776 (Regimental officers to receive Continental Commissions)
June 20th, 1776 (Providence, R.I. - Ordered by Commodore Hopkins to disembark from Continental ship Columbus commanded by Capt. Abraham Whipple)
July 20, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Adjutant, Ensign John Handy reads the Declaration of Independence from the gallery in front/over the Court House steps.)
August 10th, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Col. Richmond writes General Washington advising of latest intelligence)
September 7th, 1776 (Officer Commissions in Continental Army are approved by the Continental Congress)
October 21st, 1776 (Captain Job Pearce, now privateer of a sloop of war, arrives at Newport with a prize of 300 tons)
October 28th, 1776 (Mastic, N.Y. - Assisted William Floyd and family, member of Congress NY, to flee Long Island to CT)
October 29th, 1776 (New Haven, C.T., Col Henry B. Livingston's Return of Effectives indicates the Regiment has 320 men remaining)
November 1st, 1776 (Captain Job Pearce, arrives in the west passage of the Narragansett, with a another prize, a large brig)
November 2nd, 1776 (Setauket, Long Is., N.Y. - Secret mission ordered by Gen. Washington, planed by Col. Henry B. Livingston)
November 6th, 1776 (New London, C.T. - First 8 Companies enlistments expire. They are discharged. The remaining four Companies are sent to bolster Col. John Cooke's R.I. forces then assembled at Newport, R.I.)
December 1st, 1776 (Artillery Company's enlistment expires and Company is discharged.)
December 7th, 1776 (Newport R.I. - Evacuate Fort at Brenton's Point. Move to mainland and points elsewhere)
January 1777 (The remaining four Companies enlistments expire and the unit is officially dissolved.)

UNIT HISTORY

12 Companies of Foot –

- Companies 1 through 8 serving from November 1775 through November 1776, (Discharged at New London , C.T on November 6th, 1776, after return from Long Island, NY.)
- Companies 9 through 12 serving from January 1776 through January 1777, (Discharged January 1777, following the British & Hessian invasion of Rhode Island)
- 1 Artillery Company, Serving from December, 1775 through December, 1776 (Discharged on December 1, 1776)

Lippitt's Rhode Island Regiment in the Revolutionary War

UNIT LINEAGE

(May 1776 – February 1777)

Authorized on January 8, 1776 in the Rhode Island State Troops as Babcock's Regiment.

Organized on January 18, 1776 at Newport to consist of 12 companies.

Redesignated on May 1, 1776 as Lippitt's Regiment.

Adopted on May 11, 1776 into the Continental Army and assigned to the Eastern Department.

Relieved on September 14, 1776 from the Eastern Department and assigned to the Main Continental Army.

Assigned on October 14, 1776 to McDougall's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

Relieved on November 10, 1776 from McDougall's Brigade and assigned to Nixions Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army

Nixion's Brigade redesignated 22 December 22, 1776 as Hitchcock's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

Disbanded on January 18, 1777 at Morristown, New Jersey.

Lineage taken from "The Continental Army" by Robert K Wright

Colonel Christopher Lippitt

Lt. Col. Adam Comstock

Major James Tew, Jr.

UNIT ENGAGEMENTS

1. White Plains, 28 October 1776
 2. Second Trenton, 2 January 1777
 3. Princeton, 3 January 1777
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Other Units did have Revolutionary Wars Service. Militia units such as the Newport Artillery Company, Kentish Guards, Pawtuxet Rangers, Gloucester Light Infantry, Bristol Train of Artillery for the most part served as what was later called the Home Guard, protecting local harbors and towns. They didn't have service as a unit, but many of their members went on to have distinguished service, based on their military training in these units. The best example of this is Nathanael Greene, who received his early military training in the Kentish Guards.