

Glossary

Military & Technological Terms, People & Places

Military Terminology

Abbatis: A barrier of cut trees with sharpened branches toward the enemy.

Enfilade: A volley of gunfire directed along a line from end to end.

Fascine: Bundles of branches used to fill ditches and swamps.

Fleche: A projecting, arrow or V-shaped outwork in a fortification.

Gabions: Wicker Baskets filled with dirt and rock used to build forts.

Gun Emplacement: A military installation consisting of a prepared position for sitting a weapon.

Parapet: A protective wall or earth defense along the top of a trench or other place of concealment for troops.

Rampart: A tall, thick stone or dirt wall that is built around a castle, town, etc., to protect it from attacks.

Redoubt: A temporary or supplementary fortification, typically square or polygonal, without flanking defenses.

Revetment: A barricade of earth or sandbags set up to provide protection from blast, protecting a rampart, wall, etc.

Technological Terms

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR): A geophysical technique used to collect and record information about the earth's subsurface, by using radar pulses to map underlying archaeological features without disturbing the soil.

MATLAB: Engineering software produced by MathWorks in Cambridge, MA, used to solve engineering and scientific problems. It integrates computation, visualization, and programming in an easy-to-use environment where problems and solutions are expressed in familiar mathematical notation.

Reynolds number: A dimensionless number that gives a measure of the ratio of inertial forces to viscous forces for given flow conditions. The Reynolds number is an important parameter that describes whether flow conditions lead to laminar or turbulent flow.

Major Players

General Henry Clinton: British army officer whose forces first captured Newport in 1776. In 1778 Clinton became commander in chief of British forces in America, following General Howe's retirement. Although his second in command, Lord Cornwallis, was responsible for the loss at Yorktown, it was Clinton and not Cornwallis who received much of the blame upon returning to England, after the war.

Admiral Comte d'Estaing: A nobleman with many years in the French military, first in the army, then in the navy, d'Estaing was commander of the Toulon fleet ordered by King Louis XVI to aid the American colonies in 1778. Years later, he was guillotined in Paris during the Reign of Terror.

Major General Nathaniel Greene: Hailing from Rhode Island, Greene was manager of his family's iron foundry before the war and became commander of the State army in 1775. After joining the Continental Army, he was quickly promoted to Major General and became one of Washington's most skilled and trusted officers. He was assigned to help Sullivan retake Newport, in the hope that his local knowledge could be of use. Greene is largely remembered for his strategic mind and for his part in the war's Southern theater. His actions proved crucial in the lead up to Yorktown, luring and exhausting Lord Cornwallis' army throughout the South. After the war, he settled in Georgia, where he died in 1786.

Admiral Richard Howe: Commander of naval forces during the American Revolution and brother to General William Howe, who commanded the land forces.

General William Howe: A very successfully and decorated officer, Howe became Commander-in-Chief of British forces in America in April 1776, and remained in this position until his retirement in 1778.

Major General Marquis de Lafayette: French aristocrat and army officer who volunteered for the American Continental Army prior to French involvement in the war. Lafayette became a close friend and aide to Washington and participated in numerous engagements throughout the war, most notably helping to blockade Lord Cornwallis in the lead up to the Siege of Yorktown. He was also vital in America's dealings with France, both during the Rhode Island Campaign and later helping Benjamin Franklin to secure 6,000 French soldiers under the command of Rochambeau. Lafayette went on to be a key figure in the French Revolution of 1789 and in the July Revolution of 1830.

Lieutenant Frederick Mackenzie: British officer in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, who kept a detailed diary during the American Revolution, recording his time stationed in Boston, Newport and New York. His diary provides enormous insight and is widely quoted and cited throughout this report.

Major General Robert Pigot: British officer and aristocrat, Pigot distinguished himself early in the war at the Battle of Bunker Hill. In 1777 he became 2nd baronet after the death of his brother George. That same year, he took command of the British forces stationed at Newport and successfully maintained hold of the city during the Siege and Battle of Rhode Island. Pigot remained in command of Newport until 1779 and was succeeded by General Prescott. He died in England in 1796.

Major General Richard Prescott: A twice-captured British officer known for being “insolent, ill-tempered and supercilious.”²⁴⁸ Prescott was freed the first time in a prisoner exchange for John Sullivan (who would later lead the campaign on Rhode Island). He came to Newport in November 1776 and eventually became its commander. He was captured for the second time, in an embarrassing incident in July 1777, by Major William Barton and a party of 40 Americans. Eventually returning to Newport, he took part in the Siege and Battle of Rhode Island and succeeded Pigot to command the city in 1779 until its abandonment. He died in England in 1788.

Lieutenant General Comte de Rochambeau: A French nobleman and the general in command of French forces in the later years of the American Revolution. Rochambeau was stationed at Newport from July 1780-1781. He led the French Army to aid Washington in the defeat of British forces under Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, VA, virtually ending the war. During the French Revolution he was nearly guillotined but ultimately evaded execution and was later pensioned by Napoleon.

Major General John Sullivan: An attorney from New Hampshire, Sullivan joined the Continental Army as an officer in 1775 and took part in the Siege of Boston the following March. After being promoted to major general, he was captured during the Battle of Long Island in 1776 but was exchanged in time to lead Washington’s right column at the Battle of Trenton. After commanding the Rhode Island campaign at the age of thirty-eight, he found success on the battlefield defeating the Iroquois Indians in western New York, but ultimately resigned before the war’s end due to illness. He went on to become a delegate to the Continental Congress, presided over his state’s ratification of the Constitution and later in life became governor of New Hampshire.

Locations

See reference maps at end of glossary for a visual aid.

Aquidneck Island / Rhode Island: Comprised of the towns of Portsmouth (to the north), Middletown (in the center) and Newport (to the south) it is the largest island in Narragansett Bay in the State of Rhode Island. Originally called “Aquidneck” by the Narragansett tribe, it was later renamed “Rhode Island” by early English settlers. Both the State of Rhode Island and the Battle of Rhode Island are named for this geographic feature. Today it is widely referred to as

²⁴⁸ Boatner, 886.

Aquidneck Island, although its official name remains Rhode Island. Throughout this report it is called Aquidneck Island to avoid confusion with the state.

Bailey's Brook: A brook on Aquidneck Island that runs into Easton's Pond and was a major obstacle to the Americans during the Siege of Newport.

Bliss Hill: A hill in Middletown, Rhode Island overlooking Easton's Pond (to the east). It was the site of the British Position during the Siege of Newport.

Bliss House: A house on the outskirts of Newport, used as the British field headquarters during the Siege. Today it is called the Elder John Bliss House and is considered the oldest house in Newport.

Conanicut Island: The second largest island in Narragansett Bay in the State of Rhode Island. It is comprised of the town of Jamestown and is located between Aquidneck Island to the east and the mainland to the west. Newport harbor faces this island.

Easton's Beach: A beach located on the Newport - Middletown border on Aquidneck Island. It is south of Easton's Pond and during the Siege of Newport was held by the British on the west end and the Americans on the east. It was another major obstacle for the Americans during the Siege.

Easton's Pond: A pond on Aquidneck Island, north of Easton's Beach that is fed by Bailey's Brook, in Middletown, Rhode Island. It was a major obstacle to the Americans during the Siege.

Green End: The eastern most portion of Bliss Hill in Middletown, Rhode Island, which overlooked Bailey's Brook, Easton's Pond and faced the American position at Honeyman Hill. The British position at Card's Redoubt and the French Redoute de Saintonge were both located in this area.

Honeyman Hill: The hill, located to the east of Bailey's Brook and Easton's Pond in Middletown, Rhode Island, where the American forces entrenched during the Siege.

Middletown: A town in the State of Rhode Island, located at the center of Aquidneck Island, between Portsmouth to the north and Newport to the south. It was the location of the Siege of Newport cannonading, at Bliss and Honeyman Hills, during the Battle of Rhode Island.

Narragansett Bay: A large bay in the state of Rhode Island, fed by the Providence, Taunton, and Sakonnet Rivers. Its islands include, Rhode (Aquidneck), Conanicut, and Prudence Islands.

Newport: A port city in the State of Rhode Island, located at the southern end of Aquidneck Island. It was one of the leading colonial ports before the Revolution, until it became occupied by British forces from 1776 to 1779. Although the Siege took place mainly in Middletown, main objective was to drive the British out and retake Newport.

Newport Harbor: The harbor of the mercantile port city Newport, Rhode Island, located on the southwest side of Aquidneck Island, facing Conanicut Island (Jamestown).

One Mile Corner: A local term for an intersection on Aquidneck Island at one of the town lines. It is where Broadway in Newport becomes West Main Road in Middletown and is roughly one mile from the seat of government in Newport.

Point Judith: A small cape on the southwestern side of Narragansett Bay, where it opens out onto Rhode Island Sound.

Portsmouth: A town in the State of Rhode Island located on the northern end of Aquidneck Island. It is where the American army both landed on the island when arriving from Tiverton and retreated to after the ending the Siege in Middletown. It is also where major fighting took place during the retreat.

Providence: The capital city of the State of Rhode Island, located at the mouth of the Providence River and head of Narragansett Bay. While the British occupied Newport, Providence was a Patriot stronghold and served as General John Sullivan's headquarters prior to the Siege and Battle of Rhode Island.

Sakonnet River: The name for the east passage of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, between Tiverton and Little Compton to the east, and Aquidneck Island to the west.

Sandy Hook: A barrier spit in northern New Jersey, protruding into and sheltering part of Lower New York Bay. Located just south of New York City, ships headed for this port had to pass by Sandy Point *en route*. The British Navy stationed at New York used the strategic geography and location of Sandy Hook to their advantage to protect both the city and their fleet.

Tiverton: A town in the State of Rhode Island located across the Sakonnet River from Portsmouth on Aquidneck Island.

Tonomy Hill: Also part of the British outer line. It is the highest point on Aquidneck Island and the location of Tonomy Hill Fort.

Two Mile Corner: A local term for the intersection on Aquidneck Island, where East Main Road and West Main Road in Middletown, Rhode Island meet. It is one-mile north, up West Main Road, from One Mile Corner and two miles from the seat of government in Newport.

Reference Maps

The following maps visually show the location of the many places and landmarks listed in the above glossary.



Figure R.1 Narragansett Bay in the State of Rhode Island, including many landmarks referenced throughout the report.



Figure R.2 Aquidneck (aka Rhode) Island, along with towns involved in the campaign, the Sakonnet River and the area the Siege took place in.

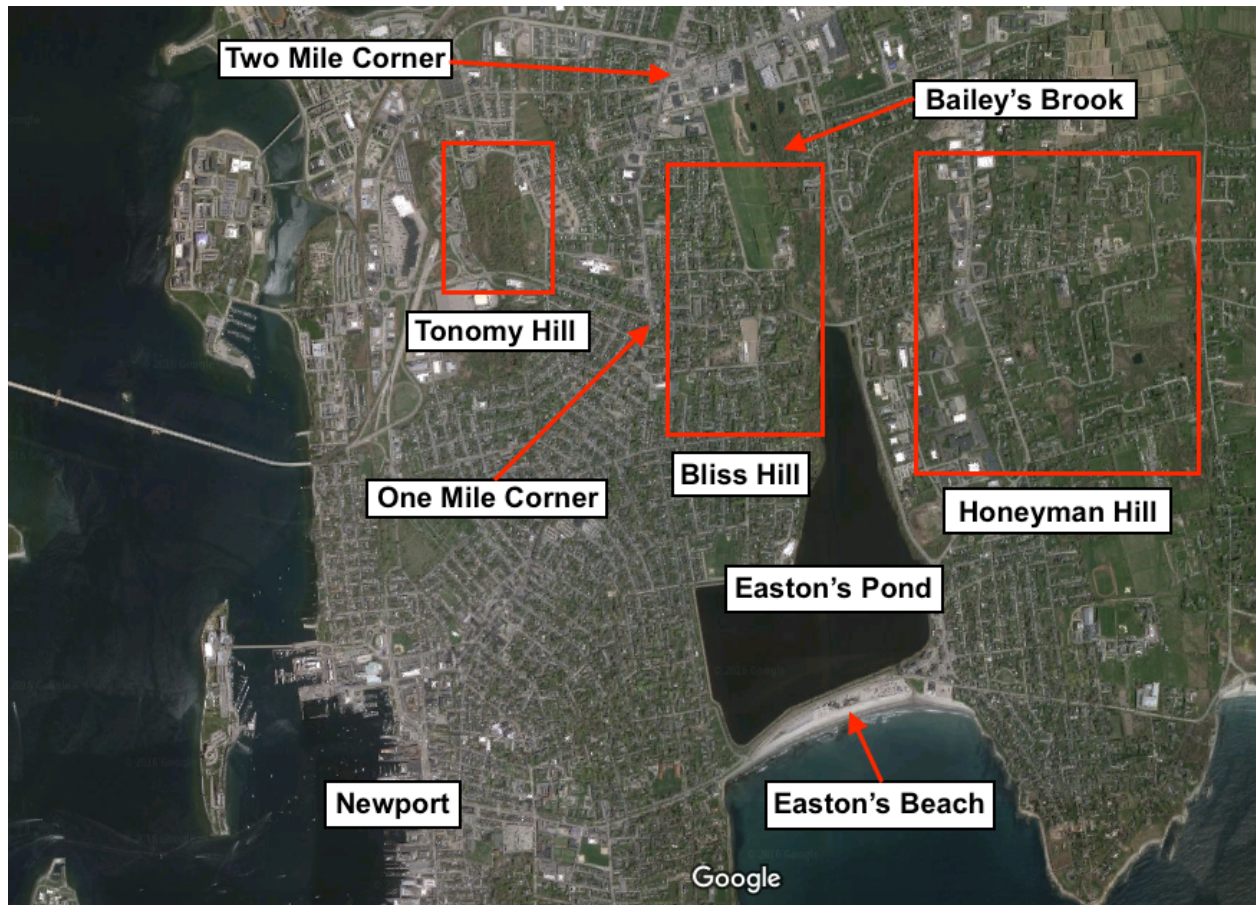


Figure R.3 The above map indicates the relation of the three major hills involved in the Siege and their locations in context to one another.



Figure R.5 The above map shows the locations of major roads that existed during the Siege, still exist and are referenced throughout the report.