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Eyewitness of the American Revolution

January 3, 1777

Princeton
Battlefield

Society

www.pbs1777.org

*A hand-painted miniature of the 17th
Regiment of Foot - by Kim Gallagher*

Soldiers of the Revolution
British: 17th Regiment 1777

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Captain-Lieutenant John McPherson

17th Regiment of Foot



During the Battle of Princeton, I was with Lieutenant Colonel Mawhood and the 17th Regiment of Foot. When we first encountered the rebels near the apple orchard and farm buildings of the William Clarke farm, I was wounded early in the fighting with a bullet in the chest which was feared to damage my lungs. I fell and the battle raged around me until our regiment was forced to retreat. After the battle, as the American forces were examining the dead and wounded, General Washington came upon me and showed great compassion. He knew I would be worried not only for myself but for those of my men who had also been wounded and left on the field. Washington assured me that his troops would treat all of the 17th Regiment, not just the officers, with great respect on account of our gallant behavior. He assured me that we would want for nothing that they could furnish us and made sure no American soldiers would abuse us while we waited to be carried to a local house where our wounds could be dressed.

Several days later a Dr. Benjamin Rush came to check on me because of the significant loss of blood from my wound. When I learned his name, it was one I recognized and I asked him, "Are you Dr. Rush, Captain Leslie's friend?" I knew that Captain Leslie had been killed in the fighting and had often spoken of Dr. Rush. I exclaimed to Rush, "Oh! Sir, ... he loved you like a brother." Dr. Rush knew Captain Leslie from the days when Rush stayed with the Leslie family in Scotland during his medical training and got to know the family very well. Dr. Rush and I joined together reciting tributes of our affection and praise to the memory of Captain Leslie. Dr. Rush wept openly and told me it was the first time he had wept for a victory gained over British troops.

After several weeks I needed continued treatment, but the doctors believed my wound would ultimately prove fatal so they did not adequately treat me. General Putnam had taken command at Princeton and came to see me. He ordered that my treatment improve and for everyone to treat me kindly. He even allowed an officer friend of mine to come to visit me from New Brunswick. I could not believe that a Connecticut Yankee of English Puritan stock could be as kind to me as a fellow Scotsman. I did eventually recover. - *Text by Larry Kidder*