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January 3, 1777
Princeton
Battlefield

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Courtesy of
Johannes
Helmut Merz

Dec 28 - Lieutenant Jacob Piel

Fusilier Regiment von Lossberg

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The morning of December 28, I was still recovering from the heavy early morning combat in winter weather and being captured at Trenton on December 26. After we had surrendered, Washington's army had marched us up the river and taken us over the ice choked Delaware River at Johnson's Ferry to Pennsylvania. They took our soldiers to Newtown but we 25 officers remained altogether in a building at the McConkey Ferry, in a small room, where we spent the night very miserably. We could hardly stand and were without food or drink. We had left behind many of our possessions at our various quarters in Trenton. Yesterday, Colonel George Weedon's 3rd Virginia regiment brought us to Newtown and he won all of our hearts through his friendly treatment toward us. We officers were quartered in several inns and private houses, while our soldiers were quartered in the Presbyterian Church and town jail.

This morning we visited General Lord Stirling, who also conducted himself in a very friendly manner toward us. He received us with these words, "Your General von Heister treated me like a brother when I was a prisoner [captured at the Battle of Long Island], and so, Gentlemen, you shall be treated by me in the same manner." After we sat down, a tall, thin, sad man entered, whom we assumed to be the local pastor, and who made a long speech to us, in which he sought to convince us of the correct view of the American goal in this war. This pastor scolded us so miserably that we soon tired of his idle talk. We had to tell him that we had not been sent by our ruler to America to determine which of the parties was in the right, but to fight for King George who had arranged for our services with our ruler.

General Stirling rescued us from the pastor and asked us to accompany him to see Washington, who received us very politely, but spoke to us only in English. When I looked into the face of this man nothing of the great man showed for which he would become noted. His eyes had no fire, but a slight smile in his expression when he spoke inspired love and respect. Washington kept four of us to share the noon meal with him while the rest of us ate with Lord Stirling. During the day I learned all of us, soldiers and officers, were to be sent to Philadelphia the next day. *Text by Larry Kidder.*