



# Dec 26 - Sergeant Joseph White

## 2nd Company, Pennsylvania State Artillery



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We got across all 18 artillery pieces Washington wanted to bring because they would be essential in this weather, but not until about 3:00am on the 26th. Our soldiers then marched through the stormy night, and although badly behind schedule, attacked Trenton about 8:00am this morning. After the miserable all-night march to Trenton, upon entering town on the Pennington Road, my artillery company reached the point where King (Warren) and Queen (Broad) Streets converged at the head of town. We positioned our howitzer with other cannon to fire down the length of those two main streets where the Hessians were forming up for battle. The third shot we fired broke the axle-tree of our carriage, disabling it. I then joined an attack down King Street to capture two Hessian cannon. I “hallowed as loud as I could scream” and we forced the Hessians to abandon them.

Our two officers were wounded in the fighting and carried to Dr. John Riker, who had joined us during our march to Trenton just a few hours earlier. Dr. Riker saved Lieutenant James Monroe’s life by repairing a severed shoulder artery. After the short morning battle ended, I walked through town and “my blood chill’d to see such horror and distress, blood mingling together – the dying groans, and ‘garments rolled in blood.’ I took up a sword from a dead Hessian officer and carried it off. I wore the elegant sword all the time I staid in the army.” We then began marching back to the ferry crossing.

Colonel Knox told us to leave our disabled howitzer behind, but I hired four men, including an experienced mate from a sailing vessel, who rigged it to move, although very slowly. One of the last officers to leave town told us to abandon the cannon, but I told him I would rather be captured than leave the howitzer. He left us. Soon after, we thought we saw some enemy cavalry approaching, but thankfully learned they were civilians. Later, Colonel Knox rode up and asked me, “Sergeant what piece is that?” I told him it was the one he had ordered left behind, but that I had wanted the victory to be complete. I knew artillery had been the key weapon in our victory. Knox told me, “You are a good fellow,” said he would remember me, and then rode on. *Text by Larry Kidder.*