

Hubbardton Battlefield State Historic Site
5696 Monument Hill Road
Hubbardton, Vermont

In 1777

In the early morning hours of July 7, 1777, one of the most successful rear guard actions in American history was fought in the green hills of Hubbardton. The Battle of Hubbardton was the only Revolutionary War battle that took place entirely on Vermont soil.

In June 1777 British Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's forces pressed southward from Canada on Lake Champlain, as part of Burgoyne's plan to split off New England from the rest of the American states.

As they closed in on Fort Ticonderoga and Mount Independence in Orwell, Vermont, American Major General Arthur St. Clair made the difficult decision to withdraw and save his troops for a future encounter. About 4,000 soldiers left under the cover of darkness July 5 and 6. The army moved southeast along the Mount Independence-Hubbardton military road.

When St. Clair and his exhausted men had marched over 20 miles, reaching the hills of Hubbardton, he transferred a number of his soldiers to the protective rear guard led by Colonel Seth Warner. It included Warner's Green Mountain Boy Continental regiment and some militia, Colonel Francis leading part of his Massachusetts Continental regiment and selected units from other regiments, and Colonel Nathan Hale with his 2nd New Hampshire Continental Regiment, the sick, and stragglers. They camped near what is now called Monument Hill.

The advancing British were seasoned Regulars, superior to the Americans in training, experience, and equipment. At 5:00 a.m. on July 7, American pickets spotted approaching British scouts. The pickets fired and moved back to join their main body. By 6:30 a.m., British soldiers reached Sucker Brook and the Americans started firing. It was the first time Burgoyne's army met the resistance and bravery of Americans in battle.

Some of the American rear guard moved to a defensive location atop Monument Hill, prepared the day before with downed trees and outstretched branches facing the enemy. The British attacked the hill, but were repulsed. The Americans returned to the top and again the British attacked and were repulsed. The British tried to encircle the Americans, who consolidated their position.

British grenadiers, to keep the rear guard from retreating southward, scrambled up rugged Pittsford Ridge mountain, forming a human barrier across the road and up the mountain. By 8:30 a.m. von Riedesel's Brunswickers had arrived, attacking the

American northern flank just about to trap the British on their left. In the fierce fighting Colonel Francis was killed. The remaining American rear guard withdrew. There was occasional gunfire along the ridge, but by 8:45 a.m. the battle was over.

The American rear guard had successfully accomplished its mission. It fully engaged the pursuing British, delaying them long enough so St. Clair and his main army could safely retreat southward. These soldiers also skillfully disengaged, fighting the British to a near standstill, and avoiding further American casualties and pursuit. The British held the field after the fight and in technical terms won the battle, but their losses were so heavy that General Fraser gave up chasing St. Clair and his army. Instead, the British stayed at Hubbardton for several days to care for the wounded and bury their own dead. They left the American dead on the field, and brought the wounded and prisoners north to Mount Independence and Fort Ticonderoga.

This battle was the beginning of the end for Burgoyne. On August 16 Brigadier General John Stark led American forces to defeat two detachments of Burgoyne's army sent to capture much needed supplies in Bennington, Vermont. Soon after the Battle of Bennington Burgoyne wrote about the people of Vermont as "the most active and most rebellious race on the continent." On October 17, 1777, after the battles of Saratoga, he surrendered with his entire Army.

Battle of Hubbardton Statistics

2,130 troops	1,000 to 1,200 Americans
	850 British
	180 Germans
101 deaths	41 American
	50 British
	10 German
244 wounded	96 American
	134 British
	14 German
234 American prisoners	

AFTER THE BATTLE

Public recognition of the historic Hubbardton Battlefield began in 1859 when the citizens of Hubbardton and vicinity erected the large monument of Vermont marble. In 1875 it was enclosed by a handsome cast iron fence, with funding from the Vermont legislature.

The monument, one of the oldest Revolutionary War battle monuments in the country, is in the area where the American rear guard made its strongest effort. The British respected the leadership qualities and bravery of Warner and Francis. When Francis' body was found, von Riedesel personally saw to it that this gallant officer received a Christian burial, with full military honors.

In September 1777 the Vermont Council of Safety issued an order to deliver any arms and accoutrements recovered from the Hubbardton battlefield, for which the bearers would be paid. The battlefield later returned to farm use. In 1937 the Vermont legislature created the Hubbardton Battlefield Commission, which began purchasing battlefield land. The Board of Historic Sites, created by the legislature in 1947, developed the property as one of the first Vermont State Historic Sites. The site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Military historians note that of all the Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields in the United States, the Hubbardton Battlefield is the most evocative of the period in which the battle took place.

The 1970 Visitors Center, updated in 1991, houses a museum and public amenities. The exhibit with period artifacts places the battle in its Revolutionary War context. The narrated three-dimensional fiber optic map provides a vivid account of the battle. Vermont artist Paul V. Winters created the battle diorama. The site offers special events and educational programs, including the annual Revolutionary War encampment in early July.