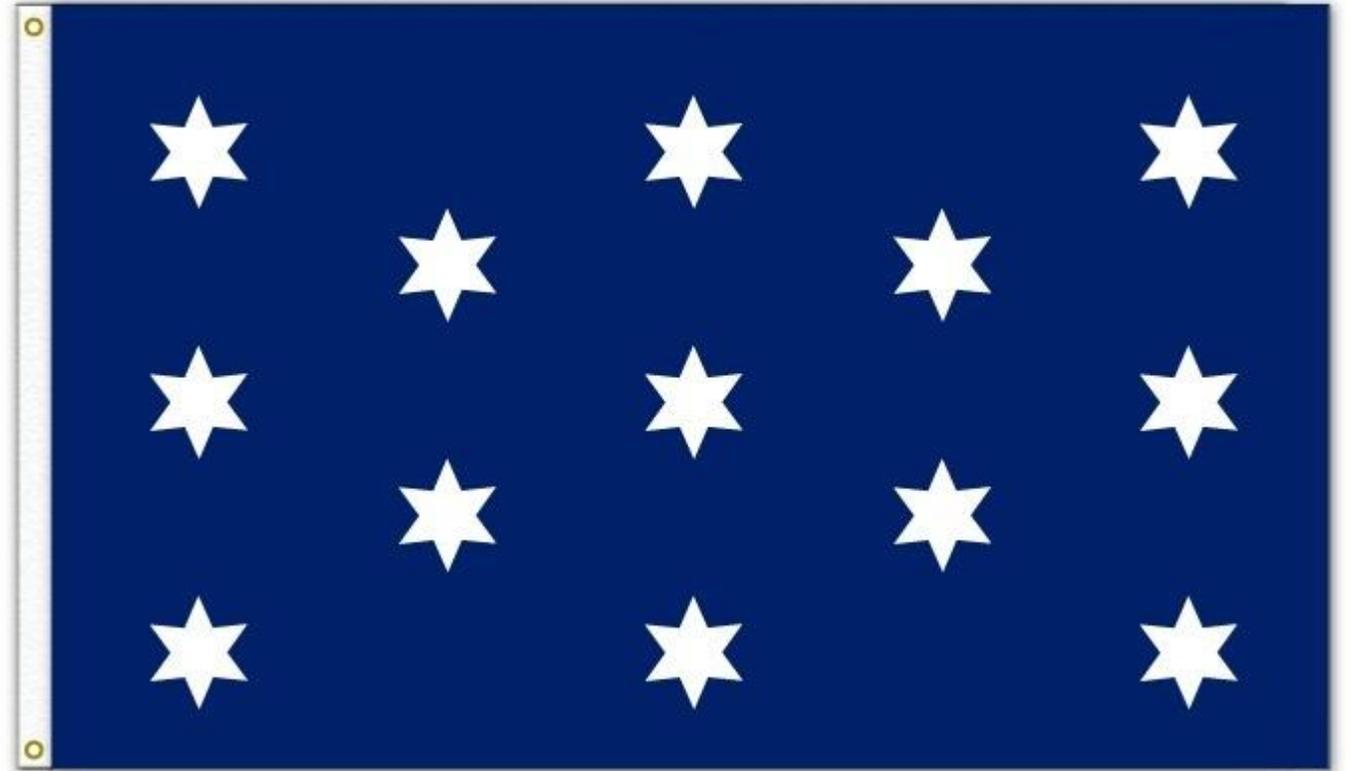


THE COMMANDER – IN – CHIEF GUARD



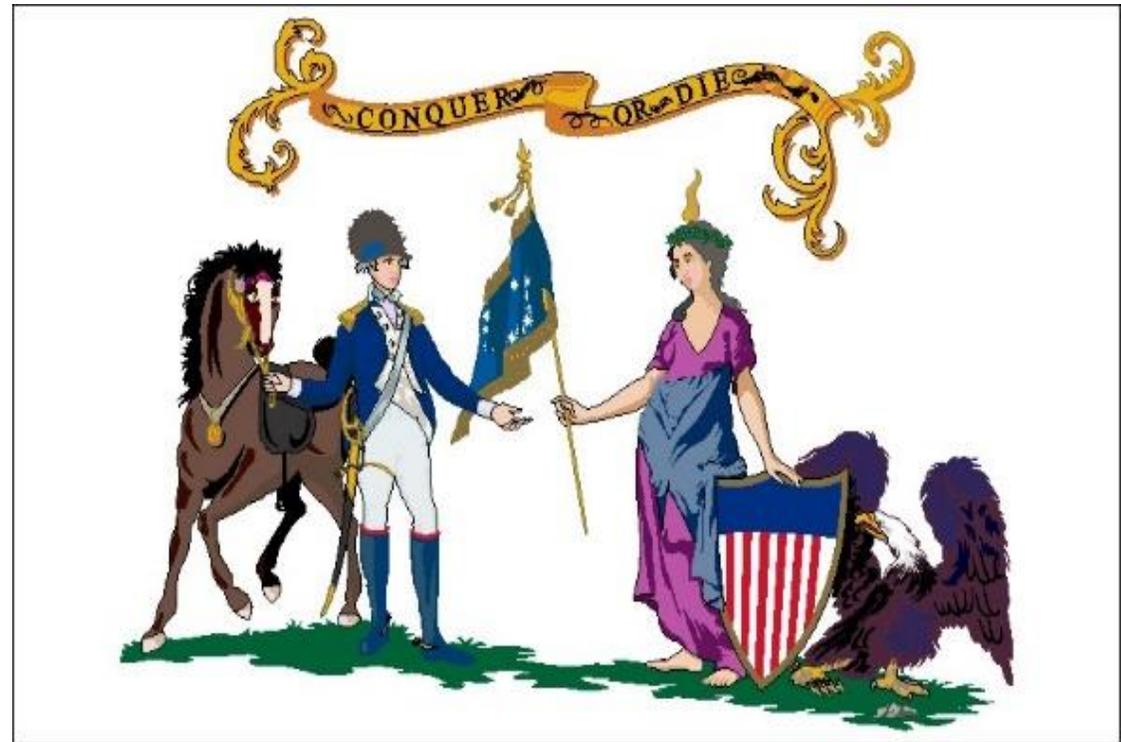
- **George Washington's Personal Standard**

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GUARD

- **The Commander-In-Chief Guard, commonly known as Washington's Life Guard, was a unit of the Continental Army that protected General George Washington during the Revolutionary War.**
- **Formed May 13th, 1776, the Guard was with him during all of his battles.**
- **It was disbanded November 15th 1783 at the end of the war.**

STANDARD OF WASHINGTON'S GUARD

- **The corps' standard was white silk.**
- **A guardsman is in the act of receiving a flag from the 'Genius of Liberty' and above is the motto of the corps, 'Conquer or Die,' written upon a ribbon.**



THE COMMANDERS OF THE GUARD

Captain Caleb Gibbs (28 years old of Massachusetts) 1775-1779

Captain William Cox 1779-1783

Captain Bezaleel Howe Jr 1783

Washington's General Order March 11, 1776

The Colonel of each of the established Regiments, will furnish him with four good Men, for their sobriety, honesty, and good behavior;

He wishes them to be from five feet, eight inches high, to five feet, ten inches.

There is nothing in his eyes more desirable, than Cleanliness in a Soldier, he desires that particular attention may be made, in the choice of such men, as are neat, and spruce.

The General neither wants men with uniforms, or arms, nor does he desire any man to be sent to him, that is not perfectly willing, and desirous, of being of this guard.

Why did the General form the guard?

- After the siege of Boston the General knew of the dangers surrounding him.**
- Besides the British army, there were Tories loyal to the British everywhere.**
- As selfish as this may sound, Washington was well aware of his symbolic importance to the Continental Army. He knew that an assassination of the Commander-in-Chief, no matter who that might be, could destroy the Revolution.**

THE CONSPIRACY

- **In the spring of 1776, Sergeant Thomas Hickey, a member of the Guard, was arrested for passing counterfeit money. Hickey revealed to another prisoner that he was part of a conspiracy of soldiers who were prepared to defect to the British once the expected invasion came.**
- **Hickey claimed that eight members of the Guard were involved in the plot. David Mathews, the Mayor of New York City, was accused of funding the operation to bribe soldiers to join the British. The conspiracy was alleged to include plans to kidnap Washington, assassinate him and his officers, and blow up the Continental Army's ammunition magazines-40 conspirators were arrested.**
- **Hickey, the only conspirator put on trial, was court-martialed and found guilty of mutiny and sedition. He was executed in New York on 28 June 1776 before a crowd of 20,000 spectators. It is ironic that the first American soldier to be executed in the Continental Army was a member of the C-in-C Guards. The fate of the conspirators is unclear; there is no record of any further hangings.**

AFTER THE CONSPIRACY

- **On April 30, 1777, when sending out orders for new men for his guard, Washington specifically asked for men born in America.**
- **“I am satisfied there can be no absolute security for the fidelity of this class of people, but I think it most likely to be found in those who have family connections in the country.**
- **You will send me none but natives. I insist you give no intimation of my preference for natives, as I do not want to create any invidious distinction between them and the foreigners.”**

UNIFORMS OF THE GUARD

- **In April, 1777, Washington issued that the uniform of the guard was to consist of a blue coat with white facings, white waistcoat and breeches, black half gaiters, and a cocked hat with a blue and white feather.**
- **When Washington issued the uniform code, Captain Gibbs was successful in securing blue and buff uniforms, but chose red waistcoats. These vests became symbolic of the guard for the duration of the war.**
- **He also procured leather helmets with a bear skin crest, in lieu of the traditional tricorne hats. These were captured by a privateer and were bound for the British 17th Dragoons.**
- **He had the red cloth binding removed and replaced with medium blue, and a white plume, tipped in blue placed on the left side. This unique headgear was to add to the distinctive appearance of the Guard.**

1777 WASHINGTON'S LIFE GUARD UNIFORM



THE GUARD HELMET



**FOLLOWING ARE TWO OF THE BATTLES IN
WHICH WASHINGTON'S GUARD PARTICIPATED**

BRITISH RETREAT FROM PHILADELPHIA

- **With the defeat and loss of the entire British Northern Army at the Battle of Saratoga, General Howe felt he simply couldn't defend both New York and Philadelphia.**
- **Howe ordered Philadelphia evacuated and elected to march across New Jersey to New York.**
- **Washington ordered the entire Continental Army at Valley Forge to pursue the retreating British.**
- **On June 23rd, Washington ordered Colonel Daniel Morgan to attack the British right flank and for Captain Gibbs and eighty men of the Guard to support Morgan.**

BATTLE AT SQUAW CREEK

- **Morgan's riflemen and the C-in-C Guard found British Grenadiers near Squaw Creek.**
- **The Guards attacked, killing and wounding several and taking 39 prisoners.**
- **Hearing musket fire, the nearby British Light Infantry attempted to rescue their captured comrades. A pursuit through the swamp ensued, but the British were unable to catch the Americans.**
- **Arriving back at Colonel Morgan's position, prisoners still in tow, and seeing the elegant Life Guard splattered with mud Morgan and his men laughed at the sight.**

GENERAL LEE RETREATS

- **A few days later, General Charles Lee commanding the vanguard of the American Army, ordered a retreat at the first signs of battle.**
- **General Washington arrived with the rest of the Army, and by sheer weight of his presence rallied the retreating Continentals.**
- **To do so, he was riding up and down in front of the line of battle that was being formed. The British Army was closing fast, and fearing for his safety, his Aides-de-camp and Captain Gibbs rode through the American lines to make General Washington retire to the rear.**

FIGHTING CONTINUES ACROSS NEW JERSEY

- **The local New Jersey Militia had been fighting an effective delaying action all the way to Connecticut Farms, near Springfield against the Hessian "*Jaegers*"**
.
- **Washington ordered Gibbs and the Rhode Island Regiment forward to form a line of defense and to hold until the main army could get into position.**
- **Gibbs moved the entire 152 man C-in-C Guard into their line of battle. Gibbs waited until the Hessians were right on top of them and launched a bayonet charge.**
- **The Hessians immediately broke. They had been fighting militia and the last thing they expected was to encounter "*regulars*" and bayonets.**
- **The mark of the Hessian advance into New Jersey was the position held by the Commander-in-Chief Guard!**

BATTLE OF KING'S BRIDGE

- **On July 3rd 1781, General Washington, accompanied by an escort of fifty guardsmen was reconnoitering the British fortifications near King's Bridge. They encountered a British foraging party of 1,500.**
- **The British immediately attacked. The Guard made a stand at the bridge and were determined to hold until General Washington was safely back to the American lines.**
- **The bridge, just ten feet wide, prohibited the flanking of the small, but determined Guardsmen.**
- **The British charged with bayonets and were forced back with heavy losses. It became painfully clear to the British that they would endure severe casualties and the most they could attain was a limited objective. When American reinforcements came into view, the British broke off the action.**

THE GUARD DISMISSED

- **With peace negotiations concluded and the Treaty of Paris awaiting ratification, Congress on May 26th, 1783, instructed General Washington to grant furloughs to non-commissioned officers, including the Commander-in-Chief Guard.**
- **Washington issued the General Orders on June 2 and on June 6th, the entire Guard was furloughed.**
- ***November 9th, 1783 Instructions to Capt. Howe,***

“Sir;

You will take charge of the Wagons which contain my baggage, and with the escort proceed with them to Virginia, and deliver the baggage at my house, ten miles below Alexandria. . . .

George Washington”

The Guard delivered everything, without incident on December 20th, 1783. And with this act, the famed Commander-in-Chief Guard were committed to history.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

***Articles were edited from the Wikipedia Encyclopedia.**

***Pictures of the flags and or banners were taken from various online public sites, primarily Wikipedia.**

CREDITS

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