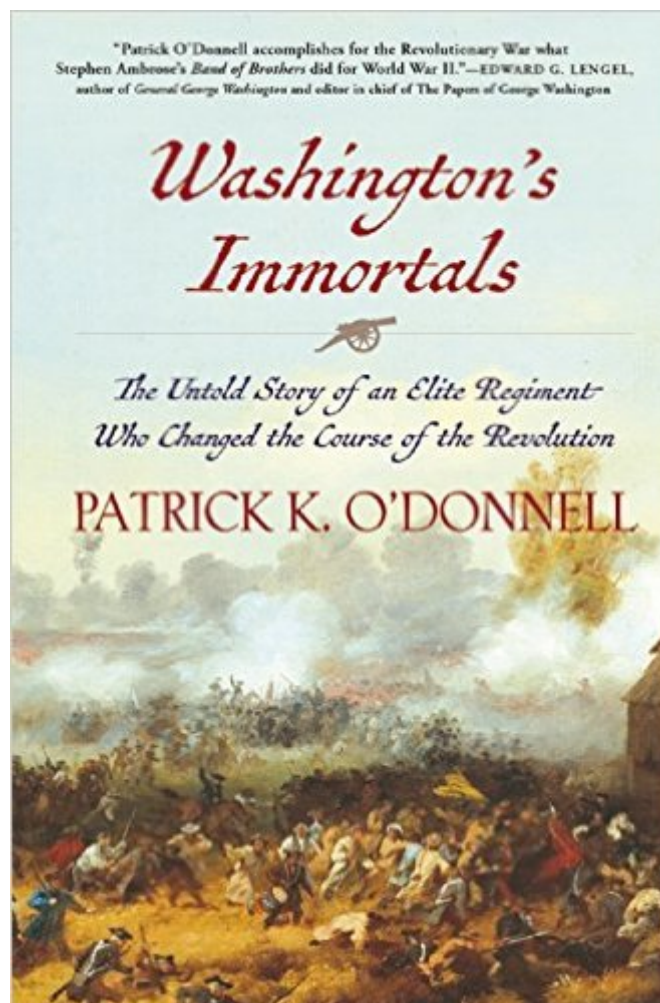


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Washington's Immortals: The Untold Story Of An Elite Regiment Who Changed The Course Of The Revolution



Synopsis

In August 1776, little over a month after the Continental Congress had formally declared independence from Britain, the revolution was on the verge of a sudden and disastrous end. General George Washington found his troops outmanned and outmaneuvered at the Battle of Brooklyn, and it looked like there was no escape. But thanks to a series of desperate rear guard attacks by a single heroic regiment, famously known as the "Immortal 400," Washington was able to evacuate his men and the nascent Continental Army lived to fight another day. Today, only a modest, rusted and scarred metal sign near a dilapidated auto garage marks the mass grave where the bodies of the "Maryland Heroes" lie; 256 men who fell in the Battle of Brooklyn. In Washington's Immortals, best-selling military historian Patrick K. O'Donnell brings to life the forgotten story of this remarkable band of brothers. Known as "gentlemen of honour, family, and fortune," they fought not just in Brooklyn, but in key battles including Trenton, Princeton, Camden, Cowpens, Guilford Courthouse, and Yorktown, where their heroism changed the course of the war. Drawing on extensive original sources, from letters to diaries to pension applications, O'Donnell pieces together the stories of these brave men; their friendships, loves, defeats, and triumphs. He explores their arms and tactics, their struggles with hostile loyalists and shortages of clothing and food, their development into an elite unit, and their dogged opponents, including British General Lord Cornwallis. And through the prism of this one group, O'Donnell tells the larger story of the Revolutionary War. Washington's Immortals is gripping and inspiring boots-on-the-ground history, sure to appeal to a wide readership.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Washington's Immortals is a fast read that reveals the origin of a light infantry regiment from Baltimore (Maryland) that was founded by wealthy merchants to fight in the American Revolution. Mordecai Gist played a vital role in financing the Maryland Line, as it was known. He saw action throughout most of the conflict, living to witness its conclusion at Yorktown. Of all the historical figures presented by the author in this book that sometimes felt like a novel, I found myself interested in him the most. Some of Gist's handwritten correspondence survives to the present day on microfilm. Quotations from those pages are cited by the author, providing historical context for what he and many of his contemporaries were thinking when they decided to take up arms. They, like many others in their day, believed in principled destiny. If the defense of their liberties meant starting a new country then, so be it! O'Donnell's narrative blends portrayals of period combat with a historical overview of events leading up to 1776 to give the reader a sense of method and motive before rebellion began. Tools and tactics of the day are explained in a way that bridges time, showing how present-day soldiers are using similar approaches based on past practices. The idea of Americanism was unacceptable to crown loyalists who sided with Britain. They formed Tory combat units that make appearances through the book. This well-researched account includes several surprises. Time and time again, elements of this elite outfit are called on to fight desperate holding actions that allow General George Washington to make the most of his situation, which included going over to the attack when he could.

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