

MILITARY: Westmoreland Independent Companies (Wyoming Independent Companies)

Constituted 11 May 1775 in the Connecticut Militia as the 24th Regiment

Organized 17 October 1775 in the Wyoming Valley region

(1st and 2d Independent Westmoreland Companies [also known as Wyoming Companies] authorized 23 August 1776 in the Continental Army; organized 26 August-21 September 1776 in Westmoreland County, Connecticut [Wyoming Valley region]; consolidated 23 June 1778 as Captain Simon Spaulding's Wyoming Independent Company; disbanded 1 January 1778 at Fort Wyoming [Wilkes-Barre], Connecticut, and personnel reverted to the 24th Regiment, Connecticut Militia)

24th Regiment reorganized in 1781 as the 1st Company, 5th Regiment

(Wyoming Valley region awarded 30 December 1782 to Pennsylvania)

Consolidated 23 June 1778 and consolidated unit redesignated as the Wyoming Independent Company, Captain Simon Spaulding commanding. Disbanded 1 Jan 1781 at Fort Wyoming, Connecticut. Engagements: Iroquois 1778 and Iroquois 1779. Westmoreland County, Connecticut, at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War was adjudicated by the Continental Congress to be properly part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Simon Spaulding served as lieutenant under Capt. Samuel Ransom in the Jersey campaign; was in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown; and 1779 commanded a company in Sullivan's expedition. He served to the close of the war and was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Simon removed to Wyoming 1771; settled in Sheshequin, PA in 1783, where he died in 1814.

Spaulding joined Washington's army in New Jersey about Jan. 1, '77, and engaged in the 'affairs' of Millstone River and Bound Brook in New Jersey as well as in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown in Pennsylvania. A detachment of Ransom's Co. under Lieut. Spaulding formed part of the garrison at Ft. Mifflin. The companies wintered at Valley Forge, '77-78, with the Connecticut Regiments.

In the spring of '78 rumors of a threatened Indian attack upon Wyoming reached camp and Capt. Durkee and Ransom resigned their commands to return to assist in the protection of their homes. A few of the men also returned, but the companies as such were retained with the army. Under Act of Congress, June 23, '78, the two companies were consolidated into one and placed under the command of Lieut. Spaulding, lately promoted Captain.

In the latter part of June he was ordered to Wyoming but failed to arrive there before the Indian attack and massacre of July 3, '78 occurred. In that attack settlers and settlements alike were swept away;

and among many others who lost their lives were Capts. Durkee and Ransom. Spalding's Co. soon re-entered the Valley, built a new fort, and remained there until the fall of '80. In the meantime, in the summer of '79, it joined Sullivan's expedition against the western Indians [Iroquois]. ... These Wyoming men represented and were paid by Connecticut as part of her Continental contingent....

In Major General John Sullivan's campaign against the Iroquois, Capt. Spalding's Co served as scouts for the 3rd Brigade under Brigadier General Edward Hand, and Lieut. John Jenkins kept a journal of their actions and movements. The three line regiments and other units in Hand's Brigade were all from Pennsylvania.

General Simon Spalding (1742-1814) was a descendent in the sixth generation from Edward Spalding, the first of the family to come to America. He was a son of Simon and Anne (Billings) Spalding, and was born in Plainfield, Connecticut, January 16, 1742. In 1761, he was married to Ruth Shepard, and a few years thereafter removed to the Wyoming Valley. He took up Connecticut Lands in Standing Stone in 1775, remained there a year, then returned to Wyoming. On the 26th of August, 1776, he was commissioned second lieutenant in Captain Samuel Ransom's company; promoted and commissioned first lieutenant, January 1, 1777; promoted to captain, June 24, 1778 and given command of the two independent companies of Wyoming (united in one) and accompanied Sullivan on his expedition against the Indians. He was at Valley Forge with his company, participated in the Battles of Germantown and Brandywine, and also had a command in "Mud Fort" on the Delaware river, during the long continued and severe cannonading of that point by the British in October, 1777. In speaking of this siege, Mr Miner says: "Almost every shot from the British tore through the fort, and the men fell on every side. A Soldier in Spalding's company threw himself on the ground. "Nobody," he said, "can stand this." "Get up my good fellow," said Spalding coolly; "I should hate to have to run you through; you can stand it if I can," and the man returned cheerfully to his duty." Captain Spalding was transferred to the First Regiment, Connecticut line, and continued in the service till January 1, 1783. He was a brave and faithful officer, and distinguished himself in various engagements, one of which was Bound Brook, where he captured several prisoners and recovered a quantity of forage gathered by the British. After the war he was made a general of militia.

General Spalding is described as "a large man of imposing and pleasing appearance." Colonel Joseph Kingsbury says of him: "General Spalding was a man calculated to gain the love and esteem even of a savage. A better hearted man I never was acquainted with. He had a peculiar tact in pleasing the redskins, and usually, when passing through the place, on treaty business to Philadelphia, he would set some sport on foot. I remember of hearing it told of a feat performed by a couple of these redskins at a time when a large company of Indians were on their return from the City of Brotherly Love. They always made it a point to stop at night with their old friend, who never failed in providing them something to eat. At this time, he selected out two long-legged hogs from a company of half a score or more. He informed the chiefs that these two hogs were a present to them for supper & breakfast on the following conditions, to wit: The chiefs were to select from their company two young Indians, who were to catch the hogs at fair running and then they were theirs. The young racers were selected, stripped bare to Indian leggings and breech-clouts, armed each with a scalping knife. The hogs were turned loose upon the flats and the sport began. Such ecstasy as the Indians were in, as well as the palefaces present, I expect from the account, does not often happen to any people. The hogs at first were too swift on foot for the two-legged swine in pursuit. Once in awhile the redskins would catch the hogs by the tail, but in attempting to stop them they were generally thrown down, sometimes tumbling heel over head, and sometimes dragged for several rods till they could hold no longer; giving

loose they were up and at it again. This sport lasted for three-quarters of an hour, when the fiercer brutes finally conquered. A fire was built, the hogs layed on without any dressing, roasted, and eaten with much satisfaction." General Spalding was a member of the Connecticut Society of the Cincinnati, and prominent in Wyoming affairs before his removal to Sheshequin. In 1791 and '92 he represented Luzerne county in the Pennsylvania Legislature, and took an active interest in all popular movements that tended to good government. In the old Sheshequin cemetery on an unpretentious headstone, is found this inscription: