

The surrender of General John Burgoyne to General Gates at Saratoga, NY, on October 18, 1777, placed nearly 6,000 British, Hessian, and Canadian prisoners of war in the hands of the Continental Congress, then in session at York, Pennsylvania. An official report states that 5,800 troops surrendered at Saratoga, of which there were 2,400 Hessians and the remainder were British citizens. According to the terms of their surrender, written in a document entitled the "Convention of Saratoga," the prisoners were to be marched to Boston, and shipped back to Great Britain. If any of the prisoners desired to remain in America, they were permitted to escape.

When the prisoners of war arrived at Boston, they were quartered on winter and Prospect Hills. Congress, wanting to ensure that none of the officers returned to the battlefield, asked that General Burgoyne write a descriptive list of each of the officers under his command. This request was not specified in the Convention of Saratoga, and General Burgoyne became personally offended and refused to heed the request. On the 8th of January 1778, Congress resolved to suspend the terms of the Convention of Saratoga, and kept the prisoners in custody.

After remaining in the Boston area for the winter, the decision was made to relocate the prisoners to Charlottesville, Virginia, where they could be more closely watched and better supplied. In November 1778 the prisoners marched southward. Many of the British officers had their wives and children with them, and wagons were provided for their transportation but the men had to march on foot. They traveled through Lancaster and York, PA in December of the same year, and finally reached Charlottesville, 550 miles from Boston, in January 1779.

The "convention troops," on the day after the formal exchange of the articles of convention, had begun their march toward Boston—over the Green Mountains from Saratoga to the Connecticut valley, down the valley through the historic towns of Northfield, Deerfield and Hatfield, then east across the river and through Hadley, Amherst and Worcester to Cambridge. The last mentioned place was reached November 6. The English were quartered on Prospect Hill, the Germans on Winter Hill. The officers were allowed to quarter themselves in the towns of Cambridge, Mystic and Watertown, and were given a parole district of about ten miles' circumference; but to preserve order among the common soldiers, three officers of each regiment constantly resided.

General Heath, who was in command of the Eastern department, with headquarters at Boston, realized that the coming of the convention troops to Cambridge would put a heavy burden on his shoulders. As soon as he knew that the prisoners were to be under his direction, he began the building of barracks and the collection of fuel and provisions—matters which gave him great uneasiness, since he thought that the British were used to much better quarters than he could supply, and fuel and food were scarce.<sup>2</sup> At the outset pleasant relations were established between General Heath and General Burgoyne. As soon as the prisoners arrived, their commander was entertained at dinner by Heath. The crowds that flocked to see the captive Briton pass along the streets treated him with respect . . . "dignified conduct" on the part of his "dear countrymen" which "charmed" Heath's "very soul." ' But his soul was to be racked

rather than charmed, for a cloud much larger than a man's hand was already above the horizon. While the convention troops were on the way to Cambridge, the Council of Massachusetts had been applied to for aid in getting quarters for the officers in private houses.ed in the barracks.'

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Gen. Phillips (1731-1781) became the highest-ranking officer in the Convention Army after Gen. John Burgoyne was paroled and sailed for home.

He was then a part of the Convention Army until he was exchanged for American General Benjamin Lincoln in 1780. While a prisoner in Virginia, he was one of the British officers who was entertained at the home of Thomas Jefferson. After the exchange he was able to fight once again, and was sent by Clinton from New York to meet up with Brigadier General Benedict Arnold (who was now on the British side) in Virginia.

While on his way to link up with General Cornwallis, he contracted either typhus or malaria, and became so ill that Arnold had to lead his men. He died on 13 May 1781 at Petersburg, Virginia, five months before Yorktown, and is buried there near Blandford Church.

As he lay gravely ill, in the home belonging to the Bolling family known as Bollingbrook, British forces in Petersburg were being shelled by the Marquis de Lafayette's cannons positioned in the heights north of the river, today known as Colonial Heights, Virginia. His final words — uttered after a shell struck the home and killed an African-American servant named Molly — are reputed to have been "Won't that boy let me die in peace?" He and Molly were said to have been buried together, to prevent identification. Thomas Jefferson described him as "the proudest man of the proudest nation on earth".

"I, **William Phillips, Major-General** and senior officer of the troops under the restrictions of the Convention of Saratoga, do promise and engage, on my word and honour, and on the faith of a gentleman, to remain in the quarters now assigned to me in Cambridge, in the State of Massachusetts Bay, and at no time to exceed or pass the limits of the gardens and yards adjoining and belonging to said quarters, except in the road by the nearest and most direct route from my said quarters to Prospect and Winter Hills, and the limits of said hills within the chain of sentries—until it shall be permitted or ordered otherwise by the Continental **General** commanding in this State, his Excellency **General** Washington, or the Honourable Congress of the United States of America; and that I will not, directly or indirectly, give any intelligence to the enemies of the said United States, or either of them, or do or say any thing in opposition to or in prejudice of the measures and proceedings of any Congress for the said States, during my continuance here as aforesaid, or until I am duly exchanged or discharged.

Given under my hand at Cambridge, this eighteenth day of June, 1778."

' I am to inform you, Sir, that, bearing the King's commission, I shall consider myself senior officer of the troops of the Convention; and every officer of them will obey my orders as far as their present situation will allow. You may confine my person, but you cannot have power to take from me my military place, nor my connexion with the Convention troops—it is too extravagant an idea to suppose you capable of; so little can it be in the power of an individual to deprive me of the commission I hold, that were these Colonies really acknowledged Independent and Sovereign States, it would not be in the power of their government to deprive an officer of another nation of his military commission, how far soever they might stretch and extend their power over his person. But, Sir, I must be allowed to declare, that until the Colonies are acknowledged by Great Britain to be Independent Sovereign States, I cannot view them in any other light than that in which they are considered by Great Britain.