

## A Patriot Ancestor

**John Jacob Barnes'** (1756 -1840) Rendered service during 1778 and 1779, was with Captain William Hoffer's Company of the **First Virginia State Regiment**, Colonel George Gibson, Commander, and with Washington's Army at Valley Forge that winter. This Continental unit was Authorized on August 21, 1775 in the Virginia State Troops as the First Virginia Regiment. Organized on October 21, 1775 at Williamsburg as a provincial defense unit composed of six musket and two rifle companies under the command of Patrick Henry. Each company was to consist of 68 enlisted men, with officers to include a captain, lieutenant and ensign (second lieutenant). Six of the companies were armed with muskets, and two with rifles.

The 1st was Adopted on November 1, 1775 into the Continental Army, then reorganized on January 11, 1776 to consist of 10 companies by raising two more musket companies. Assigned on February 27, 1776 to the Southern Department. Relieved on July 20, 1776 from the Southern Department and assigned to the Main Continental Army and assigned on October 5, 1776 to Weedon's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

They were relieved on October 17, 1776 from Weedon's Brigade and assigned to Stirling's Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army. Relieved on May 22, 1777 from Stirling's Brigade and **assigned to the 1st Virginia Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.**

Reorganized on November 1, 1777 to consist of 8 companies, Consolidated on May 12, 1779 with the 9th Virginia Regiment and re-designated as the **1st Virginia Regiment, to consist of 9 companies Relieved on December 4, 1779** from the 1st Virginia Brigade and assigned to the Southern Department.

Later Captured on May 12, 1780 by the British Army at Charleston, South Carolina then Disbanded on November 15, 1783.

### MAJOR ENGAGEMENTS:

*Chesapeake Bay, 5 September 1781*

**New York City, 1776 and the winter months of 1777**

**Northern New Jersey, 1776 and the winter months of 1777**

**Trenton - Princeton December 30 and January 3, 1777**

**Defense of Philadelphia, September 1777**

**Philadelphia May 1778**

**Monmouth June 1778**

Those who had uniforms were uniformed in blue coats faced with red, and others in brown faced with green. All had leather breeches and top boots. At first, their helmets were of leather with white horsehair crest, but later were of steel or brass, turned up at the base with black bearskin and had long flowing horse-hair crests of white or black imported from France, or captured from the enemy. They were armed at first with only the saber and pistols, but later also had short barreled muskets.

On September 15, 1776, the First Virginia, along with the 3rd Virginia joined Washington's army near Harlem Heights, New York. Having recently suffered the

humiliation of being chased out of New York City and subsequently out-maneuvered by the British, Washington's Continentals looked to the Virginians for new strength and hope. The following day three companies of the Virginians joined Lt. Col. Thomas Knowlton's Connecticut Rangers in reconnoitering the enemy lines. Running into a detachment of British, the Continentals soon found themselves in heated battle and managed to force the British to withdraw. Maryland troops joined the battle, but Washington soon called his troops back, not willing to risk a full-scale engagement.

By the end of December 1776, Washington's immediate army had shrunk from casualties, disease, desertion, and the termination of enlistments to about 2,500 men fit for duty. In the hope of seizing another morale victory, if not a strategic one, Washington decided on a daring attack on Hessian troops at Trenton, New Jersey. In the early morning hours of December 26, Washington's small band, including the First Virginia, crossed the Delaware River, reaching the outskirts of Trenton about 8:00 am. The surprised Hessians tried in vain to hold off the Americans, but by 9:45 AM the Germans were forced to surrender.

Within a few days of the American victory at Trenton, British troops marched to the town to engage Washington's small army. The two armies began firing on each other across a creek but darkness soon put an end to the fighting. When dawn arrived the next morning, the British were surprised to find that Washington's army had quietly pulled out in the dark. The Continentals had marched all night to the village of Princeton where they stumbled into a British force just setting out for Trenton. The Americans were divided into two groups, with the Virginians part of Green's division under Brig. Gen. Hugh Mercer, guarding the road to Trenton. The remaining Americans proceeded to attack Princeton from the west.

Confusion ensued for the Americans, with the Virginia regiments in the heaviest fighting and suffering the most casualties. With the appearance of Washington on the battlefield the Americans rallied, forcing the British to flee, throwing down their weapons as they ran. Washington's troops spent the winter and spring recruiting and rebuilding the army.

On August 24, 1777, Washington's Army of 16,000 regulars and militia marched through Philadelphia to Wilmington, Delaware, and by September 11, the two armies were poised for battle near Brandywine Creek, Pennsylvania. Howe divided his force for a frontal attack on the Americans and a flanking attack on the American right. Washington tried to counter the British flanking movement, ordering General Green's division, including the 1st Virginia, to support the outflanked Americans under Brig. Gen. Sullivan. Greene's men covered almost four miles in 45 minutes, arriving to find Sullivan's men retreating in a rout. Greene's Virginians opened their line to allow the panicked Americans through and then held off the advancing British to allow Washington's Army to fall back and retire in order. Greene's troops held out against a British force three times larger until nightfall, preventing the British from destroying the entire American army.

The winter of 1777-78 saw the 1st Virginia Regiment with Washington's Army at Valley Forge. The troops built log huts and many of the officers of the Virginia Regiments were

sent home during the winter to recruit for their vastly under-strength units. The Continental Army at Valley Forge, including the men of the First Virginia, were taught the new American Drill under the command of Maj. Gen. Baron von Steuben. After establishing winter encampment at Valley Forge, Washington kept his Dragoons busy intercepting shipments of food to the British in Philadelphia and serving as observers of British movements. A Major Tallmage wrote: "My duties were very arduous, not being able to tarry long in a place, by reason of the British Light Horse which continually patrolled this intermediate ground. Indeed, it was unsafe to permit the dragoons to unsaddle their horses for an hour, and very rarely did I tarry in the same place through the night."

In May of 1779, the Virginia Regiments were consolidated to create regiments of acceptable strength. The 1st Virginia was consolidated with the 10th and later the 5th, 7th, 11th Regiments. On May 7, Washington ordered Col. Richard Parker, commander of the 1st Virginia to return to the state to recruit new troops to reinforce Brig. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln in Charleston, South Carolina. At the same time, the men of the 1st Virginia were placed under the temporary command of Col. William Davies in Parker's absence.

As a result of his 3 years service in the Revolutionary War, he was given land in Kentucky. Land Office Military Warrant #872.

John Barnes, late a U.S. pensioner, from Revolutionary War Service (According to Harrison county records\*) died 5 August 1840, pension #11550 and that Milly Barnes was his widow; according to the testimony of Armstead Barnes and John T. Barnes.