

Benedict arnold essay sample



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During the American Revolutionary war against the British, Benedict Arnold was one of the American participants in the war who fought skillfully against the British and actively participated for the American war troops. In fact, he almost lost a leg for America and was wounded twice in the war (Creighton n. d). But despite his efforts in the war, he is best known as a traitor.

Considering Arnold's contributions in the American Army, Benedict Arnold, during the war, proved himself a brave and adept leader (Creighton n. d). Different missions he participated earned him a promotion to brigadier general. He was also given command of West point, an American fort on Hudson River in New York.

After Arnold was given the command over West Point, he contacted Sir Henry Clinton, head of the British forces, and proposed handing over West Point and his men. He further went ahead to attempted to execute his plan On the 21st of September 1780, during the American Revolution, when he met with the British major to discuss handing over of the West Point, over which he was granted command by the American Army.

He planned to do this in return for a large sum of money and high position in the British army (Creighton, 2012).

It was through this act that Arnold betrayed the American cause and became a traitor. However, the conspiracy was uncovered leading to the capture and execution of Andre and Arnold fled to the enemy side and went to lead British troops in Virginia and Connecticut.

Various reasons can be attributed to the traitorous act of Benedict Arnold. Such reasons may include; the promotion of Arnold's enemies in the

American military who had lesser ranks, his marriage for the second time, his becoming disappointed with war's progress, frustrations from the poorly equipped troops, he never truly felt his nation's gratitude and recessing his sacrifices and rewards.

First, Arnold had enemies within the military and in 1777; five men of lesser rank were promoted over him (Bennett and John 358). This might have discouraged Arnold and demotivated him to continue spending his efforts in the American army since he felt that he was not recognized, making him to join the enemy side to fight against the American military.

Another factor that may have led to the traitorous act from him was that after so many sacrifices, he became disenchanted with the war's progress. Perhaps more important, he grew intensely skeptical of the cause's neutral leaders and, ultimately Arnold himself felt betrayed (Creighton n. d). This mistrust might have compelled him to joining the enemy side.

In addition, Arnold's marriage for the second time could also be considered as a factor that may have contributed to his traitorous act. This is because after this marriage, Arnold and his wife live flawed lifestyle and incurred huge debt amounts (Carnes & Garraty, 2012). He thus was so much in need of large amount of money. Thus, he could not resist the urge to commit the treason at the benefit of getting the large sums of money and higher rank in the British army.

Moreover, the other contributor to the treason committed by Arnold and his betrayal of the American Army and his home country at large could have been frustration from the untrained troops. This made him to use his own

money and time to train the patriot forces. He helped launch an attack on the small British fort of Ticonderoga (Bennett and John 358). He led a troop through three hundred and fifty miles march trudging through rain, snow and ice, reduced to eating candles, dogs and shoe leather. Yet he never truly felt his nation's gratitude. Petty distrusts kept his name off lists of promotions. Inferior officers generated gossips that blemished his reputation (Martin 39).

Furthermore, according to Dave Palmer, a former superintendent of the U. S Military Academy at West Point, the sense of betrayal reached an unbearable pitch for Arnold after his stamina impressed the French enough to help convince them to join the war and provide critical support to the struggling rebels. At that time, Arnold lay in hospital after receiving a near-fatal shot to the same leg wounded at Quebec. While he lay immobilized in hospital, his commander peevishly claimed credit for the British surrender (Carnes and John 123) Arnold was distressed in hospital at the thought of his commander receiving honors won by the blood and grit of better men. This may also have compelled Arnold to betray the American cause, maybe as a revenge for their ungratefulness of the commanders.

Finally, revisiting his sacrifices and rewards, Arnold grew bitter. Out of this bitterness, Arnold planned a revenge on the American cause through his course of action. He was financially strapped, his wife had died in his absence and his personal honor had been attacked. This led to greater bitterness within his heart that may have compelled him into planning the treason that earned him the name traitor despite all his struggles and pains that he underwent during the revolutionary war (Martin 37).

In conclusion, Benedict Arnold's betrayal of the American cause despite having been a patriot and fought courageously, even to an extent of almost losing his leg and branded a cannibal after he and his troop opted to eating candles, dogs and leather in the wilderness, during the revolutionary war of the American's military against the British army should not be fully blamed on him (Martin 47). Instead, it should also be blamed on the American military for such aspects as lack of appreciation and motivation for Arnold's efforts in the war and also the commanders receiving of honors that should have been received by Arnold and his troop.

References

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