

Good joseph plumb martin's military career term paper example

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Introduction

As engraved on the tombstone " A Soldier of the Revolution', Joseph Plumb Martin was indeed an ordinary soldier who died amidst poverty in 1850. He was an ordinary person who served bravely in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He is best known for his memoir titled 'A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier', which was first published anonymously in 1830. In this memoir, he gave a vivid account of all that transpired in the battlefield in front of his eyes. His account of war is devoid of any embellishment of war heroes. Rather, he has depicted the fortitude of ordinary men who served in the Continental Army gallantly. Historical scholars look upon the memoir of Joseph Plumb Martin as an authentic source for the American Revolution as the detailed first-person narrative of the life and hardship of Revolutionary soldiers serves as an important piece of evidence of the trials and tribulations that had been encountered by a continental soldier. This paper would highlight upon the journey of Joseph Plumb Martin as a Continental soldier in the Revolutionary War as recounted in his memoir.

Martin's Joining the Continental Army

Born in 1760, Joseph Plumb Martin cherished a romantic notion about war. The first chapter of his book highlights how young men of his generation idolized the sacrifice of brave heroes at the warfront. He was not an exception either. Growing with the fantasy of war heroes, he had the desire to dedicate himself to the good of his country (Posa 2011). When the Revolutionary War took place in 1775, Joseph Plumb Martin, at the tender

age of 15, enlisted himself in the Connecticut state troops for 6 months duration, much to the annoyance of his grandparents. There he got the chance to participate in the Battles of Brooklyn, Kip's Bay and the Battle of White Plains in New York (A&E Television Networks 2014). After the first tour of his duty came to an end in 1776, he again enlisted himself in 1777 in the Continental Army of Washington and served as a soldier throughout the war period until 1783.

Training and Attitude towards the Commanding Officers

In his memoir, Joseph Plumb Martin has written that though discipline was an important criterion in the militia, he and others like him, who joined the troops voluntarily or by force, did not receive any military training. The soldiers mainly came from less wealthy families of farmers and apprentices for whom the promises of a hefty salary of six dollars per day, plenty of clothing every year and the daily ration of food were enticing enough to join the militia (Posa 2011). When young Martin enlisted himself in the militia in 1776, he along with his regiment was deployed to defend the New York City. His regiment consisted of young inexperienced soldiers many of whom were forced to join the troops. They did not receive any drilling or training in preparation for participating in the war. After they experienced defeat on the Long Island, they were given the responsibility of providing defense to the Kip's Bay. They fought from shallow trenches dug alongside a river with dirt thrown into the river to camouflage the trenches. Joseph Martin explains that when 4, 000 British and German troops in 84 flatboats approached the Kip's Bay, the officers of his regiment advised them to retreat as the

inexperienced soldiers had no chance of withstanding the attack of the British army (Martin 2011). They lost the war disgracefully. In his memoir, Martin blames the lack of training and the experience of the young soldiers who fought the battle and also the lack of leadership skill of the commanding officers for the shameful defeat in the Kip's Bay. He was completely disillusioned with the officers who commanded his team. He believed that the commanding officers did not deserve the post they were appointed for as their commands only served to confuse the troops, " the men were confused, being without officers to command them. I do not recollect of seeing a commissioned officer from the time I left the lines until in the evening" (29). However, the same troops fought gallantly in the Battle of White Plains and Harlem Heights (Martin 2011).

During his service in the Continental Army, Martin realized that war was anything but romantic. From the very beginning of his days in the militia, he encountered an array of problems like the regular shortages of food and other necessity, disease, constant threats of death and long periods of absence from home. He has given a detailed account of the hardships he and his team mates suffered at Valley Forge during winter in his book. It was here that he received his first military training. The continuous drill and practice they received prepared them for enduring the adversities of Valley Forge (Martin 2011). This training also proved fruitful to inculcate the right discipline required to combat the British army.

Campaigns and Battles

Being a part of the 8th Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Army in Washington, Martin took part in several major battles and campaigns like the Germantown battle, the siege of Fort Mifflin, the Yorktown Campaign and the Monmouth Campaign (Martin 2011). Below are given the accounts of two of the campaigns Martin participated in.

The Monmouth Campaign

In the Monmouth Campaign, Martin was assigned to the duty of the light infantry which was supposed to keep a track on the British army. The soldiers selected for the duty in the light infantry were witty and fleet-footed. After the American troops defeated the British army at Saratoga, the British troops, under the leadership of the British General Henry Clinton, consolidated their forces in New York City where Martin and his team mates easily overpowered them (Martin 2011). Outside of Monmouth, New Jersey, the main body of the Continental Army of Washington caught hold of the British troops. Especially, General Charles Lee successfully carried out an attack on the British flank and organized the Continental troops effectively against the counterattack from the British army. Martin attributes the victory at the battle of Monmouth to the well-drilled soldiers who stood firm in the face of the repeated onslaughts from the British soldiers (Martin 2011). The Monmouth campaign was the last battle fought in the north. After the defeat in the Monmouth Campaign, the British troops shifted towards the south with the thought that they would easily win a victory due to many Tories living there. Martin describes how he spent the next two years fighting the Tory "

villains" who functioned between the British and American lines along the New York City.

The Yorktown Campaign

Martin played an active role in the Yorktown Campaign. He and his team mates approached the head of the Chesapeake and sailed away in a ship for Virginia. The American sappers prepared siege works for the British troops around Yorktown on 5th and 6th October in 1780. On 14th of October, they successfully carried out an attack on the British Redoubt number 10, killing nine and wounding thirty one British soldiers (Martin 2011). Cornwallis, who was the British commander at that time, soon dispatched a white flag to negotiate truce.

Injury at War

Though Martin received no critical injury during his service in the militia, he was plagued by a number of diseases like smallpox because of which he was put to hospitalization for several days. He also suffered burn injuries and was hospitalized when the farmers' burn caught fire. Once in order to get cured of the smallpox plague, Joseph and his friend applied leeches to suck the disease out of their bodies, and though the experiment succeeded, Joseph soon fell sick with dysentery. He frequently suffered from repeated bouts of boils and was often hospitalized to restore health (Martin 2010).

Martin's Feelings about His Service in the Continental Army

Though Joseph Martin was happy to be a part of the Revolutionary War through his participation in the Continental army for the peace of his

country, he remained dissatisfied with the way the country never acknowledged and appreciated the sufferings and the efforts put in by the continental soldiers in the battle field. In his memoir, he rued over the fact that despite the death of 25% of the eleven thousand soldiers who spent the harsh winter at Valley Forge, the US government only allowed a meagre pension for them in 1818 (Martin 2011). Though the war veterans were promised with 100 acres of land, they never received any.

Conclusion

Joseph Plumb Martin was an ordinary war veteran of the American Revolution, famed for his memoir 'A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier'. He gives a detailed account of war as viewed and experienced by him in his book. He joined the militia because he, like many young men of his time, cherished a romanticized idea about war. Though he joined the military troops voluntarily, he observed that there were many soldiers who were lured into the army with the promises of food, clothing and a hefty salary. However, in reality, there was nothing romantic about war. Regular shortages of food, diseases, constant threat of death and long absence from home were among the many problems encountered by the continental soldiers. Furthermore, there was no adequate training and drilling offered to the soldiers when they joined the militia. The commanding officers appointed with the duty of guiding the soldiers lacked the leadership skills as a result of which Martin and his regiment was defeated badly by the British army in the battle of the Kip's Bay. He received his first training in the militia when he spent the bitter

winter at Valley Forge. The training and drilling received around this time helped the Continental troops in fighting the subsequent battles like the Monmouth Campaign and the Yorktown Campaign with the British army. Though he never suffered any serious injury in the war, he battled with frequent onslaughts of diseases. Though he took pride in serving his country by fighting for the Continental Army, he felt bitter with the way the US government showed no gratitude towards the war veterans for their sacrifice.

Work Cited

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