

The Unknown Soldiers' Memorial

In addition to the documented conflicts that occurred in and around Lake George Battlefield Park during the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, and the numerous commemorative statues and markers that illustrate historic locations and participants, the Park contains the remains of four Provincial soldiers who died in battle. These remains constitute what is believed to be the earliest burial ground of unknown soldiers in the United States recognized by the federal government.

The bones of these soldiers were unearthed in the early 1930s by State of New York road construction crews working along Route 9 in Lake George, southwest of the Park. Analyses done at the time determined that the remains were those of Provincial soldiers—American-born fighters for the British during the French and Indian War. The location of the discovery corresponded with the area of the first engagement in the Battle of Lake George known as “Bloody Morning Scout” on the military road to Fort Edward the morning of September 8, 1755.

The limitations of testing in the early 20th century did not allow for a more definitive establishing of the identities of these soldiers. Fortunately, the State determined that the proper location to reinter their remains was in the Battlefield Park—the site of the Provincials’ encampment prior to the skirmish in which they lost their lives. The New York State Historical Association and the State of New York oversaw the reburial of the four unknown soldiers in a ceremony in 1935, with a reverential monument marking the collective gravesite to allow posterity to pay its proper respects. The Unknown Soldiers’ Memorial and surrounding walkway were refurbished by the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance in 2018, with support from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation and contributions from our membership.

The monument’s inscription is simple:



A MEMORIAL TO FOUR UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

***WHO FELL SEPTEMBER 8, 1755 ON THE BLOODY MORNING SCOUT LED BY COL. EPHRAIM WILLIAMS
AND KING HENDRICK AGAINST THE FRENCH AND INDIANS UNDER BARON DIESKAU***

***THE REMAINS WERE DISINTERRED IN BUILDING A STATE HIGHWAY IN 1931 AND REBURIED UNDER
THIS MONUMENT***

The Unknown Soldiers’ Memorial is located in the Park on the east side of Fort George Road, a short distance from the Battle of Lake George (William Johnson-King Hendrick) statue. The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance hosts a ceremony each Memorial Day at the burial site to recall the sacrifice of these unsung heroes from another time.

Epilogue

In February 2019, a housing construction site in the village of Lake George uncovered a previously unknown cemetery containing the remains of Continental soldiers. Extensive research has determined that the discovered bones are of 25 or more soldiers of the 1st Pennsylvania Battalion (or Regiment), who were likely buried there as the result of succumbing in 1776 at the military hospital housed within what is now the Battlefield Park. The New York State Museum is analyzing these remains. Once the State's analyses are completed, these American Revolutionary soldiers may join their countrymen from the prior generation in having Lake George Battlefield Park as their final resting place.