



Revolutionary War soldier's face recreated at State Museum

Researchers used 3D printing and forensic art to recreate the look of a soldier whose skull was found among the remains of 44 people

By **Gwendolyn Craig**, *Adirondack Explorer*

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A facial reconstruction of one of the young men buried in Lake George, likely a teenager in the Continental Army, was created by forensic artist Jenny Kenyon.

Photo provided by the New York State Museum

Bioarchaeologists at the State Museum Lisa Anderson, Julie Weatherwax and their colleagues are used to looking at skeletons—boxes of teeth, fragments of femurs and tibias, a partial skull. But with the help of university researchers and a forensic artist, one of the teenaged Continental Army soldiers, who died around 1776 in Lake George, has come to life.

“It’s very powerful,” Anderson said.

The young man has a long, oval face, large, round and bright eyes, a broad nose and mouth and smaller forehead.

He had one of the more complete skulls of the 44 skeletons unearthed during a construction dig in Lake George in 2019. The soldiers were likely part of the 1775-1776 Quebec Campaign of the American Revolution, and they likely died of smallpox or other diseases.

This teenager’s remains and the others will be reburied as part of a 250th celebration of the birth of the nation later this month in a new memorial in Lake George Battlefield Park.



The First Pennsylvania Battalion button unearthed on Courtland Street in Lake George, and a sketch of what it looked like before corrosion, is kept at the New York State Museum in Albany.

Gwen Craig/Adirondack Explorer

The State Museum commissioned the artistic reconstruction of this soldier in part to ensure “they are remembered not as historical fragments, but as individuals who served and sacrificed,” said Jennifer Saunders, the museum’s executive director.

“The facial reconstruction offers a powerful new way to look across the centuries, connect with their humanity, and honor the enduring legacy of their service,” she added.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute used 3D printers to scan the teenager’s skull. The print was sent to forensic artist Jenny Kenyon, who works with museums, law enforcement and other organizations on such renderings.



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Kenyon, who is based out of Virginia, used clay to create the young man's facial features. Kenyon has a degree in forensic art from University of Dundee in the United Kingdom, and said the shape of the face is all there in the skull.

She then sent photos of her sculpture back to RPI, where they made a second 3D print and sent it back to Kenyon for painting. Kenyon worked with the museum and researchers on hair and skin color using French and Irish heritage as a baseline.

"We were trying to make it so that a lot of people could look at it and see their relatives," she said.

Also a costume designer, Kenyon worked with the museum to clothe the bust. Because the soldiers were likely hospitalized with smallpox, they would not have been wearing much. Only one of the remains, the state found, was buried in uniform.

"I love doing it," Kenyon said. "I think it's wonderful to connect the archaeological work and the museum work to people, so that they can see that these people look like just somebody walking on the street today."

A second sculpture is under commission by the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance and is expected to be on display at its museum across the street from the reburial site.

The museum is also partnering with McMaster University in Canada to learn more about the genetics of the 44 people.

The university confirmed for the Explorer that at least one of the individuals was a woman. Researchers are also studying the remains for strands of the variola virus, which causes smallpox. Lake George was the site of a well-known smallpox hospital.