

Perspectives in Military History Roundtable

49th Annual Lecture Series

Abductions in the American Revolution

Attempts to Kidnap Washington, Arnold, and Other Military and Civilian Leaders

Christian McBurney

Independent Scholar

As dawn broke on the chilly, dank morning of December 13, 1776, General Charles Lee sat writing letters in his sleeping gown in his room at White's Tavern, three miles from where his shivering American army was camped in New Jersey. The quiet mists outside the inn broke around twenty-four horsemen slipping slowly off the road to surround General George Washington's most trusted subordinate. Leading the raiding party, "Bloody" Banastre Tarleton motioned his green-coated Loyalist troopers to take the building, trapping the rebel general and kidnapping him for the British. General Lee's sudden abduction was not a unique event during the American Revolution. On Saturday, December 17, 2016, at 2:00 PM, Mr. Christian McBurney will lead a roundtable lecture event outlining the tactical and strategic implications of the wide-spread efforts to capture both American and British leaders. His formal presentation will be followed by a discussion with two other Revolutionary War scholars, bringing the conversation full-circle by connecting kidnapping as a military option to other wars in U.S. Army history, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

Christian McBurney is an independent scholar from Kingston, Rhode Island, and a graduate of Brown University in 1981. He earned his Doctorate of Jurisprudence from New York University in 1985, and now serves as an attorney in Washington, DC. Throughout his legal career, Mr. McBurney has continued his research and study into American military history. He is an accomplished speaker, appearing at the National Archives, the Naval War College Museum, the Society of Cincinnati, and numerous American Revolution historical organizations on the east coast. Mr. McBurney is also a widely published author on the topic of special operations and Revolutionary War era spies. His books include *Kidnapping the Enemy: The Special Operations to Capture Generals Charles Lee & Richard Prescott* (Westholme, 2014), *The Rhode Island Campaign: The First French and American Operation in the Revolutionary War* (Westholme, 2011), *Spies in Revolutionary Rhode Island* (History Press, 2014), and most recently, *Abductions in the American Revolution: Attempts to Kidnap George Washington, Benedict Arnold and Other Military and Civilian Leaders*.

DATE: December 17, 2016

TIME: The USAHEC opens to the public at 10:00 AM, and the roundtable discussion is from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multi-Purpose Room

For more information on both events and any last-minute changes in meeting times and places, please check the USAHEC homepage: www.USAHEC.org or call the Information Desk: (717) 245-3972.