

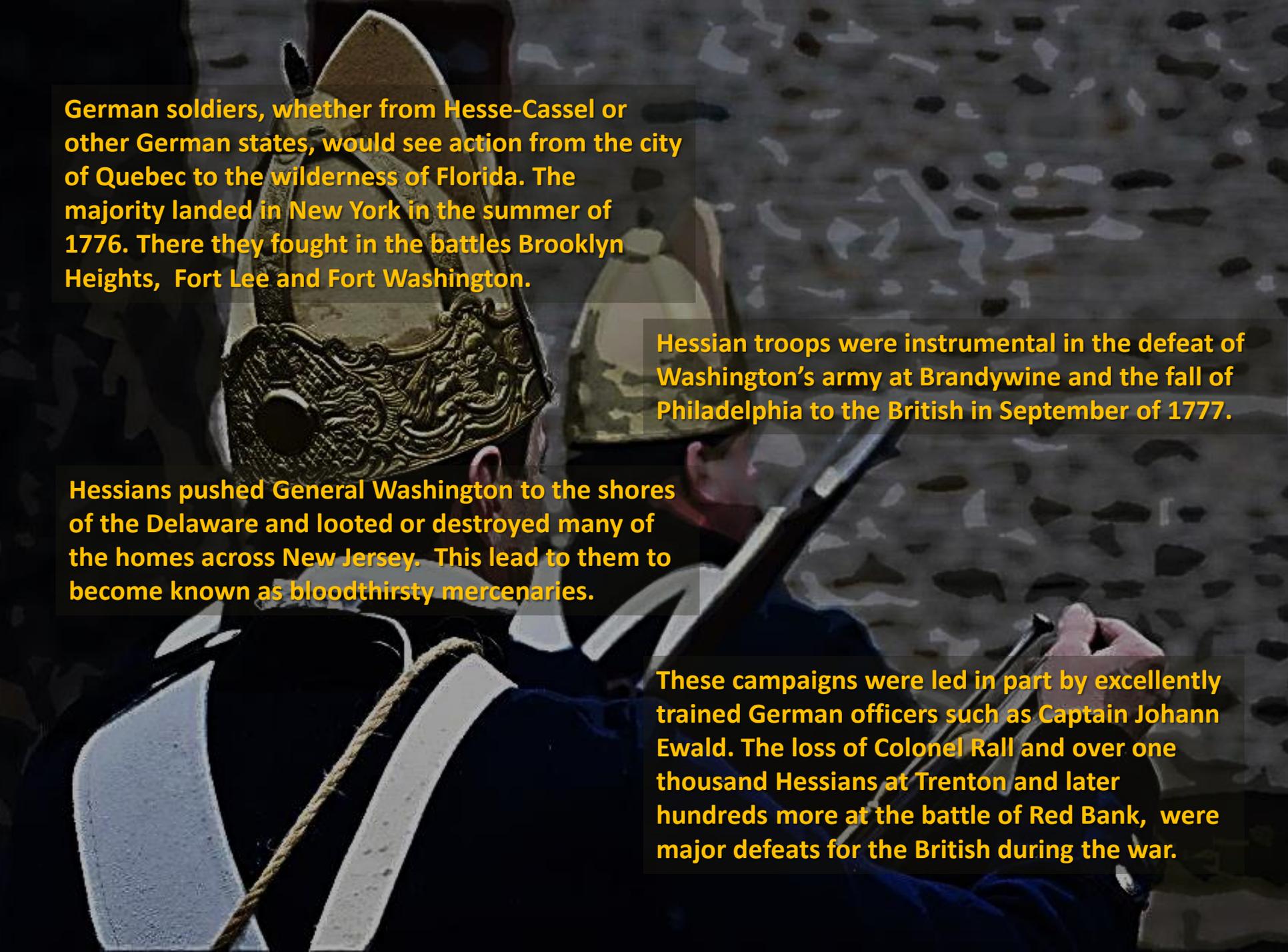
# Who Where the Hessians

A historical photograph showing several soldiers in uniform, likely Hessians, holding rifles. They are wearing dark jackets and light-colored breeches. In the background, a large, ornate brass bell is visible. The scene is set outdoors, possibly on a battlefield or a training ground.

By the start of the American Revolution, the British military was spread thinly across their global empire. Despite having tens of thousands of troops in America throughout the war, it was still necessary to supplement their numbers by hiring foreign troops. By 1776 thousands of soldiers from Hesse-Cassel were pouring into New York.

Many German States furnished the British Army with 30,000 experienced, battle hardened veterans fresh from the European wars. The majority came from a city state called Hesse-Cassel and all German troops in America became known as Hessians. Their uniforms were masterpieces of color and substance.

Each German regiment had its own style and reflected the character of the force and the choice of their commanders. Hessians formed a sizable portion of the German contingents leased to the British government.



German soldiers, whether from Hesse-Cassel or other German states, would see action from the city of Quebec to the wilderness of Florida. The majority landed in New York in the summer of 1776. There they fought in the battles Brooklyn Heights, Fort Lee and Fort Washington.

Hessian troops were instrumental in the defeat of Washington's army at Brandywine and the fall of Philadelphia to the British in September of 1777.

Hessians pushed General Washington to the shores of the Delaware and looted or destroyed many of the homes across New Jersey. This led to them to become known as bloodthirsty mercenaries.

These campaigns were led in part by excellently trained German officers such as Captain Johann Ewald. The loss of Colonel Rall and over one thousand Hessians at Trenton and later hundreds more at the battle of Red Bank, were major defeats for the British during the war.

# The Jägers (Riflemen)

As professional hunters, *Jägers* were skilled in the use of rifles - a weapon which took longer to load than the smoothbore musket of the line infantry, but which had greater range and accuracy. Drawn from a "well-esteemed class" the *Jägers* were primarily used for reconnaissance, skirmishing or screening bodies of heavier troops. The Jager units of riflemen wore green with red facing.



# The Grenadiers

A grenadier was originally a specialized soldier, first established as a distinct role in the mid-to-late 17th century for the throwing of grenades. At that time grenadiers were chosen from the strongest and largest soldiers. By the 18th century, dedicated grenade throwing of this sort was no longer relevant, but grenadiers were still chosen for being the most physically powerful soldiers and would lead assaults in the field of battle. Grenadiers would also often lead the storming of fortification breaches in siege warfare.



The tall hat with its brass plate could be distinguished from that of any other army. They were almost exclusively worn by grenadiers. Most other elements of the German forces wore the similar tricorne hat worn by American troops. The grenadier had been chosen for his height and strength. Adding inches to his above average height created an illusion of a charging giant at the back end of a bayonet. In the early stages of the war, this perception created panic in the American ranks.



# The Hussars (Light Cavalry)

Hessian light cavalry units. Hussars originated in Hungary and were used throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.



## The Fusiliers (Infantry)

Infantry was the backbone of the Hessian Army. They were well-disciplined and well-educated on the art of killing.

