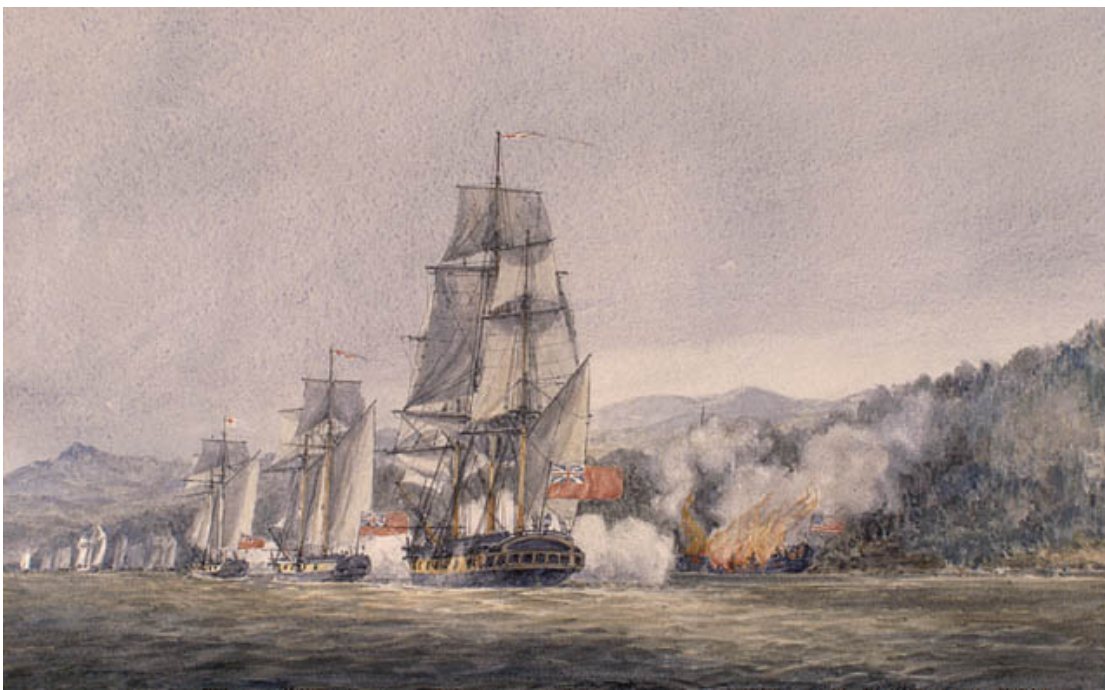


# From Privateer, to Schooner Captain, to Raider

The destruction of commercial shipping during the war hurt local merchants. Capt. David Hawley decided to recoup his losses by turning privateer.

In March 1776 he sailed out of Stratford, but was captured by the British. He was sent to Halifax where he and 8 men were able to steal a small boat and escape. By May 18, he was in Hartford.



**The Battle of Valcour Island**

In August 1776, the Connecticut General Court ordered Capt. Hawley to Lake Champlain with a small naval detachment to serve under Benedict Arnold in the northern campaign. He commanded the schooner, *Royal Savage*, built on the lake, armed with four 6-pounders and eight 4-pounders cannons. In the

battle of Oct. 12, *Royal Savage* was out-gunned by the British ship *Carleton* and driven ashore on Valcour Island. While the British won the battle, the delay forced on them by having to contest an American fleet on the lake, put their plans to split the colonies off track and eventually led to their defeat at Saratoga.

Hawley went on to command a series of ships in Long Island Sound to harass the British.

In May 1779, the British command issued an order to capture American General Gold Selleck Silliman, commander of the militia in Fairfield County. He was captured by a British raiding party in Fairfield. To get the general back an exchange was necessary, but the state had no prisoners of sufficient status to offer. That November, Capt. Hawley gathered 20 volunteers from Stratford, who crossed the sound in small boats and captured Thomas Jones, chief justice of the Ministerial Supreme Court of the Crown. The exchange was soon made.