12 Arms of Independence

Scott Stephenson: In this large red room, you're exactly halfway through the Museum's Galleries. It's late 1777. On one wall, you can see a large projection of a map and a timeline that will take you through the major battles and campaigns of the Revolutionary War. In the center of the room, you can use a touch screen to explore objects and a large case of weapons. We call this *Arms of Independence*. Make sure to take some time to use these touch screens. You can zoom and rotate each weapon 360 degrees and, by touching the various hotspots, dig down deep into the amazing story of the owners and makers of these Revolutionary War weapons. If you choose number 32 for example, you can find a remarkable engraving, "no slavery," on a brass fixture of one of those muskets. What did this mean to the soldier who carried it? Find out by exploring the interactive touch screen on your own.

Now, in the previous Gallery, you learned about the Battle of Princeton and the mortal wounding of the American Revolutionary, General Hugh Mercer. In the center of this case, you see an original painting depicting the Battle of Princeton. See if you can find an officer in the center of the painting who's been thrown off of a white horse. This is a depiction of Hugh Mercer in the midst of the Battle of Princeton after he's been mortally wounded by British soldiers. The artist was a young deaf man named William Mercer who completed this work in 1786, just after the end of the Revolutionary War, here in Philadelphia while he was studying to be a painter with Charles Willson Peale and James Peale. William Mercer was the orphan son of General Hugh Mercer.

Make sure you experience the Field of Battle. You can line up outside this theater and march into the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. That battle, the largest land action of the Revolutionary War, took place about an hour west of where we're standing now and you can still visit it today and see portions of its preserved landscape.