

## REMEMBERING ISRAEL

By **LINDSAY McREYNOLDS**

Herald-Citizen Staff



PUTNAM COUNTY -- Putnam County's namesake may not be a familiar figure to many residents, but they are now able to catch a glimpse of a little information on the life of General Israel Putnam through a new historical marker.

*Picture: Putnam County Executive Kim Blaylock and Cookeville historian Ted Darwin show off the new historical marker for General Israel Putnam outside the Putnam County Courthouse.*

*Herald-Citizen Photo/Camille Fliss.*

A historical marker noting Revolutionary War hero Gen. Israel

Putnam for whom Putnam County is named was recently placed at the northeast corner of the Putnam County Courthouse by the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Putnam County Executive Kim Blaylock said the process of getting the historical marker was set into motion several years ago after Cookeville historian Ted Darwin brought the idea to her.

"The county is named for Israel Putnam, and with all the historical markers that have been around here for years, not anything was ever done for him," Darwin said. "So I thought, what the heck. It's long overdue. Let's get something going with his name on it."

Darwin did some research at the state library and archives and discovered a copy of Gen. Putnam's commission signed by John Hancock. He framed it and presented it to Blaylock to hang at the courthouse.

Then the county commission appropriated the money for the historical marker, but it's taken several years to see the results of the efforts to recognize Gen. Putnam.

Darwin said Gen. Putnam never came to Putnam County or had anything to do with the formation of Putnam County back in the 1800s, but he was a popular figure at the time. And many counties across the country were formed using his name.

A popular Revolutionary War hero who served as second in command under George Washington, Gen. Putnam was known for his famous statement to American soldiers during the Battle of Bunker Hill, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

Darwin said those who are interested in the life of Gen. Putnam may find information about him at the Putnam County Library.

2D 46: ISRAEL PUTNAM: 1718-1790

Putnam County, created in 1842 and re-established in 1854, was named for Major General Israel Putnam, who was commissioned on June 19, 1775 by the Continental Congress. A popular hero of the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary hero, General Putnam became famous for saying, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes," at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Tennessee Historical Commission

Published November 25, 2006 2:40 PM CST:

Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN

## **Battle of Bunker Hill**

### **From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**

The **Battle of Bunker Hill** took place on [June 17, 1775](#), as part of the [Siege of Boston](#) during the [American Revolutionary War](#). It is considered by some to be the bloodiest battle of the war. General [Israel Putnam](#) was in charge of the revolutionary forces, and [Major General William Howe](#) commanded the [British](#) forces. Among historians, it is debated whether General [Israel Putnam](#) or Colonel [William Prescott](#), the revolutionaries' second in charge, ordered the troops, "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes!" Although the battle is known as "Bunker Hill", most of the fighting took place on [Breed's Hill](#) nearby. On their third assault the British forces overran the revolutionaries' fortified earthworks on Breed's and Bunker Hill. The battle was a [Pyrrhic victory](#) for the British, who suffered more than 1000 casualties. Howe's immediate objective was achieved, but the attack demonstrated the American will to stand in pitched battle and did not change the status of the siege. After the battle, British General [Henry Clinton](#) remarked in his diary that *"A few more such victories would have surely put an end to British dominion in America."*

<http://www.ajlambert.com>