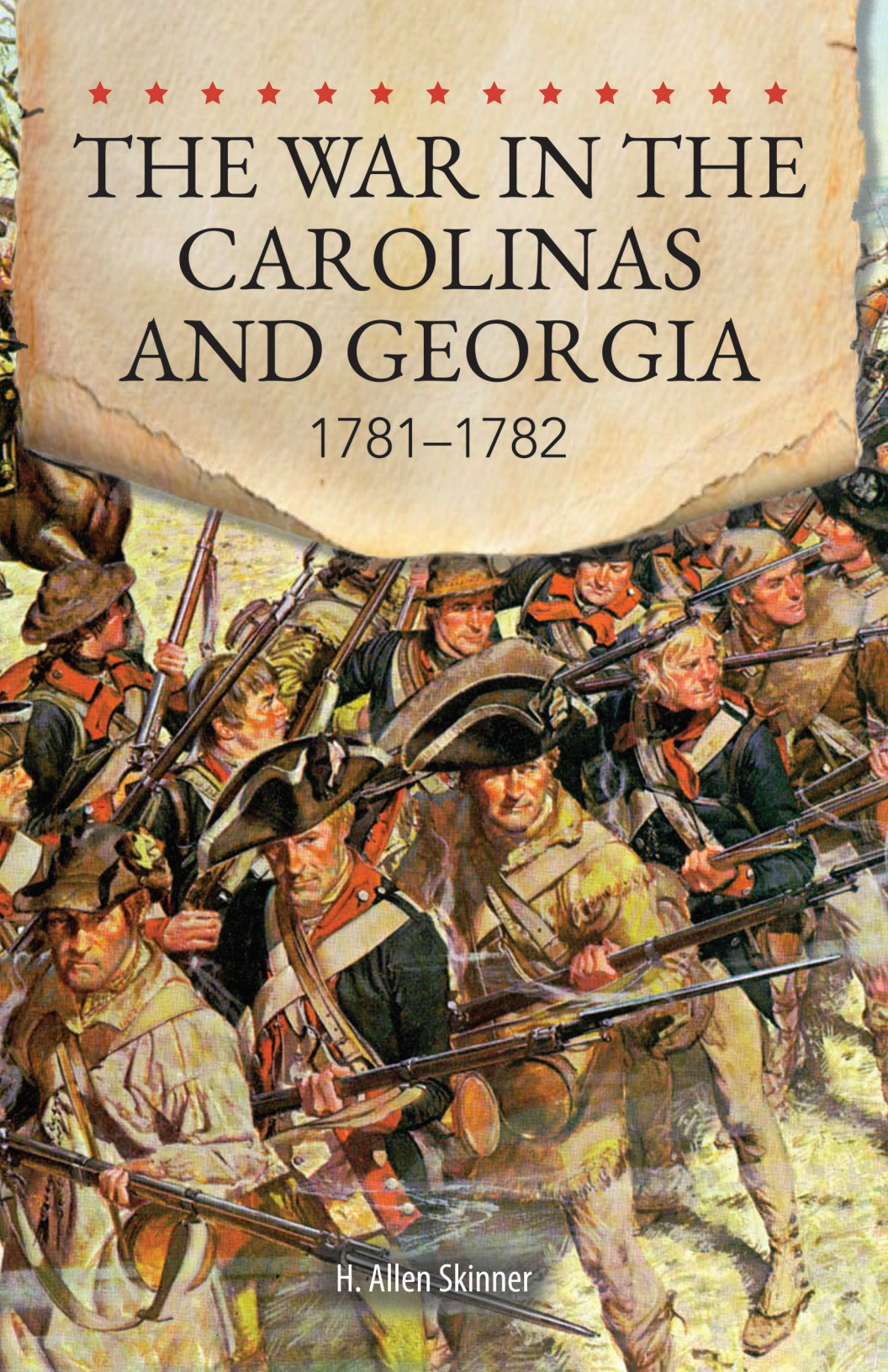
THE WAR IN THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA

1781–1782



H. Allen Skinner

The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Revolutionary War

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ISBN: 978-1-959302-25-4

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The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Revolutionary War

THE WAR IN THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA, 1781–1782

by
H. Allen Skinner

Center of Military History
United States Army
Washington, D.C., 2026

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Skinner, Harold Allen, Jr., 1966- author | Center of Military History issuing body
Title: The war in the Carolinas and Georgia, 1781-1782 / by H. Allen Skinner Jr.
Other titles: U.S. Army campaigns of the Revolutionary War
Description: Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2026. | Series: U.S. Army campaigns of the Revolutionary War | This is a publication issued by the United States federal government or produced with federal funds. | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 2026006528 (print) | LCCN 2026006529 (ebook) | ISBN 9781959302254 paperback | ISBN 9781959302254 pdf
Subjects: LCSH: United States. Continental Army | North Carolina--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Campaigns | South Carolina--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Campaigns | Georgia--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Campaigns
Classification: LCC E230.5.S7 S55 2026 (print) | LCC E230.5.S7 (ebook) | DDC 973.33--dc23/eng/20260310 | SUDOC D 114.7/9:C 22
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2026006528
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2026006529

CMH Pub 71–52

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INTRODUCTION

As America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War, it is a perfect time to reflect on the revolutionary generation. In the two-and-a-half centuries since the war, the United States has grappled with the complexities and paradoxes of its revolution. How could a nation be born from the idea that all men are created equal, and yet deny much of that freedom to many of its citizens? How should a central federal government balance power with state governments? Could those thirteen fractious colonies merge into one nation? The seeds of what would become our country's future political and military conflicts lie in these complexities, as do some of our greatest national accomplishments.

This milestone anniversary is also an appropriate time to reflect on the history of the United States Army. The Army stands as our first truly national institution, having been established by the Continental Congress on 14 June 1775. General George Washington's ability to meld the soldiers of the various colonies together into one national force provided an example to the rest of the country that national unity was possible. If the Army failed to overcome the regional sectionalism prevalent at the time, it would fall to superior British resources and organization. If the Army failed, the nation would fail. Washington gave us the precedent of military subordination to the civil authority, one of the core tenets of our political tradition and way of life. At the end of the war, he resigned his commission and voluntarily gave up all his power to return to civil life. His example has inspired us as a model of military and political leadership for generations.

The Massachusetts militiamen who fired the first shots of the war on 19 April 1775 had no blueprint for creating a nation—nor did many think that the conflict would result in a drive for independence. Deep-seated colonial resentments over their rights as English citizens had been simmering since before the 1750s. As the British Parliament enacted even more restrictive laws, peaceful protests turned to military organization, and finally open violence. As New England formed its Army of Observation in the wake of the battles of Lexington and Concord, the Continental Congress saw the need for a national army.

For eight long years, the Continental Army maintained itself in the field, despite fighting superior odds, starvation, diminished resources, and divided leadership. Setbacks in the New York Campaign of 1776 nearly destroyed Washington's army as the British drove it into Pennsylvania. Yet as 1777 opened, Washington changed the operational situation by seizing the initiative in a series of tactical victories at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. That fall, a British invasion into northern New York met with failure and capture at the hands of the Northern Army and militia at Saratoga, ultimately bringing France into war on the side of the United States. At the same time, Washington kept a British army penned up in Philadelphia while he instituted a training regimen for his army at their encampment in Valley Forge that winter. Trained under the tutelage of German-born Frederick von Steuben, the Continentals harried the British out of Philadelphia and back to New York City, fighting like regulars at Monmouth in 1778.

General Washington faced the challenge of countering British victories at Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, when the British shifted the war south in 1778, while also containing powerful British forces in Canada and New York City. Relying on skilled subordinates such as Anthony Wayne, Nathanael Greene, and the Marquis de Lafayette—all of whom in turn worked closely with state militia—Washington was able to hold the delicate balance of power in both the northern and southern theaters. Seizing the opportunity presented by his French allies, Washington quickly shifted a large portion of his army from New York City to Yorktown,

Virginia. There, the allies laid siege to another British army, forcing it to capitulate in the fall of 1781. Although this victory sounded the death knell for British control of the American colonies, peace talks would last for two more years. During this time, Washington kept an army in the field, maintained the supremacy of civil authority over the military, and presented a credible threat to the remaining British garrisons. When the peace came, the true architects of the revolution's success were the Continental Army, state troops, and the militia.

The Revolutionary War created the model for our modern Army. It set the stage for what eventually would become a three-component force, with the Continentals and militia operating in complementary roles. Today, thirty-four National Guard units can trace their lineage to the Revolutionary War, which is a testament to their role in the formation of this country. Eight army branches also have their beginnings in the revolution. The U.S. Army's very motto, "This We'll Defend," is rooted in the "self-evident" truths enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and American interpretations of Enlightenment traditions, which came together in the seal for the Board of War and Ordnance and became the Department of the Army seal in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, it also would take until the twentieth century for the U.S. Army to be as racially integrated as its Continental Army forebears.

The traditions begun and precedents set by Washington and his soldiers continue to influence the U.S. Army and causes around the world. The seeds of hope shown at Trenton and Princeton have inspired leaders in other dark times, such as Bull Run, Shiloh, and Kasserine Pass. The revolutionary generation taught us that the true strength of our Army is our people; from the frontline soldiers to the camp followers who sustained the regiments. And it is to these individuals, who forged ahead through privation and misery to final victory and who rarely received any greater recognition in their own lifetimes than the simple epitaph "A Soldier of the Revolution," that these volumes are humbly dedicated.

CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.
Executive Director



THE WAR IN THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA, 1781–1782

The year 1781 marked the seventh year of the Revolutionary War. Surprising American victories at Fort Ticonderoga, New York, in May 1775 and Boston, Massachusetts, in May 1776 were offset when the British seized New York City in September 1776. General George Washington learned from the near disaster and adopted a defensive "war of posts" strategy—a war of attrition marked by attacks on isolated British and loyalist forces and avoiding pitched battle unless the odds were in his favor.[1] At the same time, American diplomats sought intervention from Britain's traditional enemies, France and Spain.

1. On 8 September 1776, George Washington wrote to John Hancock on this issue: "In deliberating on this great Question, it was impossible to forget that History—our own experience—the advice of our ablest Friends in Europe . . . demonstrate that on our side the War should be defensive . . . a War of posts, that we should . . . avoid a general Action or put anything to the risque unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn."

Washington's plans to reorganize the Continental Army after victories at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, were interrupted in early 1777 by a two-pronged British advance to isolate the New England states. General William Howe, commander in chief of the British army, captured Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in September 1777—a strategically meaningless victory, as both the Continental Congress and Washington's army escaped. The British northern offensive ended in October 1777 with the surrender of General John Burgoyne's forces to Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates at Saratoga, New York. The victory of the American forces sent shock waves through Europe and produced a formal French-American alliance in February 1778.

During late 1777 and early 1778, Congress and Washington worked through structural and organizational reforms to improve the efficiency of the Continental Army. Of importance to the southern theater was the creation of partisan corps, a regiment-sized unit with three horse-mounted and three dismounted corps of sixty-four soldiers each. The Continental Army emerged from its Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, encampment in June 1778 as a better disciplined force, owing largely to Washington's disciplinary efforts and Maj. Gen. Frederick Wilhelm von Steuben's standardization of tactics and regulations. The success of the reforms was evident when the Continental Army demonstrated tactical parity against Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton's forces at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey, in June 1778.

The battle at Monmouth came about as part of a general British strategic retrenchment following the Saratoga debacle. The British government realized that Washington's army was too resilient to defeat militarily; at the same time, the French (and later Spanish) entry into the war constrained British strategic options. Clinton assumed command in North America with orders to retake the southern colonies, thereby securing bases for protecting Britain's valuable Caribbean holdings and accessing profitable commodities like rice and indigo.

STRATEGIC SETTING

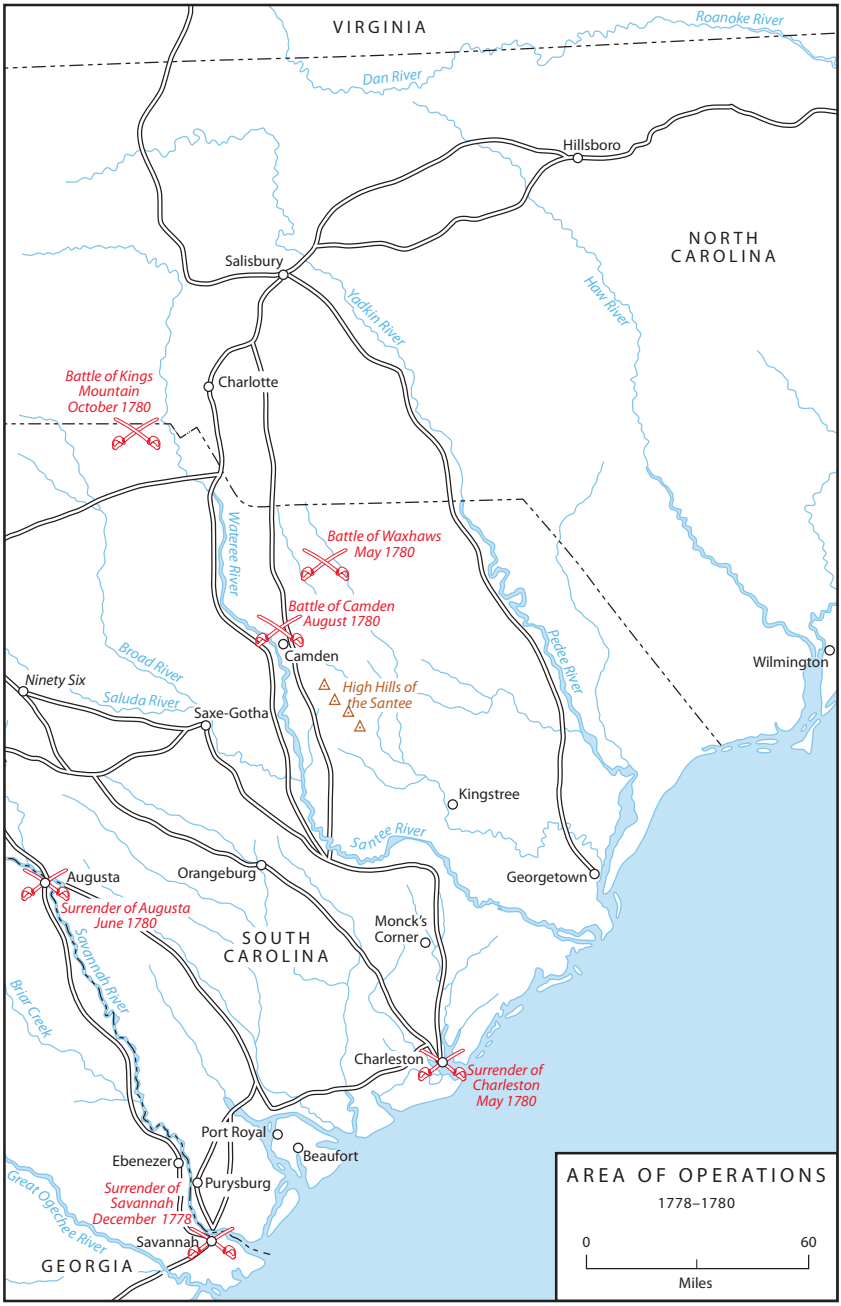
Clinton put aside his misgivings over the new strategic direction and built a rational campaign plan, based on sustained loyalist support, to retake the southern states one by one. The campaign began with his 29 December 1778 seizure of Savannah, Georgia, as a secure base of operations. (*See Map 1.*) The Continental Congress responded belatedly by sending Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln and available Continental forces to reinforce the Southern Department. Interminable fighting along the Georgia–South Carolina border followed, punctuated by a British cross-border raid in May 1779 that almost seized Charleston, South Carolina, before handing Lincoln's army a bloody repulse at Stono Ferry, South Carolina, in June 1779. A Franco-American assault to retake Savannah in late 1779 failed, largely because of a stubborn British defense. The French fleet withdrew to safer waters, prompting Clinton to assault Charleston in February 1780. Conflicting guidance from General Washington, the Continental Congress, and local officials hindered Lincoln's defense of the city. Lincoln surrendered Charleston and its 5,500 defenders in May 1780 after a weeks-long siege—the largest surrender of American arms during the war. Lord George Germain, the British secretary of state for the colonies, failed to appoint a civilian governor, leaving Clinton (and later Lt. Gen. Charles, 2nd Earl Cornwallis) to handle both military and civilian administrative duties. Yet even though Clinton understood the importance of reconciling Americans to British rule, he upset both Whigs (patriots) and Tories (loyalists) by pardoning several notorious ex-rebels while demanding oaths of loyalty from all residents. Clinton's demands



***Siege of Charleston*, Alonzo Chappel, 1862 (*Brown University Library*)**

angered many Americans, especially those paroled after the fall of Charleston. Consequently, many Americans returned to active resistance to British rule.

Before leaving for New York, Clinton appointed Maj. Patrick Ferguson to organize loyalist levies for rear-area security tasks, thereby freeing up Cornwallis's army to undertake a fall offensive into North Carolina. In the interim, Cornwallis deployed his regular and provincial forces to set up bases at Camden, Ninety Six, and Cheraw, South Carolina, and dispatched the *British Legion*—around 400 dragoons and 400 light infantrymen commanded by Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton—to pursue a withdrawing Virginia Continental detachment under Col. Abraham Buford. Tarleton's troopers destroyed Buford's command at the Battle of Waxhaws, South Carolina, on 29 May 1780, leading to accusations of British brutality in perpetrating "Buford's Massacre." News of the event compelled many Americans to join Whig militia forces led by officers like


VIRGINIA
Roanoke River
Dan River
Hillsboro
NORTH CAROLINA
Salisbury
Yadkin River
Haw River
Battle of Kings Mountain October 1780
Charlotte
Battle of Waxhaws May 1780
Wateree River
Battle of Camden August 1780
Camden
Pedee River
Wilmington
Broad River
Ninety Six
Saluda River
Saxe-Gotha
High Hills of the Santee
Kingstree
Santee River
Augusta
Orangeburg
Georgetown
Surrender of Augusta June 1780
Monck's Corner
SOUTH CAROLINA
Savannah River
Briar Creek
Charleston
Surrender of Charleston May 1780
Port Royal
Beaufort
Ebenezer
Purysburg
Surrender of Savannah December 1778
Great Ogeechee River
Savannah
GEORGIA
AREA OF OPERATIONS
1778–1780
0
60
Miles

Map 1

Brig. Gen. Thomas Sumter of South Carolina and Maj. William Davie of North Carolina.

The Continental Congress reacted to Lincoln's surrender by appointing General Gates—the hero of Saratoga—to command the Southern Department. However, Congress appointed Gates without consulting General Washington or allowing him to influence Gates's strategy. Gates took command of the American forces—about 1,400 Maryland and Delaware Continentals, a legion of 60 cavalry and infantrymen each, and a twelve-gun artillery detachment—at Deep River, North Carolina, in late July 1780. Gates found the supply situation of his new command so bad that he undertook a desperate offensive to capture the British logistics depot at Camden.

A lack of supplies, the slow pace of his wagon train, and problems assembling with the supporting North Carolina and Virginia militia troops delayed Gates's advance. A skillful delaying defense by Lt. Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon, also allowed Cornwallis to gather reinforcements at Camden. Cornwallis adopted Rawdon's plans for a night march to attack Gates's encampment at dawn on 16 August 1780. By happenstance, Gates had planned a similar nighttime march to reach a commanding position north of Camden. The two armies fought a surprise nighttime meeting engagement on the Waxhaws Road before recoiling a short distance. After determining he had no choice but to fight at dawn, Gates arrayed Maj. Gen. Johann, Baron de Kalb's Continentals on the right, North Carolinians in the center, and Virginia militia on the right wing. Each side advanced at daybreak, but the poorly deployed patriot militia troops ran from Cornwallis's bayonet-wielding regulars—carrying Gates far from the battlefield. De Kalb's outnumbered Continentals fought bravely but were crushed between the bayonets of the British infantry and Tarleton's encircling dragoons. Instead of returning to the battlefield to rally his troops, Gates avoided pursuit and rode back to Hillsborough, North Carolina, to rally the survivors. Personnel and materiel losses in the Continental ranks were severe, and patriot morale fell further when Tarleton's troopers defeated Sumter's militia corps at Fishing Creek, South Carolina, on 18 August 1780.

News of Gates's defeat intensified a sense of crisis felt by many revolutionary Americans during the summer of 1780. Rampant inflation and a depreciated Continental dollar left Congress all but powerless to supply and pay its regiments. Recruiting dropped off, and the stalemate in the north intensified discontent in the ranks over matters of pay and provisions. Matters were so bad that Washington had both mutiny in the ranks and a treasonous attempt by Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold to surrender the key fortifications at West Point to the British—prompting Germain to gloat that "the American levies in the King's service are more in number than the whole of the enlisted troops in the service of the Congress."

However, on the same day as Gates's defeat, a small patriot force defeated a stronger loyalist and provincial force at Musgrove's Mill, South Carolina, 70 miles northwest of Camden. The victory at Camden and the generally poor performance of the loyalist levies largely convinced Cornwallis to abandon pacification efforts. Cornwallis decided instead to seize North Carolina to stop the flow of American reinforcements and supplies into South Carolina. Cornwallis redirected Major Ferguson's troops from pacification to conducting an offensive sweep along the eastern face of the Blue Ridge Mountains, thus securing Cornwallis's intended movement via Charlotte and Salisbury, North Carolina, to the proloyalist region along Cross Creek. Cornwallis's decision to employ loyalists offensively was surprising, given his doubts about Ferguson's leadership and the reliability of the levies. Cornwallis also failed to anticipate how patriot militiamen—including "Overmountain" settlers from the Holston and Watauga regions (now East Tennessee), and men from western Virginia and North Carolina—would mobilize to surround and destroy Ferguson's corps at Kings Mountain, North Carolina, on 7 October 1780. Cornwallis's advance toward Charlotte, meanwhile, had stalled owing to a combination of sickness in the ranks and stiff resistance from Major Davie's North Carolina Whigs. Cornwallis reacted to news of Ferguson's defeat by suspending his offensive and withdrawing to Winnsborough, South Carolina, to rest his army and await reinforcements. Loyalist

recruiting dropped precipitously as many potential recruits hesitated to risk their lives and property openly in royal service.

Back at Hillsborough, Gates organized the surviving Continentals into a light corps commanded by Col. Daniel Morgan. Gates otherwise did little to support the North Carolina Whig militia leaders resisting the British advance. Meanwhile, the Continental Congress asked George Washington to name a replacement for Gates. On 14 October 1780, Washington wrote to Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene: "As Congress has been pleased to leave the Officer to Command on this occasion to my choice, it is my wish to appoint you—and, from the pressing situation of affairs in that quarter, of which you are not unapprised, that you should arrive there, as soon as circumstances will possibly admit." Greene visited headquarters on his way south, where Washington gave the following strategic guidance: "I can give you no particular instructions but must leave you to govern yourself intirely according to your own prudence and judgment and the circumstances in which you find yourself."

On 3 December 1780, Greene quietly relieved Gates as commander of the Southern Department—a strange twist of fate, as Gates was a retired British army major and Greene was the son of a pacifist Quaker mercantilist from Rhode Island. Greene initially had been indifferent to politics but became a staunch Whig in response to British government excesses. Greene helped organize the pro-Whig Kentish Guards militia company in 1774 but was limited to serving in the ranks because of an arthritic knee. Greene's unit took part in the siege of Boston, where his superiors soon recognized his potential for command. He had developed his aptitude through extensive reading of military treatises written by Prussian monarch Frederick the Great and French commander Maurice de Saxe. In May 1775, Greene was appointed brigadier general of the Rhode Island Army of Observation and subsequently received a Continental brigadier's commission.

Greene demonstrated an aptitude for battlefield command and, despite some missteps, earned the trust of Washington and the troops under his command. Moreover, Greene's command of foraging operations during the army's lean Valley Forge winter of 1777–1778 demonstrated his unmatched ability to support strategic

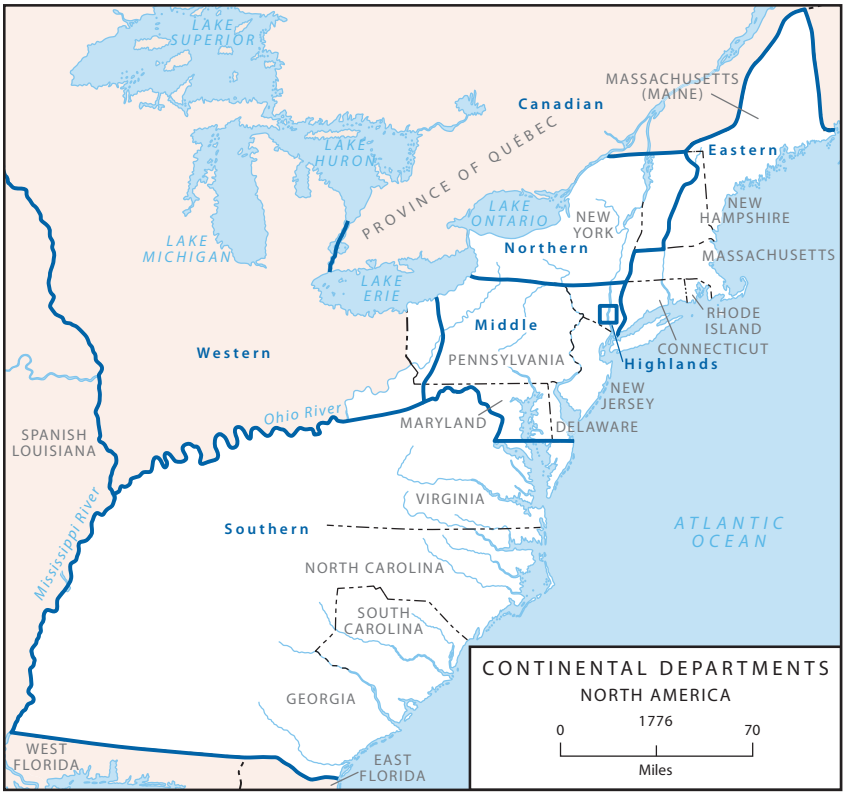
goals with tactical actions. Greene's evident skill in organizing led to his appointment as the Quartermaster General of the Army—an appointment he decried for taking him "out of the line of splendor." Greene improved the Continental supply situation but was hampered greatly by a lack of funding and underdeveloped interior roads.

Greene confided his first impressions of the new command in a letter to his wife, Catharine: "I arrivd here the 2d of this month and have been in search of the Army I am to command; but without much success; having found nothing but a few half-starved Soldiers who are remarkable for nothing but distress." To Washington, Greene detailed the paucity of supplies and equipment and low morale of the "Army, if it deserves the name of one." General Greene had never been to the South, so he urgently needed to understand his new department. Greene first sent his staff engineer, Col. Thaddeus Kosciuszko (Tadeusz Kościuszko), to perform a "most minute enquiry . . . into the State of the Rivers," roads, and topography of the Carolinas. Greene concurrently ordered Deputy Quartermaster General Col. Edward Carrington to find safe areas to establish supply depots, known as magazines, to receive forage and provisions from friendly locals. Lastly, Greene exerted great efforts to build good relationships with supportive state governors and militia leaders.

Overview of the Southern Department, 1776–1780

At the start of the conflict, the Continental Congress created the New York (later, Northern) and Canadian Departments to exercise operational command and control in the areas of active fighting. Congress organized the Middle and Southern Departments in February 1776 as the war spread southward (*Map 2*). Congress appointed Maj. Gen. Charles Lee to command the Southern Department, which encompassed Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Lee's tour of duty was short, but he played an important role in defeating then Maj. Gen. Henry Clinton's 1776 attack on Charleston.

Brig. Gen. Robert Howe of North Carolina took command of the Southern Department when Congress recalled Lee northward in June



Map 2

1776. Howe lacked an explicit appointment order from Congress, an oversight that allowed state political leaders to challenge Howe's command authority over state troops. Howe struggled to defend Georgia and South Carolina from raids out of British East Florida. Ultimately, he was recalled after the loss of Savannah and much of Georgia in late 1778.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln took command of the Southern Department in early 1779. Like Howe, Lincoln experienced significant challenges with civil-military cooperation. His tenure ended with the disastrous loss of Charleston, its garrison, and most of the southern Continental Army in May 1780. Gates took command in July 1780, and soon thereafter led his army to near ruin at Camden in August 1780. Greene thus inherited a command that in two years

had experienced nothing but defeat; the death or imprisonment of 3,100 Continentals; the loss of Georgia and much of South Carolina; and the loss of thousands of small arms and quantities of cannons, ordnance stores, and other supplies.

Geography, Terrain, and Environmental Factors

Greene and Cornwallis faced serious challenges during operations across the topographically diverse area of operations—bounded by the Appalachian Mountains in the west and running about 330 miles from southern Virginia to Savannah, Georgia. Camden and Cheraw were located along the East Coast's fall line—the highest navigable point on rivers flowing from the mountains to the Atlantic Ocean—and within the Sandhills region, a strip of broad pine barrens cut with flat ridges, stretching from Georgia to North Carolina. Savannah and Charleston were in the lower coastal plain, a mix of gently sloping terrain and wide tidal rivers bordered by marshy, fertile lowlands. In between was the upper coastal plain, with its slightly to steeply sloped clay and gravel ridges covered with thick vegetation. The Battles of Cowpens, South Carolina, and Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina, took place within this geological region.

Weather and climate within the Carolina subtropical region were equally diverse. Average summertime high temperatures ranged from 95°F (35°C) in the coastal plains to 75°F (24°C) in the upper parts of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Summertime heat and humidity affected both sides but caused greater hardships for northern European soldiers who were unused to the American climate. Winter daytime highs in the upper coastal plains ranged from 52°F (11°C) to 47°F (8°C), with nighttime lows around 32°F (8°C). The highest amounts of precipitation, mostly rain except in the upper mountain elevations, occurred along the coastal plains. The lower coastal plain averaged 51 to 60 inches (130 to 152 centimeters) of rain annually, and the upper coastal plain received around 46 to 50 inches (117 to 127 centimeters) per year. Heavy rainfall, especially during the peak months of March and July, hindered the cross-country movement of

troops and supply wagons by turning roads into mud and making normally shallow creeks and rivers impassable.

Diseases like smallpox and ague (malaria) significantly affected the operations of both armies. Smallpox was endemic in eighteenth-century Europe; thus, most British troops had acquired immunity to it either from inoculation or natural exposure. By contrast, the smaller, largely rural American population was vulnerable to smallpox. Continental and militia forces at Boston and Québec in 1775 were afflicted greatly by smallpox, likely brought over by British troops. Washington subsequently ordered the inoculation of Continental soldiers, which reduced the impact of the smallpox to more manageable levels. Washington also attempted to further reduce camp fevers like typhoid by imposing strict hygiene measures in Continental encampments—practices carried over by Greene's Continental forces in the South.

The pestilent climate of the American South also plagued soldiers, as epidemics of fever derailed American offensives on British East Florida in 1776 and 1778. Clinton was acutely aware of the dangers posed by low country diseases to unacclimated Europeans and timed his 1780 attack on Charleston to take place in winter, when the risks of these illnesses were lower. The protracted American defense of the city, however, frustrated Clinton's efforts to protect his forces. Many British and German troops fell ill from malaria, and the filth that accumulated during the siege triggered a typhoid outbreak. The movement of British troops and freed Black slaves into the interior caused smallpox outbreaks that lingered in rural areas after the end of the war. Cornwallis's army was affected greatly by malaria, despite his efforts to avoid the disease by marching his army into the supposedly healthier up-country region. Many soldiers were permanently incapacitated, and several died from fevers. Malaria was no respecter of people, and during October 1780 both Cornwallis and Tarleton temporarily were incapacitated by ague. The northern Continental troops were equally susceptible to malaria, but their surgeons usually carried cinchona bark (also known as Jesuit's bark) supplied from Spanish-held New Orleans. Cinchona bark contains quinine, a substance known to suppress malarial symptoms. British

surgeons were aware of the bark's medicinal properties but seldom received enough to make a difference.

Human Factors: Economy, Politics, and Religion

Georgia was the youngest of the thirteen colonies, with a prewar White population of 25,000 and an enslaved Black population of similar size. Georgia's coastal elites were overwhelmingly Anglicans—members of the established Church of England—yet the colony tolerated the presence of Jewish, Catholic, and non-Anglican Protestant settlers. After seizing power, the Georgia revolutionaries found themselves hemmed in by the Creek and Cherokee nations to the west and British-held St. Augustine in East Florida. A small radical, independence-minded bloc and a larger moderate Anglican faction reluctant to sever ties with Great Britain dominated the Georgia Whigs. During the early years of the war, Georgia patriots failed to take St. Augustine but did succeed in halting similar loyalist incursions. The patriots were aided by influential trader and Indian commissioner George Galpin, who persuaded the Lower Creek nation not to side with the British and to remain neutral during the war.

Compared to Georgia, North Carolina's prewar society was more divided politically and had fewer radical revolutionaries, owing to Royal Governor Josiah Martin's efforts to maintain good relations with the prewar colonial elites. In addition, the Regulator movement of 1766–1771—a short-lived rebellion of backcountry Carolinians against the royal government—fostered rural resentment against the Whig-dominated state assembly. Many backcountry inhabitants were recent German and Scotch-Irish immigrants who were not interested in Whig or Tory political arguments. Lastly, the state had a significant number of Friends, also known as Quakers, and Moravians, who refused to support or serve in the militia because of their pacifist beliefs. North Carolina revolutionaries were initially few in number, but in July 1775 many North Carolinians joined their cause after Whigs circulated a report claiming that Martin would organize militia units from White loyalists and Black recruits who

had been emancipated from rebel owners. The incensed patriots drove Martin into exile aboard a British warship on the Cape Fear River. Martin responded by convincing London to dispatch reinforcements to help the loyalist militia regain North Carolina. General Clinton's expedition reached North Carolina in March 1776, only to find the patriots had crushed a loyalist force at Moore's Creek Bridge on 27 February 1776. The British withdrew, leaving the patriot militia free to consolidate control over North Carolina—efforts that were complicated by British-instigated Cherokee attacks on settlements along the Catawba River. In September 1776, Brig. Gen. Griffith Rutherford of North Carolina led 2,500 militiamen on a punitive expedition that, in concert with similar Virginia and South Carolina expeditions, destroyed more than thirty Cherokee settlements. Most of the displaced Cherokee fled westward and took no further part in the war.

Charleston, the capital of colonial South Carolina, was established in 1670 by White settlers from Bermuda and Barbados. Although the Church of England was the official church of South Carolina, colonial proprietors shrewdly enticed French Huguenots, English and Scotch-Irish Protestants, and Sephardic Jews fleeing persecution in Europe to settle there. Prewar South Carolinian society might have been religiously diverse, but it was stratified economically between a large group of lower-class Whites and a small planter class, the so-called Rice Kings. Wealth derived from exporting rice, indigo, and other commodities gave the Rice Kings disproportionate political power and turned Charleston into the most affluent city in the colonial-era United States. By 1775, South Carolina had an estimated 170,000 inhabitants, split between 60,000 and 70,000 White people and 100,000 enslaved Black people. The upper strata of the mercantile community was overwhelmingly Anglican, yet sympathetic to Whig politics. The middle- and backcountry population of South Carolina was a diverse, boisterous mix of Protestant Scotch-Irish, and lesser numbers of Germans, Swiss, and Quakers—many who had migrated south from Virginia via the Great Wagon Road. Newer Scotch-Irish immigrants tended to remain loyal to the Crown, whereas older Scots—who

often harbored bitter memories of British brutality after the 1666 Covenanter uprising and 1745 Jacobite Rebellion—generally were hostile toward the British government and colonial establishment. Backcountry attitudes toward the British government were shaped further by the Anglo-Cherokee War of 1759. British regulars and Carolina militia troops won territorial concessions from the defeated Cherokee, but lingering resentments within rural communities gave rise to a Regulator movement that—unlike in North Carolina—extracted concessions from the colonial government peacefully. After South Carolina declared its independence, South Carolina Continental and militia units defeated a British amphibious assault against Charleston in June 1776, and other militia forces squelched Cherokee and loyalist raids in the backcountry. Consequently, South Carolina remained quiet until the British attack on Savannah in late 1778.

The English colony of Virginia was established in 1607 with a settlement at Jamestown. The early colonists struggled for several years with disease, starvation, and skirmishes with the Algonquin-speaking native population. The colony began to thrive in the mid-1630s with the intense cultivation of tobacco—first by indentured Whites who gradually were supplanted by enslaved Africans. By 1775, Virginia was the most populous state in America, with about 538,000 residents, of whom 318,000 were White and 220,582 were (mostly enslaved) Black. Tobacco wealth and the organization of an elected legislature, later known as the House of Burgesses, gave the planter elites great influence over the politics and the policies of the Crown-appointed governor. Nevertheless, the colony's overreliance on a single cash crop left the planters vulnerable to price drops, and their lavish lifestyles left them indebted to British merchants. Virginia's rural backcountry served as the first stop for many Scotch-Irish, largely Presbyterian, moving south from the increasingly crowded eastern portions of Pennsylvania and New York. The Scotch-Irish were soon joined by bands of German Lutherans and Moravians, former New England Puritans and—after the Great Awakening of 1740—congregations of Methodists and Baptists. By contrast, the Anglican Church of England was the

colony's official church and dominated the tidewater planters. Rising tensions over religious taxes and land grant fees were exacerbated by royal attempts to bypass the House of Burgesses and levy debt-reducing fees and taxes. Royal Governor John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, dissolved the House in May 1775 but fled for his safety after patriots convened their own legislature and seized control. From the security of a British ship at Yorktown, Dunmore proclaimed martial law, offered freedom to enslaved Black people and White indentured servants who would join the loyalist cause, and organized emancipated Black volunteers into *Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment*—provocative moves that alienated many otherwise sympathetic Americans. Patriot militia forces crushed Dunmore's expedition at Great Bridge on 9 December 1775. The demoralized British soon withdrew, leaving Virginia firmly in patriot hands.

Whig-controlled Virginia was left somewhat undisturbed for the next several years while the British set their focus elsewhere—which was fortunate for the Americans, as the state was vulnerable to invasion via the Chesapeake Bay's river network. The state also lacked manpower to defend itself, as most of its Continental regiments had surrendered at Charleston in May 1780. In the meantime, Virginia played an integral part in sustaining the American war effort in the South. Smuggled Virginia tobacco helped to fund the American war effort, and Virginia farms and towns supplied provisions and militia support to the Continental Army.

East Florida was not part of the original thirteen colonies but was instead ceded to Britain at the end of the Seven Years' War. Florida's population in 1775 was only a few thousand White people, both free and indentured, and a thousand or so enslaved Black people. Florida's value lay in its strategic position close to Britain's Caribbean holdings and American-held Savannah and Charleston. Both the British and Americans were surprised at the pro-loyalist sentiments among Florida's settlers, which were strengthened by the inflow of loyalist refugees from Georgia and the Carolinas.

Greene's assessment of the South's infrastructure revealed that the region had few improved roads and even fewer bridges. Thus, controlling access to river fords and ferry sites was critical to unhindered movement of troops and supply columns. Greene therefore ordered Quartermaster Carrington to build a flotilla of bateaux (flat-bottomed boats) and carriages to improve operational mobility and efficiency of moving troops and supplies via inland waterways. The assessment also revealed the placements of friendly and hostile districts, as well as the location of grist mills—information necessary for collecting and processing provisions and setting up magazines for storing supplies. Greene next appointed Major Davie, a respected North Carolina militia officer, as the commissary general, the officer responsible for procuring forage and provisions from local sources. Both sides survived by requisitioning supplies from the locals, but Greene tried to mollify the locals by requiring Davie's quartermasters to supervise foragers, prevent looting, and issue receipts for requisitioned supplies—thereby tying the holder financially to the success of the Whig cause.

Reorganizing the Southern Army

Greene next turned to improving the state of his army of roughly 1,000 troops. The consolidated remnants of the veteran 1st and 2d Maryland Brigades under Col. Otho Holland Williams—about 400 Continentals, which formed the core of his army—were redesignated as the Maryland Brigade on 1 January 1781. Greene's light troops consisted of a company each of Delaware and Maryland light infantry, and Col. William Washington's amalgamated 1st and 3d Continental Light Dragoons. Aside from an understrength North Carolina Continental company and a handful of supernumerary officers, the Continental Line regiments from the southern states were dead or British prisoners in Charleston. By comparison, General Gates had commanded two Continental infantry brigades of 950 soldiers, 400 light infantry, and a 100-strong artillery detachment. Greene described his new command to his former assistant,

Col. John Cox: "On my arrival to camp I found General Gates at the head of a few ragamuffins without discipline, order or government. The officers had lost all confidence and respect for the General, the loss of discipline naturally followed." He further noted to Alexander Hamilton how the Whigs and Tories commonly brutalized prisoners and supporters of the other side. Greene responded by issuing orders to restore discipline in the Continental ranks and backed up his orders with corporal punishment and executions of notorious offenders.

Greene's next priority was solidifying support from the state authorities in his department. Despite his best efforts to recruit local populations into Continental service, Greene found few men willing to enlist and risk ruin at home. Instead, he had to depend on a mix of alarm (immediate response) and short service (generally ninety days or less) militia, as well as state line troops enlisted in state service for up to one year. After the heavy losses incurred in Charleston, states relied heavily on the cheaper and easier options to mobilize militia and state line units to support Greene's campaigns.

Greene's most significant source of state troops and supplies came from Virginia, so when Congress assigned Maj. Gen. Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben to the Southern Department, Green appointed Steuben to expedite recruits and supplies and help Governor Thomas Jefferson defend his state. North Carolina was hamstrung politically by a three-way power struggle between Governor Abner Nash, the state assembly, and its Board of War—a situation that greatly hampered Greene's ability to get supplies and manpower. Matters were worse in Georgia and South Carolina, as neither state had a functioning government. Greene had grasped the importance of maintaining good relations with the civil authorities and carried on an extensive correspondence with Continental Congress President Samuel Huntington and the state governors and officials within his department. Greene's motivation went beyond obtaining recruits and supplies; he also intended to demonstrate support for legitimate American governance.

Greene quickly realized that his success depended greatly on support and cooperation from South Carolina militia officers like Thomas Sumter, Francis Marion, and Andrew Pickens. Sumter was

a Virginia native who saw service during the Cherokee War before settling along the Santee River. He grew wealthy through his country store and marriage to Mary Jameson, a well-to-do widow. After serving in the Continental Congress, Sumter commanded South Carolina Continentals until he resigned in 1778. After loyalists burned his plantation in May 1780, Sumter organized a partisan corps and was commissioned commander in chief of the South Carolina militia. During the latter part of 1780, Sumter's partisans raided loyalist outposts and convoys and fought several engagements with Tarleton's *Legion*. Known as the "Gamecock," Sumter was a prideful, charismatic, hard-fighting—albeit strategically inept and stubborn—patriot leader who often refused to cooperate with Greene's plans. Greene had more success with the other South Carolina partisan leaders. Andrew Pickens was a reticent Scotch-Irish Presbyterian planter from the Long Cane district of South Carolina. He raised a unit of fellow Cherokee War veterans that fought successfully against Cherokee raiders and loyalists at Kettle Creek. Pickens accepted parole after the surrender of Charleston but returned to active service after Tories burned his property. Francis Marion was a South Carolina native of French Huguenot descent and a planter on the Santee River. He saw service during the French and Indian War and the Cherokee War, which led to a captaincy in the 2d South Carolina Continentals in June 1775. Marion commanded Continental troops through major operations in 1779–1780, but he avoided the surrender of Charleston because he was outside the city recovering from a broken ankle. After the Waxhaws massacre, Marion organized a partisan band that carried out irregular warfare. Unlike Sumter, Marion proved adept at low-cost raids against loyalist units, and even against Tarleton's best *Legion* dragoons.

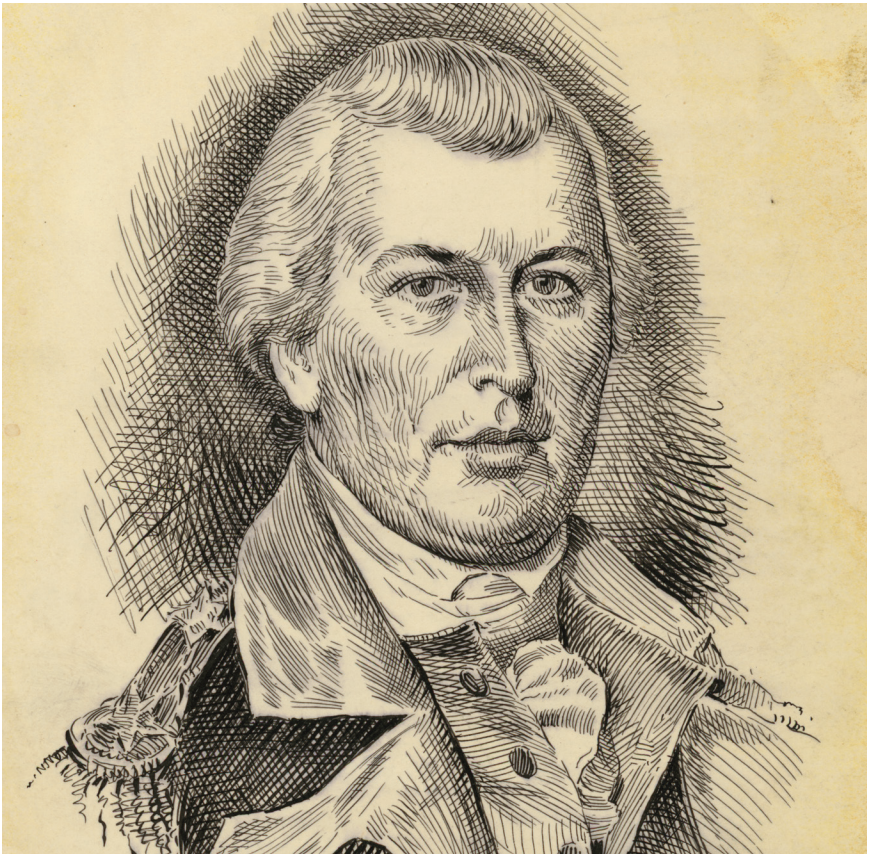
With his lieutenants busy with improvements, Greene had time to assess his strategy and campaign plans. The Continental Army's position at Charlotte made tactical sense, as the town sat in a patriot-supporting district and blocked Cornwallis's route to the loyalist enclaves at Salisbury and Cross Creek. However, Greene's small army was critically short of weapons, ordnance stores, provisions, and forage. Greene needed time without major combat action to

restore the fighting potential of his Continentals and improve the army's receipt of supplies and provisions—neither of which would be possible at Charlotte. Yet a withdrawal from Charlotte would embolden the British and loyalists and dispirit the local Whigs. Thus, Greene had to figure out a way to regroup the army while sustaining the morale of Whig supporters and undermining that of the loyalists. Greene explained his predicament to Brig. Gen. Henry Knox, Washington's chief of artillery:

> Nothing can save this Country but a good permanent Army conducted with great Prudence and Caution. . . . Every thing here depends upon opinion, and it is equally dangerous to go forward as to stand still for if you lose the Confidence of the People you lose all Support and if you rush into danger you hazard every Thing.

Greene addressed his dilemma by adopting what was described as "the most audacious and ingenious piece of military strategy of the war" by sending Morgan's "flying army"—a mix of roughly 800 Continental and militia infantry, light infantry, and dragoons—west of the Broad River. Greene's orders to Morgan, who had been promoted to brigadier general in October, were specific: "The object of this detachment is to give protection to that part of the country and spirit up the people . . . act offensively or defensively as your own prudence and direction many direct . . . annoy the enemy in the quarter [and] collect the provisions and forage out of the way of the enemy." Greene's orders illustrate his grasp of the importance of maintaining the goodwill of the population, without which no victory was possible. While Morgan's men marched westward, Greene temporarily took his remaining troops to a "camp of repose" in the fertile and patriot-friendly Cheraw Hills region of South Carolina on the Pee Dee River, where he would rebuild the fighting strength and morale of his Continental infantry through strict discipline and training.

Greene's movement to Cheraw Hills included quartermaster wagons with supplies like provisions and uniforms, ordnance



***Brig. Gen. Nathanael Greene*, Jacques Reich, c. 1899–1920 (*National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution*)**

wagons for ammunition and spare weapons, and hospital wagons for carrying wounded and sick soldiers and medical supplies. Greene appointed quartermaster and ordnance officers to supervise the work primarily performed by civilian specialists. Among this last group were women, which included soldiers' wives who were carried "on the strength" of the regiments—authorized rations and permission to accompany their husbands—in exchange for handling routine sustainment tasks like washing and sewing uniforms. Commanders prioritized women capable of working as nurses and medical attendants.

The British army was not idle in its winter camp at Winnsboro, South Carolina. Cornwallis and his quartermasters gathered the necessary supplies while the officers and sergeants supervised the training of those troops not down with camp sickness. Cornwallis commanded about 8,000 regulars and provincials—mostly American and Irish immigrants with some Continental deserters, all of whom generally had enlisted for the duration of the war—but had only 2,000 troops at Winnsboro. The remainder were tied down as garrisons for Ninety Six and other critical bases because Cornwallis did not trust the loyalty and efficiency of the loyalist militia levies. The numbers changed constantly as Cornwallis and his officers shifted forces to counter partisan attacks.

Cornwallis's position at Winnsboro made tactical sense, as he was well placed to reinforce Ninety Six and Camden quickly. Yet the town lay above the fall line, which forced quartermasters to move supplies by wagon convoys that made lucrative targets for Whig insurgents. Being immersed in tactical matters, Cornwallis lost sight of his strategic objective of recruiting and safeguarding loyalist levies and their families in South Carolina. Loyalist morale suffered as a result, as evidenced by significant levels of desertion and poor combat performance against patriot militia detachments.

OPERATIONS

Lt. Col. Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee's 2d Partisan Corps and Col. Francis Marion's partisan detachment opened the offensive with unsuccessful attacks on British posts in South Carolina at Georgetown and Fort Watson in January and April 1781, respectively. The attacks forced Cornwallis to react by sending reinforcements to shore up the defenses in what once had been safe rear areas. Col. William

Washington's corps of Continental dragoons and militia light infantry defeated a detachment of 250 loyalists at Hammond's Store—a crossroads settlement near present-day Clinton, South Carolina—in December 1780. Meanwhile, Morgan's flying army had openly crossed the Broad River and raised the alarm by raiding loyalist farms for provisions and forage. Morgan's initial success led to his proposal to drive westward into Georgia. Greene tactfully rejected the proposal as too risky but added: "If moving as far as Ninety Six, or any where in the neighborhood of it, will contribute to the obtaining of more ample supplies, you have my consent. Col. Tarleton is said to be on his way to pay you a visit. I doubt not but he will have a decent reception and a proper dismission."

Tarleton's *British Legion* was indeed riding hard to corner Morgan's elusive flying army. Cornwallis sent reinforcements along to Tarleton along with fresh orders to pass the Broad River: "with the legion and the first battalion of the 71st, as soon as possible. If Morgan is still at Williams' or anywhere else within your reach, I should wish you to push him to the utmost. . . . Ninety Six is of so much consequence, that no time is to be lost." Ninety Six was important strategically to the British to maintain secure communications with Cherokee allies to the west, protect loyalist allies, and suppress rebel partisans.

Thus reinforced, Tarleton commanded a mixed-arm force of the *7th Foot* (*Royal Fusiliers*—177 officers and men), *71st Foot* (*Fraser's Highlanders*—263 troops), a composite *Light Infantry Battalion* (135–180 men), the *British Legion* infantry battalion (200–271 soldiers), 300 dragoons, and a light artillery detachment. Additional support came from loyalist scouts and civilian wagon teamsters and drivers.

Tarleton's pursuit was delayed by bad weather, which gave his troops time to glean barely five days of provisions from that left by the American foraging parties. Scouts commanded by Col. Andrew Pickens reported Tarleton's advance to Morgan on 12 January 1781, who responded by consolidating his scattered detachments by Thicketty Creek. In line with Greene's instructions to avoid decisive engagement, Morgan directed his army northward to the Broad River via the Green River Road—a movement calculated to draw Tarleton away from possible reinforcements. Meanwhile, Morgan

asked Pickens to screen the withdrawal and sweep supplies away from the *Legion*'s march route.

The Battle of Cowpens

Morgan's army camped at Thicketty Creek, about 13 miles from the Broad River, on the night of 15–16 January 1781. On the same evening, under cover of darkness, Tarleton's troops made a surprise crossing of the Pacolet River. Morgan learned early on 16 January that Tarleton's troopers were across the Pacolet, and he quickly calculated the enemy would close the distance to the American rear guard before the flying army could cross the Broad River safely. Morgan thus opted to set up a deliberate defense at the Cowpens, a well-known cattle-grazing field off the Green River Road. En route, Morgan called up the local militia as reinforcements for the expected battle.

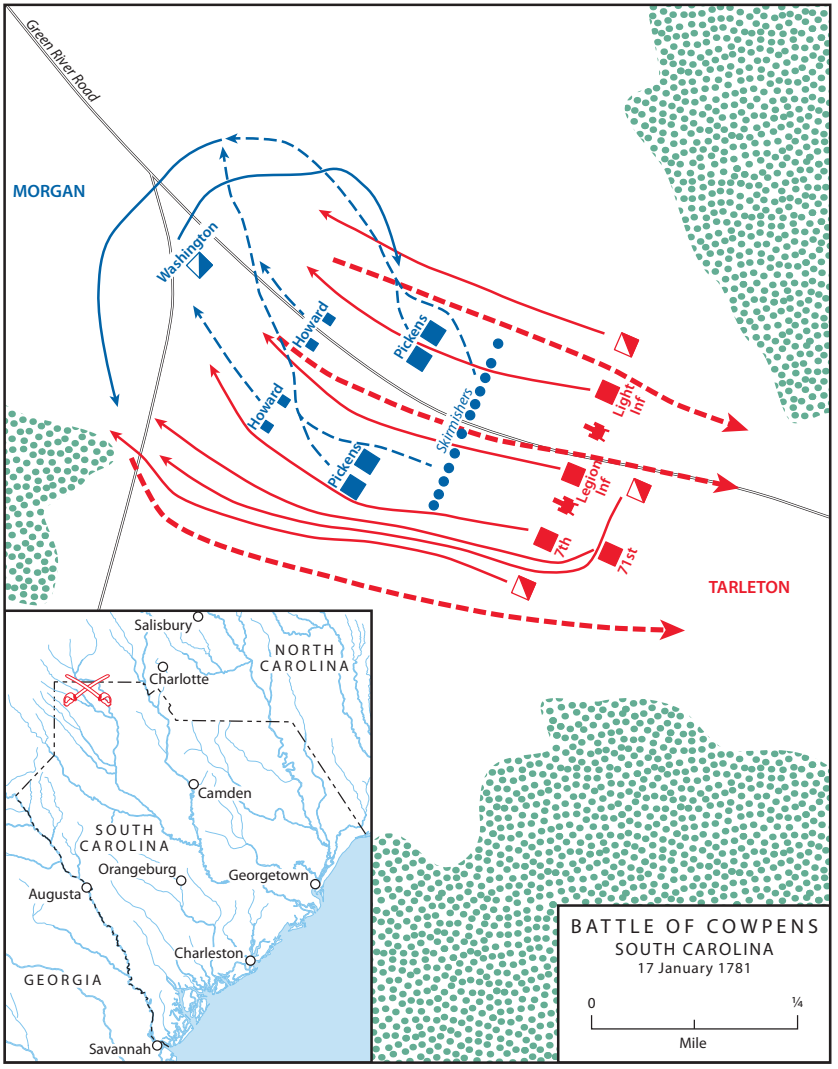
That evening, Morgan's troops ate and rested while the officers and sergeants supervised issuing ammunition—twenty-four rounds per militiaman and forty per Continental soldier—and weapons preparations. In the interim, Morgan rode the ground with his subordinate commanders to discuss disposition and tactics for the impending battle. Morgan then held a council of war to issue final orders and a rousing demand to crush the hated enemy. Morgan afterward "went among the volunteers, helping them fix their swords, joked with them about their sweet-hearts, told them to keep in good spirits . . . and telling them the old wagoner would crack his whip over [Tarleton] in the morning. . . . 'Just hold up your heads, boys, three fires . . . and you are free.'"

While Morgan's troops rested, Tarleton briefly paused to let his units rest and eat what little remained of their provisions. Tarleton resumed his advance before morning twilight on 17 January, with a strong light infantry advance guard. Partisan scouts reported the British advance, and Morgan sent out a dragoon patrol, known as a vidette, to make contact and delay the enemy advance. After a brief engagement, Tarleton's troopers captured several American skirmishers, who yielded information about Morgan's bivouac site.

The skirmish put the loyalist and British troops on edge, and they advanced slowly for fear of further ambushes.

Meanwhile, the Americans woke before dawn, ate a quick breakfast, and shook out their battle lines (*Map 3*). Morgan carefully arrayed his well-rested and motivated forces to maximize each other's strengths while minimizing their vulnerabilities. Morgan first deployed 270 rifle-armed skirmishers on a forward slope facing the expected British advance along the Green River Road. Morgan next positioned the remaining 700 Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia militiamen along the reverse slope under the overall command of Pickens. Thus positioned, the American militia had better chances of hitting the enemy troops silhouetted on the higher ground, whereas the British were more likely to overshoot the Americans. Morgan then deployed his third line of Continental, North Carolina, and Virginia State troops—a provisional battalion commanded by Lt. Col. John Eager Howard of the 1st Maryland Regiment—far enough beyond the militia position to avoid detection, even by *Legion* dragoons on horseback. Lastly, Washington's 3d Legionary Corps, with attached mounted militiamen, took position behind the third line, ready to counterattack any British breakthrough. To this point, no Continental commander had successfully employed southern militia troops using conventional tactics. Morgan was an experienced light infantry commander who had instead learned how to employ militia troops effectively in conventional operations. Morgan would use the militia to conduct a delaying defense, trading space for time while inflicting maximum casualties in the enemy ranks. In the first line, the skirmishers had orders to fire two shots, especially aimed at the British officers, and fall back to the main militia line. Pickens's militia troops in the second line had the same orders to fire two shots and withdraw in good order through the loosely positioned Continental Line. At that point, Howard's Continental and state troops in the third line would fight conventionally with their flanks covered by the regrouped militia and dragoons.

By contrast, Tarleton employed little tactical finesse when he ordered a troop of *Legion* dragoons to "drive in the militia parties who covered the front, [so] that General Morgan's disposition might be



Map 3

conveniently and distinctly inspected." Concentrated rifle fire from the Whig skirmishers arrested the dragoon's advance, prompting Tarleton to position the 3-pounder "grasshopper" cannons on the Green River Road to cover the deployment of forces: the *Royal Fusiliers* left of the road, the *Legion Infantry* in the middle, and the light infantry on the right flank. A canebrake southwest of the

road forced Tarleton to position the *Highlanders* behind the *Fusilier* regiment. Tarleton anchored each flank with a troop of dragoons and held the remaining mounted troops in reserve.

Tarleton ordered his infantry to advance at the quick step (100 steps per minute) to drive off the riflemen with the bayonet. The patriot skirmishers "gave them a heavy & galling Fire & retreated to the Regiments intended for their support." Maj. Joseph McDowell, rather than joining the retreat, instead led his North Carolina skirmishers to fight from the cover of the canebrake. The *Royal Artillery*'s fire caused few casualties, but overshooting forced Washington to relocate his dragoons from their vulnerable position. Meanwhile, Morgan waited until the enemy line reached the killing distance of 50 yards before ordering Pickens's militia to open fire. The effect of the close-range fire devastated the British ranks. Lt. Roderick Mackenzie, *Highlander* company commander, later reported: "Two-thirds of the British infantry officers had already fallen, and nearly the same proportion of privates; fatigue however, enfeebled the pursuit, much more than loss of blood." The surviving British officers rallied their troops and resumed the advance on the American militia line.

Pickens's soldiers followed orders to break contact, with some having to run from British bayonets. Tarleton reacted to what appeared to be a routed militia line by ordering the dragoon troop on his right to pursue the fleeing rebels. The British dragoons brushed aside a screen of skirmishers and cut down several Whig militiamen before being scattered by a concentrated charge of Colonel Washington's troopers. While Morgan rode in to rally the shaken American militiamen, the British main line advanced rapidly to engage Colonel Howard's Continental line, now visible on the reverse slope.

Tarleton reacted to the sighting of the Continental line by sending the *Highlanders* to extend his left flank. Meanwhile, Howard ordered sequential volleys by battalion, thereby keeping the enemy under continuous fire. The British infantry responded, and the two sides stood firm for several minutes while trading volleys. Tarleton broke the impasse by sending several *Legion* dragoon troops to support the



***The Battle of Cowpens*, Don Troiani, 1996, a National Guard Heritage Painting, courtesy of the National Guard Bureau**

Highlanders' movement beyond the Continental line's right flank. Howard reacted by ordering Capt. Andrew Wallace's flank company to "refuse the right" by pivoting 90 degrees rightward to present a wall of bayonets toward the loyalist troopers. The attacking *Highlanders* fired a volley just as Wallace issued his orders. In the confusion, Wallace's company fired a volley, did an about-face, and marched to the rear. In short order, the remaining Continental units replicated the same volley and rearward movement. Howard had not intended such a movement, but he capitalized on the error to have his troops avoid the British flanking movement while reloading their weapons. Morgan was briefly alarmed by the unexpected development but was reassured when he saw the Continentals moving in good order to the rear. Morgan responded by pointing out a slight rise astride the road, where Howard was to turn about and resume the fight.

While the infantry action played out in the middle, Colonel Washington regrouped his troopers after successfully driving back

the *Legion* dragoons on the American right. Through the black powder smoke, Washington spotted the disordered and leaderless British infantry surging after the withdrawing Continentals. Washington recognized an opportunity to encircle the enemy and sent a courier riding to Howard with vital intelligence: "They are coming on like a mob. Give them a fire and I will charge them." As Washington led his squadron around the exposed left flank of the *Highlanders*, Howard's troops pivoted and volleyed into the faces of the shocked British troops, killing and wounding dozens and stunning the remainder. Howard's soldiers capitalized on the confusion with a bayonet charge while Pickens's militia and Washington's dragoons enveloped the enemy flanks. Tarleton attempted a counterattack, but most of his dragoons—many of whom were former Continental soldiers pressed into British service after their capture—instead rode from the battlefield. Tarleton attempted a final sortie with sixty remaining dragoons, but Continental dragoons and militiamen drove him back. Tarleton rode from the battlefield to rally about 200 soldiers and returned to Cornwallis's camp on 18 January 1781. Morgan reported the enemy losses as 10 officers and "100 rank and file killed," 200 wounded, and 529 prisoners—almost all of Cornwallis's best light infantry soldiers. The Americans seized valuable booty: two 3-pounder guns; 800 muskets; and 35 wagons filled with ammunition, uniforms, and other supplies. In return, the Continentals lost ten killed and fifty-five wounded, in addition to an unknown number of militia casualties.

Fight or Withdraw?

Morgan took no time to celebrate his victory but instead prepared to move to avoid the inevitable pursuit from Cornwallis. Groups of local militiamen and prisoners buried the dead and readied the seriously wounded for transportation. With prisoners in tow, Morgan's army left hours after the battle and stopped to bivouac only after crossing the Broad River. Morgan then paused to regroup, dispatch the prisoners to Virginia under militia escort, and send a report to Greene, who received Morgan's report on 23 January 1781;

by that point, Morgan's light corps had crossed the Catawba River at Sherrald's Ford, north of Charlotte. Morgan had deliberately taken a circuitous route northwest from the Cowpens to Gilbert Town (present-day Rutherfordton, North Carolina) before turning east to Sherrald's Ford—a forced march of 100 miles in 5 days. Morgan positioned militia detachments to watch the fords for the expected British pursuit and waited for Greene's response.

Morgan's unexpected victory at Cowpens upset the strategic calculus for both Greene and Cornwallis. Greene was naturally pleased with Morgan's victory. Yet Greene's army was dangerously dispersed, and Cornwallis's remaining army was larger than Morgan's corps. Greene briefly considered regrouping to attack Ninety Six, but he abandoned the idea after conferring with Morgan at Sherrald's Ford. Morgan had received only Maj. Gen. William Lee Davidson's 700 North Carolina militiamen as reinforcements—good troops, but not enough to guard all fording points of the Catawba. Moreover, Greene's principal logistics base at Salisbury lay only 40 miles to the northeast, and presented a tempting target for Cornwallis's hungry redcoats. Finally, Greene believed Cornwallis might try to trap Greene's army against that of Benedict Arnold (now a British brigadier general) advancing from eastern Virginia. Greene thus ordered his army to conduct a strategic withdrawal northeast toward Virginia starting on 30 January 1781—beginning with the evacuation of the tons of food, forage, and ordnance stores at Salisbury. Greene then ordered Brig. Gen. Isaac Huger to march his Continental troops and logistics trains from Cheraw to support the Salisbury withdrawal. Greene lastly directed Morgan to continue screening the Catawba fords, fighting if necessary to cover the Salisbury withdrawal without exposing the light troops to heavy losses. Greene characteristically looked beyond the immediate risk to his divided army and saw the possibility of inflicting a strategic defeat on Cornwallis's overextended army: "It is necessary we should take every possible precaution to guard against misfortune. But I am not without hopes of ruining Lord Cornwallis if he persists in his mad scheme of pushing through the Country and it is my earnest desire to form a junction as soon as possible for this purpose."

The Race for the Dan

In the interim, Cornwallis prepared to resume his "mad scheme" after the arrival of Maj. Gen. Alexander Leslie's brigade of 1,200 soldiers from Virginia's Tidewater, giving Cornwallis a strength of about 2,500. Cornwallis reported the Cowpens disaster to Clinton in New York but carefully omitted his abandonment of the pacification strategy. He instead shared his plans—albeit only with Lord George Germain in London—to destroy Greene's army and then occupy North Carolina. Cornwallis used his mounted scouts to gather intelligence about the American dispositions, but he failed to use his skilled *Royal Engineer* officers to survey roads and river crossings. Cornwallis blundered by marching to the presumably shallower fords on the upper Broad River beginning on 18 January 1781. The British instead found the upper Broad was deeper than expected, further delaying the army's slow movement on muddy piedmont roads. Cornwallis's army straggled into Ramsour's Mill on 25 January to rest and forage. By then, loyalist scouts had located Morgan's troops about 20 miles away, closely guarding the main fords on the east branch of the Catawba River. Cornwallis then made an unorthodox decision to reset the odds in his favor:

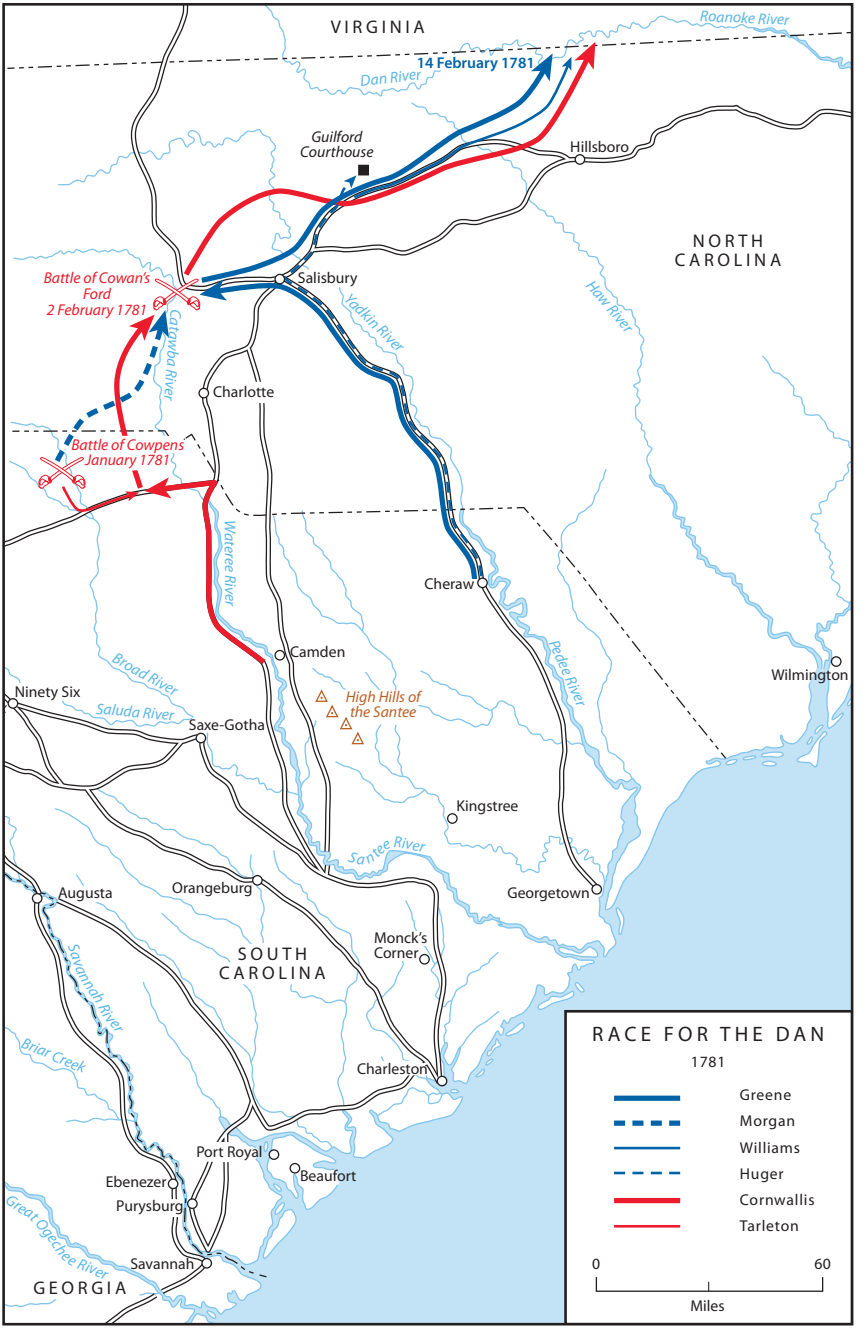
> The train of wagons that now attended [the army] met with great obstacles on the march, which considerably impeded the progress of the army. On the 25th, a halt was made . . . for the purpose of destroying all the baggage and carriages, except such that was absolutely necessary. Earl Cornwallis reduced the size and quantity of his own baggage, and this laudable example was followed by . . . other officers under his command. After adopting this measure, so necessary for the prosecution of offensive operations, the army proceeded towards the Catawba.

Cornwallis's attempt to improve his mobility by reducing his army's wagons also meant the army had to stop more frequently to gather forage and provisions. He also found the army was slowed further by

a group of ill soldiers, American prisoners, and more women than those authorized "on the strength" of individual regiments. Heavy rains hindered British movements, and it reached Beattie's Ford on 28 January only to find the Catawba River flooded and impassable. Cornwallis's troops used the enforced halt to forage, care for animals, and repair worn clothing and equipment.

Cornwallis judged the river level low enough to attempt a surprise crossing at the lightly defended Cowan's Ford on 1 February 1781, aided by a diversionary attack at Beattie's Ford by Lt. Col. James Webster's brigade. Cornwallis and Leslie both were unhorsed during the process, and many redcoats died from drowning or gunfire. The surviving British troops drove off the demoralized Carolina militiamen, and Davidson suffered a mortal wound. Cornwallis's crossing compelled Morgan to consolidate his remaining detachments and run toward Greene's army. Cornwallis's gambit thus succeeded, but at the cost of a hundred more dead or injured, and Morgan's army was still on the loose. Tarleton's troopers followed the American trail and overran some laggard rebel militiamen at Torrence's Tavern. Tarleton noted with satisfaction that word of the skirmish "diffused such a terror among the inhabitants, that the King's troops passed through the most hostile part of North Carolina without a shot from the militia." Cornwallis, however, admonished Tarleton for allowing his troopers to plunder wagons and nearby houses instead of continuing the pursuit. While the Tory dragoons were thus engaged, Morgan safely reached Salisbury despite a heavy rainstorm (*Map 4*).

Greene, meanwhile, had adjusted his strategic dispositions by ordering Davie's quartermasters to load workshops and movable stores from Salisbury. On 2 February, the wagon train marched to rendezvous with the prepositioned bateaux flotilla at Trading Ford on the Yadkin River. After seeing the wagon train on its way, Greene sent messages redirecting General Huger and Colonel Lee to a new rendezvous point at Guilford Courthouse. Tarleton's advanced guard reached Salisbury on 3 February. The main body paused there to gather the leftover supplies while Brig. Gen. Charles O'Hara's *Brigade of Guards* continued the pursuit. O'Hara's guards finally


VIRGINIA
Roanoke River
14 February 1781
Dan River
Guilford Courthouse
Hillsboro
NORTH CAROLINA
Battle of Cowan's Ford 2 February 1781
Catawba River
Salisbury
Yadkin River
Haw River
Charlotte
Battle of Cowpens January 1781
Wateree River
Cheraw
Pedee River
Camden
Broad River
Ninety Six
Saluda River
Saxe-Gotha
High Hills of the Santee
Wilmington
Kingstree
Santee River
Georgetown
Augusta
Orangeburg
Monck's Corner
SOUTH CAROLINA
Savannah River
Briar Creek
Charleston
Port Royal
Beaufort
Ebenezer
Purysburg
Great Ogechee River
Savannah
GEORGIA
RACE FOR THE DAN
1781
Greene
Morgan
Williams
Huger
Cornwallis
Tarleton
0
60
Miles

Map 4

reached Trading Ford after hours in mud and rain, only to find a handful of abandoned wagons and an enemy militia patrol watching the Yadkin River. With no boats and another flooded river to his front, Cornwallis rested his army until he found a suitable crossing point upstream.

Greene sent his main body on from Trading Ford to Guilford Courthouse while he and a small covering detachment monitored British movements. When Greene saw the British army break camp and march upstream, he correctly assumed Cornwallis was continuing his pursuit. Despite the horrid weather and lack of militia reinforcements, Greene was cautiously optimistic:

> How is it possible an army circumstanced as ours is, can make head against one organized and equipped as Lord Cornwallises is...It is not improbable from Lord Cornwallises pushing disposition, and the contempt he has for our Army, we may precipitate him into some capital misfortune. . . . If Lord Cornwallis knows his true interest he will pursue our army. If he can disperse that, he compleats the reduction of the State; and without that he will do nothing to effect.

Cornwallis's troops crossed the ebbing Yadkin on 7 February 1781 at Shallow Ford, by which point Greene's army was 25 miles away at Guilford Courthouse. Greene held a council of war there on 9 February, and his officers unanimously recommended that the army avoid fighting until reinforced. Greene already had decided as much, and reorganized the flying army with Washington's Legionary Corps, Lee's 2d Partisan Corps, Lt. Col. John Eager Howard's provisional battalion, and Maj. David Campbell's Virginia riflemen—780 troops in total—to screen the withdrawal. Greene selected Col. Otho Holland Williams of the 6th Maryland to replace Morgan, who was stricken with debilitating rheumatism and piles (hemorrhoids).

A Game of Hare and Hounds

Greene's lumbering supply trains, field guns, and their Continental infantry escort rolled from Guilford Courthouse on 10 February toward the lower fords of the Dan River at Irwin's and Boyd's Ferries (at today's South Boston, Virginia). Williams's flying army marched westward to gain contact with the British and led them northward toward Dix's Ferry on the upper Dan—thereby distracting Cornwallis from the movement of the main body. American and loyalist dragoons clashed at Bruce's Mill, only 7 miles from Guilford Courthouse. The Americans ended the skirmish by tearing planks from a bridge spanning Reedy Fork Creek, forcing Tarleton's dragoons on a costly detour while Williams's soldiers force marched toward Dix's Ferry. From 11 to 13 February, Cornwallis relentlessly drove his army after the American light troops, hindered by hasty obstacles and harassing attacks by local rebel militiamen. Sgt. Maj. William Seymour of the Delaware Regiment later described the withdrawal:

> On the eighth instant [8 February], we marched from here, General Greene's army taking one road and the light troops another. . . . This day we received intelligence that the British Army was advancing very close in our rear. . . . We marched . . . on the ninth inst., taking the road towards Dan River, which we reached on the fourteenth, after a march of two hundred and fifty miles from . . . our encampment at Pacolet River . . . we marched for the most part both day and night, the main of the British being close in our rear, so that we had not scarce time to cook our victuals, their whole attention being on our light troops.

In the meantime, Greene's troops and camp followers crossed the Dan River on light boats while engineers used the bateaux to carry across the heavy wagons and cannons. The army finished its movement by midday on 14 February, prompting Greene to send a

message to Williams ordering him to break contact and withdraw to Boyd's Ferry. Williams's corps outdistanced the pursuing British and safely crossed by torchlight at Boyd's Ferry, with Greene, Williams, and Lee in the last boats. Tarleton's advance guard reached Irwin's Ferry early on 15 February, only to find "some works evacuated, which had been constructed to cover the retreat of the enemy, who six hours before had finished their passage, and were then encamped on the opposite bank. Every measure of the Americans, during their march from the Catawba to Virginia, was judiciously designed and vigorously executed."

While the American troops rested from their exertions, General Greene implemented measures to retain the initiative. He believed Cornwallis had three possible options: move to the proloyalist Hillsborough region for recruits and supplies; continue the pursuit into Virginia; or establish communications with General Arnold's army via the Roanoke River at Halifax, North Carolina. Greene sent Steuben to prevent Arnold's army from leaving Portsmouth, Virginia, and Kosciusko to fortify Halifax. Greene urged Governor Thomas Jefferson of Virginia and Governor Abner Nash of North Carolina to call out their available alarm militia and state line units to reinforce the Continentals. Greene quickly reassessed his campaign plan after learning Cornwallis's army was regrouping in North Carolina, as he noted to Governor Jefferson:

> When the Enemy first took their departure from the Dan they had every prospect of great reinforcements from the Tories of Carolina . . . if they were permitted to roam at large in the State that it would indubitably impress the idea of Conquest upon the Minds of the disaffected . . . and perhaps occasion those . . . to take an active and decisive part against us. I instantly determined . . . to advance into the state. . . . It was necessary to convince the Carolinians that they were not conquered and by affording immediate protection . . . engage the continuance of their confidence and friendship.

Pyle's Massacre

Although he knew the army needed time to regroup, Greene realized the same respite would give Cornwallis time to reorganize and recruit loyalist reinforcements. Greene knew a quick resumption of active operations by his Continentals would both boost the morale of patriot militiamen and demonstrate Cornwallis's failures to loyalist sympathizers. Greene thus badgered Governors Jefferson and Nash for supplies, fresh mounted troops, and additional light infantry. Greene also wrote to General Steuben in Virginia to urge the rapid shipment of new muskets, cartridge boxes, and ordnance stores to arm the new troops.

Cornwallis, meanwhile, had withdrawn to Hillsborough, North Carolina, where he expected to receive loyalist reinforcements and provisions. British General O'Hara wrote disgustedly about the lackluster response by local Tories: "The novelty of a camp in the backwoods of America more than any other cause brought several people to stare at us. Their curiosity once satisfied, they returned to their homes." Contrary to O'Hara's complaint, a significant number of loyalists supported Commissary Charles Stedman as wagoners and cattle drivers. Stedman organized foraging detachments to confiscate livestock and provisions from the locals—necessary measures that further alienated many otherwise sympathetic Americans. Cornwallis's scouts detected the arrival of the rebel militia reinforcements but missed the reentry of Lee's 2d Partisan Corps and recently promoted Brig. Gen. Andrew Pickens's militia regiment into North Carolina—the first movement of Greene's counteroffensive. Several hundred loyalist recruits also joined Cornwallis at Hillsborough, who sent them to train with Tarleton's *Legion* at Wetzell's Mill on Reedy Fork Creek—a popular reprovisioning spot for both armies. The uptick in enemy movements prompted Colonel Lee to set ambushes for isolated loyalist patrols. On 25 February, a column of new loyalist recruits under Lt. Col. John Pyle unwittingly mistook Lee's green-jacketed dragoons for Tarleton's *Legion* troopers. Before Lee could tell the encircled and defenseless Tories to lay down their arms, an exchange of gunfire

precipitated a bloody and one-sided melee. The hardened Continental and patriot troops quickly killed 90 and captured 250 of the hapless Tories—while the few who escaped spread the word of what became known as "Pyle's Hacking Match." The destruction of Pyle's regiment further depressed loyalist spirits and their willingness to support the British army openly.

Wetzell's Mill

Greene received enough reinforcements—roughly 1,600 Virginia State Line infantry and militia rifle units—to recross his main force into North Carolina on 23 February 1781. Greene replicated his earlier Cowpens operational approach by splitting heavy and light troops (flying army), thereby confusing Cornwallis while reducing the demand for provisions and fodder in a single district. After several days of feinting and skirmishing, Cornwallis tried to trap Colonel Williams's flying army near Wetzell's Mill, where it was "posted carelessly at separate plantations for the convenience of subsisting." Cornwallis dispatched Colonel Webster's reinforced brigade of 1,200 troops: three infantry regiments, Tarleton's *Legion*, and a company each of *Guards* light infantry and Ansbach *jaegers* (riflemen). Williams's flying army consisted of Lee's 2d Partisan Corps, Pickens's South Carolina militia regiment, three North Carolina militia companies, and a battalion of Virginia riflemen—about 700 troops.

With Tarleton's *Legion* in the vanguard, Webster's brigade marched from their camp early on 6 March 1781 to catch the Americans in their bedrolls. The British advance was concealed by fog, but Lee's pickets detected the enemy movement and gave the alarm. Williams immediately deployed his light infantry and militia to delay Webster's advance while the Continentals and dragoons took up firing positions on the far side of Reedy Fork Creek. Lee's light infantry drove back the initial attack, buying time for the American light troops to wade the creek. Webster riposted by sending his light infantry to cross upstream, but they were blocked in turn

by Colonel Washington's 3d Legionary Corps, which screened Williams's withdrawal back to Greene's bivouac site. Each side lost about thirty casualties, but Cornwallis's troops had fumbled an opportunity to encircle and destroy many irreplaceable Continentals. Williams's near destruction reinforced Greene's caution, and the British found American security tighter than before. Greene did not publicly criticize Williams after the battle, but Pickens's militiamen were incensed at Williams's blunder and most deserted for home. Greene was compelled to release Pickens to regroup his militia in South Carolina to keep the local loyalists in check. The quick American reaction, however, reflected the progress made by Greene and his officers in improving the combat effectiveness of the force.

The Battle of Guilford Courthouse

The arrival of two brigades of 1,500 North Carolina militiamen and two brigades of 1,200 Virginia state line soldiers soon offset Pickens's departure. Greene also received fresh Continental forces to reinforce the battle-tested but understrength 1st Maryland, led by Col. John Gunby. The newly recruited 2d Maryland Regiment, commanded by Lt. Col. Benjamin Ford, was brigaded with the 1st Maryland under the command of Colonel Williams. The Virginia Brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. Isaac Huger, joined up with the 1st Virginia Regiment under Col. John Green and the 2d Virginia Regiment under Lt. Col. Samuel Hawes. Greene reorganized his army, creating two corps of observation by attaching light infantry and rifle companies to Washington's Legionary Corps and Lee's Partisan Corps, with each expected "to attend to the enemies movements upon the left with Washington on the right . . . to give the enemy all the annoyance in your power, and each to report to Head Quarters." With the fresh reinforcements, Greene assessed that:

> Our force was much more respectable that it had been, and that there was a much greater probability of its

> declining than increasing, and that there would be the greatest difficulty in subsisting it long in the field in this exhausted Country, I took the resolution of attacking the Enemy without loss of time . . . being persuaded that if we were successful it would prove ruinous to the enemy, and if otherwise, it would only prove a partial evil to us.

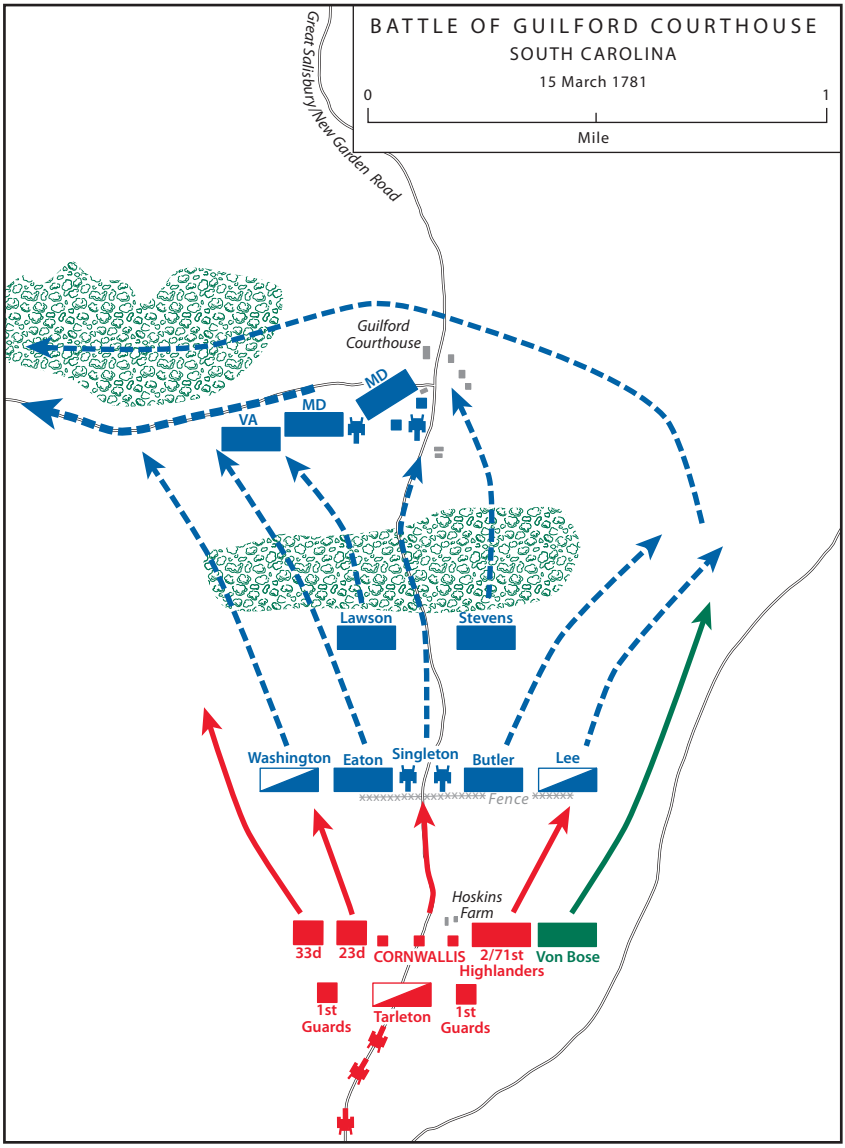
Greene's army left its camp on the Haw River on 12 March and took two days to march 22 miles to Guilford Courthouse. Greene's stated intent was to attack Cornwallis but, mindful of the British preference for surprise attacks, he prepared his command for battle by rehearsing on defensible terrain west of Guilford Courthouse. He also used the corps of observation to ensure security and reduce the risk of loss by sending his wagon train and camp followers to Speedwell Ironworks on Reedy Fork Creek.

Meanwhile, Cornwallis struggled to keep his army fed and prepared for action. His problems stemmed from the decision to destroy the army's wagon train just after the battle at Cowpens. American efforts had stripped provisions and livestock from local Tories, and so the British had to devote most of their time to foraging. Consequently, Stedman's commissaries could gather only 4 ounces each of cornmeal and meat per day—a modicum of the standard daily ration of a pound of bread and a pound of beef or three-quarters of a pound of salt pork. The absence of rum or spirits further depressed morale in Cornwallis's army, leading many redcoats to sneak from camp to loot houses for liquor. By 14 March, Cornwallis's army was reduced to taking provisions from the pacifistic Quakers at the Deep River Meeting House, 12 miles from Guilford Courthouse. On that same day, Cornwallis's scouts reported Greene's location, prompting a desperate Cornwallis to plan an attack the following day—before his army ran out of supplies. At 0530 on 15 March 1781, Tarleton's *Legion* led the advance up the New Garden Road toward Guilford Courthouse while the supply and hospital echelon marched to safety near Bell's Mills on the Deep River.

Greene screened his battle position by positioning Lee's corps of observation—150 dragoons and mounted light infantry, a company

each of Continental light infantry and Virginia riflemen—at the New Garden Meeting House. The settlement lay along Cornwallis's expected route of march along the New Garden Road. Lee's scouts immediately detected the British movements and kept Greene apprised of Cornwallis's advance. By contrast, Tarleton's light troops were surprised when Lee's skirmishers near the meeting house opened fire. During the next two hours, the provincial and American light forces skirmished on both sides of the meeting house. Casualties on both sides were fewer than fifty killed and wounded, but Lee's troops had skillfully disrupted the British advance while giving Greene time to finish deploying his forces.

Greene used the time wisely by feeding his soldiers and exhorting them as they filed into line of battle. Greene did not record a detailed battle plan, but his dispositions indicate he planned a delaying defense, trading space for time without exposing his Continentals to needless risk (*Map 5*). Earlier, Morgan had recommended a three-line deployment, like that at Cowpens, but with additional light troops to anchor the flanks. Greene broadly followed Morgan's suggestions, starting by placing Brig. Gen. Thomas Eaton's and Brig. Gen. John Butler's North Carolina brigades behind a fence that offered good fields of fire toward the oncoming enemy force. Greene then placed the Virginia brigades on the reverse western slope of Hunting Creek. He posted Brig. Gen. Robert Lawson to the north of New Garden Road and Brig. Gen. Edward Stevens to the south. Greene then arrayed the four Continental regiments atop high ground overlooking Hunting Creek—a location close to Reedy Fork Road, which led to the field trains at Speedwell Ironworks. Greene lastly positioned Washington's corps of observation on the North Carolina right flank and Lee's corps protecting the left (southern) flank. Greene's plan deviated in other critical details from Morgan's recommendations. First, Greene did not deploy skirmishers before the North Carolina militia line to attrit and disrupt the British advance. Second, Greene arrayed his lines beyond mutual supporting distance, leaving each vulnerable to defeat in detail. Third, Greene ordered the North Carolina brigades to fire two shots and withdraw but gave no further follow-on orders. Lastly, Greene stayed in the



Map 5

third line while the battle unfolded, leaving the militia troops without an overall commander to coordinate their actions.

Cornwallis's army deployed into line of battle near the Hoskins farmstead under cover of their 3-pounder guns. The two Continental

6-pounders supporting the North Carolina line returned fire, an exchange that caused few casualties but unnerved many North Carolina militiamen. Cornwallis positioned Colonel Webster's brigade of the *23d* and *33d Foot* on the left side of the New Garden Road, with General Leslie's brigade of the *71st Foot (Highlanders)* and the German *Regiment Von Bose* deployed to the right. Cornwallis split General O'Hara's *Brigade of Guards*, placing the *1st Battalion of Guards* on the right in support and the *2d Battalion of Guards* on the left. Cornwallis retained the individual *Guards Light Infantry, Grenadiers,* and German jaeger companies, and Tarleton's dragoons in reserve, instead of using them for reconnaissance or skirmishing tasks. Cornwallis opened the battle shortly after noon by launching a frontal assault on the North Carolina militia line.

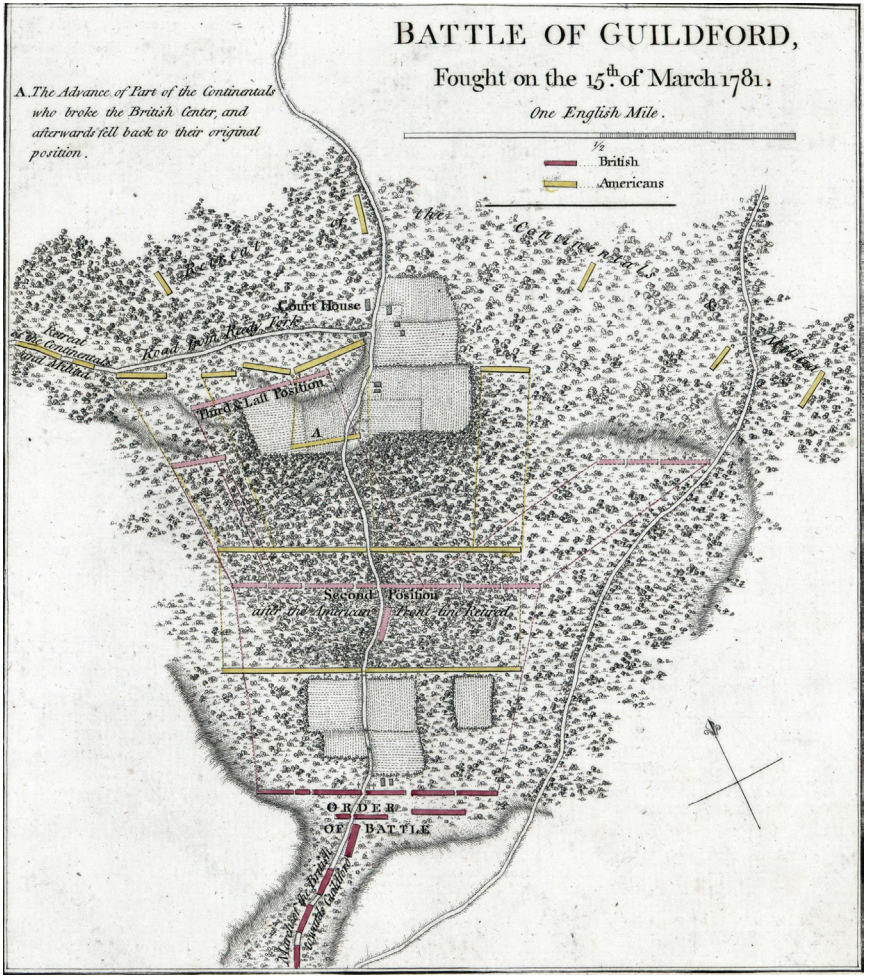
Greene's delaying defense began when the riflemen on both flanks engaged the enemy officers with long-range fire. Some nervous North Carolinians ignored their orders to fire in volleys and took individual shots at the advancing redcoats. The British tactical response to militia was an advance at a 120-paces-per-minute quick step with leveled bayonets. The intent was to close into hand-to-hand fighting range before the enemy could reload, but Webster's troops were delayed by having to hop fences and cross sodden fields. Eaton's North Carolinians let off a devastating volley when the enemy troops were about 50 yards from the last fence. Webster's troops responded with an immediate volley and bayonet charge that reached the enemy militia line before many rebels could reload. Leslie erred by ordering his regiments to alternate fire and movement, thereby giving many of Butler's North Carolinians time to fire a third volley in the faces of the British and German troops. Most of the Carolina troops ran for their lives, but some stood with their officers and fought with clubbed muskets and knives. Webster's units continued eastward through the shattered North Carolina line, but the terrain and pockets of resistance split his brigade line. Cornwallis and O'Hara responded by pushing the *2d Guards* and light infantry companies into support of Webster's running engagement with Washington's corps of observation. To the south, some North Carolinians fell in with Lee's corps of observation on the American left to fight a

delaying action against the *Regiment Von Bose* and the *1st Guards*. Cornwallis's initial attack broke the North Carolinian line, but at the cost of heavy casualties and the dispersion of his army.

The sounds of battle and the sight of running North Carolinians warned the Virginia troops of the British advance. The Virginia brigades fought better, as they had been well trained by the ex-Continental officers and soldiers in their ranks. Lawson's brigade fought stubbornly until it was hit by a counterstroke from the *Guards Light Infantry* company and the *33d Foot*—as later described by Maj. St. George Tucker: "This threw the militia into such confusion. . . . Holcombe's regiment and ours instantly broke off without firing a single gun and dispersed like a flock of sheep frightened by dogs." Even then, many of Lawson's officers rallied squads and platoons that maintained "an irregular kind of skirmishing with the British." Webster's brigade eventually broke through Lawson's scattered regiments, but only at a high cost in casualties and expended ammunition. Meanwhile, Washington's corps of observation continued a fighting withdrawal back to protect the Continental right flank on the third line.

On the southern half of the battlefield, Stevens's brigade of 750 soldiers fought hard to avenge their humiliating defeat at Camden. The odds were too great, and many Virginians ran after Stevens fell with a shattered femur in the middle of a melee with bayonets and clubbed muskets. Even then, several Virginian companies and platoons remained intact to fall in with Lee's corps of observation. Stevens's stand cost the British heavily in casualties and slowed the momentum of their advance toward the Continental main line.

General O'Hara fell wounded at the second line, and Cornwallis narrowly escaped capture after his horse was shot from under him. Webster pushed through the maelstrom with the *33d Foot* and three light infantry companies to reach the open area by Hunting Creek—where he ordered a frontal attack on what he assumed was a single Continental regiment and the 6-pounder section near the Salisbury Road. Webster's troops were shocked as they took fire from two unbloodied Virginia Continental



"Battle of Guildford, Fought on the 15th of March 1781," William Faden, London, 1787 (*Library of Congress Geography and Map Division*)

regiments and their supporting artillery. The British troops recoiled from the American fire to shelter in the woods west of the creek.

Webster's soldiers barely had reached cover when O'Hara and the *2d Guards* reached the creek edge near the road. The British again launched an immediate attack against the left flank of the Continental line. The *2d Guards* had better luck as they rolled up the right flank of the poorly positioned 2d Maryland and its supporting

gun section. The *2d Guards* were surprised in turn by a counterattack from the veteran 1st Maryland Continentals and Washington's dragoons. A brutal close-range fight occurred between the redcoats and the Continental infantry and dragoons. The Americans came close to overwhelming the *2d Guards* but instead were driven off by salvos of grapeshot directed by Cornwallis personally. Cornwallis's appearance with the artillery and the concurrent arrival of the *23d Foot* and *Highlanders* convinced Greene it was time to save his Continentals to fight another day. Greene ordered General Huger's Virginia Continental Brigade to screen the withdrawal. Greene also ordered the surviving Continental gunners to leave their 6-pounder guns on the battlefield as their horses had been wounded or killed. Elements of the *23d*, *71st*, and Tarleton's *Legion* attempted a pursuit, but the Virginia Continentals held the enemy troops at bay, allowing Greene's army to withdraw safely toward Speedwell Ironworks.

However, fighting continued south of Salisbury Road between scattered North Carolina and Virginia detachments, Lee's corps of observation, and the *1st Battalion of Guards*. The wooded terrain disordered the redcoats, allowing militia skirmishers and Lee's light troops to inflict heavy casualties. The *1st Guards* were saved from destruction only by the timely intervention of the *Regiment Von Bose*, which formed a hollow square to present its bayonets against the American attackers. The British commanders rallied their troops and resumed fighting alongside the *Regiment Von Bose*. Soon thereafter, Lee unexpectedly broke contact and withdrew toward the courthouse—just as Tarleton led a troop of his dragoons with drawn sabers into the North Carolina and Virginia militiamen. Many American militiamen were cut down, and others scattered into the trees to escape. One American managed to maim Tarleton's right hand with a lucky rifle shot before the *Legion* ended its pursuit.

As the Continental rear guard marched north toward Speedwell Ironworks, Cornwallis rallied his units at the courthouse, thus ending the battle after three hours of fighting. The weather after the battle turned cool and rainy, but the surviving American troops enjoyed the shelter and double rations at the Speedwell Ironworks camp.

By contrast, the hungry and tired British soldiers had no means of shelter from the storm because of Cornwallis's earlier decision to destroy the excess wagons and baggage. The hapless wounded were left unattended on the battlefield overnight, and many consequently died from shock and exposure.

What were the results of the battle? Greene's army of 4,400 Continentals and militia lost 79 dead, 184 wounded, and 1,046 missing in action (most of whom were militiamen who left the battlefield and went home), along with four cannons and an indeterminate number of abandoned firearms. Greene expressed his satisfaction with the outcome, as his army had inflicted disproportionately heavy losses on the enemy. He noted: "The battle was long, obstinate and bloody. . . . But the enemy have been so soundly beaten, that they dare not move towards us. . . . Except the ground and the Artillery they have gained no advantage, on the contrary they are a little short of being ruined."

Greene's assessment was correct, as Cornwallis's army of 1,900 soldiers had suffered a debilitating 28 percent loss rate: 93 dead, 413 wounded, and 26 missing in action. Leader losses were especially heavy, with fourteen killed and thirteen wounded. Webster and two junior officers died of their wounds. Under a flag of truce, the British and the Americans agreed to collectively evacuate the wounded to field hospitals at the Hoskins farmstead and New Garden Meeting House, while soldiers and locals interred the dead in common graves. Cornwallis rested his troops for two days at the courthouse before leaving his seriously wounded at New Garden Meeting House and returning to Bell's Mill. Once there, Cornwallis issued a proclamation of victory, offered parole to surrendering rebels, and elicited loyalist recruits. Cornwallis wryly noted the tepid response in his battle report: "Many of the inhabitants rode into camp, shook me by the hand, said they were glad to see us, and to hear that we had beat Greene, and then rode home again." Cornwallis eventually marched his army to Wilmington, North Carolina, after he realized he could no longer sustain his army in the increasingly hostile and barren region. Greene followed the British army to the Deep River Meeting House, where "the want of provisions and a considerable part of

the Virginia Militias time being expired, will prevent our further pursuit." Greene camped his army and sent out scouts and spies to track Cornwallis, whom he correctly assumed would march through Cross Creek to Wilmington.

Cornwallis Goes North

While his army rested and regrouped, Greene opted for another change in his campaign plan:

> [R]emote from reinforcements, inferior to the enemy in numbers and no prospec[t] of support I am at a loss what is best to be done. . . . In this critical and distressing situation I am determined to carry the War immediately into South Carolina. The Enemy will be obliged to follow us or give up their posts in the State. If the former takes place it will draw the War out of [North Carolina]. . . . If they leave their posts to fall they must lose more there then they can gain here. . . . All things considered I think the movement is warranted by the soundest reasons *both political and military.*

Greene recognized the risk of leaving Cornwallis to march unimpeded into Virginia; he also knew that Cornwallis could remain in North Carolina as well. Greene, however, judged the opportunity to eliminate British outposts in the Carolinas as worth the risk—especially because Washington could send reinforcements more easily to Virginia than to the Carolinas. This last point was borne out by the October 1780 landing of General Arnold and 2,000 British troops at Portsmouth, Virginia. Virginia levies under Brig. Gen. Peter Muhlenberg contained the British until Steuben and 1,200 reinforcements under the command of Maj. Gen. Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, arrived in support. Greene decided to move southward in late March 1781, well before he knew Cornwallis's intentions, yet he hedged his bets

by resting his army at the Deep River until early April. Greene used his time there writing letters to Congress in Philadelphia; Steuben and Jefferson in Virginia; and other officials to obtain fresh levies, supplies, and weapons to replace those lost during the 1781 Carolinas campaign.

Cornwallis rested his battered army at Wilmington while he rethought his campaign plans. Instead of resuming his original strategic task of pacifying South Carolina, Cornwallis instead marched his army toward Virginia on 25 April 1781. Once there, Cornwallis fought several engagements but failed to attain his goal of blocking reinforcements and supplies to Greene's army. Cornwallis entrenched his exhausted army at Yorktown in late September 1781, where a joint Franco-American force compelled his surrender on 19 October 1781. Yorktown was in the future, however, and the present remained uncertain. In the interim, Greene could only advise Governor Jefferson and the Continental forces defending Virginia, while keeping his strategic focus on regaining control of the Carolinas.

The War of the Posts

Greene marched southward on 6 April, with the expectation that supplies and reinforcements would soon follow. Greene's army had shrunk in the interim with the departure of North Carolina alarm militia and Virginia volunteers. He commanded only the Virginia and Maryland Continental brigades, Capt. Robert Kirkwood's Continental Delaware light infantry company, Washington's dragoons, and a Continental artillery detachment under Col. Charles Harrison—about 1,500 soldiers. The Americans faced about 5,200 regular and provincial troops and several hundred loyalist volunteers and alarm militia, all under the overall command of Colonel Rawdon. Rawdon's forces were scattered in garrisons at Ninety Six, Camden, and small outposts along the interior lines of communications—thus vulnerable to defeat in detail.

Freed and enslaved Black soldiers augmented the British numbers, but a lack of clear policy guidance from London hindered the Crown forces' ability to make use of this potential

volunteer pool. Instead, commanders had to proceed carefully lest they provoke a rebellion among the freed Black contingents or lose the support of slave-holding loyalists. In 1779, Sir Henry Clinton had issued a proclamation that promised freedom to rebel-owned enslaved people who entered British lines—but deliberately excluded South Carolina from its remit to avoid losing the manpower necessary to raise food crops on loyalists' plantations. Enslaved people fleeing from patriot owners still were welcomed and given paid employment as artisans and teamsters supporting the war effort. British commanders also employed enslaved Black laborers to help fortify places like Camden and Ninety Six. The White population largely balked at arming Black people, aside from a few temporary measures taken by British and loyalist officers facing rebel insurgent attacks on isolated posts. A notable exception was the Continental Army, which allowed for the enlistment of free Black men, even in southern regiments. Black Continentals, however, faced the extra risk of being forcibly enslaved if taken prisoner by the British.

By 19 April 1781, Greene's little army was camped atop Hobkirk Hill, a sandy ridge astride the Great Waxhaws Road north of Camden. Greene positioned his army there to fix Rawdon's garrison at Logtown—a cluster of log houses guarding the northern approaches to Camden—and planned to use militia detachments to seize the crossing points of the Wateree and Lynches Rivers. Greene wrote to Pickens, Sumter, and Marion about his plan and asked for their cooperation. Pickens and Marion agreed to support the plan, although many of their soldiers were committed elsewhere. Sumter, by contrast, rebuffed Greene's request, forcing Greene to ask for militia troops from North Carolina and Virginia instead. Sumter's refusal owed much to his bruised ego, as Greene had appointed Morgan instead of him to command the flying army. Further offense came in January when Greene undiplomatically implied Sumter's troops were motivated by "plunder and depredation." Greene's assertions largely were correct, as evidenced by Sumter's ill-conceived offensive below Camden in early 1781. His failed attack on Fort Granby was motivated by the promise of loot, and the capture and loss of booty

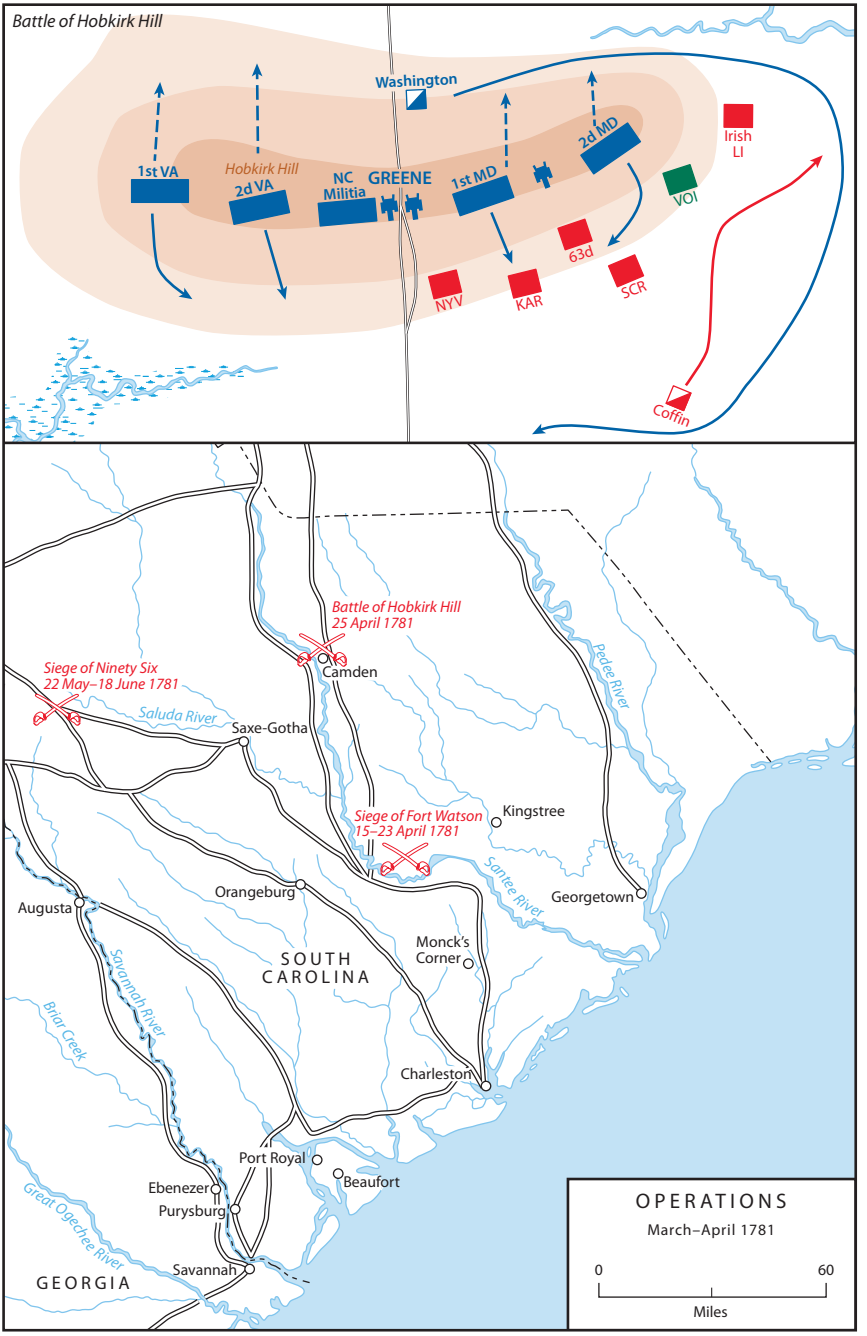
from Big Savannah aroused suspicions of treachery among Sumter's troops. Sumter then tried to enlist men into South Carolina state dragoons by offering confiscated enslaved people as bounty—an initiative known as "Sumter's Law." Greene reluctantly approved the measure, fearing correctly that Sumter's bounty would further stimulate looting and tit-for-tat Whig and Tory reprisals. Sumter subsequently cooperated only when he saw the advantage to his own goals, despite Greene's efforts at reconciliation.

Meanwhile, Rawdon's energies were consumed by securing Camden, Ninety Six and the vulnerable supply lines with Charleston. He thwarted several partisan attacks but at the cost of tying up reinforcements intended for Cornwallis's army. Tory sympathizers reported Greene's position accurately, allowing Rawdon to consider a spoiling attack on the American army at Hobkirk Hill. (*See Map 6.*) Greene expected an enemy counterstroke and positioned his regiments and guns overlooking the open areas along the Waxhaws Road behind a strong skirmish line. Greene also sent Captain Kirkwood's Delaware light infantry to probe the British defenses. Kirkwood's skirmishers successfully seized Logtown, though they found Camden itself strongly fortified.

Meanwhile, Rawdon decided to strike after receiving intelligence that Greene was temporarily vulnerable with detachments from the main body—which included Lee and Marion—attacking Fort Watson. On 25 April 1781, Rawdon marched his raiding force quietly up the wooded eastern side of Hobkirk Hill by skirting Pine Tree Creek. Alert American pickets raised the alarm, prompting Kirkwood to deploy his light infantry as skirmishers—which bought time for the Continental officers to gather their soldiers from the camp and deploy for combat. Greene arrayed his four Continental regiments—the 1st and 2d Maryland Regiments on the left and the 4th and 5th Virginia Regiments on the right—facing southward, with the field guns and a security detachment in support. Lastly, Greene held Colonel Washington's light Continental dragoons and a North Carolina militia battalion in reserve. Greene's army numbered roughly 1,300 Continentals and 250 militiamen, whereas Rawdon led perhaps 900 troops: the regular *63d Foot*, the provincials

of the *Volunteers of Ireland* and the *King's American Regiment*, the *New York Volunteers*, and a troop of the *New York Dragoons*. The *Volunteers* were a unique organization, organized by Rawdon in 1777 from Irish immigrants and Continental deserters, whose desire to serve with fellow Catholic Irishmen outweighed their normal anti-British attitudes. The regiment fought so well in the north that the British government added it to the permanent army list as the *2d American Regiment* in May 1779.

The Continental artillery opened the battle by raking the British columns with grapeshot while Greene ordered a bayonet charge and flanking attack by Washington's squadron. The artillery fire surprised Rawdon, who tardily deployed his regiments from column into line to meet the Continental advance. The American attack inflicted heavy casualties and seemed on the point of success when the veteran 1st Maryland unaccountably fell apart, giving Rawdon an opening to launch a countercharge. The disorder spread to all but the 5th Virginia, which formed a wall of bayonets to protect the disorganized withdrawal of the field guns and remaining infantry. Thus covered, Greene pulled his army back to regroup near the old Camden battlefield. Left behind on the battlefield were 19 dead, 113 wounded, and 138 missing, whereas Rawdon incurred 38 dead, 177 wounded, and 43 missing. Greene heaped blame on Colonel Gunby of the 1st Maryland for failing to control his unit, while ignoring Colonel Washington's failure to employ his dragoons effectively. Washington inexplicably had led his regiment on a wide circuit. Instead of falling on the rear of Rawdon's infantry, the Continental troopers scooped up rear echelon troops near Logtown. Greene, however, also failed to admit his own role in initiating a meeting engagement instead of defending in place with his superior numbers and firepower. After some reflection, Greene realized the battle had not changed the overall strategic situation: "This repulse, if such it may be called, will make no alteration in our general plan of operations." Rawdon soon arrived at that same conclusion after he failed to fix and attack Greene's army after its withdrawal.


Battle of Hobkirk Hill
Washington
1st VA
Hobkirk Hill
2d VA
NC Militia
GREENE
1st MD
2d MD
Irish LI
VOI
63d
NYV
KAR
SCR
Coffin
Battle of Hobkirk Hill
25 April 1781
Camden
Siege of Ninety Six
22 May–18 June 1781
Saluda River
Saxe-Gotha
Pedee River
Kingstree
Siege of Fort Watson
15–23 April 1781
Santee River
Georgetown
Orangeburg
Augusta
Monck's Corner
SOUTH CAROLINA
Savannah River
Briar Creek
Charleston
Port Royal
Beaufort
Ebenezer
Purysburg
Great Ogechee River
Savannah
GEORGIA
OPERATIONS
March–April 1781
0
60
Miles

Map 6



The Battle of Hobkirk's Hill, **F. C. Yohn, 1898 (*New York Public Library*)**

Siege of Ninety Six

In the interim, Lee's legion and Marion's partisans surrounded Fort Watson, which lay on the British supply line between Camden and Charleston. The Americans found the enemy had skillfully fortified the top of a 22-foot-high Santee tribal burial mound. After a plan to obtain a field gun from Greene went awry, Lt. Col. Hezekiah Maham, Marion's dragoon commander, orchestrated the building of a 30-foot-tall siege tower of logs under the cover of darkness. Riflemen atop the "Maham Tower" and Continentals at the base shot down several defenders at dawn on 23 April 1781, thereby allowing a team to begin breaching the fort—which compelled the wounded British commander to surrender.

The loss of Fort Watson and the proximity of Greene's army convinced Rawdon that he could not remain at Camden any longer. On 27 April 1781, Rawdon evacuated the garrison. He relocated willing loyalist supporters and their households and movable stores approximately 100 miles southeastward to Monck's Corner. The evacuation emboldened the Whig militia and convinced many Tory

sympathizers to seek protection by joining the patriot side. Many hardcore loyalists continued to fight alone, but Sumter considered their resistance "little more than a nuisance and more than offset by the number of men in the area who joined the Whigs."

Rawdon's evacuation of Camden set off a cascade of further British reverses. Lee and Marion's combined light force captured Orangeburg and cut the Congaree River line by seizing Forts Motte and Granby—yielding some 215 British and 400 loyalist prisoners, plus dozens of muskets and wagonloads of valuable supplies. Lt. Col. Nisbet Balfour, the British commander at Charleston, panicked and evacuated Georgetown before Lee and Marion could assault the seaport town.

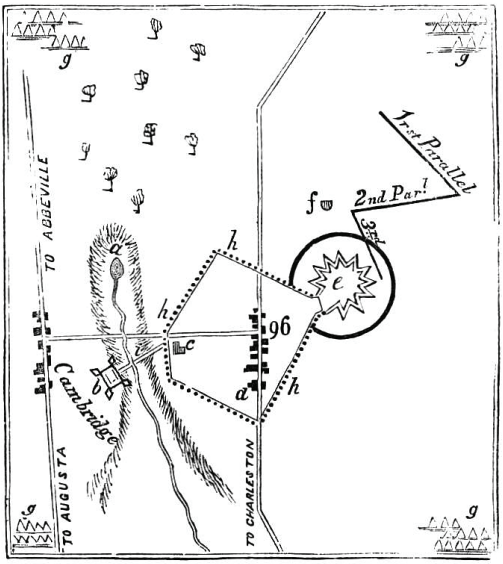
The evacuation of Camden and the closing of the Congaree to boat traffic left Ninety Six and Augusta isolated in enemy-controlled territory. On 10 May 1781, Rawdon sent orders to Lt. Col. John Harris Cruger at Ninety Six to withdraw his garrison and movable stores to reinforce the Augusta garrison. A patriot militia patrol scooped up the loyalist couriers, leaving Cruger ignorant of his dangerous isolation. Greene had expected Rawdon to order an evacuation, so he reacted to the new intelligence by marching to lay siege to Ninety Six. To keep Rawdon distracted, Greene dispatched Lee's partisan corps to cooperate with Pickens and Col. Elijah Clarke of Georgia in attacking British-held Augusta—which surrendered on 6 June 1781.

Greene's army consisted of two Maryland and two Virginia Continental regiments, a North Carolina and Continental light infantry company each, and three 6-pounder gun sections—about 984 troops. Greene's corps outnumbered Cruger's garrison of 350 New York and New Jersey provincials and 200 Carolina loyalists, but Cruger's troops had the advantage of fighting from fortifications. The centerpiece of the defense was the star fort—laid out by Cornwallis's engineer, Lt. Henry Haldane, in mid-1781—built by work parties of soldiers and conscripted enslaved people to safeguard Island Ford Road. The finished fort had 15-foot-thick walls embedded with wooden palisades and abatis that protected the garrison from artillery fire and infantry assault. The work parties built other smaller redoubts and stockades to protect vital installations and connected

the whole with communications trenches. During the winter of 1780–1781, Cruger's soldiers stockpiled provisions confiscated from local Whigs while butchers laid up barrels of salted beef and pork for the expected siege.

Greene surveyed the enemy works with his chief engineer Colonel Kosciuszko on 22 May 1781. The reconnaissance revealed surprisingly strong defenses. Greene ordered his troops to bivouac out of cannon range and create hasty earthworks to cover the approaches to the town. Greene followed Kosciuszko's advice to begin sapping operations toward the star fort, as they believed it to be the key to the enemy's entire works. Ironically, the besiegers found themselves besieged, as later described by Greene: "The Tories swarm around us and render it extremely difficult to get either forage or subsistence for our Troops. We contend with the Enemy upon such an unequal footing that I have nothing less to expect than disgrace and ruin." Greene's troops found the encircled loyalists were equally daring and desperate. Kosciuszko placed the first battery position close enough to the enemy works to invite a surprise raid on 23 May 1781. The loyalist raiders killed and dispersed the American working party, seized their pioneer tools and several Black laborers, and withdrew into the star fort before Greene's officers could respond.

Chastened by the failure, the Americans collected more tools and built a second set of battery positions at a safe distance from the enemy. Under the cover of field guns and riflemen in the battery, fatigue parties of White soldiers and Black laborers dug zigzag approach trenches through the hard soil. At the same time, other American troops built a 40-foot-high Maham tower to sharpshoot the defenders. Cruger's Tories responded by digging deeper and using the spoil to stack sandbags atop the redoubt walls. The monotony of the siege was broken when Lee and Pickens—with loyalist prisoners taken at Augusta—marched openly past the enemy redoubt into Greene's camp on 8 June. The sight angered the loyalists inside Ninety Six and furthered their resolve to continue resistance. Greene used the fresh manpower to guard the garrison's spring-fed water source. By 11 June, the loyalists were suffering from intense thirst in the



"Plan of the Siege of Ninety-Six," in Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-book of the Revolution, vol. 2* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860)

springtime heat, as they could only get water under the cover of darkness.

On the same day, a messenger from Sumter arrived with news that Rawdon was en route with a relief force of 2,000 fresh British troops. Greene responded by asking Sumter and Marion to block the route, but a surprisingly stiff Tory militia response hindered them. Meanwhile, a loyalist courier bluffed his way past some inattentive Continental soldiers, which gave Cruger the first information about Rawdon's relief expedition. Greene therefore had several unattractive options: remain in place and risk becoming trapped between Rawdon and Cruger; withdraw and admit that the siege had failed; or try to take Ninety Six by frontal assault. On 18 June 1781, Greene sent a Continental storming party against the star fort while the light infantry simultaneously attacked the redoubt guarding the spring. The assault troops breached the abatis and pulled down the sandbag parapet of the star fort as the sharpshooters in the Maham tower pinned down most of the defenders. However, Cruger's disciplined provincials launched a surprise counterattack that overwhelmed the Continental breaching team, killing several American officers and dozens of their troops with bayonets and clubbed muskets. Greene's forlorn hope had failed with the loss of 147 soldiers against 85 dead and injured Tories. Greene responded by lifting the siege and withdrawing before Rawdon could reach Ninety Six. Rawdon arrived on 21 June after a forced march through the torrid summertime heat,

which killed about fifty of the unacclimated new troops. Rawdon replaced his sickest troops with fit soldiers from Cruger's garrison and attempted to pursue Greene. However, Lee and Washington's dragoons screened the safe withdrawal of the main Continental force eastward across the Broad River. Greene thereby fulfilled his strategic objective of preserving his Continental force, but the withdrawal demoralized his troops and caused many Whig militiamen to desert to protect their property from loyalist retribution.

Both sides tacitly suspended major operations to rest and prepare for the cooler fall season. Greene marched his army to the pro-patriot High Hills of the Santee, a quiet place to restore the health and morale of his army while he attended to strategic and administrative matters. Back in May 1781, Greene and Cornwallis had worked out a cartel for exchanging Continental and militia soldiers on a one-to-one basis, and exchange or parole for officers. The first American prisoners—including Benjamin Lincoln and William Moultrie—sailed in June from Charleston to Jamestown, Virginia. The ship then sailed to New York with a load of paroled British prisoners. The exchange was a welcome reprieve for the surviving Continental troops who had been held in Charleston; of the 2,700 taken prisoner in May 1780, only 1,300 were alive and available for exchange a year later. Greene suspended the agreement in August after the British executed Col. Isaac Hayne, a South Carolina militia officer, for breaking his parole. After an angry exchange of letters between Greene and Cornwallis, the prisoner exchanges resumed in October but only included officers. Besides worrying about the prisoner cartel, Greene wrote extensively to Steuben and Lafayette with guidance about defending Virginia from British raids.

In the meantime, the British troops at Ninety Six loaded available wagons with casualties, provisions, and ordnance stores, while Rawdon told loyalist commanders to either abandon their land and move their households to Charleston or remain in place without British protection. About 800 loyalists and their families marched southward with Rawdon's corps. The Tories who remained in the Ninety Six district soon regretted their decision, as many were hanged and their houses burned despite Greene's orders forbidding

such practices. Greene described the brutal nature of the civil war within South Carolina to Col. Alexander Hamilton: "The division among the people is much greater than I imagined, and the Whigs and Tories persecute each other, with little less than savage fury. There is nothing but murders and devastations in every quarter." A lull in the campaign followed the British departure as both sides rested their regular troops. Operations did not cease during the summer. Lee's and Marion's light troops continued to attack British outposts on the Santee River—the last easily defendable terrain feature north of Charleston—while Pickens's militia skirmished with loyalist and Cherokee raiders led by Major William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham.

Eutaw Springs

Greene returned to active operations in early September 1781 with a well-drilled force of roughly 2,500 soldiers: 1,250 Continentals, 300 dragoons, and 150 South Carolina state troops, plus some 700 militiamen commanded by Marion and Pickens. The morale of the army had recovered, and most of the Continentals and militiamen were battle-tested and confident. Greene, however, was dogged continually by supply shortages, especially uniforms and equipment. By contrast, Lt. Col. Alexander Stewart commanded an army of 1,400 soldiers: Maj. John Marjoribanks's light infantry battalion, three regiments of British regulars, Cruger's provincial battalion, a small dragoon squadron, and five guns. Stewart had no shortage of equipment and ordnance stores, but at this point, the British had great difficulty obtaining fresh provisions and forage in the face of persistent rebel militia attacks. Stewart's regulars were mostly fresh recruits unused to southern diseases and heat and untested in battle. Each army had a sizeable number of both deserters and former prisoners of war who enlisted (willingly or not) to fight against their former comrades. At this stage in the war, both the British and American armies routinely hanged any recaptured deserters, thus motivating some to fight hard to avoid capture.

Each side also operated under a new strategic paradigm. Back in June 1781, Greene learned from congressional president Samuel Huntington that Russia had offered to broker a peace treaty based on the Roman concept of *uti possidetis*, which granted each belligerent a right to the territory it controlled or occupied at the cessation of the conflict. King George III was receptive to the idea, as he could extract Britain from an increasingly costly war while retaining Georgia and South Carolina as lucrative consolation prizes. Greene responded by adjusting his strategy to establish Whig military and political hegemony over the region, which he described in a letter to Georgia justice John Wilkinson:

> Upon a consultation I can think of no better mode for the State to . . . secure itself from the further ravages of the enemy than to form a Council . . . whose orders should have the force of Laws. . . . You may rely upon my giving you all the protection in my power; but the people must take measures not only for their own internal security but to aid the Continental Army. . . . Two evils which prevail in all the Southern States should be checked. . . plundering and private murders. . . . Appointing a Councel, raising a body of regular State troops, forming, arming and arranging the Militia . . . and destroying the enemy fortifications should be the first object of peoples attention.

Greene understood that political sovereignty rested on the acquiescence, if not consent, of the civilians to Whig governance. Greene thus redoubled his efforts to tamp down on the Whig-on-Tory abuses and promote fair treatment of civilians by the Continentals and militia alike. Greene then pressured South Carolina Governor John Rutledge and surviving members of the state's privy council to reestablish governance in South Carolina. Georgia had no existing Whig government, so Greene dispatched Deputy Paymaster Joseph Clay, a former member of Georgia's provincial congress, to lay the groundwork for a pro-American government.

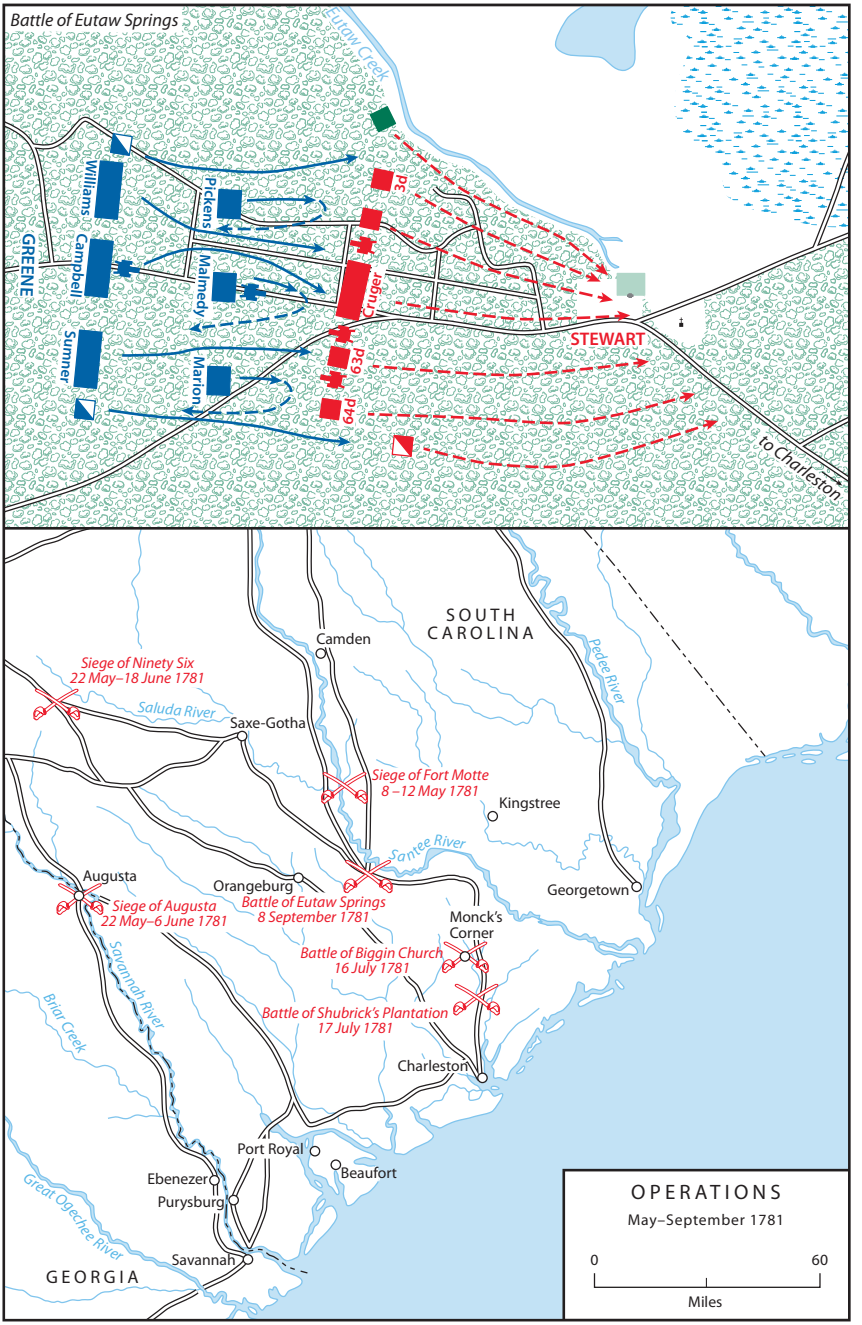
Greene's efforts along political and economic lines were for naught unless he drove the British and loyalist troops from the remaining interior bases. Greene pressured southern partisan commanders to redouble their attacks on British outposts and patrols. (*See Map 7.*) Marion and Pickens remained cooperative, and Sumter offered to cooperate but soon thereafter unilaterally discharged his troops after a botched attack at Biggin Church in late August. Greene nevertheless set out to stop Stewart's reprovisioning patrols above the Santee River. Greene's intelligence showed Stewart had a sizeable force camped at Thompson's Plantation, near the strategically important McCord's Ferry on the Santee River. Although the straight-line distance from the High Hills to McCord's Ferry was approximately 40 miles, Greene led his army northward to cross the Wateree River at Camden—a detour that added 30 miles while bypassing the obvious approach march across the rain-swollen terrain between the Congaree and Santee Rivers. Greene's ruse did not fool Stewart, and he responded by relocating his corps to Eutaw Springs—a location where a sturdy two-story brick house formed a convenient strong point overlooking the Charleston road. Eutaw Springs also afforded access to spring water, forage, provisions, and reinforcements from Charleston. Greene left his logistics trains at Motte's Fort after learning of Stewart's location at Eutaw Springs. Greene's combat troops bivouacked at Burdell's Plantation, only 7 miles west of Eutaw Springs, on the evening of 7 September 1781.

The American army began its movement at 0400 on 8 September 1781, with Lee's reinforced legion as the advanced guard. Shortly thereafter, Stewart dispatched a foraging detachment of 300 soldiers drawn from every regiment. By happenstance, the "rooting party" avoided detection by marching to a plantation well off the River Road. Stewart first learned of Greene's advance from two North Carolina deserters, and he responded with a combat patrol of 140 infantry and 50 dragoons under Maj. John Coffin. Coffin's dragoons began the battle by killing two American dragoons during an engagement around 0800 hours. Lee responded by luring Coffin's squadron into an ambush, where fire from the American light infantrymen unhorsed Coffin and struck down ten loyalist dragoons and half the

light infantrymen in a bloody firefight. The fighting drew the lightly armed foraging party into the open, where Lee's light infantry quickly overran them. Many unwounded British troops avoided capture by dropping their weapons and running into the woods. At a stroke, Greene's army had eliminated about a regiment's worth of troops from Stewart's order of battle—even before the start of the main engagement.

Stewart reacted to the sounds of firing by sending out a covering force to screen the deployment of the remaining infantry into a line of battle west of the brick house. Major Marjoribanks's light troops took position on the right flank by sheltering in a thicket of blackjack oak alongside Eutaw Creek. The remnants of Coffin's light troops and the field guns took up a blocking position on the road to Charleston. Stewart positioned the available soldiers of the *3d Foot*, *84th Highlanders*, *Cruger's Loyalists*, and the *64th* and *63d Foot* into a line of battle. Stewart commanded about 2,000 regulars and provincials after accounting for last-minute reinforcements and his earlier losses. By 0900, Greene had his army arrayed in a three-line attack formation, with the North and South Carolina militia in the first line. The Continentals were next, with the Maryland regiments on the left, Virginians in the middle, and the new North Carolina Continentals on the right. Greene next positioned Washington's 2d Partisan Corps and Kirkwood's Delaware light infantry in reserve and anchored his flanks with dragoons under Col. Wade Hampton and Colonel Lee. Greene lastly positioned a 3-pounder section in the militia line, and 6-pounder guns with the Continentals. Greene commanded a force of 2,076 officers and troops, of which 856 were Continentals. The remainder were state line and militia troops. Despite the season and time of day, the weather was described as hot and sultry, enough to cause heat exhaustion and heat stroke among the ranks during the battle.

The patriot militia showed themselves the equals of their British and Tory opponents in the opening minutes of the battle. Unlike earlier battles, the militiamen advanced into firing range and stayed there for several minutes, trading volleys with the enemy. Discipline in the Whig ranks was so good that subordinates replaced wounded


Battle of Eutaw Springs
Eutaw Creek
GREENE
Williams
Campbell
Pickens
Malmedy
Summer
Marion
Cruger
3d
63d
64d
STEWART
to Charleston
SOUTH CAROLINA
Camden
Siege of Ninety Six
22 May–18 June 1781
Saluda River
Saxe-Gotha
Siege of Fort Motte
8 –12 May 1781
Kingstree
Pedee River
Santee River
Augusta
Orangeburg
Siege of Augusta
22 May–6 June 1781
Battle of Eutaw Springs
8 September 1781
Georgetown
Monck's Corner
Battle of Biggin Church
16 July 1781
Savannah River
Briar Creek
Battle of Shubrick's Plantation
17 July 1781
Charleston
Port Royal
Beaufort
Ebenezer
Purysburg
Great Ogeechee River
Savannah
GEORGIA
OPERATIONS
May–September 1781
0
60
Miles

Map 7

commanders without the unit becoming noticeably disordered. After perhaps fifteen minutes of close combat, Greene ordered the exhausted militia line to break contact and regroup behind General Jethro Sumner's North Carolina Continentals. The North Carolinians fought stubbornly against Stewart's main line, which prompted the commanders of the *63d* and *64th Foot* to respond with a bayonet charge. The British troops drove back the North Carolinians but were in turn disordered by a riposte from Lee's light troops.

Greene countered by committing the Virginia and Maryland Continentals. At this point, Stewart's troops in the center and left had fought two engagements already, so the onrush of four fresh Continental regiments was too much for the fatigued redcoats to handle. The *64th Foot* was hit in front and flank and broke in panic, compelling the remainder to fall back to regroup at the brick house. The disorder affected the Americans as well, as they had to contend with disarming prisoners and fending off enemy dragoons while trying to pursue the broken enemy. Losses were heavy in the American ranks, with several commanders killed or wounded. Greene seemingly had victory in his grasp, and he committed Washington's dragoons and Kirkwood's light infantry to exploit the disorder and crush the demoralized redcoats.

Yet success again eluded Greene, this time because of Major Marjoribanks's light infantry. Their stubborn defense in the blackjack thicket on the British right allowed Maj. Henry Sheridan and a company of *New York Volunteers* time to barricade themselves in the brick house. Washington unaccountably erred by not waiting for his light infantry support before leading his dragoons to attack Marjoribanks's position. Marjoribanks's troops quickly shot down about half the American troopers, including Washington, who was bayoneted and captured while pinned underneath his wounded horse. Hampton regrouped the unwounded troopers and drove Marjoribanks's light infantry from the thicket with support from Kirkwood's light infantry. Greene described the climax of the battle to Continental Congress President Thomas McKean:



***Battle of Eutaw Springs*, Alonzo Chappel, 1858 (*New York Public Library*)**

We kept close at the Enemy's heels after they broke . . . and a great number of Prisoners were continually falling into our hands, and some hundreds of the Fugitives ran off. . . . But a party threw themselves into a large three story brick House . . . others were lodged in an impenetrable thicket. . . . Thus secured in front, and upon the right by the House, and a deep Ravine upon the left. . . . Every exertion was made to dislodge them. Lt. Col. Washington made the most astonishing efforts . . . to charge the Enemy in the Rear but found it impracticable, had his Horse shot under him, and was wounded and taken Prisoner. Four six pounders were ordered up before the house . . . and they were pushed on so much under the command of the fire from the House . . . and Thickett as rendered it impracticable to bring them off again when the Troops were ordered to retire. . . . Nothing but the brick House, and the peculiar strength of the position at

> Eutaw saved the remains of the British army from being all made Prisoners.

Greene's report glossed over how his army fell into disorder after breaking the enemy line and pursuing the disorganized remnants through the British bivouac site—where some accounts describe the American troops pausing to plunder enemy rum and provisions. Heavy losses among Greene's officers exacerbated the breakdown in command and control. Both Lt. Col. John Eager Howard of the 1st Maryland and Lt. Col. William Washington received bayonet wounds that took them out of combat, and Col. Richard Campbell, the commander of the Virginia brigade, was killed in action. Meanwhile, Major Sheridan's *Volunteers* in the brick house checked the American advance with heavy fire and a quick counterattack that seized two cannons and several Continental prisoners. Greene conceded defeat after two hours of punishing combat and ordered his troops to break contact and withdraw, bringing with them the wounded who were not within range of the British guns. The remaining British troops tried to pursue aggressively but were halted by Hampton's dragoon rear guard.

Greene withdrew his battered army back to its campsite at Burdell's Plantation while Stewart regrouped his troops near the brick house. Stewart and Greene then worked out the disposition of prisoners and wounded through an exchange of letters. Continental surgeons sent the sick and wounded to the army hospital at Camden, while militiamen escorted the British and loyalist prisoners northward to Salisbury, North Carolina. In the meantime, the British troops buried their dead and loaded up the wounded and movable supplies. The redcoats then destroyed excess muskets, rum, and provisions before withdrawing on 10 September. Greene ordered Lee and Marion to harass the enemy's withdrawal, but rain and reinforcements from Charleston helped screen Stewart's withdrawal to the upper Cooper River near Monck's Corner. Both sides lost heavily in the Eutaw Springs engagement. A postbattle tally of Greene's forces showed 139 killed, 375 wounded, and 8 missing in action—about 25 percent of Greene's combat strength. By contrast,

Stewart reported losses of 84 dead, 351 wounded, and 257 missing in action—roughly 13 percent of his corps. Greene claimed to have taken 500 prisoners, thus leaving Stewart with about 1,100 soldiers still fit for duty.

Both sides claimed victory. Greene based his claim on the haul of prisoners and weapons, whereas Stewart pointed to his possession of the battlefield and several Continental cannons as prizes. Stewart won in a narrow tactical sense because of the tenaciousness of Marjoribanks's defense of the ravine and Sheridan's stand at the brick house. Yet, much as at Guilford Courthouse and Hobkirk Hill, Stewart's tactical victory was strategically barren. General Leslie, the overall British commander, was compelled to contract his defensive perimeter to Dorchester, on the upper Ashley River, and Goose Creek, a tributary of the Cooper River. Despite the British withdrawal, die-hard loyalist bands along the border of South and North Carolina continued to fight against local patriot patrols.

After Yorktown

The euphoria in the American ranks from the Eutaw Springs battle soon evaporated, and Greene had his hands full dealing with a sick, hungry, and discontented army. Greene responded by using patriot patrols to watch the British while he marched his Continentals back to their habitual campsite along the Santee River. Meanwhile, Greene did what he could to shape operations in Virginia and North Carolina and worked on prisoner exchanges with Leslie. At the same time, his officers nursed the army back to health and prepared to resume the campaign in cooler weather. Greene received welcome news in late October when he learned of General Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown. Soon thereafter, Greene received an offer from Leslie to resume prisoner exchanges—an offer Greene spurned over his resentment of Isaac Hayne's execution. Greene also learned that the Continental Congress had voted their thanks to the individual units and particular officers for the Eutaw Springs battle. Congress especially honored Greene with the award of a gold medal commemorating what they saw as a victory at Eutaw Springs.

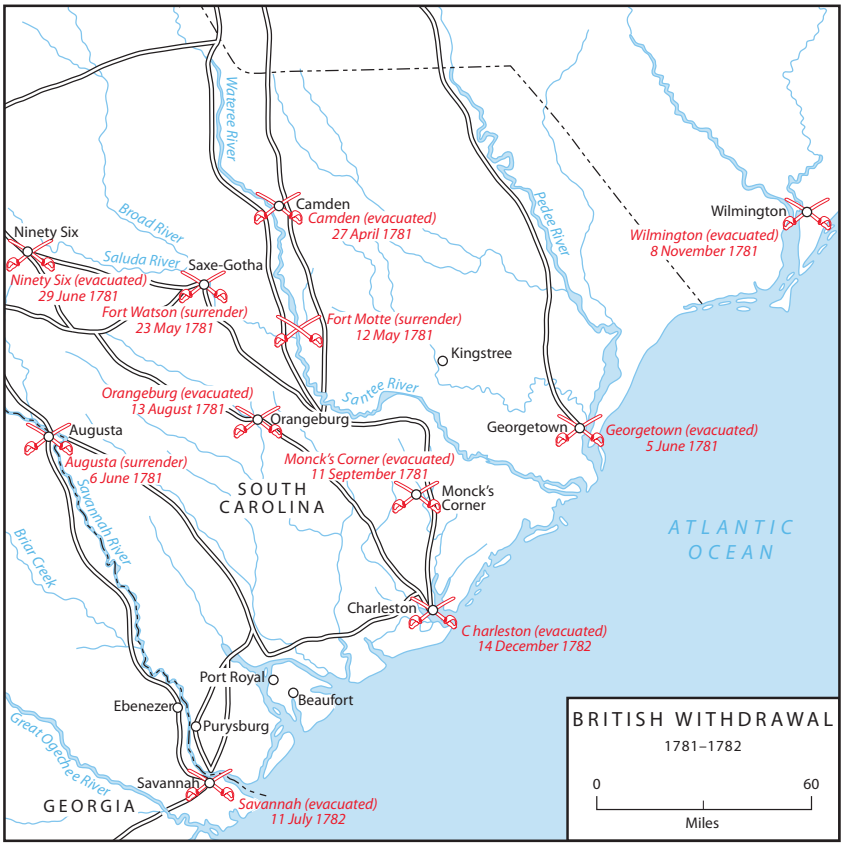
Cornwallis's surrender did nothing to change matters in North America immediately (*Map 8*). Clinton still commanded 15,000 combat troops in New York alone, and the British army and *Royal Navy* had substantial combat forces in the West Indies. Within the southern theater, the British still controlled roughly 9,000 British regulars and provincials, and hundreds more loyalist supporters. Hardcore loyalists continued to launch raids from Charleston and Savannah, and in several instances, they inflicted heavy losses on isolated rebel patrols. However, the surrender at Yorktown demoralized the British troops so much that their commanders refused to continue risking troops in unnecessary offensive operations. Greene led a reconnaissance force toward Dorchester in November 1781, which encountered only scattered resistance from loyalist partisans, while General Leslie quietly withdrew the Dorchester garrison down to Charleston.

Consolidation of Gains

Despite the high operational tempo during the summer of 1781, Greene never lost sight of his strategic goal of ending the Whig-vs.-Tory civil war and establishing undisputed American sovereignty in the region. For example, Greene repeatedly urged Whig militia leaders to rein in the counterproductive habit of brutalizing Tory prisoners, news of which discouraged many loyalists from deserting. In addition, Greene convinced Governor Rutledge to pardon loyalists who successfully served a tour in patriot militia ranks. Rutledge further encouraged loyalist defections through a confiscation act that legalized the seizure of property from staunch Tories. The combination of carrot and stick induced many loyalists to quietly leave Charleston and submit to patriot authority.

Greene prioritized his efforts on Georgia, which he judged would be the easiest to control. Greene prodded the congressional delegates from Georgia to take the lead:

> The enemy Have but little footing in that State [Georgia] and if proper regulations could take place it would



Map 8

> be difficult for them ever to gain ground there again without a very great force. . . . I have recommended to the people to choose a council to govern their affairs until a Legislature could be at hand; and I wish from the . . . European intelligence . . . that a compleat Legislature agreeable to the constitution could be formed as soon as possible.

Greene assisted the Georgians by ordering Deputy Paymaster Clay to redouble his efforts to smooth out factional disputes among the Georgia Whigs and prepare for elections. Greene backed the Georgia

politicians with force by mustering Col. Elijah Clarke's state militia troops into Continental service, thereby bolstering American claims of control over the state. Greene's efforts to consolidate American sovereignty in Georgia culminated in August 1781 with the election of Nathan Brownson, a physician who had represented Georgia at the Second Continental Congress, as governor by the state legislature.

However, the departure of many of the Maryland troops and officers at the end of their term of service in late 1782 complicated Greene's operational plans. Greene had anticipated the impending loss and demanded reinforcements from the fresh Continental troops released by the British surrender at Yorktown. Greene also wrote directly to Marshal Jean-Baptiste-Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, commander of the French blockading fleet at Yorktown, asking for a similar operation against Charleston. General Washington's focus was on Clinton's army in New York, so he promised Greene only a single Continental brigade of Pennsylvanians under Brig. Gen. Anthony Wayne. Although Wayne did not arrive until December, his march southward prompted the British evacuation of Wilmington—thus ending a permanent British presence in North Carolina.

In the interim, Greene did what he could to tighten the screws on the British enclave at Charleston. Greene moved his headquarters to the village of Round O, which lay astride the British lines of communications between Savannah and Charleston. Greene then positioned his available manpower in a loose cordon around Charleston: Continentals along the Edisto River to the west and south, and light forces east of the Cooper River at Monck's Corner. Leslie exploited Greene's weakness with periodic raids by loyalist forces, which included a troop of Black dragoons that Leslie shrewdly had recruited from among the formerly enslaved Black volunteers in December 1781. The Black dragoons proved formidable opponents, as they had intimate knowledge of the terrain and rebel sympathizers—and would fight hard to avoid capture and reenslavement. In February 1782, one such raiding detachment battered Marion's militiamen so badly that they withdrew back to the Santee River. Meanwhile, Greene

tried other schemes to keep the British off balance, such as a raid in January 1782 that failed to capture the 500-odd British defenders of Johns Island. Greene also failed to convince Georgia and South Carolina to adopt a proposal by Lt. Col. John Laurens—son of the former president of the Continental Congress, Henry Laurens—to enlist enslaved Black volunteers and promise them their freedom after the war. Greene found that most civil officials believed the end of the war was in sight and balked at the additional cost of providing fresh recruits and supplies to sustain his force. Greene relieved some of the camp chores from his combat troops by using about 500 enslaved Black noncombatants for wagoner and engineer work.

Wayne's fresh Continentals joined the Southern army in January 1782, giving Greene the combat power necessary to consolidate American gains in the region. Georgia was uppermost in Greene's mind, as British and loyalist forces still held territory west of the Savannah River. Greene's strategic approach of subordinating the military to civil authority and governance was reflected in his orders to General Wayne:

> You will therefore march . . . the whole of your force . . . for covering the Country. . . . You will open an immediate correspondence with the Governor . . . make such requisitions for militia, as you may find requisite. . . . The mode of subsisting your troops will also concert with the magistrates of the state . . . be as little oppressive as possible to the people. When you get into the lower Country you will invite all people to join . . . afford them protection & security. Try by every means in your power to soften the . . . deadly resentments subsisting between the Whigs and tories, and put a stop as much as possible to that cruel custom of putting people to death after they have surrendered. . . . The practice of plundering you will endeavor to Check as much as possible. . . . Let your discipline be as regular

and as rigid, as the nature and constitution of your troops will admit.[2]

With matters in Georgia moving to a climax, Greene moved to finish the job in South Carolina. The state convened its first elected General Assembly and elected John Mathews as the new governor in January 1782. The new state government was installed at Jacksonboro, a town only 30 miles from Charleston, thereby threatening British claims to control the territory. Although Greene was unaware at the time, the end of the war was near at hand. French seizures of British holdings in the Caribbean and Mediterranean magnified the psychological impact of Cornwallis's surrender in October 1781. The British government collapsed in February 1782 after the House of Commons refused to support the king's plans to retain footholds in Georgia and South Carolina. The new opposition party quickly concluded that the American holdings were too small and isolated to defend easily from further French and Spanish attacks.

Consequently, the new British prime minister, Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham, began measures to wind down the war in North America. Rockingham replaced General Clinton with Lt. Gen. Sir Guy Carleton, who had a mandate to evacuate troops safely from New York, Charleston, and Savannah—and to use that manpower to beef up the defense of the West Indies. Rockingham reorganized the political structure in North America under the sole authority of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Charles Fox. Rockingham then directed Secretary of State for Home and Colonial Affairs William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne, to open peace negotiations. After months of diplomatic wrangling, British, French, and American representatives signed preliminary peace agreements on 20 January 1783. The War of American Independence ended officially in Paris on 3 September 1783. The Americans won their full independence and important fishing and Appalachian territorial concessions in exchange for dropping claims

2. After reestablishing control of the area in concert with local patriots, Wayne further encouraged reconciliation by offering amnesty to Tories and outlaws in exchange for service in the patriot militia.

to Canada and Florida. British territorial losses were limited largely to the American colonies, and the British retained Gibraltar and their most valuable colonies in the West Indies. Most importantly, Britain had extricated itself from a costly and unpopular war without permanently severing diplomatic and economic ties with the Americans.

In anticipation of the upcoming peace treaty, Carleton ordered Leslie in June 1782 to prepare for an orderly withdrawal from Charleston, Savannah, and East Florida once sufficient transport was available. Leslie sat on the orders until 7 August as he feared the adverse effect on the morale of his loyalist supporters. Leslie's fears were realized when panic ensued in Charleston after the orders were published. Greene soon learned of the order from a steady stream of demoralized loyalists leaving Charleston. Greene responded by ordering his pickets to turn back the Tory defectors to add pressure on Leslie—an order largely ignored by his troops, who had compassion on the loyalist refugees. Governor Mathews responded by offering amnesty to lukewarm Tories and proper judicial proceedings for the most notorious loyalist leaders. Mathews's proclamation was accepted by many Tory insurgents who were demoralized by the imminent British evacuation and patriot and friendly Creek patrols eventually eliminated the remaining loyalist holdouts. In Charleston, Leslie sought to end an increasingly pointless conflict by halting shipment of weapons and ammunition to loyalist and emancipated partisans, and seeking a truce—an overture rejected by a suspicious Greene.

In the meantime, Greene felt he had to keep pressure on the British to convince them to end the war, not just redeploy their combat forces to resume operations in New York. Yet the lack of reinforcements, funds, and supplies from Philadelphia and the states in his department continually hamstrung Greene's efforts. Greene was so desperate for supplies that he quietly authorized the exchange of provisions for clothing from loyalist manufacturers in Charleston. Greene was also faced with keeping his increasingly sick and disaffected army together through a long and frustrating summer of containing the British in their coastal enclaves. At one point, tempers

boiled over when disaffected soldiers in Wayne's Pennsylvania Line articulated plans for mutiny in protest against shortfalls in pay and provisions. The Pennsylvanians, several of whom were British deserters, had mutinied once before at Morristown in late 1780. Greene moved swiftly to squelch the mutiny by publicly executing the ringleader after a swift court-martial. The remaining mutineers received dishonorable discharges, and as part of their punishment they and their families were sent to work rolling cartridges at the logistics depot at Salisbury, North Carolina.

British control of Georgia, meanwhile, ebbed under pressure from Clarke's militia and Wayne's Continentals. Governor John Martin replaced Governor Brownson in early 1782 and offered pardons to loyalists who enlisted in state line or militia service, an enticement that convinced many lukewarm Tories to defect. Meanwhile, Royal Governor Sir James Wright and the remaining die-hard loyalists fought a losing battle to retain a foothold in the state's interior. Wright's frustration at the lack of reinforcements culminated with receiving a humiliating order to evacuate Georgia—days after celebrating the king's birthday in Savannah on 4 June 1782. After a final round of skirmishes between loyalist rangers and Creek auxiliaries with Lt. Col. James Jackson's Georgia Legion, Governor Wright oversaw the evacuation of Savannah on 11 July 1782. The evacuation transplanted 2,000 White loyalists and about 4,000 freed Black loyalists to St. Augustine, with a further 400 White settlers and 5,000 enslaved Black people sailing to Jamaica. Those who settled in Florida were later repatriated when Britain ceded the territory to Spain in the final peace treaty of 1783. The triumphant Georgia Whigs convened the new General Assembly in January 1783 and elected Lyman Hall as the next governor. However, the Georgia state troops and militia remained busy for several months, mopping up isolated detachments of Tories and pro-British Creek and Cherokee tribal combatants.

Both sides knew the end was in sight in South Carolina, but occasional skirmishes still happened between foraging patrols. One such firefight on the Combahee River on 27 August 1782 resulted in the death of Colonel Laurens, a loss that Greene decried as a

needless, "paltry little skirmish." In the meantime, Leslie began the evacuation of loyalist and American provincial troops—followed by prominent loyalists and their families, enslaved laborers, and personal property—from Charleston to St. Augustine and Nova Scotia in October 1782. The last engagement in the South probably occurred on 14 November 1782, when a Continental patrol clashed with an armed woodcutting party on James Island. By 13 December 1782, the British had assembled 130 transports and escorts at Charleston to carry the remaining 4,000 British regulars and provincials, loyalists, and about 5,300 free and enslaved Black people. In the interim, Greene had positioned detachments closer to the city, hoping for an opportunity to attack. Intelligence soon indicated an evacuation was imminent for 12 December, so Greene ordered Wayne to take a strong reconnaissance force—300 light infantry, 80 dragoons, and an artillery detachment—across to the Neck to harass the British. Wayne halted the movement when a courier under a flag of truce presented Greene a proposal from General Leslie, which promised a peaceful evacuation of Charleston if Greene's troops would hold their fire until complete. Greene gratefully accepted Leslie's terms and promptly canceled Wayne's reconnaissance in force.

Early on 14 December 1782, Greene and General William Moultrie—the victor of Sullivan's Island in 1776 and a former British prisoner of war—crossed the Ashley to oversee the final act. The British fired a cannon from the Hornwork, the citadel guarding the city's entrance, to signal the beginning of their withdrawal. Both sides warily watched one another for any sign of hostilities until the British rear guard passed through the city gates at the vacant Hornwork. While the British troops marched eastward to their transports on the Cooper River. Wayne's troops continued southward to secure the South Carolina State House. Greene's security detachment then escorted newly elected Governor Mathews and the Privy Council to occupy the House, all in full view of the British fleet slowly making its way toward open waters. The governor officially marked the end of the British occupation on Sunday, 15 December 1782. As General Moultrie noted afterward: "It was an

ample reward for the triumphant soldier, after all the hazards and fatigues of war, which he had gone through, to be the instrument of releasing his friends and fellow citizens from captivity, and restoring to them their liberties and possessions of their city and country again."

Between 1775 and 1783, the British army suffered perhaps 6,800 combat deaths. By contrast, more than 25,000 Americans died from all causes during the war. Available data indicate that about 852 Americans were killed and 1,198 wounded in action—about 10 percent of the total casualties—during the southern campaign of 1781–1783. Continental officers and militiamen who died in or shortly after combat generally received proper burials, but the dead Continental troops, mostly soldiers from Maryland and Delaware, were buried where they fell. Their remains thus render each southern battlefield hallowed ground to the cause of American freedom.

Congress officially disbanded the Southern Army on 25 November 1783. Enlisted troops with an established trade or family homestead usually went home to rebuild their lives. Those who lacked prewar ties moved westward to take advantage of their freedoms, and later, land bounties and pensions. Nathanael Greene's business fortunes suffered during the war, compounding the debts he incurred to buy supplies for the Southern Army. He received no debt relief from a cash-strapped Congress but was helped by land grants from grateful Georgia and North Carolina citizens. Greene settled on a plantation near Savannah, but he died of a stroke on 19 June 1786 before he could turn a profit. Daniel Morgan briefly returned to service to defend Virginia in mid-1781, but chronic sciatica and rheumatism forced his retirement near Winchester, Virginia. There, he married and dabbled in politics and land speculation before dying peacefully in 1802.

Many other former Continental officers moved naturally into civil governance roles. Otho Holland Williams served as commissioner of the Port of Baltimore and later as a United States Representative before his death in 1794. John Eager Howard briefly resumed his profitable enterprises in Baltimore, Maryland, before

serving as the state's governor and representing the state in both houses of the U.S. Congress. Henry Lee played a prominent role in the last Congress of the Confederation and the 1787 Constitutional Convention. He subsequently was elected governor of Virginia from 1791 to 1794 and served one term in Congress. Lee later fell into debt and ill health before dying in 1818. South Carolinians lionized William Moultrie and elected him to the state legislature. He served two terms as governor before his death at Charleston in 1805. Andrew Pickens resumed planting and served as a tribal negotiator and member of the U.S. House of Representatives before passing away in 1817. A penniless Thomas Sumter represented South Carolina at the 1787 Constitutional Convention and served three terms in the U.S. House and Senate before his death in 1832. Francis Marion served briefly in politics before returning home to marry his cousin, Mary Esther Videau. He also served as commander of Fort Johnson, outside Charleston. Cornwallis returned home after surrendering at Yorktown, where his humiliation was assuaged by honors from King George III. Clinton was widely blamed for the loss of America. He retained his commission but was relegated to minor posts while he served in Parliament. Francis Rawdon returned home to recover from malaria and received honors and promotions, dying in 1826 as the 1st Marquess of Hastings.

Over time, Continentals and militiamen were compensated for lost wages through land grants and pensions and were honored in the postwar historical narratives. Camp followers played an essential part in sustaining the war effort yet received no similar recognition for their service. Native tribes in the southern states fared poorly regardless of which side they supported. The Catawba nation sided with the Americans and suffered heavily during the fighting of 1780–1781, which left the postwar Catawba tribe a shrunken, impoverished remnant in the Carolinas. By contrast, the Cherokee lost dozens of their settlements during fighting in 1776, with the surviving bands driven westward across the mountains. The British outraged their former allies by ceding the trans-Appalachia territory to the Americans, thus setting the stage for future American-Cherokee conflict. Many wealthy southern loyalists went into exile, some going

to Jamaica, and smaller numbers settling in Nova Scotia or Britain. In later years, many exiles received compensation in the form of land grants or pensions. A small number of loyalists, generally those not suspected of violent crimes, remained in the South. The climate of reconciliation fostered by Greene and Rutledge—assisted by prewar business and family connections—allowed many loyalists to integrate into postwar society quietly. The fate of the enslaved Black population varied widely. Many exiled slave-holding loyalists opened new plantations in the West Indies. The British, however, honored offers of emancipation to the surviving Black dragoons and other Black soldiers who joined the war effort before 30 November 1782. Many freed Black people emigrated to Nova Scotia, where they experienced harsh living conditions and discrimination over jobs and land grants. Their lot was still better than the many thousands of enslaved people who remained behind in the southern states. They would remain in bondage until the final destruction of slavery during the American Civil War of 1861–1865.

Although often overlooked in American histories of the War of Independence, the French lost several thousand dead and sick and incurred (in today's dollars) about half a trillion dollars in costs—which included millions of dollars in direct loans and the furnishing of military-grade supplies and weapons to equip Continental regiments. Spain also played an indirect role, though it never entered a formal alliance out of fear that the rebellion would spread to its own American colonies. The actions of Spain's navy as a check against the British freed up the French navy to support Washington's forces at Yorktown, and Spanish expeditions against Pensacola and Mobile further strained British resources. Lastly, Spanish pesos and credit, and essential supplies like gunpowder and cinchona bark, helped to sustain the American war effort in the South.

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

Historians have struggled to understand how the British lost the war in the South despite their initial tactical successes. At the top, Secretary of State Lord George Germain and Prime Minister Frederick, Lord North, complicated matters for Clinton and Cornwallis by issuing muddled and often contradictory strategic operational guidance. The British government also failed to address the political grievances that led to the revolution and establish competent, sustainable civilian governance in the reconquered territories. Despite those grand strategic challenges, Clinton's strategy of pacification was feasible, given his reduced manpower and constrained freedom of maneuver after the French entry into the war. London officials and Clinton certainly understood loyalist support as the center of gravity for the southern campaign. Yet, British officials consistently undermined their own strategy. First, Cornwallis and his officers failed to protect loyalist supporters from Whig reprisals—a strategic blunder noted by British lieutenant Frederick Mackenzie:

> Our taking post at different places, inviting the Loyalists to join us, and then Evacuating those posts, and abandoning the people to the fury of their bitterest Enemies, has deterred them from declaring themselves until affairs take a decisive turn in our favor; we shall then find the people eager to shew their loyalty. . . . We should not then have dispersed our Army . . . but have kept a large Army together, which would have conquered whenever it went and secured what it conquered.

Commissary Charles Stedman later wrote how contemptuous and abusive treatment (including beatings) at the hands of British soldiers compelled many loyalists to desert, "choosing to run the risk of meeting the resentments of their enemies rather than submit to the derision and abuse of those to whom they looked upon as friends." Lastly, Clinton undermined efforts to sway moderate Americans to support the British through his proclamations demanding oaths of loyalty and military service for all within British lines. Within the operational realm, Cornwallis abandoned his pacification mission to employ Maj. Patrick Ferguson and his loyalist troops in an offensive role—a decision that ended in disaster at Kings Mountain in October 1780. The heavy losses there, and the corresponding decrease in loyalist recruiting, left Colonel Rawdon insufficient force to protect his bases and supply lines after Cornwallis marched northward in April 1781.

Cornwallis's decision to burn his wagons after Tarleton's defeat at the Cowpens temporarily improved the tactical mobility of his force but greatly shortened its operational reach. Instead of pausing every four to five days to replenish the wagon train, Cornwallis's troops had to forage daily, and their operational reach was constrained by the need to remain immobile until the quartermaster detachments finished the processing of flour and the butchering of cattle. At the tactical level, the British officers proved themselves competent and dangerous opponents—although Cornwallis's failure to understand his operating environment hindered the pursuit of Greene's army after Cowpens. By contrast, Rawdon and Cruger showed a good grasp of tactical intelligence and demonstrated exceptional skill in defending their respective posts—accomplishments squandered by Cornwallis's decision to abandon the Carolinas to seek a decisive battle of annihilation in Virginia.

By comparison, Greene sought to understand his theater of operations and then created a flexible, realistic campaign plan based on available resources to attain his "war of posts" strategy. Greene understood the importance of the American Continental Army, which demonstrated to Whig and Tory alike the enduring resilience of the revolutionary cause. Unlike the British, Greene was careful

to protect his Continentals from needless risk, and sought to shape operations to protect Whig sympathizers from Tory reprisals. Greene not only recognized but also demonstrated the importance of good relations with the populace through his orders and actions. Lastly, Greene focused on grand strategy, combining military, economic and political lines of effort toward a unified goal. Unlike Cornwallis, Greene saw military actions had to create the conditions necessary for security and civil governance. Greene, however, lacked the tactical acumen of Cornwallis or Rawdon. His neglect of the militia lines at Guilford Courthouse, inattention to basic security measures at Ninety Six, and refusal to accept blame for the defeat at Hobkirk Hill stand out as examples. Greene's tactical ineptness was offset to a degree by his ability to identify and promote talented soldiers like Carrington and Davie into critical staff and command positions. What each leader lacked in terms of skill and professionalism was offset by revolutionary fervor and devotion to the cause of American independence. In July 1781, Greene compared his operational approach to that of his opponent, Cornwallis:

> Our army has been frequently beaten and like a Stock Fish grows the better for it. Lord Cornwallis who is the modern Hannibal, has rambled through great part of the Southern States . . . without reaping any solid Advantages from it, except that of distressing the poor Inhabitants. . . . John Turnbull . . . Asserts that with all my Talents for Warr, I am deficient in the great Art of making a timely retreat. I hope I have convinced the World to the contrary, for there are few Generals that has run oftener, or more lustily that I have done. But I have taken care not to run too farr; and commonly have run as fast forward as backward, to convince our Enemy that we were like a Crab, that could run either way.

The revolutionary Americans ended the war with full independence, thanks to the efforts of Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene and thousands of dedicated Continental and Whig militia officers and soldiers. They

put aside political, religious and sectional differences and united as American citizens dedicated to republican freedom. Their effort would have been for nothing without hundreds of nameless camp followers, artisans, craftsmen, farmers, and enslaved people who provided necessary supplies, labor, and support. General George Washington said as much in 1776: "he will be the best Soldier, and the best Patriot, who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his Station, or from whatever part of the Continent, he may come."

APPENDIX

"Order, Regularity, & Discipline": Waging War in the Eighteenth Century

by Joseph A. Seymour

By 1775, armies in Europe and North America had developed into complex forces organized around the infantry regiment. Artillery provided fire support. Mounted units performed reconnaissance, screened attacks and retreats, and added shock. Engineers and pioneers built and demolished fortifications and other works. Artificers repaired and maintained weapons and ordnance. Surgeons treated the sick and wounded. Civilian commissaries made, procured, and transported supplies and rations. All of them supported the foot soldiers, who usually dominated the battlefield.

Composition

The Continental Army and state militia generally organized their infantry regiments using the British model, with a colonel in command, aided by a lieutenant colonel, major, and regimental staff. A regiment had ten companies, including one light and one grenadier company. The light company consisted of the best shots, the cleverest, and the most agile in the regiment. These soldiers specialized in screening, skirmishing, patrolling, and scouting. Congress dispensed early on with the grenadier company, with its brawny shock troops who often formed the vanguard of assaults,

and usually authorized nine companies. Each company carried equipment and additional ammunition in one or two wagons. When the situation called for the infantry to operate away from its baggage train, soldiers placed extra ammunition and essential items in their knapsacks. Most companies had a few women on their rolls. Although not officially in the army, they could draw rations, and sometimes pay, by performing various essential duties, including nursing the sick and wounded and laundering the soldiers' clothing. Captains and lieutenants directed the maneuver and fire of the platoons in their companies. Sergeants and corporals maintained unit cohesion in battle, assisted officers, and enforced discipline in the sections under their charge. Drummers, who ranked between corporals and sergeants, communicated orders in camp and battle.

Equipment

A soldier's basic fighting equipment was known as a stand of arms, which commonly consisted of a musket; a bayonet; a cartridge box of wood, leather, or tin containing between twenty-three and twenty-nine paper cartridges; and cleaning tools. A standard firearm of the period was the British Land Pattern musket. It fired a powerful load consisting of a 1-ounce lead ball propelled by nearly a half ounce of gunpowder. Its oversized barrel of about 0.76- to 0.80-inch diameter made it easier to load. A ball fired from a musket of this type could reach massed troops out to 300 yards. At 100 yards, it was accurate enough to hit an individual and powerful enough to penetrate a two-inch elm plank. Continental, state, and militia forces augmented existing musket stores with locally made copies of the Land Pattern and imported French, German, Dutch, and Spanish arms of similar bore sizes and ballistics. Soldiers also shouldered sporting (nonmilitary issue) arms of different calibers, sometimes retrofitted to mount bayonets. The lack of serviceable arms slowed augmentation and the integration of reinforcements. Furthermore, companies equipped with a mix of arms could not easily sustain fire, let alone mount effective bayonet assaults.

Both armies also issued rifles to light troops or recruited experienced riflemen who brought their own. The rifles usually followed two patterns: the short-barreled, large-bore Germanic or *Jäger* (hunter) rifle, and the long-barreled, small-bore Pennsylvania rifle. Less powerful than muskets, both were accurate to about 300 yards and took about one minute to load. Neither could mount a bayonet. In 1777, British Maj. Patrick Ferguson fielded an innovative breech-loading rifle that mounted a bayonet, but it saw limited service.

Tactics

The musket's capabilities shaped tactics. A trained soldier could fire three rounds per minute. After twenty-five shots, the piece became too hot to handle, and the accumulation of residual gunpowder (known as powder-fouling) required cleaning and slowed reloading. Regiments formed in line at close order, presenting a continuous front of muskets and bayonets to concentrate their fire and mass to maximum effect. Close ranks also enabled company commanders to keep their troops together and thus better control them. The soldiers easily could hear orders communicated by drumbeat and could support each other using linear tactics described in tactical publications such as the *Manual Exercise, As Ordered by His Majesty in 1764*. In 1778, the Continental Army introduced a system spelled out in the *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, nicknamed the Blue Book. Well-drilled companies could execute a variety of maneuvers to bring their firepower or bayonets to bear, unleashing simultaneous volleys with devastating effect, or firing alternately by platoon to sustain a running fire. Infantry usually closed to the optimal range of 40 yards for a killing volley before a bayonet assault. While battalions also could extend their intervals to optimize individual fire, volume rather than accuracy usually decided a battle's outcome.

Artillery on both sides organized as separate regiments and battalions but fought as detachments as needed. With a range

of several hundred yards, 3-, 4-, and 6-pounder guns supported battalions in battle. With their slightly longer range, 8- and 12-pounders supported brigades, while larger guns with greater range operated from fortifications. Mortars fired exploding shells in a high arc to get over walls or other obstacles. Howitzers fired shells either directly at troops or in an arc. Artillerists and wagon teams were valuable assets. Commanders therefore often ordered crews that were about to be overrun by the enemy to disable their guns with spikes and mallets and abandon the weapons to save themselves and their teams.

Both forces also employed light dragoons, a type of mounted infantry. The scarcity of large horse breeds in America, the cost of transporting such mounts, and the uneven topography challenged the use of cavalry. Organized as regiments or separate troops, dragoons fought both mounted and dismounted and were armed with sabers, carbines, and, occasionally, pistols. Depending on time and terrain, both armies frequently detached light infantry, riflemen, artillery, and dragoons into separate battalions or combined them into corps or legions.

Fortifications

European and colonial governments constructed dozens of forts before and during the war to defend important cities, towns, and key points. Field fortifications included fort-like redoubts, arrow-shaped flèches, and crescent-shaped lunettes. These structures were built of large wicker cylinders, called gabions, which were filled with soil or rubble, and then reinforced by bundles of sticks called fascines, covered with soil and sod, and surrounded by moats. As time permitted, soldiers erected palisades (walls of vertical wooden stakes), placed fraises (sharpened stakes) at a slant on the inner surface of the moat, and laid an abatis (a network of felled trees with sharpened branches) to slow infantry assaults. For a portable obstacle, artificers would use a cheval-de-frise, which typically consisted of sharpened stakes projecting from a log or beam. To fortify harbor defenses and block

rivers, engineers employed log booms connected with heavy chains and created the naval version of a cheval-de-frise by constructing rock-filled timber boxes bearing sharpened logs.

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Technology dictated tactics, which in turn influenced formations. The contending forces frequently deviated from the standards prescribed by regulations or government allocations as they dealt with issues of personnel, materiel, and authority. Necessity and mission spurred the evolution of regulations, tactics, and equipment during the war. That was particularly the case for the new army of the United States. As the war progressed, American soldiers attained a high level of proficiency that earned the confidence of those they served and the respect of both allies and enemies.

"The Course of human Affairs forbids an Expectation, that Troops formed under such Circumstances, should at once posses the Order, Regularity & Discipline of Veterans—Whatever Deficiencies there may be, will I doubt not, soon be made up by the Activity & Zeal of the Officers, and the Docility & Obedience of the Men. These Quali[ties,] united with their native Bravery, & Spirit will afford a happy Presage of Success, & put a final Period to those Distresses which now overwhelm this once happy Country."

—George Washington, in an address to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, 4 July 1775

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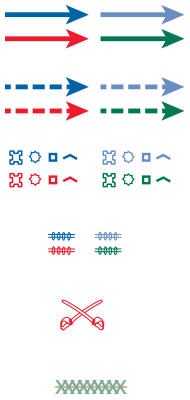
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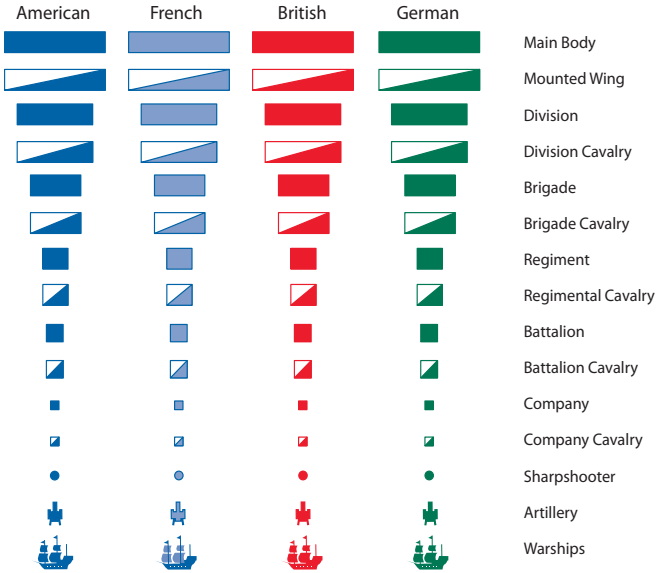
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MAP SYMBOLS

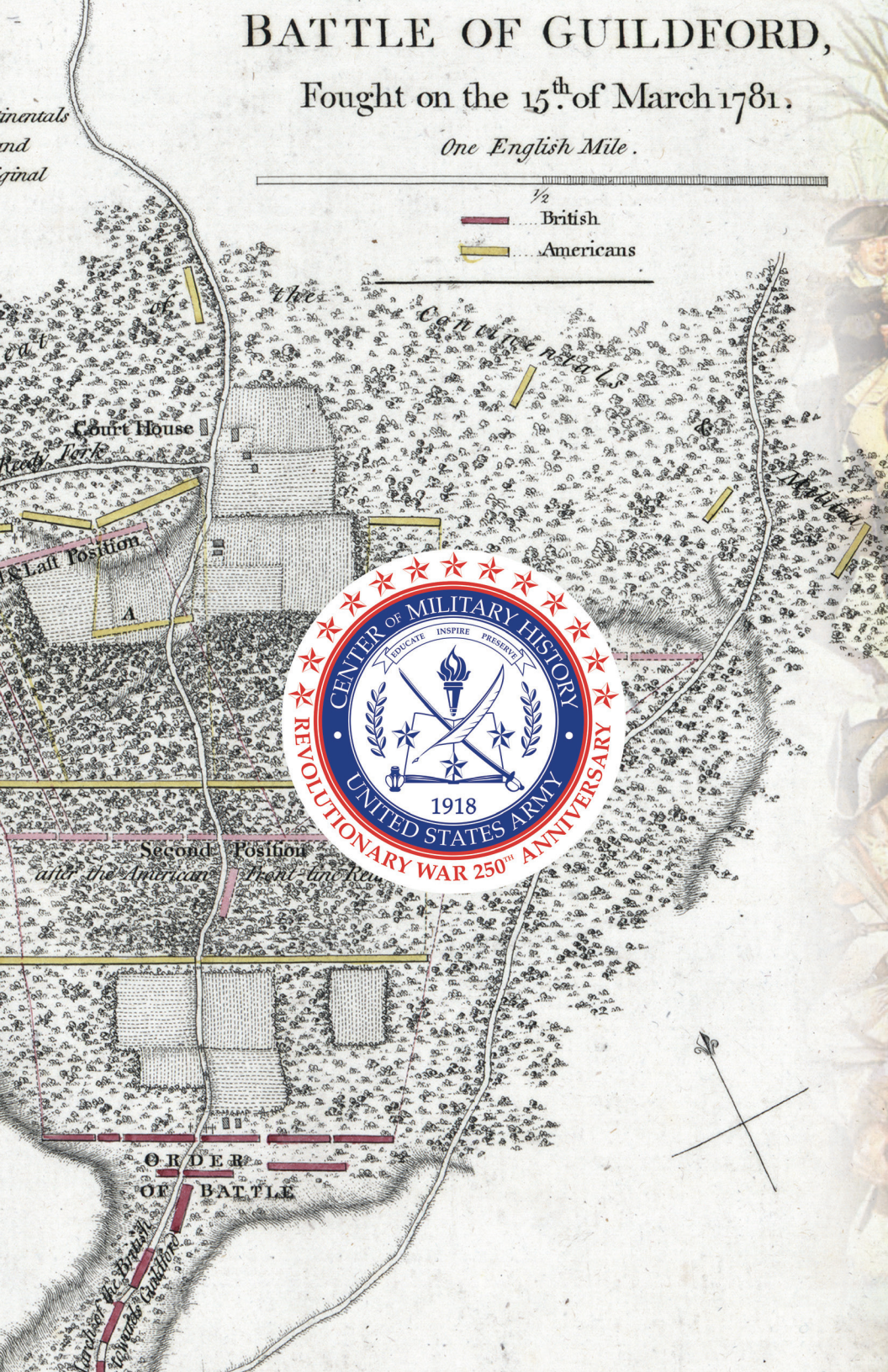


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H. Allen Skinner Jr. is an Illinois native and holds a PhD in American history from Liberty University. He has sixteen years of experience as an Army historian, including assignments with the Army Reserve and Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve. He is currently the command historian for the United States Army Soldier Support Institute at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He is the author of *A Long and Obstinate Resistance: Staff Ride Handbook for the Charleston Campaign* (Army University Press, 2023), *A Game of Hare & Hounds: Command Study of the Guilford Courthouse Campaign* (Marine Corps University Press, 2021), and *Staff Ride Guide for the Battle of Kings Mountain* (Army University Press, 2020). The last of these was a finalist for the Army Historical Foundation's Distinguished Writing Award. He has also contributed articles to *Army History*, *1914–1918 Online: The International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, and the *Journal of Military History*. Dr. Skinner currently has Revolutionary War leadership chapters pending publication in edited books with the University of Virginia Press and the University of Oklahoma Press.


BATTLE OF GUILDFORD,
Fought on the 15th. of March 1781.
One English Mile.
½
British
Americans
the Cantine roads
Court House
Reedy Fork
Last Position
A
Second Position
and the American
ORDER
OF BATTLE
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
EDUCATE INSPIRE PRESERVE
1918
REVOLUTIONARY WAR 250TH ANNIVERSARY
UNITED STATES ARMY