

Guilford Courthouse

The Battle for
March 15th, 1781 *By Bob Barnettson*

This bloody victory by the British during the American War of Independence (AWI) generated the following comment from pundits in Parliament back home: 'Another such victory would ruin the British Army!' Large in size and heavy in casualties makes this the perfect scenario to test out the free rules we gave you in the last issue of the magazine.

INTRODUCTION

The revolutionary war had raged for six bloody years. What started as a relatively simple concept – smash the revolutionaries – had failed to come to fruition. The American forces had demonstrated quite amazing resource, especially for the rabble they were believed to be. French support provided significant aid to the rebels, especially from a naval perspective, whilst king and country continually failed to support the army and loyalists fighting for the British in the colony.

So with all this at the back of his mind, Lieutenant-General Charles, Lord Cornwallis began his invasion of North Carolina in the spring of 1781, intent on smashing the American army. They were to meet at Guilford Courthouse on March 15th, a conflict that was to once and for all prove that the British forces could not defeat their foes in this far-flung colony.

Considering that Cornwallis was to win the forthcoming

battle, it was a bitter irony that it was to set the wheels in motion for an overall defeat in the American colony.

BACKGROUND TO GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

It was a bright, sunny day when the War came home to a remote spot in North Carolina. Guilford Courthouse had a small population - less than 100 - but on March 15th had become the temporary residence of some 4,400 American soldiers and the man who was their leader, Major General Nathanael Greene.

At this time the British had overrun Georgia and South Carolina and showed every sign of ripping the stars and stripes of North Carolina and Virginia from the all-new American flag. Things were looking dire for the Americans following defeats in the south, but resolve was high and Greene had managed to pull together the ragged remnants of a defeated southern army.

Greene raised a new force consisting of 1,700 Continentals



and somewhere in the region of 2,700 militia. The Continentals were three-year enlistees in the regular army, with militia being mostly farmers, temporary soldiers called up for short periods of service during an emergency.

On the morning of the 15th General Greene deployed his men in three lines of battle across the Great Salisbury Wagon Road. There is some debate over the name of this road, with some sources calling it the New Garden Road, but either way it ran from Guilford Courthouse toward the camp of the British army commanded by Lord Cornwallis.

Greene carefully devised the American battle formation after realising that although the woods did pose a problem for combat, the ground naturally split into three distinct areas. Greene considered that the woods would pose more problems for the generally static British formations than for his own troops.

The American army's first sign of the British came when Cornwallis' advance guard, under the command of Tarleton, crossed the bridge over Little Horsepen Creek heading east from the New Garden meeting house where the British had camped.

The British army was somewhat outnumbered. But this was a matter that did not bother Cornwallis who believed his redcoats would be victorious over the American rebels.

LET BATTLE BEGIN!

The battle began just after noon and progressed in fits and starts through the rest of that fateful day.

The first line, composed primarily of the North Carolina Militia, its centre deployed behind a split rail fence for cover and facing farm fields with its flanks extending into the wooded areas, was first to collapse.

Before their rout the militia inflicted a devastating amount of damage on the British troops, the 71st Highlanders under the command of Captain Dugald Stuart. Around 1,500 muskets exploded in the faces of the Highlanders and Stuart later recalled that "one half of the Highlanders dropped on the spot" with an American officer recalling that the fallen British looked like "scattered stalks in a wheat field".

So here we have the militia performing admirably prior to their collapse. The second line was to prove an even greater obstacle for the British. Located in heavy forest and with non-commissioned officers ordered to shoot any man who ran away, the Virginia militia grappled with their attackers for about an hour in a bitter action.

The problem for the British was that as they pursued the North Carolina militia through the forest they broke up into pockets of men, which meant that by the time they reached the Virginia militia they could not use the usual massed firepower and instead were forced into hand to hand actions with the men under Stevens (on the American left) and Lawson (on the American right).

Once through the second line, the British still had to contend with the regulars in the third line where Greene had stationed the Continentals. The intensity of the fighting varied with some of the more 'green' Continentals retreating and offering little resistance.

Towards the end of the battle Cornwallis found himself with an interesting tactical problem to deal with: his troops attacked from two directions and intermixed with numerous enemy troops in combat.

His solution: fire into the mass of men, which included his own troops, in a bid to 'blast' apart the opposing armies. Brigadier General Charles O'Hara, commander of the Guards brigade, is said to have begged him not to perform this action, but to no avail. Once the smoke of the cannon and musket fire had cleared the Americans quit the field, leaving the British victorious. But it was at an incredible cost and a mere seven months later Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

HISTORICAL ORDERS OF BATTLE

The number following the unit name is the number of troops mustered on the day of the battle.

British Forces

C-in-C Lieutenant-General Charles, Lord Cornwallis

Captain McLeod

Royal Artillery Detachment - 3 x 3pdrs

Colonel O'Hara

1st Battalion, Foot Guards – 300 men

2nd Battalion, Foot Guards – 300 men

Foot Guard Grenadier detachment – 120 men

Lieutenant-Colonel Webster

23rd Foot– 258 men

33rd Foot – 322 men

Major-General Leslie

71st Foot (2nd Battalion) – 212 men

Von Bose Regiment (Hessians) – 313 men

Reserves - under Cornwallis' direct command

British Legion (Dragoons) – 174 men

Jaegers (Hessians) – 97 men

Foot Guard detached Light Infantry – 120 men

North Carolina Loyalists – 130 men

American Forces

C-in-C Major-General Nathaniel Greene

American First Line

Brigadier-General Butler

North Carolina Militia Brigade – 500 men

Lynch's Virginia Rifles – 200 men

Colonel Washington's 1st/3rd Continental Dragoons – 86 men

1st Continental Artillery Detachment – 2 x 3pdrs

Brigadier-General Eaton

North Carolina Militia Brigade – 500 men

Campbell's Virginia Rifles – 200 men

Lee's Legion (Infantry) – 82 men
Lee's Legion (Dragoons) – 75 men

American Second Line
Brigadier-General Lawson
Virginia Militia Brigade – 600 men

Brigadier-General Steven's
Virginia Militia Brigade – 600 men

American Third Line
Brigadier-General Huger
4th Virginia Regiment – 400 men
5th Virginia Regiment – 400 men
1st Continental Artillery Detachment – 2 x 3pdrs

Colonel Williams
1st Maryland Regiment – 360 men
2nd Maryland Regiment – 360 men

SETUP

The game board is 4' x 6' and should look like the map provided.

The American player sets up his troops in 1st, 2nd and 3rd lines (left to right on the map) with the British player entering within 6" of the road on the left. The fields provide no cover and cannons may not move across them. The fence line in front of the American lines count as a linear obstacle and cover. There is a small rise located in the bottom right of the battlefield.

OBJECTIVES

The Americans win a major victory if they hold all three lines at the end of the game. Otherwise, the player with the most victory points (VPs) as per below wins a marginal victory. If one player doubles the other player's victory point total, it is a major victory.

- British gain 2 VPs for breaking the first line, 4 VPs for the second and 6 VPs for the third. The British also gain 1 VP for each American unit destroyed.
- The Americans gain 3 VPs for each British unit destroyed and 1 VP for each British unit routed off the board.

AMERICAN FORCES

The first line is commanded by Brigadier-General Butler (CR 8) and comprises 4 militia units, 2 units of scouts, 2 units of dragoons and 1 cannon. The second line is commanded by Brigadier-General Lawson (CR 8) and comprises 4 militia units. The third line is commanded by Brigadier-General Huger (CR 8) and comprises 3 continental infantry units and 1 cannon. Major-General Nathanael Greene (CR 9) is in overall command.

BRITISH FORCES

Colonel O'Hara (CR 8) commands 2 units of infantry and 1 unit of grenadiers. Lt. Colonel Smith (CR 8) commands 2 units of infantry and 2 cannons. Major General Leslie (CR 8) commands 2 units of infantry. General Cornwallis (CR 9) is in overall command and has a reserve comprising 1 unit of dragoons, 1 unit of grenadiers and 1 unit of Loyalists.



The Battle of Monmouth

June 28th, 1778 *By Bob Barnettson*

OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL BATTLE

Following a winter of drilling at Valley Forge, General George Washington was confronted by the British evacuation of Philadelphia. Sir Henry Clinton moved first towards New York and then the coast. Washington sought to intercept the enormous British column that included some 12 miles of baggage train.

Contact was made at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey on June 28, 1778. Approximately 5,000 American troops under General Charles Lee were to pin the British flank and allow the American army time to assault it. Lee's plan to deliver a coordinated attack against the British foundered due to his incompetence and British regulars pursued Lee as he and his troops retreated.

Washington was forced to rally Lee's fleeing troops while the British attacked. The battle was a standoff, with the intense heat causing significant casualties to both sides. By nightfall both sides retired. Lee was later court marshaled for his actions. Monmouth was the last major battle in the north and the largest one-day battle of the war.

SCENARIO

Lee's attack on the British flank has turned into a rout.

General Washington has arrived on the scene to rally Lee's troops and fend off the first wave of advancing British regulars. Intense heat is tiring men on both sides and it is unclear who will hold the field at the end of the day.

HISTORICAL ORDERS OF BATTLE

TERRAIN

The game is played on a 6' x 4' gaming board with the short sides representing the west (American) and east (British) sides of the board as per the map. The ravines act as linear obstacles for purposes of sighting and cover. The creek is fordable along its length. The forest in the south-west and north-east corners of the board counts as dense terrain.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game runs 12 turns. Losses are calculated by counting stands (not units) removed from play.

For a major victory, the British drive the Americans back over the western ravine and inflict more losses than they suffer. For a minor victory, the British must remain on the field when the game ends and inflict more losses than they suffer.



For a major victory, the Americans must break the British army and hold the field. For a minor victory, American player must have troops to the east of the ravine when the game ends.

It is possible for both sides to win a minor victory.

AMERICAN FORCES

The American forces are divided into three groups:

- Two state infantry and one militia unit begin the game in the middle of the board in skirmish formation, facing the American side of the board. Each unit has two hits on it and is routing. If these units exit the American side of the board they count as American losses.
- Washington (General, CV 8) commands 2 units of dragoons and 1 unit of continental infantry. They are in column on the road facing the centre of the board. The rear of the column is to the east of the Western Ravine.
- Lafayette (Officer, CV 9) and Stirling (Officer, CV 7) command 4 units of militia, 4 units of continental infantry and one unit of cannon between them (player divides command). On a successful command roll these units can appear anywhere on the American board edge in any formation and perform one action (i.e. move or shoot).
- Before the game, the American player may secretly deploy two units of scouts on the north or south board

edge at the mid point. These enter at any time after a British unit has crossed the mid point of the board. These units can be ordered by any American general.

BRITISH FORCES

The British forces are divided into three groups:

- Cornwallis (Officer, CV 8) commands 3 units of light infantry and 1 unit of dragoons. These units begin the game in line formation facing the centre of the board to the west of the middle ravine.
- Grey (Officer, CV 8) commands 3 units of regular infantry. These appear on the road in column at the British edge on turn 2.
- Clinton (General, CV 9) commands 2 units of regular infantry and 1 cannon. These appear on the road in column at the British edge on turn 4.
- A further 2 units of regular infantry appear on the road in column at the British edge on turn 6.

SPECIAL RULES

Heat played an important factor in the battle. To simulate this, hits are not removed from a unit at the end of the owning player's turn. Rather, one hit is removed from each unit at the end of the owning player's turn. This will make attacks more difficult to sustain.



The Battle of Camden

By Bob Barnettson

16th August, 1780

INTRODUCTION

By the January of 1780, Major General Clinton was in command of the British forces in America, having relieved Major General Howe, who instead now took a force from New York and, in the May of that year, captured Charleston, the provincial capital of South Carolina.

This left the Americans uneasy, and as Clinton returned to New York the task of securing the rest of South Carolina was given to Major General Cornwallis. In the June the hero of Saratoga, Major General Horatio Gates, arrived in the south, intent on duplicating his victorious campaign in the North. Gates took his troops to Camden and wanted a swift victory...

The British troops in Camden were commanded by Lord Rawdon, Cornwallis still being in Charleston. Rawdon advanced his troops from Camden to meet the Americans and took a position on a creek to the north-east of the town. On Gates' approach the British fell back into Camden.

Now Cornwallis entered the foray and on August 14th he joined his troops in Camden, eager to quash the upstart

Gates. Amusingly he opted for a night advance and his troops quite literally collided with the Americans, who were also advancing to make an assault.

The battlefield lay between two swamps, which basically narrowed the front and secured the flanks. The British formed into two brigades, with Colonel Webster on the right flank with his companies of Light Infantry, the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the 33rd Foot. On the left Lord Rawdon had his Irish Volunteers, Tarleton's infantry and some loyalist provincial units. Two battalions of Fraser's 71st Highlanders were held in reserve.

The American commander drew up his army with the regiments of the Continental Army on the right under Gist, with General Baron de Kalb's 2nd Maryland and a Delaware regiment, the centre was commanded by Caswell of North Carolina and his right flank was held by militia under Stevens of Virginia. A reserve of the 1st Maryland was commanded by Smallwood.

For some reason Gates elected to attack first by sending the militia of his left wing forward, engaging the opposing



British units. But this was to be swiftly dealt with as the British, looking to intimidate their enemy, elected to advance en masse and the whole line effectively counterattacked.

With such a massed attack facing them the ill trained militia crumbled away, exposing the flank of the American right wing and leaving Webster's Continentals open to assault. The Continental units put up a stiff fight, but the battle was more or less over at this point. Now Tarleton's cavalry attacked the American right wing in the rear, causing the units to break, and a 20 mile pursuit took place.

Here we have Gates escaping the battlefield along with the militia and he apparently rode quite some distance before stopping. Back at Camden the battle was a British victory even though Gates' subordinate commanders did a fine job of trying to hold it all together. But it was enough to destroy the commander's reputation. Baron Von Kalb, a German in the American service, particularly distinguished himself before being killed.

This battle ensured the British hold on South Carolina, at least for the time being. Like all battle in the Americas, Camden was not going to stop the inevitable victory.

Americans deploy in two lines:

1st line (left to right): 1 unit of scouts, 2 units of militia, and 2 units of regulars, Von Kalb (Officer, CV 9)
2nd line (left to right): 2 units of regulars, Gates (General, CV 8)

British deploy in two lines:

1st line (left to right): 1 unit of Loyalists, 1 unit of regulars, 2 units of grenadiers Cornwallis (General, CV 9)
2nd line (left to right): 1 unit of grenadiers, 1 unit of dragoons, Tarleton (Officer, CV 8)

SPECIAL RULES

American scouts and militia will evade (regardless of the effectiveness of the tactic) if the British charge directly into melee.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

- British win a major victory if they break the American force and sustain fewer stands (not units) lost than the Americans. British win a minor victory if they break the American force while suffering more stands lost than the Americans.
- Americans win a major victory by breaking the British force. The Americans win a minor victory if they remain unbroken long enough that the British commander concedes the attack is lost.

