

1775

Boston



On March 14th Governor Gage is secretly given orders from the Crown to enforce the Coercive Acts and suppress “Open Rebellion” using all necessary force. The following day British troops within the city are relieved of their normal duties in preparation for other duty. Then on April 18th orders are given to 700 troops to march to Concord and search for contraband weapons. Expected by Patriots, the troop movement launches Paul Revere’s famous ride to Lexington. His warning insured the British had a warm reception at Lexington and Concord.

Within days of the battles of Lexington and Concord, Militia units arrive outside Boston from Rhode Island and New Hampshire. By April 24th some 15,000 men were laying siege to the City.

1776

High Seas

The USS Lexington, a brigantine of 28 guns, operating out of Philadelphia encounter’s the British Sloop Edward on April 7th. The Edward is a tender to the larger frigate HMS Liverpool that was patrolling the Delaware Capes for American ships. In a short Battle Lexington took Edward and escorted its prize back to Philadelphia.

April During the Revolution

Canada

By April 1776 the American attempt to liberate Canada from England was failing. On the 10th General David Wooster wrote John Hancock that only half of his two to three thousand troops were fit to serve. He had just replaced Benedict Arnold as commander of patriot forces besieging Quebec City. His official problems were that the British had released Small Pox into his troops and French Canadians were unsupportive of the American efforts to liberate them. Unofficially, his problem was his Puritanism, which required him to close all the catholic churches in Montreal.



North Carolina

On April 12th, the provincial Congress at Halifax sent orders to its delegates in Philadelphia to support a motion for independence. Called Halifax Resolves, it was the first colony to officially call for independence from Britain.

New York

Still believing an attack by General Howe was approaching; General Washington and General Gates arrived in the city on the 13th. By the 25th over 10,000 troops were guarding the city. Howe by this time was in Nova Scotia, ending any chance of a rebellion there among the mostly English colonists.

April During the Revolution

Philadelphia



On April 23rd Congress accepts the resignation of major General Artamas Ward (depicted). He was a major factor in organizing the initial American Army units during the fighting around Boston the previous year. Officially he was second in command under General George Washington.

Germany

On April 20th the Principate of Waldeck agreed to send a regiment (680 troops) to America. By this time several German princes had agreed to send troops including Hesse and Brunswick. Before the conflict ended Waldeck would send a second regiment for a total of 1,225 men.

On April 27th Lord Germain in London sent word to General Howe that the first Hessian Division was ready to sail to America.



1777

New Jersey

April 13th 1777, General Cornwallis, and 4,000 British and Hessian troops, attempted to take the garrison at Bound Brook. The 500 American troops commanded by Major General Benjamin Lincoln (depicted) quickly withdrew given they were outnumbered 8 to one. General Washington then sends General Greene and a large force to take back the town only to find the British had withdrawn. This is marked as the start of an effort by General Howe to draw Washington into an attack on Howe's terms.



April During the Revolution

Connecticut

On April 25th British troops land at Westport. General Howe had learned of the existence of a Depot in Danbury that was crucial to the supply of forts along the Hudson River. The plan was to raid Danbury, destroy all war material, and then withdraw quickly.



The British arrived in the town on the 26th and destroyed large quantities of salted pork, flour, shoes, and tents. Little did they know militia Col Ludington's 16-year-old daughter Sybil had raised the alarm the night before. General Wooster and Benedict Arnold (depicted) were in pursuit from Newhaven, while other militia units were forming to block the British retreat towards New York.

On the 27th the British burned several buildings in Danbury before withdrawing to Ridgefield. As they marched General Wooster launched attacks against their rear units, trying to drive them forward towards Arnold who was already at Ridgefield. In one of these attacks General Wooster was struck by a round of grapeshot and killed.

Arnold withstood attacks by the British until he and his men were driven from their barricades. Arnold's horse was shot out from under him, but he was not captured and retreated from the town with his men. The British occupied Ridgefield until the following day when they burned several more buildings, including the church, before heading south to re-boarded their boats.

But before they reached their transport Arnold, with General Sillman, made one last attempt to block them. Another battle occurred, in which Arnold again had his horse shot out from under him. But the British could not be stopped and reached their boats. The battle was over: Both sides lost some 100 men killed or wounded. Connecticut would from that point be solidly Patriot. And Arnold would be promoted to Major General.

April During the Revolution

1778

Europe April 8, 1778



John Adams (depicted) arrives in Paris. Officially he is to counter Franklin's age and help speed recognition of the new nation by the French government. Unofficially he is to replace Silas Deane who has been charged with misuse of public funds. Deane is also suspected of giving information to the British. One hundred years after the revolution it was learned the spy was actually Deane's personal secretary Edward Bancroft.

As Adams settled-in to Paris, a British peace commission left London on April 12th. William Eden, a career politician, George Johnstone, a naval officer and partisan for America, and Frederick Howard, Earl of Carlisle, are tasked by Parliament to prevent a Franco-American alliance from being created. Called the Carlisle peace commission they are to negotiate with the Continental Congress and its delegates for a peace treaty. Independence is not offered and the British withdrawal from Philadelphia only stiffens Patriot resolve. Johnstone tries to bribe some Congressmen to no effect while Carlisle is challenged to a duel by Lafayette. On April 22nd The Continental Congress declares that "the United States cannot hold with propriety any conference or treaty with any commissioners on the part of Great Britain unless they as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies or else in positive and express terms acknowledge of the said states."

With the failure of the commission the British launched their Southern Strategy.

Whitehaven, England

April 23rd, John Paul Jones leads a detachment from the USS Ranger, setting 3 ships on fire while also spiking the guns of two forts protecting the port. Later in the day, Jones attempts to capture the Earl of Selkirk at St. Mary's Isle but fails.



Then on April 25th Ranger engages the British Sloop of war HMS Drake. After a pitched battle Ranger is victorious and the Drake is captured. These American assaults during the Revolution, within the British Isles, lead to consternation in Parliament.

1780

South Carolina

April 1, 1780 General Clinton begins besieging Charleston. By April 13th the British fleet was in the harbor and the only road into the city was through Monck's Corner. General Lincoln had stationed 500 militia, and the Dragoons of Col Washington, to keep the road clear. The next morning Trelton and Major Ferguson led 1,400 British troops against Monck's corner. Caught completely by surprise the Americans were quickly routed suffering high casualties. The city was now completely cut-off: Worsley Trelton captured the 80 horses of Col Washington's Dragoons for his legion.

1781

South Carolina



April 15-23, Fort Watson

Having left General Cornwallis behind his defenses at Wilmington N. Carolina, Continental General Nathanael Greene decides to attack the line of forts stretching from Charleston to the Cherokee nation. To accomplish this, on April 6th, he orders Light Horse Henry Lee (depicted) to make contact with Francis Marion, combine their forces, and then attack the British Fort Watson. Fort Watson, a vital link in the scheme of British communications in the Carolina's was also a small position defended by a mixed force of 120 British regulars and Loyalists.

Small not withstanding, the fort was on a high point of land. There was no cover for some distance from the walls, allowing the defenders to shoot down on any attackers with impunity. Lee and Marion arrived on April 16th and initially tried to cut the fort off from water. When this did not work, they implemented a novel idea proposed by Major Maham. Essentially it was the building of a siege tower, which would allow a company of Marion's riflemen to shoot at the defenders of one side of the fort with their own impunity. On the morning of April 23rd, the British awoke to find the tower erected and manned. As the riflemen now pinned down the defenders, more troops stormed the wall. In short order the fort was taken.

April During the Revolution

April 25, 1781

Clash at Hobkirk's Hill (Camden)



As Lee and Marion were taking Fort Watson, General Greene (depicted) was moving to engage Lord Francis Rawdon-Hastings. Rawdon had positioned several hundred troops in Camden, behind strong defenses. Unable to surround the town, Greene positioned his troops on nearby Hobkirk's hill. There he awaited the return of General Lee as well as reinforcements from General Sumter.

From an American deserter Rawdon learned that Greene had no cannons, though they were en route. Although outnumbered 1,500 to 900, he decides to engage Greene before either the cannons or additional troops arrived.

Initially Rawdon caught Greene by surprise, only to then be surprised himself by finding Greene's cannons were present. Greene now advanced only to suffer a series of deaths among his commanders. Eventually these losses caused the American line to fall apart. Seeing his chance, Rawdon charged, forcing Greene to withdraw from the hill.

Officially it is a tactical victory for the British. But it also was a Pyrrhic Victory since Rawdon lost almost 29% of his men while Greene lost only 18%: down to 14% when the missing militiamen found their way back to camp. Within days Sumter had arrived, making Rawdon's position unsustainable. Thus on May 9th Rawdon withdrew from Camden to Monch's Corner. This left only the strong garrison at 96 to be taken by Greene.

April During the Revolution

1783

April 15th

The Congress of the Confederation approves the preliminary peace treaty signed in November 1782.

April 17th,



British Tory James Colbert led a force of Tory back-woods men against the Spanish Fort Carlos at the confluence of the Arkansas and Mississippi River. Spanish soldiers launched a sortie against the Tories only to find the enemy had no stomach for fighting. The British fled with their prisoners and plunder from the nearby Indian village.

April 19

General Washington informs his troops that hostilities have ended.