

BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURT HOUSE

The Battle of Guilford Court House was fought in Guilford County, North Carolina on March 15, 1781. Over 4,000 American troops under the command of General Nathanael Greene met about 1,900 British troops under Lord Charles Cornwallis. While the American forces



General Nathanael Greene, commander of the American forces at the Battle of Guilford Court House

outnumbered the British, many of the American soldiers were militia, which were regular citizens who had volunteered for the war. They did not have as much training or experience as the British troops.

At the battle, General Greene set the militia in the first two lines. He asked them to fire several shots and then leave the battleground. The militia had rifles that shot farther than the British muskets. On the third line, General Greene placed the regular Continental Army soldiers. This plan meant the British would be heavily damaged and the Americans would not.

The battle lasted about 90 minutes. General Greene retreated to save his troops and the British claimed victory.

While the U.S. forces lost the battle, it was a costly victory for the British. The British lost almost a quarter of their troops, while the Americans suffered comparatively light losses. General Greene continued to battle the British in South Carolina, keeping the pressure on the British forces. Lord Cornwallis, the commander of the British forces, left North Carolina to go to Virginia to collect more troops. There he would be defeated by General Washington at the Battle of Yorktown, which would end the war.



Lord Charles Cornwallis, commander of the British forces at the Battle of Guilford Court House

QUICK QUIZ

When was the Battle of Guilford Court House?

Where was the Battle of Guilford Court House?

Who commanded the American forces?

What were the militia?



Painting of the Battle of Guilford Court House. Here, General Greene is on horseback behind the third battle line.