



BATTLE DIGEST™

Lessons for Today's Leaders

Volume 3 ★ Issue 11

Early American Wars: *Camden*

DATE:
Aug. 16, 1780

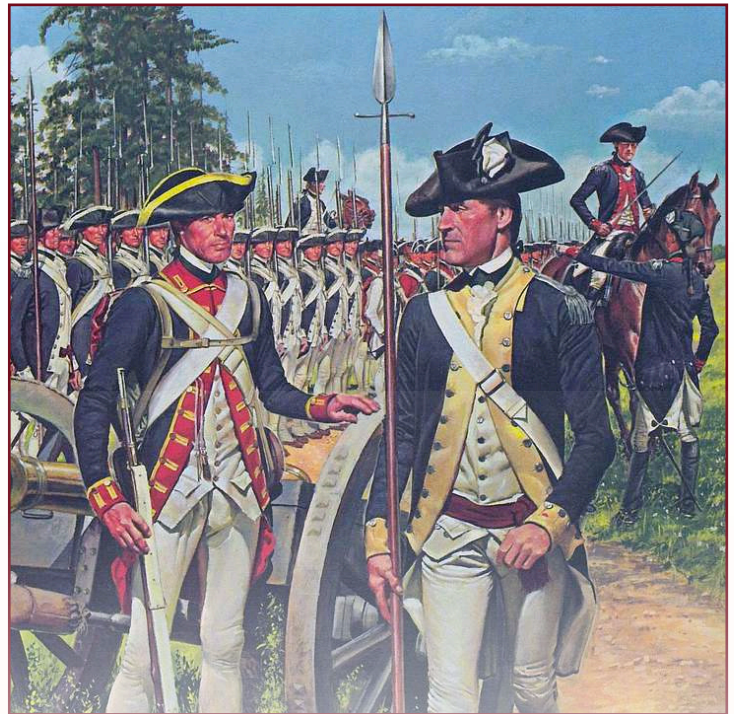
LOCATION:
Camden, South Carolina



OPPOSING FORCES

Americans: 3,700 soldiers (900 Continentals of the Maryland and Delaware Lines and 2,800 militia) commanded by Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates. The right flank was commanded by Maj. Gen. Baron Johann de Kalb. Brig. Gen. Mordecai Gist commanded the 2nd Maryland Brigade, which included the 1st Delaware Regiment. Brig. Gen. William Smallwood commanded the reserve, the 1st Maryland Brigade. The left flank consisted of Gen. Richard Caswell's 1,800 North Carolina militia, Brig. Gen. Edward Stevens's 700 Virginia militia, Lt. Col. Charles Porterfield's 100 Virginia light infantry, and 120 men of Lt. Col. Charles Armand's Legion of Horse and Foot.

British: 2,200 soldiers commanded by Lt. Gen. Charles Earl Cornwallis. Col. Francis Lord Rawdon commanded the left division of Irish Volunteers, the Legion infantry, and Royalist troops. Lt. Col. James Webster commanded the right division of 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers, the 33rd Regiment of Foot, and light infantry. Two battalions of the 71st Regiment of Foot and Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's Legion Cavalry were in reserve.

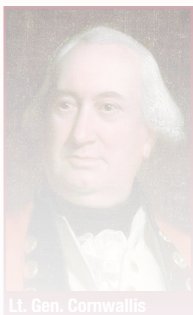


The American Soldier: Set 1, U.S. Center of Military History



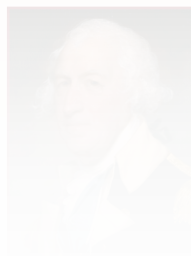
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1780, as the American Revolution entered its fifth year, British Gen. Sir Henry Clinton looked to break the stalemate that had settled in the North. His "Southern Strategy" would leverage what was thought to be strong Loyalist support in the Southern colonies to subdue the population and further isolate the rebellion. After capturing Charleston, South Carolina, Clinton left Lt. Gen. Charles Earl Cornwallis in charge of the campaign. As Cornwallis recruited Loyalists, set up a ring of outposts, and prepared to move into North Carolina, he got word of a Continental



Lt. Gen. Cornwallis

army, commanded by Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates, moving south toward Camden. During the resulting battle, Cornwallis routed Gates, destroyed the Southern Continental Army, and headed the army north to Philadelphia.



STRATEGY & MANEUVER

Actions by the British – In March of 1778, after he replaced Maj. Gen. William Howe as the commander-in-chief of British forces in America, Maj. Gen. Henry Clinton faced a dilemma. He had to subdue the rebellion but lacked the manpower required to pursue Washington's army and the state militias into the countryside. To regain momentum, Clinton looked south. After capturing Charleston on 12 May 1780, he planned to maintain control of Georgia while subduing the Carolinas. If he could choke off Southern support for the rebellion, he would set the conditions for British forces to move into Virginia, link up with Northern forces, and put an end to the war. With limited manpower and a vast territory, the plan relied heavily on recruiting large numbers of Loyalists.

On 5 June, after a promising start, Clinton left Cornwallis in charge and headed back to New York. When Cornwallis's command