

January in the Revolution

1776

Boston

January 4th Washington promises Congress that he will attack Boston at his first opportunity. Ten days later Washington writes that army enlistment problems continue: "Our total number upon paper amounts to about ten thousand five hundred; but as a large portion of these are returned not joined, I never expect to receive them . . ." While this is



happening Boston loyalist Peter Oliver reports on January 16th that the old North Meetinghouse has been pulled down for fuel for the loyalist Associates. The Reverend John Lathrop and his patriot congregation had abandoned the meetinghouse, making it an easy target for Loyalists.

On **January 19th** Washington and other patriot generals agree that troops cannot be spared for service in Canada and that Boston must be attacked before Howe received reinforcements. Two days later Washington directs each regiment to send out two officers to purchase weapons for their unit. Soldiers enlisting with their own firearms are promised one dollar for its use and reimbursement if the weapon is lost during the campaign. Finally, on Jan 23rd Washington writes in a letter to Joseph Reed, "I have often thought how much happier I should have been if, instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket upon my shoulder, and entered the ranks.

Congress

Upon learning of an impending British expedition against the southern colonies, on January 1st Congress requests that the provinces cooperate on defense and security. North and South Carolina and Georgia are instructed to occupy St. Augustine. The next day Congress passes a resolution calling on colonial committees to indoctrinate those "honest and well-meaning, but uninformed people" by expounding to them the "origin, nature and extent of the present controversy." The body also calls for confirmed tories to be disarmed and confined, if necessary. On **January 5th New** Hampshire establishes a colonial government in accordance with the recommendation of the Continental Congress. On Jan 7th Samuel Adams writes that the idea of a confederation among the colonies "is not dead, but sleepeth." Two days later Thomas Paine's pamphlet Common Sense appears in today's session of the Continental Congress.

On **January 12th** Congress allows the expense of two dollars per week for the board and lodging of officers taken prisoner, the total to be repaid by the officers before they are released from captivity.

Southern Military Actions

On **January 3rd** an officer aboard the British sloop Otter writes home: "I have the pleasure to assure you that this rebel town (Norfolk Virginia) is in ashes. It is glorious to see the blaze of the town and shipping. I exult in the carnage of these rebels." The citizens of Norfolk would have to wait until Jan 28th before receiving help finding shelter and land to cultivate.

Three days after Norfolk was shelled The Council of Safety in South Carolina advises its counterpart in Georgia that British warships leaving the Charleston harbor are likely headed for Savannah. The South Carolina council asks Georgia to return their Governor, Lord Campbell, if he is apprehended.

On **January 10th** North Carolina Governor Martin, aboard the warship Scorpion, issues a proclamation calling on the King's loyal subjects to raise an armed force to combat the rebels, raise the royal standard, and restore the province to "its former glorious freedom."

January 17th The Virginia Convention orders the jailing of all African Americans who carried arms in Dunmore's service. They are then to be appraised and sent to the West Indies or Bay of Honduras to be sold. The following day In Savannah, Georgia, Governor Wright is arrested and confined to his house.

January 22nd The South Carolina Council of Safety resolves "that able-bodied negro men be taken into the public service, and enrolled and employed, without arms for the defense of the several batteries in Charles-Town, Fort Johnson and other batteries, at the rate of two to each gun, . . . That they be in constant pay at the rate of ten shillings per day, and the public to find them provisions . . . Suitable rewards shall be given to those slaves, who behave well in time of action."

Canada

On Jan 24th Congress approves a letter to the Canadians promising a renewal of efforts to expel the British and urging the Canadians to associate with the Americans by appointing delegates to the Congress. The next day Congress authorizes a memorial in honor of General Richard Montgomery who was killed at Quebec on December 31, 1775. Then on Jan 29th Congress agrees to Washington's request that regiments be raised in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut for service in Canada, the cost to be underwritten by the Continental Congress.

1777

January 1st the people of Philadelphia come out in force to see the Hessian troops captured on Christmas marched through the city. As this was happening Cornwallis, about to board ship for England, instead rode 50 miles to Princeton to take command. On January 2nd he marched 8,000 men against Washington's forces within the town. Little did he realize Washington had gone around him and attacked Princeton on January 3rd. After seizing supplies Washington then move to Morristown on Jan 6th: In two battles he had cost the British over 1,300 men to American losses of only 90 men. Two days later the British

withdrew to Northern New Jersey, ending the threat against Philadelphia. Congress still adjourns to Baltimore on January 27th.



The Forage Wars

The withdrawal of the British forces to New Brunswick and Perth Amboy started a series of small battles during the winter of January 1777. On **January 20th** Patriot militia under the command of General Dickinson caught British foragers at Somerset Courthouse (present-day Millstone), New Jersey. The British lost horses, wagons, cattle and sheep making the battle of Milestone one of the significant events of the 1777 Forage war.

New York

While Washington's forces were pushing the British out of New Jersey, on the 17th General William Heath independently begins a movement toward a British post at Fort Independence, King's Bridge, New York. It's a terrible mistake as British forces from New York City counter attack on the 25th and finally force American withdrawal on Jan 29th. General Heath was reprimanded by Washington for the action.

The Rode to Saratoga

On **January 28th**, in London, General John Burgoyne submits a plan to isolate the New England colonies from the rest of North America.

1779

January 6-9, 1779



Actions at Fort Morris (Sunsbury), Georgia

Having captured Savannah on December 29th 1778, Colonel Campbell (Depicted) was rewarded by being made provisional Governor of Georgia. With this title he offers immunity from prosecution to those who will affirm their loyalty to the Crown. In the meantime his replacement as commander of British forces in the South, General Augustine Prevost, leads a force of 2000 British troops on Jan 6th against a much smaller force of 200 Continentals led by Major Joseph Lane. By the 9th the skirmish is over with Lane surrendering. In Late January Prevost then launches operations to seize both Augusta and Port Royal Island.

1780

January 1, 1780

On New Year's Day, 100 soldiers from Massachusetts mutiny and attempt to return home at the expiration of their enlistment, or in some cases, shortly prior. Some are punished although the majority is pardoned.

1781

January 1-10, 1781

Mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line

Winter inactivity combined with grievances concerning enlistment terms, pay, and food, among other things, culminates in mutiny in the Continental camp located near Princeton, New Jersey. Little is known about how the mutiny is organized. The two leaders are a William Bozar and John Williams. Only two individuals are recorded as having died in the mutiny. The mutineers intend to confront the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. General "Mad" Anthony Wayne manages to defuse the situation on which the British hoped to capitalize. However, almost half the soldiers involved in the mutiny leave the army.

1781

January 7th

British troops from Pensacola Florida attempt to take back Mobile Bay. Though they outnumber the Spanish 3 to 1 the Spanish route the British and send them fleeing back to Florida.

January 17

Having been sent out to defeat General Daniel Morgan, on [January 17th](#) Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton catches up with his quarry at a place the Locals called the Cowpens. The forces are equally numbered, but Morgan chose this place for the battle, which commences early in the morning as Tarleton orders his Dragoons to engage the front line of Morgan's troops. The Dragoons however were beaten off, forcing Tarleton to launch an assault with his infantry.



Tarleton's troops were exhausted and needed rest. Tarleton however expected them to easily disburse the Patriots, which he believed were only militia. The American line however had orders- two volleys and then retire to the right. The British mistake the repositioning of the Americans as a rout and ran forward straight into Morgan's awaiting Tarleton's troops were exhausted and needed rest. Tarleton however expected them to easily disburse the Patriots, which he believed were only militia. The American line however had orders- two volleys and then retire to the right. The British mistake the repositioning of the Americans as a rout and ran forward straight into Morgan's awaiting regulars. The Militia then circled the battlefield and engaged from the left with devastating effect. The British forces collapsed with 100 killed and 229 wounded while an additional 600 are captured. The American losses total only 12 killed and 60 wounded.

Tarleton, his legion destroyed, fled the field to report the disaster to General Cornwallis. How does one inform his superior that he has lost 17% of his troops?

January 20-27, 1781

Mutiny of the New Jersey Line

While in winter quarters at Pompton, New Jersey, these soldiers have the same basic complaints as their compatriots of the Pennsylvania Line. Washington sends a 600-man force commanded by Robert Howe to suppress the mutiny and enforce unconditional surrender. Howe surrounds the Pompton encampment at dawn on the 27th. Sergeant David Gilmore and John Tuttle are tried and immediately executed on the spot by other prominent mutineers serving as an example to the other soldiers.

1782

On January 3rd American troops attempt to stop British foragers at Videau's bridge, just outside of Charleston. The Americans are however routed.

January 24, 1782

Patriot commanders Henry Lee and Francis Marion combine their forces and conduct a raid upon Georgetown, which is defended by 200 British soldiers commanded by Colonel Campbell. The Americans manage to arrive at Georgetown undetected but are surprised to discover the British refuse to engage them. Not wishing to take casualties, the Americans parole Campbell and his men