



The Revolutionary War

The
Americans
Break Free

Start of the War



- ◆ The American Rev. began before writing of the Dec. of Indep.
- ◆ Lexington & Concord - Apr. 1775
- ◆ Ticonderoga & Crown Point - May 1775
- ◆ Bunker (Breeds) Hill - June 1775
- ◆ Siege & evacuation of Boston - March 1776

Organizing The War Effort

- ◆ Obtaining weapons, supplies, etc a major obstacle for Congress
- ◆ Lacking hard currency, Congress issued paper \$ (Continental) backed only by promise to pay
- ◆ Rapid inflation (loss of \$ value)
- ◆ States ignored Cong. calls for \$
- ◆ **War effort could not have been sustained w/out foreign aid**



Organizing the Military



- ◆ Early victories = overconfidence
 - Harder to raise a regular army
- ◆ Washington created the 1st national army - Continental Army
- ◆ Regular army backed by militia
- ◆ Troops inexperienced & poorly trained
- ◆ Militia least reliable but effective in containing loyalists

The American Navy

- ◆ Americans had a tiny navy
- ◆ 2000 privateers & 34 ships made up the navy in the early years
 - Harassed British merchant shipping
 - Picked away at British blockade
- ◆ John Paul Jones attacked British naval ships in their home waters
- ◆ Later French naval assistance was crucial to victory



Revolutionary War: Advantages and Disadvantages

United States

Strengths:

1. Familiarity of home ground
2. Superior weapons and marksmen
3. Experienced officers and soldiers trained in past colonial wars
4. Leadership of George Washington
5. Inspiring cause— independence

Weaknesses:

1. Most soldiers untrained and undisciplined
2. Shortage of food and ammunition
3. An infant navy
4. No central government capable of enforcing wartime policies



Britain

Strengths:

1. Strong, well-trained army and navy
2. Strong government with available money
3. Support of Loyalists
4. Indian allies

Weaknesses:

1. Distance of 3,000 miles separating Britain from battlefield
2. Unfamiliar battlefronts
3. Inability to use Loyalists effectively
4. Weak military leaders



The Loyalists (Tories)

- ◆ 1/5 of Colonists were Loyalists - completely loyal to Britain
- ◆ Never fully organized by British
- ◆ Tended to be wealthy landowners & officeholders + recent arrivals
- ◆ Most fled to Canada & England to escape wrath of Patriots
- ◆ Some fought in British armies
- ◆ A civil war within the Revolution



Key Encounters of 1776

- ◆ British evacuate Boston & move on to New York (Led by Howe)
- ◆ 8/26/76 - British defeat part of Washington's forces at Brooklyn Heights (NY) - the Americans escape
- ◆ Howe failed to pursue Washington & destroy his army
- ◆ GW retreats thru NJ to PA



Key Encounters of 1776

- ◆ 12/25/76 - GW's surprise attack on Hessians at Trenton NJ
- ◆ GW follows Trenton victory w/ a surprise attack at Princeton
- ◆ Trenton & Princeton were minor victories but demonstrated that "superior" British army was vulnerable





British Plan to Divide the Colonies

- ◆ Capture New York & split the colonies
- ◆ Planned a 3-pronged attack on Albany NY
- ◆ Strategy failed
 - St. Leger forced to retreat to Canada
 - Howe pursued GW to PA
 - Burgoyne defeated at Saratoga



Capture of Philadelphia

- ◆ Howe marched on Phila.
- ◆ GW tried to stop the British but lost Battle of Brandywine (Sept. 1777)
 - Congress forced to flee
- ◆ 9/26/77 - Howe captured Phila.
- ◆ GW attacked - major loss at Battle of Germantown (10/4/77)
- ◆ Howe failed to pursue GW again
- ◆ GW pulled back to Valley Forge

Foreign Assistance

- ◆ During the war, GW received valuable help from foreign volunteers
- ◆ Many provided experienced leadership for the untrained & undisciplined colonials
- ◆ At Valley Forge, Prussian officer Baron Frederick von Steuben reorganized & trained GW's forces
 - “Drillmaster of the Revolution”



Saratoga - The Turning Point

- ◆ British Gen. Burgoyne's troops marched south from Canada into NY - recaptured Ft. Ticonderoga
- ◆ St. Leger & Howe did not meet him (3-prong plan)
- ◆ Burgoyne's forces were cut off from reinforcements & supplies
- ◆ Militia harassed & slaughtered them





Saratoga cont.

- ◆ British surrounded at Saratoga, NY by Colonials under Gates
- ◆ 10/17/77 - Burgoyne surrendered
- ◆ Colonial victory ruined British divide & conquer plan
- ◆ Boosted American morale
- ◆ Convinced French to enter into an alliance w/ Americans
 - Previously provided secret aid



War in the West

- ◆ After Saratoga - war stalled in North
- ◆ Focus shifted to West & South
- ◆ George Rogers Clark led militia & French volunteers against British forts in West
 - British were inciting Indians to attack American settlements
- ◆ Clark gained control of NW Terr.

War in the South

- ◆ Georgia occupied by British in 1778
- ◆ Took Charleston SC in 1780
- ◆ British held seaports but could not control interior
- ◆ Most vicious fighting of the war
- ◆ Constant guerilla fighting drove Cornwallis to withdraw north for supplies & reinforcements



Yorktown

- ◆ Cornwallis pulled back to Yorktown, VA
- ◆ Washington planned to trap C using American & French forces
- ◆ French Admiral De Grasse sealed Chesapeake Bay
 - No British help from the sea
- ◆ GW & Rochambeau laid siege to Yorktown



British Surrender

- ◆ After weeks of desperate fighting, Cornwallis surrendered 10/19/81
- ◆ Last major battle of the war
- ◆ With pressure at home & from foreign enemies - Britain sought peace
- ◆ Hoped to restore colonial relationship but Americans insisted on independence





Treaty of Paris - 9/3/1783

- ◆ American delegation - Franklin, John Jay, John Adams
- ◆ Britain recognized U.S. independence
- ◆ Agreed to U.S. claim to land west to the Miss. & from Canada to Florida (Florida given to Spain)
- ◆ U.S. given fishing rights off Newfoundland



Treaty of Paris cont.

- ◆ U.S. promised to allow British creditors to collect U.S. debts
- ◆ Pledged to restore Loyalist property
 - neither promise fulfilled
- ◆ Navigation of Miss. would be open to both U.S. & Britain