

NATHANAEL GREENE AND THE MYTH OF THE VALIANT FEW

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Nathan Greene is the Revolutionary Warfare general most associated with unconventional warfare. The historiography of the southern campaign of the revolution uniformly agrees he was a guerrilla leader. Best evidence shows, however, that Nathanael Greene was completely conventional -- that his strategy, operations, tactics, and logistics all strongly resembled that of Washington in the northern theater and of the British commanders against whom he fought in the south. By establishing that Greene was within the mainstream of eighteenth-century military science this dissertation also challenges the prevailing historiography of the American Revolution in general, especially its military aspects. The historiography overwhelmingly argues the myth of the valiant few -- the notion that a minority of colonists persuaded an apathetic majority to follow them in overthrowing the royal government, eking out an improbable victory. Broad and thorough research indicates the Patriot faction in the American Revolution was a clear majority not only throughout the colonies but in each individual colony. Far from the miraculous victory current historiography postulates, American independence was based on the most prosaic of principles -- manpower advantage.

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The map of the Territorial Departments of the Continental Army on page 72 is from *The Continental Army*, by Robert K. Wright, Jr., published by the Center for Military History.

The map on page 151 is courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

I dedicate this dissertation to the two greatest women I have ever known:

Vickie Lynn Swaringen Smith – who made it possible and

Kellye Renae Guinn Smith – who made it worthwhile.

Between the two of them, God never blessed any man more than he has blessed me.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Nathanael Greene emerged into the historical limelight in a starring role, Revolutionary War general. Most Patriot generals served in the French and Indian War, the Indian wars, or both. Greene's only military experience prior to the American Revolution was local militia training. He began the war as a private, was almost immediately promoted to brigadier general, and with only one significant lapse performed well at every position he held, command or staff. Such inexperience was unusual but not unheard of for a person who attained Greene's stature.

This dissertation is not a biography of Greene in the traditional sense, or even a military biography. Rather, it examines individual aspects of Greene's military practice, showing that all were well within the mainstream of eighteenth-century warfare. In the process, it proves that Greene, although an excellent general, succeeded primarily because he held a significant manpower advantage over his enemy.

Several twentieth-century historians argue that Greene's southern operations were significantly different from those that Continental Army Commander-in-Chief George Washington or Major General Horatio Gates conducted in the north. These scholars suggest Greene was an innovator who brought new insights to eighteenth-century military campaigns. According to them, Greene's military operations resembled modern irregular warfare, and Greene was a harbinger of modern guerrilla tactics.<sup>1</sup> Other historians hail Greene's

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<sup>1</sup> John Morgan Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaigns and Mao Tse-Tung's Mobile War," *Military Affairs* 47:3 (1983): 115-117; Steven E. Siry, *Greene: Revolutionary General* (Washington: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006), xii, 64-65; Don Higginbotham, "Some Reflections on the South in the

achievements without focusing on his methods – they point out that Greene was General Washington’s best subordinate commander and that he excelled in administrative ability and civil-military relations<sup>2</sup> – but they generally accept the judgment that as a commander, Greene was an original and innovative military mind, who foreshadowed various elements of modern warfare.

This dissertation does not dispute Greene’s competence; what this dissertation challenges is the notion that Greene was unconventional. Most American Revolution historians writing on the southern campaign focus on three issues: the difficulties Greene faced, a superficial view of his strategy, and his use of militia. Their incomplete investigations make Greene’s victory appear “miraculous.”<sup>3</sup> For earlier historians, that miracle centered on Patriot

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American Revolution,” *The Journal of Southern History* 73:3 (2007): 668-669; Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 71-72; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 27-39; Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), 114; Kenneth A. Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors: American Intelligence in the Revolutionary War* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 196.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer C. Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again: The Life of Nathanael Greene* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2009), 215; Terry Golway, *Washington’s General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 35; Theodore Thayer, *Nathanael Greene: Strategist of the American Revolution* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), 5; Mark A. Clodfelter, “Between Virtue and Necessity: Nathanael Greene and the Conduct of Civil-Military Relations in the South, 1780-1782,” *Military Affairs* 52:4 (1988): 169; James Haw, “Every Thing Here Depends upon Opinion: Nathanael Greene and Public Support in the Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 109:3 (2008): 212-213; Francis F. McKinney, “The Integrity of Nathanael Greene,” *Rhode Island History* 28:2 (1969): 53-60; George C. Rogers, Jr., “Aedanus Burke, Nathanael Greene, Anthony Wayne, and the British Merchants of Charlestown,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 67:2 (1966): 75-83; Dederer, “Making Bricks without Straw,” 115-117; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Russell F. Weigley, *The Partisan War: The South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 1-3; Anthony James Jones, *Guerrilla Conflict before the Cold War* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 1-40.

<sup>3</sup> John Ferling, *Almost a Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).



virtue and republican ideals.<sup>4</sup> For modern historians the miracle was the effect of guerrilla warfare.<sup>5</sup>

This dissertation takes a different approach, investigating many aspects of Greene's military command and personality. The broader view reveals several important influences on Greene's decision making. European, including British, military treatises about campaigns in both Europe and America shaped Greene's basic view of warfare.<sup>6</sup> American colonial military practices also impacted Greene's practice significantly.<sup>7</sup> Beyond these literary influences on Greene, George Washington's leadership directly affected him. Greene fought beside Washington in several campaigns and his own operations resemble what he experienced in the north. That being so, it is difficult to argue his operations were unique. Last, and perhaps most important in showing Greene as a conventional eighteenth-century general, Greene's southern opponents faced virtually the same obstacles he did, and they made virtually the same

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<sup>4</sup> Lester H. Cohen, "Foreword," in *The History of the American Revolution, Volume I*, by David Ramsay (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1990), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 98; Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 410-411; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 36; Stephen Conway, "The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67:1 (2010): 77; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-3; Jones, *Guerrilla Conflict before the Cold War*, 1-40; Jac Weller, "Irregular But Effective: Partizan Weapons and Tactics in the American Revolution, Southern Theatre," *Military Affairs* 21:3 (1957): 118-137; John Edward Grenier, "The Other American Way of War: Unlimited and Irregular Warfare in the Colonial Military Tradition," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Colorado, 1999), 2(n), 10, 284. In support of his operational description of certain colonial units, Grenier describes modern United States Army Ranger operations as irregular, meaning guerrilla. That assertion is incorrect by any reasonable standard. Both the official definition of Rangers and the actual deployment of Rangers in combat from their inception in World War II until the present is as special operations forces. The definition of special operations forces is conventional forces, operating with or without the presence of other conventional forces, but within the conventional chain of command. The closest unit in the modern United States Army to irregular forces is the Special Forces (Green Berets) whose mission includes working as advisors to modern guerrilla forces. Even the Special Forces, however, are special operations units, neither irregular nor guerrilla.

<sup>6</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 47; Golway, *Washington's General*, 42; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Jameson, "Subsistence for Middle States Militia, 1776-1781," *Military Affairs* 30:3 (1966): 121.

decisions in response. Each chapter of this dissertation illuminates similarities between Patriot armies in the north and south and between the Patriot army and the British Army in the south. This methodology situates Greene among his American and British peers, rather than ahead of them as vanguard of a modern way of war.

Chapter 1 introduces and explains the thesis of this dissertation and reviews Greene's historiography. Chapter 2 briefly summarizes Greene's early life. Together they form an introduction for this dissertation.

Chapter 3 examines the primary circumstances under which civilians and military cross paths during war: civil-military relations, recruitment, and civilians in war zones. Patriot civil-military command arrangements and recruitment were based on long-standing British and colonial military tradition. Their most significant differences are explainable by exigent circumstances and inexperienced Patriot leadership.

Chapter 4 demonstrates that the Continental Army modeled its organization and administration after the British Army. During Greene's southern campaign Continental and British armies organized similarly in virtually all respects. Greene's success came not from a novel guerrilla organization, but from a Patriot military manpower advantage.

Chapter 5 deals with leadership and training. Leadership among Patriots was more open than in most European armies, but class remained important. Patriot training, both less brutal and less efficient than European, was nevertheless based on the European model.

Chapter 6 details Greene's logistical practices and circumstances. Greene despised requisitioning supplies from civilians, but his army would have starved without it. Logistics significantly constrained both Patriot and British military operations and both armies suffered

greatly, especially in the south. Each remained in the field only through constant requisitioning of supplies from civilians in the regions through which they campaigned.

Chapter 7 addresses intelligence and command and control. Patriot and British commanders used similar methods to gain intelligence and to keep it from the enemy. Patriot intelligence efforts were more successful than British efforts because Patriots had broader support among the population. All armies suffered command and control limitations because advances in military technology outpaced advances in communications technology. In general, command and control limitations led to greater independence for commanders and to difficulty controlling troops in battle.

Chapter 8 concerns strategy. Greene's theater strategy was based on grand strategy developed by Washington and the Continental Congress. Greene's strategy resembled Washington's own theater strategy and that of British commanders in the south. Both Patriot and British strategy depended on recruiting soldiers from the American population.

Chapter 9 concerns Greene's operational methods. Although mobile in concept, Greene conducted his campaign along conventional lines with conventional forces. He waged an offensive campaign with defensive tactics, the preferred use of the technology of the era. His generalship was unquestionably superb, but his operational concept resembled British generals against whom he fought and his success was primarily due to the significant manpower advantage he enjoyed.

Chapter 10 discusses late eighteenth-century military tactics and their application by Greene. Greene's tactical success, as with other aspects of his generalship, depended on a

substantial manpower advantage. Greene's tactics resembled the enemy he fought as well as the tactics of several well-known European generals of the era.

Chapter 11 is a case study examining political affiliation in South Carolina. It provides the key element in understanding Greene's campaign, as well as Patriot military success in general. South Carolina, long believed a loyal stronghold, had a Patriot political majority, which implies strong Patriot political majorities in each of the thirteen states. Historians have argued that Patriots were a colonial minority and succeeded by guile and advance preparation. Recognizing a Patriot majority offers a prosaic and more convincing explanation for Patriot success. It also reveals Greene's methods as reflecting the military conventions of his age, rather than novel ideas of an original military mind.

Viewing Greene as unconventional or guerrilla is part of a larger narrative of the war, which this dissertation describes as the myth of the valiant few. The myth's political component suggests Patriots were a minority in American society, no more numerous than Loyalists but better prepared, more daring, and more committed to their cause. As war began they took control of all thirteen state governments, formed a central government, gained control of the various militias, and dragged a mostly apathetic population into independence almost against its will. The military component of the myth depicts George Washington as leading a small, dedicated group of Continental officers, including Greene. Using an unconventional approach, they confounded a tradition-bound British Army and its ultra-cautious leadership. This view manipulates evidence more than interpreting it.

Like George Washington in the north, Greene owed his success in the south to a significant manpower advantage over the British Army, not to unconventional strategy or

tactics. Britain scraped the bottom of its manpower barrel throughout the American Revolution.<sup>8</sup> British military strategy in America hinged on loyal Americans, whom British leaders believed the majority.<sup>9</sup> As it turns out, the British view was incorrect. Fewer than twenty percent of Americans were loyal to his majesty's government. By contrast, more than half supported the Patriot faction.

Greene's greater access to the American manpower pool translated into two advantages. He outnumbered the British Army in every battle he fought, sometimes more than two-to-one. More important, however, was his army's resilience. Greene could recruit replacements for men he lost during the war, both regulars and militia, even after the devastating losses suffered in the south prior to his taking command.<sup>10</sup> Lack of local recruitment opportunities meant the British Army could scarcely replace its *non*-battle losses.

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<sup>8</sup> Piers Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 36-37, 511; Ira D. Gruber, "The American Revolution as a Conspiracy: The British View," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26:3 (1969): 370-371; Joel Anthony Woodward, "A Comparative Evaluation of British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign of 1780-1781," (master's thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2002), 18; John E. Ferling, "Galloway's Military Advice: A Loyalists View of the Revolution," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 98:2 (1974): 173; Dave Richard Palmer, *The Way of the Fox: American Strategy in the War for America, 1775-1783* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1934), 46; John R. Tokar, "Redcoat Supply! Strategic Logistics and Operational Indecision in the American Revolutionary War, 1775-1783" (master's thesis, School of Advanced Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1999), 36; Keith L. Dougherty, "An Empirical Test of Federalist and Anti-Federalist Theories of State Contributions, 1775-1783," *Social Science History* 33:1 (2009): 65; George Athan Billias, ed., *Washington's Generals and Opponents: Their Exploits and Leadership* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), ix; Ira D. Gruber, *The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 125; Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 43, 147, 162, 191, 233, 353; John W. Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution: A Battlefield History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 98; David K. Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775-1780* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2005), xiii; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985), 98; Jim Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King: Loyalists, Indians, and Slaves in the Revolutionary War, 1775-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 127.

<sup>9</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 43, 159, 511.

<sup>10</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 326-327.

The manpower situation for the British Army was so difficult it could not even afford the casualties from victory, much less from lost battles.

Three different commanders led armies against Greene in the south. Each fought a single battle against Greene and retreated, realizing that even winning threatened the British Army with dissolution because it could not replace its losses, whereas Greene could replace his losses with relative ease.<sup>11</sup> Less than a year after Greene assumed command of the Southern Department the British Army held only a few coastal cities. However, even with the manpower at his disposal, Greene lost every battle he fought. There is little likelihood he could have won the campaign without a significant manpower advantage.

Those who view Greene as a guerrilla leader or the American Revolution as a guerrilla war see surface similarities but fail to understand deep differences between the Revolution and the signature guerrilla conflicts of the twentieth century. Militarily, Vietnam was a guerrilla war. Viet Minh guerrillas conducted campaigns in North Vietnam until the French withdrew from the conflict. The Viet Cong and, following its defeat, the North Vietnamese Army, conducted guerrilla campaigns in South Vietnam until the United Nations withdrew. Only then did the North Vietnamese Army mount a final conventional campaign. On most occasions when Communist forces mounted conventional attacks against western armies they suffered significant defeats. The primary Communist forces in the Vietnam War and the Chinese Revolution were guerrillas. That was never true in the American Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Henry Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown: the American Revolution in the South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), 175-176, 183-184, 220; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 330-331, 348-350, 380.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 123.

While guerrillas operated on the fringes of both the northern and southern theaters, adopting a guerrilla strategy with the Continental Army was completely impractical, and never attempted. It would have left the cities, agriculture, and commerce of the colonies at the mercy of the British Army. If the Patriot army failed to defend important points within the country neither the colonial population nor European governments would have offered support. As it was, France refused to enter the war openly until America won a convincing field victory on its own.

In 2013 the United States Army Special Operations Command published a guerrilla warfare study. According to that study, European powers initially dominated Vietnam so completely the Vietnamese had no opportunity to form a conventional army until they eliminated their European adversaries. The same study indicates Chinese rebels faced similar circumstances vis-à-vis the Chinese government in the 1920s and 1930s. In both cases, insurgents had no option but to fight as guerrillas for years before eventually mounting a conventional campaign with any hope of success.<sup>13</sup> In the American Revolution the militia tradition provided a conventional army, ready from the start of hostilities.

During the American Revolution, primary armies of both sides fought conventionally. While both Greene and Washington did have executive command of guerrillas, they did not personally conduct guerrilla campaigns. Guerrillas operated primarily where no conventional forces were present, as was common to European warfare as well. To cite one instance as an example, in 1744, during the Second Silesian War, guerrillas in the mountains south of Prague

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<sup>13</sup> Paul J. Tomkins, Jr., *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare, Book I* (Ft. Bragg: United States Army Special Operations Command, 2013), 44, 47, 593, 598.

supported regular light cavalry forces. The guerrillas hid food and supplies from the Prussians, provided intelligence for the regulars, and occasionally joined them in raids against Prussian supply lines.<sup>14</sup>

Neither did Washington or Greene implement a Fabian strategy, as some have argued.<sup>15</sup> Both were maneuver generals, but maneuver was a practice common to the era and routinely used by generals on both sides during the American Revolution. Greene's battles pitted his entire available force against the primary enemy. They were not tactical jabs, but intended to be knockout blows. Greene's hope in each battle was to ruin his enemy in a single contest, not to slice off small portions of their forces.

Revolutionary War battles, even most battles fought with militia, typically employed conventional tactics for the era. Patriot militia fought only two significant battles acting entirely as skirmishers, the Battle of Lexington and Concord – before the formation of a national army or government – and the Battle of King's Mountain. Both battles were clear Patriot victories, but special circumstances existed. At Lexington and Concord, with exception of the small

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<sup>14</sup> Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 89-90. Asprey, in tracing the history of guerrilla warfare, uses many examples that most military historians and professionals would not consider guerrilla, however, this circumstance is a clear example of guerrilla warfare in which Asprey's only error is including the regular army light cavalry as guerrillas.

<sup>15</sup> Donald Stoker, Kenneth J. Hagan, and Michael T. McMaster, eds., *Strategy in the American War of Independence: A Global Approach* (London: Routledge, 2010), 3; Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 114; Dexter Hoyos, *Hannibal's Dynasty: Power and Politics in the Western Mediterranean, 247-183 BC* (London: Routledge, 2003), 117. During the Second Punic War, the Roman general Fabius Maximus used maneuver to avoid *any* combat with Carthaginian general Hannibal Barca. Hannibal's strategy depended on Italian tribes deserting Rome and reinforcing his army. Fabius believed simply keeping a Roman army in being would frustrate Hannibal's strategy, while another Roman defeat could convince the Italians of Carthaginian superiority. Fabius shadowed Hannibal, attacking his allies and detachments but avoiding all contact with any force commanded by Hannibal, himself. Most Italians saw Hannibal's quandary as failure and remained loyal to Rome. Even accepting that a commander used Fabian tactics, however, it does not follow that such a commander was a guerrilla or partisan leader. Fabius, himself, was the commander of Rome's legions, among the more conventional military forces in history. His campaign had greater resemblance to modern conventional maneuver campaigns than modern guerrilla warfare.



skirmishes in Lexington and at the Concord Bridge, the British Army failed to realize they were entering battle until ambushed and were unable to effectively coordinate a response until they were halfway back to Boston. At King's Mountain Patriot militia, almost entirely armed with rifles, fought from tangled brush that acted as breastworks for the Patriots, prohibiting entry of formed British units. The British Army, on the other hand, sited in the open, were easy targets for Patriot rifles. It was, in other words, the best possible situation for the Patriot militia and the worst possible situation for the British Army.

Historians often cite Greene's division of his forces early in the southern campaign as unconventional warfare. Greene himself described it in wholly conventional terms.<sup>16</sup> While dividing a force near a numerically superior enemy does violate a military axiom, it is far from uncommon and many conventional commanders have attempted it successfully including Confederate General Robert E. Lee at Chancellorsville and, going as far back as 52 B.C., Roman Proconsul Julius Caesar campaigning in Gaul.

Greene is the single Continental department commander most often associated with guerrilla warfare. The fact that Greene was a conventional commander significantly impacts a common misunderstanding of the Revolutionary War. What was true in the south was true in every theater – Patriot armies won their campaigns not through the weapons of the weak, such as guerrillas or guile, but through superior numbers. General Washington survived lost battles and harrowing marches because he could rebuild his army. British Lieutenant Generals Sir William Howe and Sir Henry Clinton, successive commanders-in-chief of British forces in North

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<sup>16</sup> Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume VI*, ed., Richard K. Showman (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 589-590.

America, often seen as dilatory, could not afford rashness since even moderate losses could (and eventually did) ruin British prospects of final victory.<sup>17</sup> British Lieutenant Generals John Burgoyne and Lord Charles Cornwallis both lost their armies due to aggressive generalship in theaters where they could not compete effectively for replacements or reinforcements. British Army manpower problems, which were already dire before 1778, only increased as France, Spain, and the Netherlands joined the war.

The war is not the only field of Revolutionary scholarship skewed by the myth of the valiant few. When one accepts that the Patriot cause enjoyed overwhelming public support in the thirteen colonies it also transforms the political, social, and cultural history of the Revolution – Revolutionary ideas emerge as conventional, rather than radical; Revolutionary agitation emerges as reflecting consensus, rather than societal divisions; and American separatism can be more easily reconciled with the staunch British patriotism that preceded the Revolution. These themes in Revolutionary history are not the focus of this dissertation, but hopefully historians in other fields of specialization will recognize the influence the military historiography of the war has had on their fields of research. They are apt to find that accurate data on the strength of Patriot wartime support is as impactful on their view of the Revolution as it is for military historians.

The historiography of the myth of the valiant few dates from the Revolution itself. It originated with imperial policymakers even before the development of Britain's war strategy.

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<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant General William Howe, *The Narrative of Lieutenant General Sir William Howe in a Committee of the House of Commons on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 1779, Relative to His Conduct during His Late Command of the King's Troops in North America: to which are Added, some Observations On a Pamphlet, Entitled, Letters to a Nobleman*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: H. Baldwin, 1780), 19, 32.

British policymakers devised imperial reforms for the colonies in the 1760s and 1770s on the assumption that the Sons of Liberty represented a vocal minority. They began the war in the belief that a few unscrupulous New Englanders orchestrated the recurring protests of Parliamentary taxation. On its forced departure from Boston in the face of an army as large as its own and better situated, British government officials assured themselves that the troubles in New England were a regional problem. Certain that Loyalists in the middle colonies would rise to support the arrival of British troops, the British Army attacked New York and Pennsylvania. Despite early victories in both states, Britain soon gave up an army – in Saratoga – and all the territory it had gained except that adjacent to New York City. It made the same mistake in the south, landing an army too small for its assigned task at Charlestown, counting on gaining necessary support from Loyalist recruits. That decision resulted in yet another lost army – at Yorktown – and the successful completion of Greene’s southern campaign.

Amazingly, some in the British government believed in a Loyalist silent majority even after Yorktown,<sup>18</sup> and British historians have maintained since the war that a much larger number of Loyalists existed than was the case.<sup>19</sup> They argue a combination of Patriot political and military preparation and British Army failure to support, protect, and recruit Loyalists

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<sup>18</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 542; Marshall Smelser, “An Understanding of the American Revolution,” *The Review of Politics* 38:3 (1976): 303; O’Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 187.

<sup>19</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 36, 83; Peter Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion: A Tory View* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1961), 145; Joseph Galloway, *Historical and Political Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion* (London: G. Wilkie, 1780), 94; Jonathan Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution; in Thirteen Discourses* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1797), 366; O’Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America*, 11, 117-118; Richard Middleton, *The War of Independence 1775-1783* (London: Routledge, 2011), 41-42; Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 284.

damaged Loyalist effectiveness.<sup>20</sup> They routinely fail to explain adequately why experienced political and military leaders were so fatally inept or short sighted.

American historians writing immediately after the war take a completely opposite stance. They uniformly assert that most Americans were Patriots.<sup>21</sup> That position remained dominant among American historians throughout the nineteenth-century. In 1902 Sydney George Fisher became the first American historian to argue Patriots were a minority, with no greater numbers than Loyalists. He took that position based on statements by British leaders and an off-the-cuff remark former President John Adams made in a personal letter written more than three decades after the war.<sup>22</sup>

If I were called to calculate the divisions among the people of America, as Mr. [Edmond] Burke did those of the people of England, I should say that full one third were averse to the revolution. These, retaining that overweening fondness, in which they had been educated, for the English, could not cordially like the French; indeed, they most heartily detested them. An opposite third conceived a hatred of the English, and gave themselves up to an enthusiastic gratitude to France. The middle third, composed principally of the yeomanry, the soundest part of the nation, and always averse to war, were rather lukewarm both to England and France; and sometimes stragglers from them, and sometimes the whole body, united with the first or the last third, according to circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

Adams' statement has since become the basis of belief in the myth of the valiant few by

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<sup>20</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 2, 37; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 11, 36, 53, 98, 175, 333.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. David Ramsay, M.D., *The History of the Revolution of South Carolina, from a British Province to an Independent State, Volume I* (Trenton: Isaac Collins, 1785), 67; Dr. David Ramsay, M.D., *The History of the American Revolution, Volume I* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1990), 185; Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution, Volume 1* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1994), 11, 18, 167; Richard Snowman, *The American Revolution: Written in Scriptural, or, Ancient Historical Style* (Baltimore: W. Pechin, 1815), 68; Elizabeth F. Ellet, *Domestic History of the American Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1854), 37; John Fiske, *The American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1891), 87, 213, 274, 280.

<sup>22</sup> Sydney George Fisher, *The True History of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1902), 160-163; William F. Marina, "The American Revolution and the Minority Myth," The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017].

<sup>23</sup> Charles Frances Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856), 113.

American historians.<sup>24</sup>

The historiographical consensus on both sides of the Atlantic has thus become that the American victory was a miracle of sorts. Rather than challenge the miracle, historians have endeavored to explain it. British historians, as noted above, largely blame Patriot readiness and British error.<sup>25</sup> Early twentieth-century Americans suggested the miracle was based on Patriot morality and republican ideals.<sup>26</sup> By the latter half of the twentieth century, with the Vietnam War as a backdrop, American historians focused on guerrilla warfare, particularly regarding Greene's southern campaign.<sup>27</sup> With the widespread understanding of guerrilla warfare as the weapon of the weak, this explanation – like previous ones – explained how a beleaguered minority could pull off such a victory.

Some modern historians are beginning to accept the reality of a Patriot majority, however. Historians Paul Smith and Robert Calhoon have provided estimates of the various factions. Smith argues 19.8 percent of the colonial population was loyal, but does not estimate the Patriot portion of the population.<sup>28</sup> Calhoon argues that Loyalists represented fifteen to

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<sup>24</sup> William F. Marina, "The American Revolution and the Minority Myth," The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017].

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Conway, *The War of American Independence 1775-1783* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 80; Mackesy, *War for America*, 2, 37; O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America*, 7; Galloway, *Historical and Political Reflections on the American Rebellion*, 54, 58, 90-91; Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion*, 145; Richard M. Ketchum, *Decisive Day: The Battle of Bunker Hill* (New York City: Henry Holt and Company, 1974), 99; Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, xlv; Michael Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen through British Eyes* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 9-10; Christopher Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels: The American Revolution through British Eyes* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 334.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, "Foreword," 5.

<sup>27</sup> Don Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America: The Wider Dimensions of Conflict* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 153-154.

<sup>28</sup> Paul H. Smith, "The American Loyalists: Notes on Their Organization and Numerical Strength," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25:2 (1968): 269.

twenty percent, and Patriots forty to forty-five percent, or “at most no more than a bare majority.”<sup>29</sup> In a more recent study, Calhoun notes estimates by two other historians, neither one named or cited, both placing the Loyalist population at approximately eighteen percent. Here Calhoun notes no accompanying Patriot estimate.<sup>30</sup> As noted below, several other historians have adopted these more realistic figures, or similar ones, for their own studies. In the late twentieth-century, William F. Marina launched a veritable campaign, which is slowly bearing fruit, to prove that Patriots significantly outnumbered Loyalists.<sup>31</sup> British historian Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy comes nearest of any current historian to understanding the full impact of the myth.<sup>32</sup>

However, even historians who accept a Patriot majority fail to adequately connect the Patriot majority to the British manpower and shipping crisis, and to investigate the impact of those issues on the conduct of the war. Marina and O’Shaughnessy, for instance, both argue

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<sup>29</sup> Robert M. Calhoun, “Loyalism and Neutrality,” in *A Companion to the American Revolution*, eds. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Limited, 2000), 235.

<sup>30</sup> Robert M. Calhoun, Timothy M. Barnes, Robert S. Davis, *Tory Insurgents: The Loyalist Perception and Other Essays* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 356.

<sup>31</sup> William F. Marina, “The American Revolution and the Minority Myth,” The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017].

<sup>32</sup> O’Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 353-361. In his “Conclusion,” O’Shaughnessy argues there existed very little chance for the British to win the war, an opinion he bases on Patriot majority, lack of British resources, and lack of Loyalist support. All these circumstances did exist. However, he overstates the importance of any British limitation on resources, by which he means lack of money and supplies. Certainly, taxation for the war was an important issue, but it was not decisive. The British government could get the money it needed, despite its already significant debt and political opposition. American and British historians repeatedly discuss British recruiting problems, which lay behind, among other things, the hiring of mercenaries. If money was really the issue, there would have been enough recruits, but not enough pay, and there would have been no need or ability to hire mercenaries. In fact, it was just opposite. O’Shaughnessy also understates the impact of the Patriot majority prior to French entry into the war and attributes British failure in large part to their inability to deal with the Patriot insurrection, by which he implies guerrillas. The last appears based, at least in part, on a faulty understanding of the eighteenth-century term guerrilla, a common failing. Having said all that, it remains true that O’Shaughnessy comes closer than any modern historian to fully understanding British defeat in the American Revolution.

fiercely for a Patriot majority, but still insist Patriot armies fought a guerilla war.<sup>33</sup> This dissertation both offers evidence of a significant manpower disparity favoring the Patriot army over the British Army and interprets the American Revolution and Greene's generalship through the prism of that understanding. Seen in that light, it is clear the Patriot faction had the greatest advantages in the war from the beginning. Patriot military victory was not a miracle and historians should not regard it with surprise. It was the predictable consequence of broadly understood military principles.

As is common concerning the American Revolution, the nature of Greene's personal historiography changed dramatically over time. Nineteenth-century biographies of Greene are primarily hagiographies, but several do provide narratives of the general's life. The two most important are undoubtedly William Johnson's *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene*, and *The Life of Nathanael Greene*, a three-volume work by the general's grandson, George Washington Greene. Their greatest importance is that together they constitute the closest accounts to primary sources available on Greene's childhood.<sup>34</sup> George Washington Greene published a single volume biography prior to the multi-volume work. A pair of lesser works also exist. The first of these includes chapters copied from works of other historians and the second is an abridgement of Johnson's biography into a single volume.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> William F. Marina, "The American Revolution and the Minority Myth," The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017].

<sup>34</sup> William Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene, Major General of the Armies of the United States, in the War of the Revolution, Volume 1* (Charleston, SC: A. E. Miller, 1822), v-xi; George Washington Greene, *The Life of Nathanael Greene, Major-General in the Army of the Revolution, Volume I* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1884), vii-viii.

<sup>35</sup> Francis Vinton Greene, *General Greene* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893), Contents (no page number); William Gilmore Simms, ed., *The Life of Nathanael Greene: Major-General in the Revolutionary Army*

None of these works are academic in the modern sense of having an analytical thesis beyond veneration of Greene.

In addition to the works listed above, several original documents provide valuable information regarding Greene's activities and attitude. Most important is undoubtedly *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*.<sup>36</sup> Almost as important are *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*.<sup>37</sup> Greene exchanged letters with many leading Revolutionary-era figures including John Adams, Joseph Reed, the Marquis de Lafayette, Friedrich von Steuben, Henry Lee, and Francis Marion.<sup>38</sup> Letters to or from Greene can be found in many Revolutionary-era writings and mentions of Greene exist in several Revolutionary era memoirs and histories. Finally, the *Journals of the Continental Congress* contain many references to Greene.<sup>39</sup>

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(New York: Derby and Jackson, 1858); Frederick Wagner, "Simms's Editing of 'The Life of Nathanael Greene,'" *The Southern Literary Journal* 11:1 (1978): 40.

<sup>36</sup> Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volumes I-XIII*, eds. Roger K. Showman, Dennis M. Conrad, and Roger N. Parks (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976-2005).

<sup>37</sup> George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, Volumes 1-39*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1944). There are at least three other collections of Washington's writings. The Library of Congress has the original manuscript writings which are available for online viewing. There is a collection of Washington's writings that is older than the collection edited by Fitzpatrick and a newer collection specifically of Washington's military writings. However, the collection edited by Fitzpatrick is by far the most commonly used source. Although all have worth, none of the other collections come close to Fitzpatrick's work in importance, comprehensiveness, or ease of use.

<sup>38</sup> John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations, Volume 1-10*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856); Joseph Reed, *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, Volumes 1-2*, ed. William B. Reed (Philadelphia, Lindsay & Blakiston, 1847); Continental Major General Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, *Memoirs, correspondence and manuscripts of General Lafayette, Volumes 1-3* (London: Sanders and Otley, 1837); Continental Major General Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, *The Papers of General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben: 1777-1794*, ed. Edith von Zemenzky (Millwood, NY: Kraus, 1984); Henry Lee, *The Revolutionary War Memoirs of General Henry Lee with a Biography of the Author by Robert E. Lee*, ed., Robert E. Lee (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, Gaillard Hunt, John C. Fitzpatrick, and Roscoe R. Hill, eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789, Volume I-XXXIV* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1904-1937).



Recent historiography concerning Greene revolves around three primary arguments. None suggests Greene was less than outstanding in any of his three primary military roles: subordinate commander, quartermaster general, and theater commander. One camp argues Greene was Washington's best subordinate. Another argues that Greene was particularly adept at civil-military relations. The most prominent camp argues that Greene's methods were innovative and forward thinking, presaging twentieth-century revolutionary wars. While each camp has detractors, none of these camps are particularly controversial, and Revolutionary War historians generally agree on all three issues.<sup>40</sup>

Probably the most widely held argument about Greene is that he was Washington's best subordinate. Adherents of this view include historians Spencer C. Tucker, Theodore Thayer (who goes as far as claiming Greene originated Washington's strategy<sup>41</sup>), Terry Golway, Steven E. Siry, John Buchanan, Benson Bobrick, Piers Mackesy, Francis C. KAJENCKI, and Lawrence E. Babits. Virtually every historian whose primary argument is that Greene was a prototype of the modern guerrilla leader joins in this view.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 215; Golway, *Washington's General*, 35; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 5; Clodfelter, "Between Virtue and Necessity," 169; Haw, "Every Thing Here Depends upon Opinion," 212-213; McKinney, "The Integrity of Nathanael Greene," 53-60; Rogers, "British Merchants of Charlestown," 75-83; Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw," 115-117; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-3; Jones, *Guerrilla Conflict before the Cold War*, 1-40;

<sup>41</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), 264-265; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 215; Golway, *Washington's General*, 35; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 5; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 150-151; Mackesy, *War for America*, 405; Francis C. KAJENCKI, "Kościuszko's Role in the Siege of Ninety-Six," *Polish American Studies* 54:2 (1997): 9-10; Lawrence E. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping: The Battle of Cowpens* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5-6; Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw," 115-117; Millett and Maslowski *For the Common Defense*, 71-72; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 27-39; Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 114; Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 196.

There are, however, some slight detractors who damn Greene with faint praise. Don Higginbotham argues that Greene learned the tactics and operational methods he used in the south from Daniel Morgan. Henry Lumpkin makes a similar assertion, referring to Greene somewhat pedestrianly as “steady and dependable.” He focuses sharply on South Carolina militia commanders, especially Francis Marion.<sup>43</sup> Dennis Conrad argues that Greene was no strategist in the modern sense because he was too reactive to enemy operations, failing to develop and follow a plan that forced the enemy to conform to his movements.<sup>44</sup> At least one historian challenges Greene’s tactical ability, citing the fact that he never won a battle.<sup>45</sup> Neither Higginbotham, Lumpkin, nor any other historian, however, suggests that Greene was less than an outstanding commander.

Historiographically, the greatest difference of opinion regarding Greene concerns civil-military relations. Only a few historians, including Mark A. Clodfelter, James Haw, Francis F. McKinney, Donald E. Reynolds, Pete Maslowski, M. Foster Farley, Richard B. Morris, and George C. Rogers, Jr., focus significantly on Greene’s relationship with civilian leaders.<sup>46</sup> However, most historians who study Greene argue that he maintained good relations with civil government. The prevailing view is that even though Greene often requisitioned supplies from civilians, he

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<sup>43</sup> Don Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan: Revolutionary Rifleman* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 158-159; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 58, 169; Robert C. Pugh, “The Revolutionary Militia in the Southern Campaign, 1780-1781,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 14:2 (1957): 160, 174.

<sup>44</sup> Dennis Conrad, “General Nathanael Greene: An Appraisal,” in *General Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution in the South*, eds., Gregory D. Massey and Jim Piccuch (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 398.

<sup>46</sup> Clodfelter, “Between Virtue and Necessity,” 169; Haw, ““Every Thing Here Depends upon Opinion,”” 212-213; McKinney, “The Integrity of Nathanael Greene,” 53-60; Rogers, “The British Merchants of Charlestown,” 75-83; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 244, 255; Melissa Walker, *The Battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens: The American Revolution in the Southern Backcountry* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 90-91.

maintained the good will of most southerners by his honest and ethical behavior. At least one historian from this camp suggests Greene imitated Washington in this regard.<sup>47</sup> There are also detractors, however. Reynolds argues Greene expected too much from states that supported him, especially Virginia. He also suggests Greene was insufficiently grateful for the support he received.<sup>48</sup>

Differing, although not conflicting, arguments on Greene's views of African-Americans also exist. Pete Maslowski and M. Foster Farley argue that Greene wanted to use African-Americans in the army, believing they would make good soldiers. His support for civil government kept him from recruiting African-Americans because it was unpopular in the South. That view speaks well of Greene both as a supporter of civil over military government and as enlightened regarding race.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, both Farley and Richard B. Morris note that Greene supported paying soldiers in slaves plundered from Loyalists. Given that Greene was a slave holder and plantation owner after the war, that tends to cast him in a lesser light regarding race.<sup>50</sup>

The third historiographical camp argues that Greene's operations were unconventional, original, innovative, and ahead of his time, and thus significantly different from operations conducted in the northern colonies. Their argument postulates a similarity between Greene's

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<sup>47</sup> Haw, "'Every Thing Here Depends upon Opinion'," 212-214.

<sup>48</sup> Donald E. Reynolds, "Ammunition Supply in Revolutionary Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 73:1 (1965): 73, 76.

<sup>49</sup> Pete Maslowski, "National Policy toward the Use of Black Troops in the Revolution," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 73:1 (1972): 14, 16; M. Foster Farley, "The South Carolina Negro in the American Revolution, 1775-1783," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 79:2 (1978): 81.

<sup>50</sup> Farley, "The South Carolina Negro in the American Revolution," 84; Richard B. Morris, "Class Struggle and the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 19:1 (1962): 19.

operations and twentieth-century guerrilla wars such as the Chinese Revolution or the Vietnam War. This camp compares Greene to such modern guerrilla military leaders as Mao Tse-tung and Vo Nguyen Giap. The basis for this argument is Greene's alleged Fabian strategy and use of guerrilla forces. Twentieth-century revolutionary leaders do not mention Greene's operations, largely ruling out any possibility Greene was a model for modern operations. There is, however, a well-voiced argument, led by John Morgan Dederer, that Greene's operations so resembled twentieth-century revolutionary operations as to foreshadow them.<sup>51</sup> Other adherents to this camp include Russell F. Weigley, Anthony James Jones, Don Higginbotham, Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, Stephen Conway, John Edward Grenier, Melissa A. Walker, James W. Pohl, John W. Gordon, Donald Stoker, Michael W. Jones, William F. Marina, and Robert Asprey, as well as Greene's modern biographers.<sup>52</sup> This argument fits neatly within the larger argument put forward by historians such as Higginbotham, Weigley, Dederer, and Asprey

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<sup>51</sup> John Morgan Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw: Nathanael Greene's Southern Campaign and Mao Tse-tung's Mobile War* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1983), 5-7; John Morgan Dederer, "The Origins of Robert E. Lee's Bold Generalship: A Reinterpretation," *Military Affairs* 49:3 (1985): 122.

<sup>52</sup> Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-3; Jones, *Guerrilla Conflict before the Cold War*, 1-40; Higginbotham, "Reflections on the South," 668-669; Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 71-72; Weigley, *American Way of War*, 27-39; Russell Weigley, "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 410-411; Conway, "The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence," 77; Grenier, "The Other American Way of War," 284; Walker, *The Battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens*, 90-91; James W. Pohl, "The American Revolution and the Vietnamese War: Pertinent Military Analogies," *The History Teacher* 7:2 (1974): 258-259; Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 114; William F. Marina, "The American Revolution and the Minority Myth," The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017]. Aside from Dederer three historians stand out on this list. Asprey claims to trace guerrilla warfare from antiquity to Vietnam, but includes many operations most historians or military professionals would not classify as guerrilla. Grenier argues an even greater similarity between Greene and modern guerrilla operations than Dederer, although he fails adequately to distinguish between special operations and guerrilla warfare. Marina, although among the first and most vehement modern historians to argue a Patriot majority, fails to understand how that translated to the battlefield. He remains a vigorous proponent of the argument for guerrilla warfare by the Patriot faction in general.

that the American Revolution as a whole was similar to the Vietnam War and other twentieth-century guerrilla conflicts.<sup>53</sup> The argument that Greene's operations specifically, and the Revolutionary War in general, were akin to twentieth-century guerrilla warfare began during the Vietnam War.<sup>54</sup> However, it so influenced later historians that virtually every Revolutionary War historian since then supports the argument that Greene was unconventional – meaning guerrilla – at least to some extent.

There is, admittedly, a surface similarity between modern Communist cells and Revolutionary Committees of Correspondence, between Communist agitators and infiltrators and the Sons of Liberty, and between the use and threat of violence as revolutionary instigation in Vietnam and colonial America. There were guerrilla operations, sometimes opposed by conventional armies, in both wars. There were great foreign nations far from the theater of conflict supporting and opposing local insurgents.

However, those surface similarities fail to account for deep differences in the times and methods of the two wars. Each war may have featured terror tactics, but the term did not have the same meaning in both eras. Only on the fringes did murder become commonplace in the American Revolution. Even then it was a method of reprisal, not coercion, and typically aimed only at adult men. The Sons of Liberty were sometimes rough, their violence sometimes even counterproductive. However, their behavior never involved systematic assassination or torture

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<sup>53</sup> Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America*, 154-155; Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 97-117; Weigley, "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War," 410-411; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 5-7.

<sup>54</sup> Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America*, 153-154.

of leading men of the opposition, much less their families and friends. Many leading men on both sides decried personal violence.

This dissertation recognizes the importance of Greene's historiography, agreeing with much of the published material. However, it also illustrates that the link between Greene's command methods and twentieth-century warfare is accidental and superficial. Greene was, indeed, an outstanding general, probably Washington's best. He carefully thought through his strategy, operations, and tactics and was generally successful. He performed at the top of his field as a subordinate general, staff officer, and theater commander. His work in the South was a strategic and operational masterpiece. His tactics were a mix of what he learned in his studies, what he learned from experience under Washington, and what he learned on his own. In the end, however, the inescapable fact is that Greene won the southern campaign, and Patriot armies won the American Revolution, not by inventing a novel way of war, but primarily through the application of European military conventions of their age. What allowed them to do so was their overwhelming manpower advantage.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROLOGUE: THE EARLY YEARS

Nathanael Greene's ancestors moved to Rhode Island with religious dissenter Roger Williams, founder of the colony. They eventually settled in Potowomut, later renamed Warwick. The family ultimately broke with the followers of Williams and became Quakers. Greene was born in Potowomut on 27 July 1742. Nathanael was the fifth child of his father, also Nathanael Greene, and the second of Mary Mott, the elder Greene's second wife. The elder Greene fathered nine children with his first two wives, both of whom died young. Nathanael Greene, Sr. and his third wife reared the children.<sup>55</sup>

As a youth, or perhaps even at birth, young Nathanael developed a limp from a stiff knee. He took the inoculation for Smallpox on a pre-war trip to New York City, an act that was illegal in Rhode Island. Inoculation served him well in Smallpox outbreaks during the Revolutionary War, but it caused a blemish in his right eye that occasionally became painfully infected. He also developed asthma as a young man, which bedeviled him for the remainder of his life. Despite his physical limitations Green was active and athletic throughout his life, more than able to sustain the rigorous lifestyle of an eighteenth-century military commander.<sup>56</sup>

Greene received a basic education, but joined the family business while still a child. The elder Greene, an austere man, considered more than a primary education a distraction from

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<sup>55</sup>Greene, *The life of Nathanael Greene*, 4-5, 16; Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene*, 2-6.

<sup>56</sup> Greene, *Life of Nathanael Greene*, 24, 26; Johnson, *Sketches and Correspondence*, 1, 13; Siry, *Greene*, 5; Golway, *Washington's General*, 29-30.

God and unnecessary for business, the focal points of his life other than his family.<sup>57</sup> Although a boy and subject to whims of boyhood, Greene largely buckled down to work, accepting the strictures of his father's religion with two exceptions. Greene loved to dance and, beginning in his late teens, he developed a love of reading. Over time, the urge to dance faded and he persuaded his father to accept his reading. His father eventually hired a tutor to guide Nathanael's further education.<sup>58</sup>

As Greene approached maturity, he accepted more responsibility. His two oldest brothers died when he was eighteen, and a legal battle developed over their share in the property. Greene, the best-educated member of the family, delved into Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries*, learning enough law to take the lead in winning their inheritance for the family. Afterwards, although the family still used attorneys on occasion, Greene became, to a significant degree, legal counsel for the family business.<sup>59</sup>

Ten years later, in 1770, Greene became manager of the family foundry in Coventry, Rhode Island, where he built a nice home and became active in civic affairs.<sup>60</sup> The foundry, among the largest in the colonies, employed most of the men in Coventry. Before the end of that year Nathanael's father died and managing the family business fell to Nathanael and his brothers. The brothers initially held the business in common, not dividing it among themselves until 1778, late in the Revolutionary War.

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<sup>57</sup> Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume I*, Richard K. Showman, ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 47-49.

<sup>58</sup> Greene, *Life of Nathanael Greene*, 100-101; Johnson, *Sketches and Correspondence*, 9-11, 14.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson, *Sketches and Correspondence*, 15.

<sup>60</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 9-13, 25-26.



From about the time of his father's death, for no known reason, Greene's reading turned more toward military topics. Rhode Island was the scene of several pre-Revolutionary War conflicts between royal representatives and the colonists. Initially Greene was not particularly active in protests of Britain, although he served in the colonial legislature from 1771 until 1775 and helped rewrite the militia laws of the colony. Any passivity disappeared with the *Gaspee* Affair, however.

Curtailling widespread smuggling was a constant challenge for British authorities. Mercantilism was at the heart of the smuggling problem. Mercantilism protected the trade of the mother country by retaining control over colonial trade. It provided financial advantages for the mother country, to the disadvantage of the colonies. Smuggling was a locally accepted way for colonists to profit within the mercantilist environment. For years smuggling was easy in Britain's North American colonies. After the French and Indian War, the British government, needing revenue, tightened enforcement of shipping laws.<sup>61</sup>

In 1770 the British government dispatched the customs schooner *Liberty* to Rhode Island to stop smuggling. Locals boarded it and burned it to the waterline. In 1772 the British government sent a second ship, the revenue schooner *Gaspee*, captained by Lieutenant William Dudingston. A dedicated officer, Dudingston stopped and searched every merchant ship entering or leaving Newport harbor. During his duties, Dudingston searched the merchant ship *Fortune* as it was leaving Newport. *Fortune* carried a cargo of rum and other distilled spirits. Dudingston ordered the ship and cargo impounded and apparently handled the captain of the

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<sup>61</sup> Joseph C. Morton, *The American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 9-14.; H. Damsgaard Hansen, *European Economic History: From Mercantilism to Maastricht and Beyond* (Koge, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2001), 59-65.

ship roughly. He ordered the ship taken to Boston where a British, rather than a colonial, court would determine legality of the cargo. The *Fortune* belonged to Nathanael and his family and its captain was Rufus Greene, a cousin.<sup>62</sup>

Greene sued Dudingston, eventually winning a verdict against him for three hundred pounds. There is no extant paperwork showing whether Dudingston ever paid the claim.<sup>63</sup> Greene's legal action did not end the matter, however. While the issue was working its way through the courts, Dudingston continued stopping ships entering or leaving the harbor. One such ship, the *Hannah*, fled, luring Dudingston into shallow water where he grounded. The captain of the *Hannah* reported the grounding to the citizens of Newport, where some sixty men, led by the county sheriff, set out for the *Gaspee* in longboats. Dudingston refused to surrender, and the posse fired on him, hitting him in the groin. It then arrested him on a warrant relating to Greene's case against him. As with the *Liberty*, the posse burned the *Gaspee* to the waterline.

After the boarding of the *Fortune*, Greene set his face firmly against England. He travelled frequently to Boston on family business where he met bookseller Henry Knox, future Patriot artillery general and first American Secretary of War, with whom he became lifelong friends. Knox introduced him to several of Boston's leading Revolutionaries. On closure of Boston Harbor by the Intolerable Acts, Greene was among those who sent support to the beleaguered city.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 26-31, 51-54.

<sup>63</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 33-35. Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 14; Siry, *Greene*, 6.

<sup>64</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 67-68.

At home, Greene was instrumental in forming a militia company in East Greenwich that evolved into the Kentish Guards.<sup>65</sup> Chagrined when not voted a commission because of his limp, which some felt marred the look of the company on the parade ground, he considered resigning. After time to reflect, however, he remained in the company as a private.<sup>66</sup> On one of his trips to Boston, he hired a British deserter to drill the new company.<sup>67</sup>

On learning of the fighting at Lexington and Concord, the Rhode Island assembly recruited a militia brigade of fifteen hundred men, of which the Kentish Guards were part. The first two men the assembly approached to command the brigade declined. Nathanael Greene was the third man offered the position. The choice was not as completely surprising as sometimes suggested. Greene had sought a commission in the Kentish Guards; was among the most faithful men of his company regarding drill attendance; supplied the company with a drill instructor; was well-read on military subjects; had significant political influence; and was very involved in rewriting the colony's militia laws. At a time when standing as a gentleman was the most important issue of command, Greene certainly qualified. Nevertheless, just as much reason existed to choose other men who would almost certainly have accepted the position, including men with experience in the French and Indian War. If a reason for Greene's appointment existed, history has lost it. In any case, Greene became the brigadier general in command of the Rhode Island militia brigade, officially christened The Army of Observation.<sup>68</sup> Greene threw himself into the organization of the brigade, working to recruit and supply the

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<sup>65</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 68-70, 71-75.

<sup>66</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 75-77; Siry, *Greene*, 11; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 19-20.

<sup>67</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 70-71; Siry, *Greene*, 10; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 18.

<sup>68</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, xviii-xix, 78-80.

new formation as hard as he had ever worked in the family business.<sup>69</sup> In early June, he led two of his three regiments to Boston, joining militia forces from other New England colonies in besieging that city. Commanders of the New England army assigned the Rhode Islanders to the right wing.<sup>70</sup>

Shortly after the New England army gathered at Boston the Continental Congress adopted it, christening it the Continental Army. When Congress named general officers, it did not forget that Rhode Island contributed substantially to the force besieging Boston. As senior officer in the Rhode Island force, Greene was among the original Continental Army brigadier generals. In August 1776, before any involvement in combat and based primarily on his having been among the original brigadiers, Congress promoted Greene to the rank of major general.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 81-84.

<sup>70</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene Volume I*, 85-86.

<sup>71</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 89, 280; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 65-66, 88-89, 98; Golway, *Washington's General*, 2-3, 56, 84-86; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 27, 42-43.

## CHAPTER 3

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The principle of civil primacy over the military was a hard-won British ideal that the Patriots were unwilling to relinquish. Fear of a strong army with a popular leader permeated congressional deliberations throughout the war. Nor was such fear groundless, as the Newburgh Conspiracy later proved. The dedication to civil primacy of generals such as Washington and Greene was important, but the Continental Congress did not leave the fate of the new nation to their good will. From the earliest days of the war Congress maintained control of the military through a variety of measures.

Greene served in the context of a civil-military relationship that, while containing uniquely American elements, was conventionally European. The Patriot civil-military relationship, developed in haste and confusion, was less sophisticated than those in Europe. Patriots avoided a strong central government as a threat to their liberties and for the same reason championed civilian primacy over the military. Patriot military forces drew officers from leading men of Patriot society, while recruiting enlisted men from the working class.<sup>72</sup> Impressment into the Continental Army was a last resort. Even so, desertion was an issue. The presence of an army, no matter how restrained, inconvenienced civilians. Greene limited those inconveniences as much as possible, knowing the goodwill of the populace was important and that requisitioning supplies from local populations caused real hardship for civilians. A staunch

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<sup>72</sup> Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 164; Harold E. Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 24; James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1982), 13.

Patriot, Greene emulated Washington in embracing and deferring to the Patriot government, even when he disagreed with its decisions. Neither his approach nor his circumstances were fundamentally new or groundbreaking.

### Civilian Control of the Military

The Second Continental Congress did not meet to form a new American government. That was an accident. Congress met as part of an ongoing but irregular practice of consultation between colonies in the attempt to coordinate Indian affairs and secure colonial frontiers from both Indians and Europeans.<sup>73</sup> Recent intercolonial meetings also sought a united front against British governmental practices colonists believed infringed on their liberties. Two American congresses met for that purpose prior to the American Revolution, the Stamp Act Congress of 1765, and the First Continental Congress, which met in 1774. Neither contemplated revolution.<sup>74</sup>

The Second Continental Congress, convening in 1775, expected to adopt a similar course to those previous, but with stronger political actions.<sup>75</sup> Lexington and Concord changed all that. Some Americans hoped the reality of war would bring the British government to its senses. In like manner, some British subjects thought military action might awaken the better judgment of

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<sup>73</sup> Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 39.

<sup>74</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume II* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1905), 15-24; Richard A. Primus, *The American Language of Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 125.

<sup>75</sup> Ford, *Journals of Continental Congress, Volume II*, 13-22. The credentials of the delegates at the Second Continental Congress, mostly written before Lexington, were certainly more strident than the credentials of the delegates to the first Congress, but it is clear the various colonies were not authorizing a war.

rebellious colonists. However, there were few people on either side who really believed avoiding war was possible.<sup>76</sup> Most Patriots also believed if colonial unity had meaning it must begin with support of the New England militia surrounding Boston.<sup>77</sup> The Second Continental Congress, planning to negotiate an end to grievances between Britain and its North American colonies, suddenly had a war on its hands. The circumstances required that Congress, at virtually a moment's notice, manage that war. Congress was completely unprepared for such a formidable task.

For the fledgling confederation to survive it needed a government and an army. On 11 May 1775, the day after it convened, Congress heard a letter requesting it assume control of the army surrounding Boston and of the war. By 25 May 1775, two weeks after convening, Congress was directing the strategy of the war.<sup>78</sup> The delegates had little choice. Someone had to make the necessary decisions, and Congress was the only available organ. To legitimize the national Patriot government, Congress drafted the Articles of Confederation, approving them on 15 November 1777.<sup>79</sup> Approval gave the confederation claim to a legal framework within which to operate, although ratification of the Articles took place only in 1781.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Morton, *American Revolution*, 161.

<sup>77</sup> Ford, *Journals of Continental Congress, Volume II*, 91.

<sup>78</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 24-44, 60-61; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 41, 42; Kenneth Schaffel, "The American Board of War, 1776-1781," *Military Affairs* 50:4 (1968): 185.

<sup>79</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume V* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1906), 433.

<sup>80</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume IX* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1907), 907.

As with the government, Congress created an army starting with what it had. Primarily, it nationalized the militia around Boston into the Continental Army.<sup>81</sup> Rank largely, but not entirely, transferred from the militia to the new army. Consequently, Congress appointed Greene a Continental Army brigadier general.<sup>82</sup> Richard Montgomery, Charles Lee, and Horatio Gates received appointments based on their experience as British Army officers.<sup>83</sup> Congress appointed generals from other states primarily for political balance. Of course, that meant Congress failed to provide commissions for some of the original militia commanders, and appointed others to ranks below what they previously held or below officers they previously outranked. That created significant discord, with some generals withdrawing from the new army altogether.

Congress appointed George Washington commander-in-chief for two reasons. First, he was a socially, politically, and economically prominent and well-respected Virginian. His appointment to command what was primarily a New England army facilitated a national military coalition. Second, Washington was a former provincial officer well known for his military service during the French and Indian War. Washington's birthplace was important because most congressmen thought it inappropriate for a British Army officer to head the American army, believing that choice implied colonists were incapable of leading themselves.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 89-90; Robert K. Wright, Jr., *The Continental Army* (Washington: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1983), 24; Charles Patrick Neimeyer, *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>82</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 50, 65-66; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 21-22, 27-28; Louis Clinton Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1904), 11.

<sup>83</sup> Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*, 10.

<sup>84</sup> Edward G. Lengel, *General George Washington: A Military Life* (New York: Random House, 2005), 86-88; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 123-124; Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*, 6-7.



Congress formed both government and army in haste and confusion and by European standards both lacked sophistication. No bureaucracy did the bidding of the government, no alliance system existed, and there was no responsible method to fund the government. The Continental Congress could not tax or compel the collection of revenue in any form. It could requisition money from the states. They might comply fully, partially, or not at all. It could also print or borrow money. However, printed money had no support because the government had no means to back it. Without support, Continental currency had no credibility with contractors, vendors, or consumers.<sup>85</sup> With no way for the Continental Congress to regulate governmental income, no sure way existed to repay loans.

The new government proceeded largely by trial and error. Changes in process were constant. For example, Congress initially handled all military matters as a body. That proving unsatisfactory, it established a board of war, whose makeup and duties changed several times. Finally, it appointed a secretary at war.<sup>86</sup> At the same time, Congress never wholly relinquished command of the army to anyone other than itself as a body, although it deferred substantially to Washington. On occasion, however, it also acted on advice of other military officers without consulting Washington. Such a scattered approach was common in all areas of Continental government, and probably unavoidable given the circumstances.

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<sup>85</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 147-148.

<sup>86</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 434; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IX*, 818-820; Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume XII* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1908), 1076; Gaillard Hunt, *Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume XXI* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1912), 1087.

Similar confusion naturally affected the military. Calling the group of men surrounding Boston an army did not make it efficient or reliable.<sup>87</sup> The Patriot army benefited from the initial imbalance of numbers, inadequacy of British logistical support, and the conservatism of British Lieutenant Generals Thomas Gage and William Howe, a conservatism augmented after Bunker Hill. Congress took over the army in June 1775 and most enlistments expired in December, requiring wholesale replacement. It allowed new enlistments for only one-year terms. The following year the army again disbanded and reformed, but from that time Congress lengthened enlistment. Authorized size and organization of the army changed at various times during the war. There were differences of opinion regarding the worth and role of militia. In short, as with other areas of government, inexperience of decision makers and exigency of circumstances dictated haste over thoughtfulness.<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, the Patriot government, at both Continental and state levels, deliberately modeled itself after Britain, as did Patriot military forces.<sup>89</sup> The great majority of Americans were of British descent and considered themselves Britons. The initial goal of Patriot political leadership was to protect the colonists' liberties as Englishmen, even from the British government.<sup>90</sup> Most American colonists of any political persuasion believed the British government was the best in the world to that time. Patriots saw themselves as standing

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<sup>87</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 40.

<sup>88</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 47, 51, 55-56, 62, 91-94; Kyle F. Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen during King Philip's War* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 213.

<sup>89</sup> John Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 161-162; John Childs, *The Army of Charles II* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1976), 1, 232; Jeremy Black, *European Warfare, 1660-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 161-162, 197; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 30; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 3, 14, 26.

<sup>90</sup> Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 40-41, 92-93; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, xxiv; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 22.

against the current British parliament as the English people stood against English Kings Charles I in the Civil Wars and James II during the Glorious Revolution of 1688. They saw themselves as defending British representative government. Patriots desired a government resembling the British government as closely as possible without incorporating its arbitrary power.<sup>91</sup>

However, if Patriots looked to British law as a source of their liberties, they also looked to colonial tradition. Each colony was, from its first existence, individually governed. Each passed its own laws, had its own legislature, executive, and courts, and its own militia. The colonies, especially those from different regions, had little in common, and they were often on opposing sides of political issues. Prior to the Second Continental Congress all efforts to unite the colonies had failed. Little guarantee existed that the Continental Congress would achieve better results, for no colony was willing to submit to more than voluntary compliance with a central government.<sup>92</sup>

Like Britons, Americans – both Loyal and Patriot – had a real fear of generals and armies. The examples of Oliver Cromwell and James II served as powerful reminders of the dangers that standing armies posed to liberty and self-government. In the view of American Patriots, King George III, with the support of Parliament, was similarly undermining representative government in America.<sup>93</sup> Patriot leaders understood that nations required large armies to win

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<sup>91</sup> John Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 10-11; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 213.

<sup>92</sup> Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 232; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 30, 35.

<sup>93</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IX*, 1076; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 75; Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution*, 203; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, xv. Neimeyer argues that as time passed during the war, public feeling regarding the army turned less toward fear of a great man taking over the government and more toward insurrection by an armed lower class with little attachment to society. There is certainly some truth in Neimeyer's argument, but the Newburg Conspiracy suggests that, even at the end of the war, any insurrection would need a recognizable person of importance as a front man.

wars, but that did not ease their fears that kings or generals might use those armies to expunge their liberties. They saw little point in trading one master for another.<sup>94</sup>

Some Patriot leaders argued for the exclusive use of militia, or forces made up primarily of militia, a traditional approach in both Britain and the colonies.<sup>95</sup> Militia, however, belonged to the states. Congress could not compel such forces to follow congressional orders or to serve outside their home state. To provide a force sufficient to challenge the British Army the nation needed its primary army directly under control of the Continental Congress. State governments concerned themselves too greatly with their own perceived exposure to give up full control of their military forces to the central government. In addition, military men generally perceived militia as no longer having the skills necessary for modern war.<sup>96</sup>

Beyond militia, Congress used two primary methods to avoid dangers they associated with a strong central army. First was tight civilian control over the military.<sup>97</sup> Congress

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<sup>94</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume 1* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1904), 54; John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States, with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations, by His Grandson, Charles Francis Adams, Volume II*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 320, 354, 357, 358, 421; Forrest McDonald, ed., *Empire and Nation: Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania (John Dickenson) and Letters from the Federal Farmer (Richard Henry Lee)* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2011), 45, 47, 56; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 70, 213-214; Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution*, 9, 203; Black, *European Warfare*, 106.

<sup>95</sup> John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States, with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations, by His Grandson, Charles Francis Adams, Volume IV*, Ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 30-31; Gouverneur Morris, *The Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, Minister of the United States to France; Member of the Constitutional Convention, etc., Volume II*, ed. Anne Cary Morris (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), 303; Ramsay, *History of the American Revolution, Volume I*, 152; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 6; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 218; Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 252; David Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (London: B. T. Batsford Limited, 1976), 92-93; Shaffel, "The American Board of War," 185.

<sup>96</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 12, 17; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 13; Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution*, 6, 7; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 61; John Lynn, ed., *Tools of War: Instruments, Ideas, and Institutions of Warfare, 1445-1871* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 185.

<sup>97</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume 1*, 58-59n; Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume VIII* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1907), 528, Childs, *The Army of*

expected Washington and theater commanders to keep it advised of all actions and decisions. It maintained the right to appoint all general officers and senior positions in the army, and those positions served at congressional pleasure. That included theater commanders, heads of artillery and cavalry, commissary general, quartermaster general, and similar positions. Congress determined the size of the army, retained right of approval for both field and company grade officers, and retained final authority in strategic matters.

The second method of controlling the army was avoiding long-term enlistments, which Congress was reluctant to approve.<sup>98</sup> Even when it eventually did so, long-term was a relative quantity of time. With occasional exceptions, soldiers of the European great powers enlisted for twenty years to life.<sup>99</sup> The longest Continental enlistments were for the duration of the war. For Congress, shorter enlistments offered greater control, greater safety for the government, and therefore greater safety for the people.<sup>100</sup> A strong American government backed by a standing army was, in the view of many Patriots, a continuing threat to the very liberties for which they challenged Britain.

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*Charles II*, 8; Jeremy Black, *A Military Revolution? Military Change and European Society 1550-1800* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1991), 3-4; Shaffel, "The American Board of War," 186.

<sup>98</sup>John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States, with a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations by His Grandson, Charles Francis Adams, Volume I*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 167; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 61, 90; Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume III* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1905), 289.

<sup>99</sup>Larry H. Addington, *The Patterns of War since the Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 66; Black, *European Warfare*, 220; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 2.

<sup>100</sup>Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 48; Jameson, "Subsistence for Middle States Militia, 121."

While differences between governments of the Continental Congress and Britain were noticeable, many similarities existed. Both were representative. Both offered protections for individual rights. Most laws of the Patriot government resembled British law. The new government also maintained the individuality of the states, as was the case under royal administration. There was certainly enough similarity to show that the Patriot government drew on British antecedents.<sup>101</sup>

As with the government in general, the antecedents on which Congress modelled Patriot military forces were clearly European and primarily British, but also uniquely American. Congress retained full authority over the military. Although recommendations came from the states, Congress appointed all senior positions in the Continental Army.<sup>102</sup> Most of this was common in Europe, and none of it was without European precedent.

Congress took responsibility not only for strategy, but for logistical support of the army. It did not directly involve itself in actual distribution of goods to the soldiers, but it appointed those who did. Logistics became its single most demanding duty. Congressional responsibility for military logistics included appointment of the Quartermaster General of the Army, Paymaster General of the Army, Commissary General of the Army, and Inspector General of the

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<sup>101</sup> Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 50.

<sup>102</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume I*, 97, 99, 103; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 358-359; Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume VII* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1907), 364; Gaillard Hunt, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume XXII* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1914), 129; Gaillard Hunt, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume XVII* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1910), 508; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 45.

Army. A large part of the duties of the various ambassadors, especially the ambassador to France, was to seek help in supplying Continental forces.<sup>103</sup>

Congress typically did not interfere with operational decisions. It did retain significant input into strategic military decisions, however, and did not hesitate to insist on certain issues. For instance, on capture of Fort Ticonderoga Congress ordered all “canon and stores” accounted for and stored, intending their return to Britain after the war.<sup>104</sup> Shortly afterward, as the war widened, Congress approved an invasion of Canada.<sup>105</sup> It ordered Washington to hold New York City if feasible, although some generals, including Greene and Major General Charles Lee, second highest ranking officer in the Continental Army, opposed the idea and even Washington doubted it was possible.<sup>106</sup>

For a variety of reasons, Congress was not always available for consultation regarding important decisions. For instance, both time constraints and the desire to avoid British Army interference led Washington to keep the retreat from Long Island secret until after its accomplishment. The larger retreat across New Jersey also began without congressional approval because there was no time to obtain it. Congress was typically understanding about such issues, but it expected Washington, or the appropriate theater commander, to keep it informed as much as possible and as soon as possible.

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<sup>103</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume IV* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1904), 419.

<sup>104</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 55-56.

<sup>105</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 109-110; Shaffel, “The American Board of War,” 187.

<sup>106</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IV*, 127-129.

One aspect in which Congress differed from European governments was day-to-day management of the war. Every major nation in Europe formed a small committee of councilors or high-ranking officials to run the daily affairs of government, including making strategic military decisions. For the British government it was the cabinet, a set of officials drawn from parliament and approved by the King. Early in the century the entire cabinet participated in daily government and military decisions. By the Seven Years War a war cabinet, usually eight to ten members, wielded control of daily operations, with other officials consulted as necessary.<sup>107</sup>

The government of the fledgling United States made an effort to implement a similarly efficient decision-making process. However, that effort fell victim to inexperience and internal divisions in the Patriot government. In the initial rush of war, Congress necessarily acted as a body regarding virtually every issue. It soon realized the volume of work was more than it could handle. To streamline the military process, it created a Board of War and Ordnance and resorted to frequent ad-hoc committees. The board was never really a decision-making organ, however, Congress limiting it to oversight and accounting. While makeup of the Board changed several times, the nature of its work remained largely constant. The same was true of the duties of the secretary at war, which replaced the Board.<sup>108</sup>

Unable to make decisions as a body in real time, Congress usually deferred to Washington or other senior command or staff officers for on-the-spot decisions. The result was, to some degree, exactly what Congress tried to avoid. Military commanders and senior

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<sup>107</sup> Richard Middleton, *The Bells of Victory: The Pitt-Newcastle Ministry and the Conduct of the Seven Years' War, 1757-1762* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 18-21; John A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle: the French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), 70.

<sup>108</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 434-435; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 42-43. Shaffel, "The American Board of War," 185, 186, 188.



staff officers made necessary decisions, then faced judgment based on support they personally garnered in Congress. However, the fact that Congress held power to appoint and dismiss any person in military service gave it at least formal control over the military. Weakness in that regard was a matter of inexperience and exigency, not intent.<sup>109</sup>

Revolutionary Patriot government included not only the Continental Congress, but state governments. States were truly sovereign. Legally, some requirements for compliance existed. Functionally, there were none, because when a state failed to accede to the requests of Congress, no power existed to compel that compliance. No state, acting alone, could force the central government to comply with its wishes, but neither could the central government force the compliance of any state.<sup>110</sup>

State governments were more elaborate than the central government. Each had all three traditional branches: executive, legislative, and judicial – although not necessarily organized separately. Each had its own laws and power to levy taxes. They were, in short, thirteen nations, each cooperating with a central government when and to the degree they saw fit – more like the United Nations than the modern United States.

Militia were part-time soldiers called up by state governments when necessary. Some states, such as South Carolina, raised their own regular armies, as well.<sup>111</sup> These military or

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<sup>109</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 109-110; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 265; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IV*, 383-384; Major A. J. Straley, "General, George Washington; Exemplar in Chief: A Historical Analysis of George Washington's Influence on the Early Continental Army and Civil Military Relations" (master's thesis, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2009), 7.

<sup>110</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 195-199.

<sup>111</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 305-309; Francis Bernard Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution, April, 1775 to December, 1783* (Washington: W. H. Lowdermilk & Co., 1893), 526; Bobby Gilmer Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots in the American Revolution* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), xii.

paramilitary contingents were the armies of the state, not the central government. The Continental Congress had no control over them and they were not subject to orders from Washington or any other Continental general in their theater of operations. They cooperated with the Continental Army only on instruction from their own state governments. Even when so ordered some militia officers resisted. Brigadier General Thomas Sumter of South Carolina is an example. When under command of Continental generals, he often avoided or ignored their orders, depending on his political standing to avoid censure.<sup>112</sup>

Lack of support by Sumter could have had devastating consequences. It highlights the difficulties Continental generals faced in dealing with state governments. Thomas Jefferson, as governor of Virginia, refused to forward reinforcements Greene desperately needed. He also demanded return of horses he believed improperly taken, although they, too, were badly needed by Greene's cavalry. There was little Greene could do in either case.<sup>113</sup> Although Greene was not subject to orders of state governments, neither could he compel them and he needed their support. The Continental Army never had enough men to withstand the British Army without attachment of state forces.

Lack of militia support might appear unusual but precedent existed both in the colonies and in Europe. Local government in both Switzerland and the Netherlands determined the number of troops they sent to their central governments.<sup>114</sup> In the seventeenth-century many

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<sup>112</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 304-305.

<sup>113</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 337-339.

<sup>114</sup> Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 231-238; Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500-1660* (London: Routledge, 2002), 145-148; Hans Kohn, *Nationalism and Liberty: The Swiss Example* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 18-23.

nations in Europe, including France, fielded regional armies whose control by the central government was tenuous where it existed at all. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a major effort of several European monarchs was development of a government strong enough to control the entire nation, including regional armies within its borders.<sup>115</sup>

Among the strongest models for American militia tradition, however, was America, itself. Every colony was independent in military matters and had been since its founding. Military levies by Britain during the colonial wars were typically unenforceable. Colonies formed armies of their own or joined regional alliances to campaign against Indians on their frontiers, often at their own expense and without British Army involvement. This colonial tradition strongly influenced the military relationship between the Continental Congress and the various states.<sup>116</sup>

However, if militia presented significant problems for Washington and Greene, it solved others. Patriot armies could hardly have won without it. Even had Congress enrolled a significantly larger army, it could not have fed and clothed the larger force. It was barely able to care for the relatively small army that it established.<sup>117</sup>

Greene's relationship with local governments was not voluntary. Both necessity and Congress required his cooperation with local authorities. However, his relationship with them differed from his relationship with Congress or Washington. Although he depended on local

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<sup>115</sup> Evan Cameron, ed., *Early Modern Europe: An Oxford History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 219-221.

<sup>116</sup> Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 53-55; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 49.

<sup>117</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 76.

authorities for supplies, reinforcements, political support, and intelligence, he was not subordinate to them. If he disagreed with local authorities he was free to act as he saw fit, provided he listened to them and cooperated with them when he felt it reasonably possible. That he did. For instance, it was Greene who suggested Governor John Rutledge re-establish civil government in South Carolina.<sup>118</sup> He also took the initiative in re-establishing civil government in Georgia.<sup>119</sup> He encouraged his subordinates to support even poor decisions of local government, so long as they did not hazard major damage to the cause.<sup>120</sup> He declined to press his recommendation when North Carolina governor Alexander Martin refused to deal more gently with Loyalists.<sup>121</sup> Greene also disagreed with the governors of South Carolina and Georgia regarding the use of slaves as soldiers, but refused to act on his own preference, in deference to local government.<sup>122</sup> He even found a way to work with Thomas Sumter after the South Carolina militia leader initially refused cooperation.<sup>123</sup>

Despite his sincere attempts to cooperate with local governments, Greene could be a demanding partner. He confiscated supplies when circumstances required, although he typically did so by seeking writs from the local government if possible.<sup>124</sup> He also argued

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<sup>118</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 354; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume VIII*, ed. Dennis M. Conrad (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 256.

<sup>119</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 272.

<sup>120</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 497, 531-532; Clodfelter, "Between Virtue and Necessity," 170, 171, 173; Haw, "Every Thing Here Depends upon Opinion," 219-220, 227, 229; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 366.

<sup>121</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 293; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 452-458.

<sup>122</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 295-298; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume X*, ed. Dennis Conrad (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 21-23, 230.

<sup>123</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 264, 266, 269, 271, 293; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 178, 183.

<sup>124</sup> Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume VII*, ed. Richard K. Showman (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 384.

vehemently with Virginia governor Thomas Jefferson regarding use of Virginia soldiers and requisitioning of horses from Virginia. He harbored lifelong resentment against Jefferson for, as he saw it, putting the cause of Virginia above the cause of the nation. Nor was Jefferson the only person with whom Greene quarreled. He admonished the governor of Rhode Island for hoarding men rather than supporting the Continental Army.<sup>125</sup> He destroyed his friendship with John Adams in an argument over military promotion procedures.<sup>126</sup> He angered many in Congress by the wording of his resignation as quartermaster general.<sup>127</sup> In none of those cases, however, did Greene attempt to circumvent or prevent the work of the civil government.

Greene limited his choices regarding his personal career to following the directives of Congress or resigning his commission. Greene's willingness and ability to work with civil authorities, subordinating his judgment to theirs, was a significant factor of his success in independent command. That was the practice he observed with Washington in the north. At least one historian suggests that Greene modeled his political behavior in the south on Washington's approach.<sup>128</sup> Based on his service in the Rhode Island legislature and his relationship with the governor while commanding the Rhode Island brigade, it seems doubtful Greene drew his views on the subject entirely from Washington. However, Greene's respect for Washington no doubt reinforced his belief in supporting elected government even when he disagreed.

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<sup>125</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 121-122; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume II* ed. Richard K. Showman (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980) 10.

<sup>126</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 130-131; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume II*, 111-114.

<sup>127</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 225-226; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 276; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 154-157.

<sup>128</sup> Haw, "'Every Thing Here Depends On Opinion,'" 212-214.

## Induction and Desertion

The makeup of the Continental Army was different from most European armies in various ways, depending on the specific nation compared, but not so different it was unrecognizable. Most European armies limited commissioning of commoners to company or lower field grade ranks.<sup>129</sup> A few, such as Switzerland and the Netherlands, completely opened their ranks to commoners. Even in those armies, however, most senior officers were leading gentlemen of their nation. Prussia and a few other nations limited commissioning of untitled officers even into the company grades.<sup>130</sup> The Continental Army officer's corps was more open than most European nations. Nobility, as such, did not exist in the colonies with exception of a few nobles (or pseudo nobles) who moved there from Europe. Some colonies, especially in New England, had reputations for deliberately avoiding any appearance of social stratification.<sup>131</sup>

The notion of equality in the American colonies is open to challenge, however, even in the northeast. Social position was among the issues considered in commissioning Continental

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<sup>129</sup> Christopher Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West: Origins and Nature of Russian Military Power 1700-1800* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 138; H. M. Scott, *The Emergence of the Eastern Powers, 1756-1775* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 98; Erik A. Lund, *War for the Every Day: Generals, Knowledge and Warfare in Early Modern Europe, 1680-1740* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 40; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 29, 219; Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 175; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 184.

<sup>130</sup> Joachim Remak, *A Very Civil War: The Swiss Sonderbund War of 1847* (Boulder: Westview, 1993), 77-78; Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe*, 161-162; Peter H. Wilson, *Absolutism in Central Europe* (London: Routledge, 2000), 95; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 184; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 52; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 191.

<sup>131</sup> Page Smith, *A New Age Now Begins: A People's History of the American Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), 55-57.

officers. That followed both British and colonial military tradition.<sup>132</sup> All the general officers of the Continental Army were men of comparative wealth and high social standing.<sup>133</sup>

Washington was among the wealthiest men in the colonies.<sup>134</sup> Nathaniel Greene's family owned large business interests in Rhode Island, and he personally managed one of New England's largest foundries. His friend, Continental Major General John Sullivan, was among the leading politicians and businessmen of New Hampshire.<sup>135</sup> Brigadier General Jonathan Glover, who commanded the Marblehead Amphibians, a short-lived but elite Massachusetts regiment, owned a shipping line. Many of the Amphibians worked for Glover as civilians.<sup>136</sup> Major General Benedict Arnold was an apothecary and ship owner from Connecticut.<sup>137</sup> Henry Knox was a businessman from Boston.<sup>138</sup> Daniel Morgan began the war as a captain but ended it as a brigadier general. Although raised in poverty, by the beginning of the American Revolution he was a known and respected businessman in the Shenandoah Valley of western Virginia.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 331; Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 44; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 44; Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 8, 70; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 13, 27, 50; Black, *European Warfare*, 235.

<sup>133</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 18, 106-107; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, xii-xiii.

<sup>134</sup> Straley, "Exemplar in Chief," 8.

<sup>135</sup> Charles P. Whittemore, *A General of the Revolution: John Sullivan of New Hampshire* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961), 1.

<sup>136</sup> Nathan P. Sanborn, *General John Glover and His Marblehead Regiment in the Revolutionary War: A Paper Read before the Marblehead Historical Society May 14, 1903* (Marblehead, MA: Marblehead Historical Society, 1903), 8-9.

<sup>137</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 134-135.

<sup>138</sup> Henry Knox, *Memoir and Correspondence of Henry Knox, Major General in the American Army and First Secretary of War of the United States during Washington's Administration*, ed. Francis S. Drake (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1873), 12.

<sup>139</sup> Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 12-15.

British soldiers, and even the British public, sneered at cobblers, farmers and other small businessmen commissioned as field and company grade officers. Still, such officers typically held positions of authority before the war and they understood the nature of command. They were often men who served faithfully in the militia and argued for military resistance and independence. Company and field officers might not be as prestigious as generals, but their communities respected them as gentlemen.<sup>140</sup>

Often such men gained their commissions due to their recruiting prowess, and sometimes their popularity mattered more than their ability. The idea of popular men appointed or elected to leadership positions in the militia was not as preposterous as it might appear today. Popular and publicly respected officers induced men to enlist and serve with them. That made them important to the military manpower equation, especially early in the war. As with many other military issues during the American Revolution, the use of popular leaders drew on British and colonial militia tradition.<sup>141</sup> Many of them became acceptable or good officers, although some failed to maintain minimum standards. Either way, two facts about officership in the Continental Army are indisputable. First, officers of the Continental

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<sup>140</sup> Charles W. Toth, *Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite: The American Revolution & the European Response* (Troy, NY: Whitston, 1989), 292; Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*, 7; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 50; John R. Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia: The Case of Culpepper County, 1780-1781," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 92:3 (1984): 269-271; Fred Anderson, "A People's Army: Provincial Military Service in Massachusetts during the Seven Years' War," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 40:4 (1983): 506-507. Anderson points out that virtually every occupation represented in the ranks of company officers he also found represented within the ranks of enlisted men, although the proportions were different. What Anderson does not note is whether the officers typically held higher positions within the various occupations. For instance, were officers farmers and enlisted men farmhands.

<sup>141</sup> Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, xiii, 27, 50, 194; Black, *European Warfare*, 89; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 134.



Army, even senior officers, were not part of any formal aristocracy. Second, while Continental officers were not aristocrats, they were leading men in their communities.

Recruiting for the Continental Army was a complicated and difficult practice. In part, the difficulty sprang from congressional distrust of long-term enlistments. In part, it was because various states offered better pay or enlistment bonuses than Congress, sometimes for shorter terms of service. In part, it was because military life was distasteful to most military age men for a variety of reasons.<sup>142</sup>

Where British military practice, and that of most European nations, was long-term enlistment, typically twenty years to life, Congress relied on much shorter terms.<sup>143</sup> Congress assumed control of the militia around Boston in June 1775, making it the nucleus of the Continental Army. Most of the militia present in Boston had enlisted until the end of the year, and Congress honored that discharge date. On 14 June 1775 Congress voted to enlist a new set of soldiers for one year only. That reliance on short-term enlistment was based on fear of a standing army. As early as late 1776, however, when seeking to replace enlistments expiring in December of that year, Congress lengthened enlistment terms. By that decision, Congress provided Washington with the core of a dependable army.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, Volume VI* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1906), 944-945; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume XI*, ed. Dennis M. Conrad (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 10-13, 16, 19-21, 34-35; Golway, *Washington's General*, 121-122; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 155-157; George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, Volume 7*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), 42-44; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 66; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 5, 124.

<sup>143</sup> Wilson, *Absolutism in Central Europe*, 147.

<sup>144</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 89-90; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VI*, 945.

The traditional view of induction into European military service during the eighteenth-century is of a heartless recruiter buying drinks in a tavern for luckless, ignorant young rubes. Once sufficiently intoxicated, recruiters easily induced those youngsters to sign induction papers from which sobriety offered no escape. That certainly happened. Likewise, some soldiers fit the description of “the scum of the earth,” as Major General Robert Cunninghame described a group of Irish recruits in 1776 and as the Duke of Wellington described his own army some years later.<sup>145</sup> Many colonists might have agreed with that description regarding the British Army in America during the American Revolution.<sup>146</sup>

On the other hand, there were probably almost as many reasons for men to join the army – in America and Europe – as there were men joining. There is little way to know the specific reasons of most, as they left no record.<sup>147</sup> However, in both the Continental Army and Europe, recruiting worked, for the most part, without impressment, which implies most soldiers enlisted by choice. In Europe, with its long enlistment periods, soldiering was a profession, like that of cobbler or blacksmith. A cobbler or blacksmith might start as an apprentice and aspire to a shop of his own. A soldier would start as a recruit and hope for promotion to sergeant, first sergeant, or sergeant major. Aside from times of war, it was not substantially more difficult than most work of the time and it provided a similar standard of living.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Conway, *The War of Independence*, 26; Philip Henry Stanhope, *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington, 1831-1851* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 13-14; Christopher Hibbert, *Wellington: A Personal History* (Reading, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1997), 83, 139.

<sup>146</sup> Smith, *A New Age Now Begins*, 306.

<sup>147</sup> Van Atta, “Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia,” 280.

<sup>148</sup> Stanhope, *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, 13; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, xvi-xvii; Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 272-276; Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment*, 164; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 13; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 23, 24; Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 46; Black, *European Warfare*, 219, 225; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*,

The colonial military tradition did not provide for regular military forces, that is, professionally trained, long service, soldiers. Britain supplied regular army units to the colonies when the London government felt it necessary. Colonies divided their indigenous forces into provincials and militia.<sup>149</sup> The overwhelming majority of men in the colonies were members of the militia. City, town, or county detailed militia, depending on population. It trained with set frequency, varying by location. It was a local defense force, typically called out for short periods of time and remaining close to home. Seldom did militia, as such, travel far beyond the borders of its colony.<sup>150</sup>

For longer service, either during Indian wars or supporting British regulars during the colonial wars, colonies recruited or drafted provincials. Provincial units were the primary striking arm of their colonies. Still under orders of their colony, they typically remained in service longer than militia, travelled farther from home, and frequently joined with British regulars or with similar forces from other colonies.<sup>151</sup> Many of them came from the militia, but many did not.<sup>152</sup> Local boards sought volunteers and pay was often good. If too few men

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77, 185; David Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 65; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 24, 44; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 183-184, 191; Stephen Conway, "'Great Mischief Complain'd of:' Reflections on the Misconduct of British Soldiers in the Revolutionary War," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47:3 (1990): 375.

<sup>149</sup> Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 67, 142; Fred Anderson, *The War that made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 61, 95, 129.

<sup>150</sup> Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 29-30, 142; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, xii, 14, 49; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 57-58; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 65; Jameson; "Subsistence for Middle States Militia," 121.

<sup>151</sup> Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 67, 142; Anderson, *The War that made America*, 129; John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 32.

<sup>152</sup> Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, x, 13, 52; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 19; Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 67.

volunteered, localities drafted the necessary manpower. Local committees which, at least in a general sense, knew the men they drafted, controlled the impressment process.<sup>153</sup> Preferential treatment was the norm. Where possible, committees protected their own. Drafted men were typically young and single and were often considered outsiders, derelicts, or troublemakers by the boards of their towns.<sup>154</sup> Committees were also concerned with maintaining enough local men free of military encumbrance to plant and gather crops and conduct other necessary business within the community.<sup>155</sup> The standard of living for soldiers in provincials units, except for living in the field and the threat of death in battle, was not substantially different from that of communities they served.<sup>156</sup>

According to one study recruits initially joined the Continental Army in a rush of patriotic enthusiasm. The cold realities of soldiering proved more enduring than patriotic fervor, however. As ardor waned, recruits for the Continental Army proved more difficult to procure and joined the army for less patriotic reasons. From 1777 onward the bulk of the men who fought in the Continental Army were poor – that is, they were men of little or no property. While they were like their European counterparts in many ways, in one way they were

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<sup>153</sup> Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 7, 36-37, 44, 66, 70, 216-217; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 15, 24, 44, 83n; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 70; Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 32.

<sup>154</sup> Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 109, 142, 165, 180; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 24, 50, 52; Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 37-38; Anderson, "A People's Army: Provincial Military Service in Massachusetts during the Seven Years' War," 501, 505, 509-512, 518-522. While it is possible drafted men were unemployed or underemployed, Anderson argues that, at least in the French and Indian War, that was untrue for volunteers. According to Anderson one major reason young men had little money was that they were at the mercy of their family estates, not receiving their portion until the patriarch died or divided the estate.

<sup>155</sup> Zelner, *Rabble in Arms*, 109; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 52; Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia," 280; Anderson, "A People's Army: Provincial Military Service in Massachusetts during the Seven Years' War," 499.

<sup>156</sup> Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 44; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 125. Neimeyer points out that it did not matter what soldiers made during the Revolution, because Congress seldom paid them.

different. For Europeans, soldiering was a profession. For Patriot recruits, soldiering was a temporary necessity to protect their way of life. Almost none of them intended to stay in the army, which implies that most, at least, did not like army life.<sup>157</sup> That should not suggest lack of patriotism, however. Patriotism was undoubtedly part of the makeup of most Revolutionary War soldiers throughout the war. As Charles Royster points out, little else could have held them to their duties.<sup>158</sup>

Impressment was difficult and unpopular during the early modern era.<sup>159</sup> Sometimes, however, impressment or other efforts beyond mere recruiting, such as hiring mercenaries, were necessary to meet a nation's military manpower requirements. For instance, during the American Revolution the British had the largest navy in the world, requiring more than one hundred thousand sailors at the height of the war.<sup>160</sup> The British merchant marine needed another fifty thousand, most of whom would have been of military age.<sup>161</sup> Britain's army had worldwide commitments, especially when including the army of the East India Company. That problem only became worse with the heightened threat to non-American British colonies after France, Spain, and the Netherlands joined the war.<sup>162</sup> The British government retained a large army in England to contest a direct French invasion, which many in the British government

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<sup>157</sup> Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 5.

<sup>158</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 25, 373-378; Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia," 265, 272-273; Joseph Plumb Martin, *A Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier: Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of Joseph Plumb Martin* (New York: Signet Classic, 2001), 9-19, 52-54. By his personal experiences, Martin bears out Royster's argument.

<sup>159</sup> Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 63-64, 80; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 191.

<sup>160</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 65-67; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 66; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 28.

<sup>161</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 65-67.

<sup>162</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 61-62; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 80-81.

feared.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, the expeditionary force to America was the largest British Army ever dispatched outside the British Isles.<sup>164</sup> Little surprise, then, that Britain hired mercenaries from Germany and occasionally resorted to impressment.<sup>165</sup>

The Continental Congress enacted impressment for the Continental Army, but individual states and communities implemented it. Congress understood impressment was unpopular and the good will of the public was necessary for Patriot victory. Rather than attempt impressment directly, they forwarded quotas to the individual states. States forwarded enlistment quotas to various towns. The towns chose the men sent to fight.<sup>166</sup> Militia used persuasion to fill its quota when possible, but filled it by lot if necessary. Several classes of men were exempt, and payment or substitution was possible.<sup>167</sup> This procedure followed the colonial tradition of draft implementation by community, rather than a distant government. It made Continental impressment as gentle as possible.<sup>168</sup>

Most soldiers in the Continental Army had some affinity for the cause and their patriotic motivation helped hold them in the ranks. The sense of shame over wearing the label of a deserter doubtless provided further, although less positive, motivation.<sup>169</sup> Still, desertion was a

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<sup>163</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 287, 449, 514; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 81; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 224; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 4.

<sup>164</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, xvii; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 148.

<sup>165</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 61-62; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 4.

<sup>166</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 196; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 65; Black, *European Warfare*, 159; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 70; Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia," 265-266; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 121.

<sup>167</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 196; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 65; Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia," 263, 266; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 17, 203.

<sup>168</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 65; Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia," 265.

<sup>169</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 72, 145-146, 196, 376-377; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 338; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 102-103; Caroline Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George*

problem, just as it had been during the colonial wars. Soldiers deserted the Continental Army by the thousands during the American Revolution. Historians have estimated desertion rates in the Continental Army as high as twenty-five percent, although many eventually returned to the ranks.<sup>170</sup> Numbers were no doubt even higher for the militia, although many of them also returned after a time.

As the return of many soldiers to their units implies, not all desertions were equal. Some desertions were for personal profit in one form or another. Bounty jumpers, for instance, joined a unit until they received their bounty then deserted, often repeating the process several times. Some men deserted to the enemy.<sup>171</sup> Other men deserted for more traditional reasons – dislike of military life, extreme hardship, or fear of death in battle. That was especially true of men impressment into service, who were often among the disenfranchised in society.<sup>172</sup> Some also left the army before their enlistment was up, feeling they had done their part or not wanting to risk death during the last days of their service.<sup>173</sup> Undoubtedly, one of the biggest

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*Washington's Army* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), xvii, 53, 101; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 53; Steven C. Eames, *Rustic Warriors: Warfare and the Provincial Soldier on the New England Frontier, 1689-1748* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 160-162.

<sup>170</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 71, 196; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 338; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 53, 55-56; Guy Chet, *Conquering the Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 80, 127, 184; Eames, *Rustic Warriors*, 64, 160-162; John B. Frantz and William Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia: The American Revolution in the Pennsylvania Hinterland* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 80; Lengel, *General George Washington*, 45, 64; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 158.

<sup>171</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 267; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 132-133; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 106.

<sup>172</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 60-61, 110, 137, 145, 235; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 338; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 102-103, 132; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 53, 112-113; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 25, 55-56, 83n, 146, 171; Chet, *Conquering the Wilderness*, 127; Eames, *Rustic Warriors*, 64; James Truslow Adams, *New England in the Republic, 1776-1850* (New York: Literary Licensing, LLC, 2013), 24, 28; Frantz and Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia*, 80; Lengel, *General George Washington*, 35, 45, 64.

<sup>173</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 110, 196; Adams, *New England in the Republic*, 28.

factors in Patriot desertions, especially the militia, was homesickness.<sup>174</sup> Some men deserted to protest what they considered unfair treatment. Unfairness included failure to receive their discharge on the agreed date, unpopular officers, poor food, lack of pay, or other perceived mistreatments.<sup>175</sup>

Continental Army desertion rates dropped as the war progressed. The change was primarily due to hardening of long-term soldiers, but certain events triggered greater commitment to the cause. Normally, those were issues, such as the alliance with France, that increased the soldier's chance of surviving the war.<sup>176</sup>

Conditions in the south mimicked those of other theaters. Although Greene earned his promotion to command of the Southern Department, his initial command of the Rhode Island brigade was based on political influence.<sup>177</sup> Officers who served under Greene's command, Daniel Morgan among them, were also typically leading men in their communities. Lieutenant Colonel Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee was a member of the famous Lee clan of Virginia and father of even more famous Civil War General Robert E. Lee. Lieutenant Colonel William Washington was a cousin to General Washington. Brigadier General Otho Williams of Maryland

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<sup>174</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 60-61, 137, 196; Adams, *New England in the Republic*, 28.

<sup>175</sup> Eames, *Rustic Warriors*, 160-162; Frantz and Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia*, 80.

<sup>176</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 338; Joseph A. Goldenberg, Eddie D. Nelson, and Rita Y. Fletcher, "Revolutionary Ranks: An Analysis of the Chesterfield Supplement," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 87:2 (1979): 185. Goldenberg and his co-authors, writing about a group of men inducted into the Continental Army in 1780, note that their desertion rate was less than half that of the Continental Army overall.

<sup>177</sup> George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, Volume 19*, ed., John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 279-280, 381; George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, Volume 20*, ed., John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 241, 244-245, 246-249.



was county clerk in Baltimore at eighteen and immediately prior to the war a businessman in Frederick.<sup>178</sup> Brigadier General Isaac Huger was a wealthy planter in South Carolina.<sup>179</sup>

Greene's army also included militia officers such as Lieutenant Colonel Francis Marion of South Carolina. Marion was a plantation owner who began service as a junior officer in the colonial militia in the late 1750s.<sup>180</sup>

Enlisted men in the south were also little different from those of the north. In fact, many of them had already fought in the north. The Fifth Maryland Regiment, for instance, distinguished itself in the Battle of Brooklyn and fought at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth prior to its transfer south.<sup>181</sup> Much of Greene's militia was from Virginia and North Carolina, and it frequently included men who had served in the Continental Army or on other militia campaigns. By the time Greene took command in the south, many of the Continentals were long service regulars who could be depended on.

As with commanders in the north, Greene's army suffered greatly from desertion. The problem included regulars, but militia was even more likely to slip away, especially around the time of battle. Militia typically turned out when called, but was difficult to keep in the field for extended periods.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Osmond Tiffany, *A Sketch of the Life and Services of General Otho Williams* (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1851), 4-5.

<sup>179</sup> Mary Theresa Leiter, *Biographical Sketches of the Generals of the Continental Army of the Revolution* (Cambridge: John Wilson & Son, 1889), 137.

<sup>180</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 68.

<sup>181</sup> John J. Gallagher, *The Battle of Brooklyn, 1776* (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1995), 179; David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 391; Stephen R. Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777-1778* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 246.

<sup>182</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 501; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 534; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume IX*, ed., Dennis M. Conrad (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 672-673. The pages referenced are index pages with the deserters/desertion listing in the

The Continental Congress recruited two armies in the Southern Department prior to Greene taking command, only to see them both destroyed. Greene logically received most of his Continental reinforcements and replacements from the north, at least from north of where he was fighting. Other than forces assigned him from the north, his army was comprised of local militia, which did its own recruiting. Greene supported greater use of impressment and several other methods of enlisting and retaining long-term soldiers, some of which were probably unworkable – as was the idea of a larger army generally. Fortunately for the southern army, the means available for recruitment and retention was just enough to accomplish the task at hand.<sup>183</sup>

#### Civilians in the War Zone

Civil-military relations stood at the heart of the American Revolution. As were their forefathers in Britain, colonists were deeply suspicious of military power, seeing it as a tool often used to interfere with their liberties. Greene understood that dynamic, was part of it, in fact, having faced his own conflicts with the British government.<sup>184</sup> He knew the Patriot army could not win without public support. As such, he was seldom heavy-handed, tried very hard to avoid unnecessary damage to civilian property, and sought the confidence of civilian leaders.<sup>185</sup>

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volumes of Greene's papers during the time he commanded in the South. There are, all together, at least four column inches of such listings mentioning most of Greene's major commanders and units, as well as militia. These are letters to or from Washington, various political figures, and Greene's subordinates discussing the problem of desertion and how they might solve it.

<sup>183</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 154-156.

<sup>184</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 26-31, 51-54.

<sup>185</sup> Clodfelter, "Between Virtue and Necessity," 174; Haw, "Everything Here Depends On Opinion," 230-231; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 547; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 172-173.

Writing of the political situation in the south, Greene noted, "Every Thing here depends upon Opinion. If you lose the Confidence of the People, you lose all support." He decried feuding between Patriots and Loyalists, warning that it only damaged the cause of the very men who carried it out.<sup>186</sup> He ordered subordinates to support civil government unless doing so jeopardized their men or their mission.<sup>187</sup> A certain amount of disruption when the army passed through an area was unavoidable, but Greene continually exhorted his men to exhibit good conduct. In New York, he even forbade visitation of the local red-light district and chastised his men for bathing and swimming nude in front of local women.<sup>188</sup>

Greene's view on mistreatment of civilians in a war zone was not unique. Washington and most other eighteenth-century commanders shared it. On assuming command of the Continental Army, Washington issued orders against infringing on rights or property of civilians.<sup>189</sup> He scattered similar injunctions throughout his Revolutionary War writings.<sup>190</sup> The American Revolution included a significant aspect of civil war, with excesses committed by both sides, but many on both sides deplored such behavior, as well. British and Hessian soldiers, and

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<sup>186</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 17-18, 87-91; Clodfelter, "Between Virtue and Necessity," 171; Haw, "Everything Here Depends On Opinion," 212-213; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 547; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 109-110, 127-128, 438-439, 456-459.

<sup>187</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 60-61, 176-177, 356; Haw, "Between Virtue and Necessity," 227-230; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 109-110, 456-461.

<sup>188</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 146, 205, 212, 215 305; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 67; Golway, *Washington's General*, 78, 81-82; Haw, "Every Thing Here Depends upon Opinion," 216.

<sup>189</sup> George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, Volume 3*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 309, 312, 516.

<sup>190</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 24-25, 35, 88-91, 116-118, 225-226, 242-247, 257-258, 275-278, 382-384, 409, 463-465.

even officers, often acted harshly against Americans, and not only Patriots, but such was never the policy of the British government or the senior British military command in America.<sup>191</sup>

Despite attempts at amelioration, military contact with civilians was often inconvenient and sometimes brutal.<sup>192</sup> Even if armies behaved perfectly, and perfection seldom occurred, military movement inconvenienced civilians. Soldiers clogged roads and damaged crops, fields, and homes. Armies detained civilians when battle was imminent. Civilian road movement was frequently halted to hide military movements. Large groups of men from other parts of the world brought in new strains of disease, a situation worsened by armies undisciplined in the practice of hygiene.<sup>193</sup> Martial law, when imposed, restricted people's freedoms in various ways.

The situation was worse when armies remained in an area, even briefly. Senior officers needed quarters large enough for their staffs to work, eat, and sleep. They typically took over inns or large homes for that purpose. Wealthy families often offered their homes, crowding themselves into small corners of their dwellings so senior officers and their staffs had room to work and live. On other occasions, senior officers took over homes of wealthy enemies, especially if owners had fled. Enlisted men assigned to headquarters and animals used by headquarters occupied barns and other outbuildings. Thousands of soldiers camped on private

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<sup>191</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 32-34; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 253-254; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 145; Stephen Conway, "The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence," 97-98.

<sup>192</sup> Stephen Conway, "The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of Independence," 93-94; John Brewer, *Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1989), 47; Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhaft, and Hannah Smith, *Civilians and War in Europe, 1618-1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University press, 2012), 101, 124; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 178-179; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 23; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 62.

<sup>193</sup> Erica Charters, "The Caring Fiscal-Military State during the Seven Years War, 1756-1763," *The Historical Journal* 52:4 (2009): 111; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 178-179.

land wherever they could find space, water, and firewood. Inadvertent damage was unavoidable. Thousands of men cannot travel through a neighborhood and leave it unmarked.<sup>194</sup>

Requisitioning – taking food or other property from civilians for military use under orders of a proper authority – was frequent. Victims of requisitioning were typically at least promised payment, but that was not always so and payment, when made, was often in worthless Continental currency or promissory notes, the latter used by both sides. Even when armies paid in specie requisitioning was different from simply purchasing supplies, because the seller had no choice.<sup>195</sup> In the eighteenth century, gathering food for armies took various forms. Many foods for both man and animal spoiled quickly. Some items, such as hardtack and salted meat or fish, might last considerable time. Fresh meat and vegetables would not. Many foods were bulky and competed for shipping space with replacements and with supplies such as uniforms, weapons, and ammunition, which were unavailable in theater. Instead of shipping items that were available in theater, most armies provided their commanders with money to buy them.<sup>196</sup> Commissary and quartermaster departments sought out necessary items. Often that was good for the local economy, but when fighting occurred repeatedly in the same area necessities could be scarce, sometimes forcing people to give up what they had, even when they had little left for themselves.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 80-81; Lengel, *General George Washington*, 270.

<sup>195</sup> Conway, *War, State, and Society*, 285-286; Lund, *War for the Every Day*, 69, 76; Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 127.

<sup>196</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 186. This citation recounts how near Washington came to capturing Howe's war chest containing, at that time, seventy thousand pounds sterling.

<sup>197</sup> Clifford J. Rogers, ed., *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 186; James C. Bradford, *The Military and Conflict between Cultures:*

Washington and other senior Patriot officers avoided requisitioning directly from the public whenever possible because it so agitated the civil population and civilian support was so important to the Patriot cause. Usually, however, requisitioning was the only certain means of supply. There were times, such as the winter of Valley Forge, when Washington had to requisition supplies to keep his army from dissolving or starving. On those occasions, he could be ruthless, but he acted in that manner with regret and only as a last resort.<sup>198</sup>

Greene served for two years as quartermaster general of the army and as such was very familiar with Washington's views concerning requisitioning, being the man who carried them out. As commander in the south, he paid careful attention to supply. Despite his best efforts in that regard, he often found requisitioning supplies directly from the public necessary. Like Washington, he ordered requisitioning reluctantly. Even when it was necessary, Greene tried to accomplish his task with the knowledge and support of local governments.<sup>199</sup>

Plunder was, essentially, unauthorized requisitioning. The diet of soldiers on the march could be less than sumptuous, if food was even available. Fresh food was particularly hard to obtain while on campaign and soldiers often went days without any food at all. Close supervision limited plunder but did not stop it. Soldiers took whatever they wanted – fowl, small meat animals, milk, vegetables, firewood (or any wood that would burn), or whatever else might supplement their diet or improve their circumstances. In hot summers, soldiers might

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*Soldiers at the Interface* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 221; Frank Tallett, *War and Society in Early-Modern Europe: 1495-1715* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 43, 58, 60, 66, 137.

<sup>198</sup> George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1789, Volume 10*, ed., John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 152.

<sup>199</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 589-590; Golway, *Washington's General*, 241; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 142.

completely drain wells and cisterns they passed. The problem existed in all armies during the American Revolution: British, German, and Continental.<sup>200</sup>

Washington and other officers, including Greene, tried to stop plunder, but company officers, who frequently benefited from it, often winked at perpetrators. Washington also complained in general orders of mounted men committing robberies. W and other corporal punishments were common, although not as severe as similar punishments meted out by Europeans. Dismissal from the army might accompany such punishments.<sup>201</sup>

Even worse than requisitioning or plunder were felonious crimes committed by soldiers against local civilians. Aside from theft and destruction of property, cases of assault, arson, rape, and murder all existed. Commanders often ordered men caught in such practices executed or brutally beaten.<sup>202</sup> On the other hand, sometimes officers excused criminal actions as exigencies of war, such as the murders committed by British soldiers during the retreat from Concord and the Saratoga Campaign.<sup>203</sup> Even when commanders desired to punish criminals within their ranks, such men could be difficult to catch. They were often one or a few among thousands or tens of thousands. If the army was on the move, apprehension was even more difficult.<sup>204</sup> The result was that civilians caught in a war zone faced significant challenges, no

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<sup>200</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 8, 43, 79-81.

<sup>201</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 10*, 205-207, 241-242, 297-300; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 324, 331-333.

<sup>202</sup> Janet M. Hartley, *Russia, 1762-1825: Military Power, the State, and the People* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 145; Black, *Britain as a Military Power*, 108-109.

<sup>203</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 118-119, 256.

<sup>204</sup> Smith, *A New Age Now Begins*, 307-308; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 32, 226-227; Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, 195.

matter the intent of army commanders. All armies in the American Revolution were guilty of abusing even civilians of their own factions.

The British government's official policy prohibited unnecessary acts of violence and, typically, so did orders from General Howe and other British senior commanders. Unfortunately, some officers disliked or disagreed with that policy and failed to enforce it. Whether they deserved it or not, the Hessians, more than any other army in the American Revolution, gained a reputation for brutality against civilians, including Loyalists, although British soldiers frequently engaged in similar acts. Even British historians credit brutal acts by British or Hessian soldiers against the loyal population with driving Loyalists into the Patriot camp.<sup>205</sup>

Typically, civilian treatment by militia followed the same pattern as the Continental Army. In some cases, however, especially guerrilla operations in areas without civil government, crimes and plunder were excessive. Georgia, South Carolina, and New Jersey were among the most abused regions. In those areas, large paramilitary forces claiming loyalty to each side preyed on the property and lives of their perceived enemies. Marauders attacked civilians, or even small bands of soldiers, on either side without distinction, their only goal to live off their criminal proceeds. There was little effort to quell these operations, and no way exists to measure their impact on public opinion.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 32-33; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*. 11, 355.

<sup>206</sup> Mark V. Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War, 1775-1783* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996), xiv; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 95-96; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 52.



The civil-military relationship under which Greene served was based on colonial and British precedents. Despite exigent circumstances and lack of sophistication, the government and its military command system worked well enough to prosecute a successful war. Greene and his officers, leading men in the colonies, commanded men who were overwhelmingly volunteers but often lacked necessary discipline. Requisitioning caused significant suffering for civilians, just as it alleviated the suffering of soldiers. Greene's efforts, like Washington's in the north, were imperfect, but successful enough to keep an army in being and convince most civilians not to abandon the Patriot cause.

## CHAPTER 4

### ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Nathanael Greene's brilliant victory in the southern campaign of the American Revolution was based on the most conventional of means – superior manpower. Roughly eighty percent of military age Patriot men fought in the American Revolution, the highest enlistment rate of any American war. The Continental Congress and senior Patriot military officers, along with state officials, struggled to mold those men into a cohesive fighting force. Despite seemingly overwhelming difficulties, they developed a military force with a resilience that stretched the manpower deficiency of the British Army beyond its breaking point.

The army Greene commanded was similar in many aspects to that led by Washington and by his British opponents. Those who argue Greene succeeded through unconventional leadership typically misinterpret the term “partisan,” misunderstanding both Greene's operations and the organization of his army. Greene's army mirrored Patriot forces in the north and followed, as closely as circumstances permitted, congressionally sanctioned organization based on the British Army model. As in the north, Greene's force was Continental regiments supplemented with militia. Greene and his opponents in the south operated in a much larger theater with much smaller armies than in the north. The size of the armies in the south made gaining or retaining even small numbers of men significant. Limitations on Greene's army resembled those of his enemies and the enemy's solutions were also similar – dependence on local manpower. The difference was that Greene, as with Patriot generals in the north, had a significant advantage in public support, providing him with a manpower reserve the British Army could not match.

Those who view Greene as unconventional argue he organized the Southern Department into a guerrilla army supported by mobile regulars.<sup>207</sup> A careful review of Greene's army shows a different organization. Guerrillas only operated as such in the earliest stages of Greene's command in the south or when he was out of state. During Greene's South Carolina offensive militia previously operating as guerrillas formed conventional units, under a conventional chain of command, undertaking conventional operations. Much of the confusion surrounding this issue comes from the relationship between the words guerrilla and partisan.

As a direct translation, the French word partisan and the Spanish word guerrilla depending on usage, can each mean small war. In modern parlance, the terms are congruent. That was not always the case. Partisan, as people from the early modern era used the term when discussing warfare, came into use around 1700. During the American Revolution It included the modern meaning of guerrilla but was not as limited. Partisan also included what is today known as special operations. A third component of the term was peripheral warfare, the continuous military activity between enemy armies in proximity. Such activities included sniping, patrolling, foraging, raiding, reconnaissance, and similar endeavors leading to combat on a small scale.<sup>208</sup>

Guerrilla, in modern usage, is specifically from the latter half of the twentieth-century, especially the Vietnam War. Correct usage limits the term to indigenous paramilitary forces not under direct regular army command, hiding in remote areas or among local populations from

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<sup>207</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 37.

<sup>208</sup> Satterfield, *Princes, Posts and Partisans*, 1-3; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 52n, 66-72; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, 538-546; Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 15.

whom they derive cover and support when not in the field. Small, mobile forces are common guerrilla traits, but not all guerrilla forces are small and not all small forces are guerrilla.

Neither is mobility common only to guerrillas. It is organization, not size or tactics, which determines guerrilla forces. Guerrilla objectives typically include enemy logistics and infrastructure and rear echelon enemy forces, but not primary enemy armies. The description this dissertation uses for guerrillas comes from a modern, United States Army field manual.

Historians and biographers attempting to prove Greene was a prototype of modern guerrilla commanders must limit themselves to the modern, professional military definition,<sup>209</sup>

otherwise the term “modern guerrilla commanders” is completely non-descriptive.

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<sup>209</sup> John Alexander Galin, *Field Manual 1-02: Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington: Department of the Army, 2004), 1-90; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 24; Dederer, *Making Bricks Without Straw*, 10-11; Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 209; Kwasny, *Washington’s Partisan War*, 139-149. Weigley implies the Battle of King’s Mountain was a guerrilla operation resembling those waged by Sumter and Marion. In fact, King’s Mountain was a conventional battle using skirmishing tactics. The King’s Mountain campaign was a peripheral campaign of the type conducted in any war. Local authorities called up the militia that conducted the campaign, enlisting them for a definite period. Its objective was the destruction of a conventional force threatening the region from which the militia hailed. It did not involve harassment of small British forces, attacks on rear area installations, raids on supplies, reconnaissance, or cutting enemy communications – normal guerrilla operations. In short, it was partisan by the eighteenth-century definition, but it was not guerrilla.

Dederer compares Greene’s campaign in South Carolina with, among others, the twentieth-century guerrilla campaign of the Viet Minh in North Vietnam. However, in that campaign Giap coordinated guerrilla forces in a classic guerrilla effort aimed at French supplies, communications, and infrastructure. He only attacked French regular forces late in the war. Giap’s largest attack was not against the main French army in Vietnam, but against an outpost manned by a single reinforced light infantry division. Both Washington and Greene constantly sought battle with the primary British armies in their theaters, using guerrillas only on the periphery.

Higginbotham implies Morgan directly commanded southern partisans – referring to riflemen – which he equated with guerrillas. That never happened. In the north, early in the war Morgan commanded riflemen, a form of light infantry today referred to as special operations forces – units with special capabilities operating under the regular chain of command. His command in South Carolina included forces comprised of Continentals and militia, including some riflemen, all operating as conventional forces. The only battle that Morgan commanded was Cowpens. Although a spectacular victory, it was a completely conventional eighteenth-century battle.

Kwasny, while describing some operations that might correctly be termed guerrilla, also describes as partisan many very conventional raiding, reconnaissance, and foraging missions. While it is true people of the early modern era considered such operations partisan, they were not guerrilla operations. They were routine patrolling, a normal practice of conventional armies in virtually any era. A perfect example of Kwasny’s mistaken practice is his use of Prussian officer Johann Ewald’s description of light infantry tactics, common in previous colonial wars as well as throughout Europe, but described by Kwasny as “partisan,” by which he meant guerrilla.

While guerrilla operations occurred during the American Revolution, generals throughout history who were undeniably conventional routinely conducted small operations that had no guerrilla aspect. Among the earliest examples is the Roman commander Scipio Aemilianus, who made his reputation by adroitly conducting such operations during the Third Punic War.<sup>210</sup> The Duke of Marlborough's march from Netherlands to Blenheim during the War of Spanish Succession saw both sides throwing out constant cavalry screens. Resulting cavalry clashes were typically small, but not guerrilla. Marlborough also had small detachments foraging along the way. These occasionally met enemy forces, but their actions also were not guerrilla.<sup>211</sup> Washington created "European style" reconnaissance regiments of cavalry and infantry with the specific ability to protect themselves while operating independently for extended periods. These were not guerrilla forces, they were regular army regiments under the conventional chain of command.<sup>212</sup> John Lynn devotes an entire section of his book on the French army of Emperor Louis XIV to partisan operations.<sup>213</sup> None of these endeavors were

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<sup>210</sup> Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars* (London: Cassell & Co., 2000), 343-344.

<sup>211</sup> Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, 130-131.

<sup>212</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 222; Wright, *The Continental Army*, 161-162; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 52n, 66-72; John W. Wright, "Some Notes on the Continental Army," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 11:3 (1931): 193. Wright errs regarding "partisan" formations. The nomenclature for the formation approved by General Washington was the partisan corps, but it was a mixed infantry-cavalry regiment assigned as regular cavalry. On Washington's request Congress authorized two such regiments for the army. These were regular regiments which normally operated as scouts and screens at significant distance from the army. They differed only marginally from other Continental cavalry formations of that period in that they contained a slightly higher ratio of infantry to protect their base because they operated farther from the main army. In modern parlance, they were special operations forces and even though detached they were under the regular army chain of command and logistics. They were not guerrillas. Those "partisans" Wright describes as ignoring Greene's orders were South Carolina militia, who sometimes acted as guerrillas and sometimes as conventional forces. Either way, Wright is correct that at times the militia ignored Greene.

<sup>213</sup> Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, 538-546.

guerrilla operations. All of them were small operations using conventional forces (sometimes including militia), within a conventional chain of command.

The inescapable conclusion is that traditional eighteenth-century partisan operations were primarily conventional. Only a significant minority of partisan operations during the American Revolution qualify as guerrilla in the modern sense. The same militia units operated as guerrillas or as conventional units, as necessary. Nor was this the transformation of a guerrilla army into a conventional army as accomplished by Giap or Mao. Greene's army was conventional throughout the campaign. Militia changed back and forth between guerrilla and conventional operations as convenient.

In relating Greene's operational history, historians of the Southern Campaign and Greene's biographers routinely list the units under his command, especially as he entered battle.<sup>214</sup> They often list his immediate subordinates.<sup>215</sup> Sometimes they describe commanders who operated apart from Greene, usually the colorful characters of Brigadier Generals Daniel Morgan (the Old Waggoner), Francis Marion (the Swamp Fox), and Thomas Sumter (the Gamecock).<sup>216</sup> However, their efforts typically focus on proving Greene was an exceptional

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<sup>214</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 161-163, 173-175, 189-191; M. F. Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown: The Southern Campaign of Nathanael Greene, 1780-1781* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 173; Golway, *Washington's General*, 256, 266, 280; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 326-327, 344-345, 375; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 43, 66; Siry, *Greene*, 71, 77-78, 82; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 170, 180, 214-216; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 372-373.

<sup>215</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 163, 175, 189-190; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 173; Golway, *Washington's General*, 256, 280; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 326-327, 344-345, 376; Siry, *Greene*, 77-78, 82; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 170, 180, 214-216; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 372-373.

<sup>216</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 136, 141-147; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 20-23, 76-87; Golway, *Washington's General*, 232-233, 245-248; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 300-306, 315; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 22-24, 28-33; Siry, *Greene*, 64, 66-67; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 47-48; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 68-90, 116-134; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 276-288, 296-333.

commander in the sense of being unconventional, different, revolutionary.<sup>217</sup> Those authors who do not extoll Greene virtually always favor other commanders in the southern theater and argue their champion's impact on victory.<sup>218</sup> None of these historians or biographers examine military realities to determine how they impacted not only Greene, but his British counterparts. Such a comparison reveals that campaigning in the south impacted Greene and his rivals in much the same manner, producing much the same results. Yet the conventionality of the British Army is unquestioned.

As with the British Army, Continental Army regiments held a single battalion, combining the primary administrative unit with the primary tactical unit. Regiments contained several companies, composed of varying numbers of men, usually from eighty to one hundred. If an army contained an adequate number of regiments, commanders gathered them into brigades and brigades into divisions, both brigades and divisions being temporary formations. If the

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<sup>217</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, x-xi; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 197; Golway, *Washington's General*, 3, 5, 302-303; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 5-6, 446; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-3; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 6, 52-53; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 260. Golway's work is almost a hagiography in which he claims Congress promoted Greene from brigadier to major general based on his "grasp of military history, his competence, his organizational skills, and his persistence in defeat." The last can hardly be true. Greene started the war as a brigadier and Congress promoted him to major general (his highest rank) prior to fighting in any battle. Greene's promotion to major general was based on seniority. Golway also argues that when Greene assumed command of the Southern Department "the American cause was as close to collapse as it had ever been, even during the fateful closing weeks of 1776." This author believes no credible historian of the American Revolution would agree with that statement.

Dederer argues on pages 52-53 that actions of Greene and men under his command convinced recruits to join Greene's army, giving Greene his manpower edge at Guilford Courthouse. While Dederer's argument has limited validity in the longer and wider views, the recruits which enabled Greene to fight at Guilford Courthouse were Continental Army regiments from the north and militia from Virginia and North Carolina. They were all regimented by state authorities and on their way before Greene took any action other than retreat. The only battle fought since Greene assumed command was Cowpens, linked in the minds of the public to Morgan, not Greene. Those recruits which joined Greene's army prior to Guilford Courthouse did so based on the orders of their superiors. Greene's only means of convincing them was his desperate letters to those superiors.

<sup>218</sup> Hartmann, *The American Partisan*, ix, 205-206; Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 119, 124, 155; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 79; Babits, *Devil of a Whipping*, 23-24; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 276. Lumpkin emphasizes the achievements of South Carolina partisan leaders, especially Marion.

army was small enough, regiments operated as the highest level of command under the army. Greene's army, quite small, never organized into units larger than brigades. Regardless of the size of the army or the theater in which it operated, during the American Revolution one looks in vain for conformity with Congressional standards.<sup>219</sup> Losses from combat, illness, and injury make any military unit, even in modern armies, very fluid. Exigent circumstances and the constantly changing organization of the Continental Army made standardization even more difficult.

The Continentals in Greene's army, transferred to the southern theater from the north, officially organized according to standards set by Congress. Like other Continental units, however, they typically formed little more than a recognizable shadow of the Congressional standard. In the southern theater, the same was true for British forces, both regular and provincial. Historians such as Louis Clinton Hatch and Robert K. Wright, Jr. have adequately described overall Patriot military organization and administration.<sup>220</sup> The remainder of this chapter will focus on similarity of circumstances, organization, and solutions between Greene's southern army and the inarguably conventional British Army in the south.

During the American Revolution Congress divided the theater of war into six military departments.<sup>221</sup> From 3 December 1780 Greene commanded the Southern Department,

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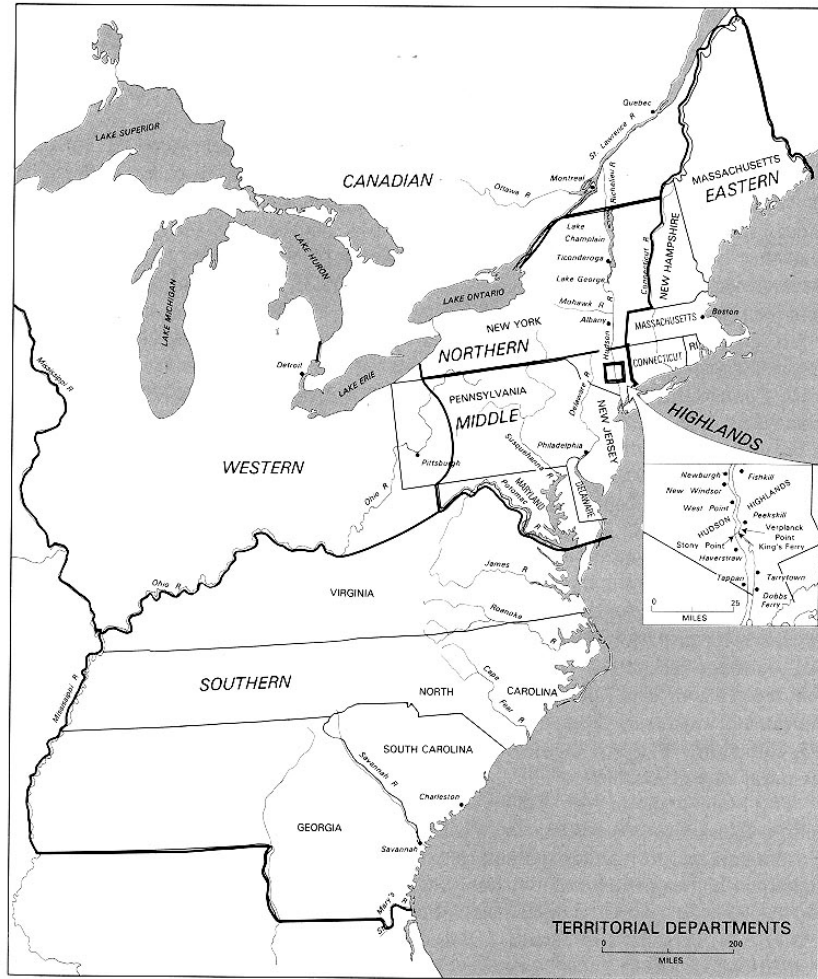
<sup>219</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 158; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 94; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 70; Douglas N. Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant, Inspector General and Advisor to the Commanding Generals of the Southern Forces 1778-1782," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 86:3 (1985): 223-224; Wright, "Some Notes on the Continental Army," 187-188, 190; Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 18. Duffy presents Russia as an example of nations with more than a single battalion per regiment.

<sup>220</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*; Hatch, *The Administration of the Army*.

<sup>221</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 83-89, 431; Jonathan G. Rossi, *Politics of Command in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1975), 90.



stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, north of Florida and south of Maryland (see map 1).



MAP 1: Continental Army Territorial Departments  
SOURCE: Robert K. Wright, Jr., *The Continental Army*, 1983

The map size of the Southern Department is somewhat misleading, however. Greene's active theater of operations included primarily the Carolina Piedmont and tidewater. That is considerably less than the total area of the modern states, much less the area from the east coast to the Mississippi River. Still, Greene's active theater was larger than the active area of either the Northern or Middle Departments, where the largest armies of both sides

operated.<sup>222</sup> Local Patriot forces manned the Southern Department until 1780. In 1780 the British Army initiated a large southern offensive and a significant contingent of Continentals transferred south.<sup>223</sup>

Beyond the smaller size of armies, at least two significant differences existed between the southern army and those in the north. Both increased the maneuverability of Greene's army. Northern Patriot armies formed light units up to brigade size, used as elite formations. However, light units in northern armies were never more than a small minority of the total force.<sup>224</sup> Greene carried that practice a step further. He divided his army into two brigade sized formations, one of light forces, the other of standard infantry. Although about the same size as the northern light force, Greene's light brigade contained nearly half his army. The core of Morgan's command at Cowpens was Greene's light brigade.<sup>225</sup> Such light forces, north or south, were not guerrilla forces. They were elite troops formed and equipped in the conventional manner, organized of the best and most dependable units and able to march long distances rapidly.

Greene frequently dispatched his light brigade or its sub-units, often paired with mounted militia, on independent missions. Those pairings, although often touted as such, were not guerrilla operations. They were conventional units by organization, logistics, and chain of command, part of Greene's campaign to push the British Army out of South Carolina. They were not raiders, nor did they operate against infrastructure or logistics. They attacked or

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<sup>222</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 83.

<sup>223</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 83-89, 431; Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 195.

<sup>224</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 126-127; Ford, *Journals of Continental Congress, Volume II*, 538-539.

<sup>225</sup> Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 114.

besieged lightly or moderately held British Army positions, permanently recovering them for the Patriots. As with Greene, Cornwallis organized a large segment of his army into light units, finding such units useful in the south. However, Patriot forces destroyed most of Cornwallis' light units at King's Mountain and Cowpens, significantly impacting his actions later in the campaign.<sup>226</sup>

Second, northern commanders, including Washington, saw cavalry's primary worth as reconnaissance. As such, Washington convinced Congress to change the cavalry organization into what he called legionary corps (although they remained regimental in size), in which two of the six regimental companies were light infantry. He also formed two partisan corps, used for deep reconnaissance. These manifested the same organization as legionary corps, except with three companies each of infantry and cavalry. Despite the name, the partisan corps was not a guerrilla force. It was a long-range reconnaissance regiment composed of cavalry and light infantry. Washington formed both legionary and partisan corps for the same reasons. They saved on horses compared with typical cavalry regiments; they reduced the need for forage; and the integrated infantry provided base support and protection for the cavalry, which Washington had discovered was important for forward cavalry bases.<sup>227</sup>

Whereas Washington seldom used cavalry in combat, Greene used horsemen extensively. In the South roads were easier on horse's hooves, forage was more available, less forest underbrush made riding easier, and local militia largely refused to campaign on foot.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 341.

<sup>227</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 160, 163; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 20*, 163-164.

<sup>228</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 342; Erma Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1981), 98.

Greene's two primary cavalry units were commanded by William Washington and Henry Lee. Washington commanded a dragoon (cavalry) regiment never converted to legionary organization. Lee commanded one of the partisan corps, although it was known as Lee's Legion. Infantry of Lee's Legion, when not operating with Lee's cavalry, was part of Greene's light infantry force.<sup>229</sup> Both Lee and William Washington were extremely active in Greene's campaign, operating at times with the main army and at times independently.<sup>230</sup> Cornwallis also operated with several cavalry units, most of them provincial. As with Greene, Cornwallis often paired his cavalry with his light infantry forces.

Militia, although undependable, also formed a key component of Greene's army, as it did for Washington in the north, acting as auxiliaries to the Continental units in both cases. Southern British commanders sought militia for a similar role, but lacked Greene's success in that endeavor. A division of opinion exists regarding militia importance. Some, pointing to militia successes, argue militia was the heart of the Patriot war effort.<sup>231</sup> Others point to more dismal aspects of militia legacy, asserting that only a regular army – the Continentals – could have won America's independence from Britain.<sup>232</sup> As with many similar arguments, truth lies somewhere near the middle.

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<sup>229</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 434; John W. Hartmann, *The American Partisan: Henry Lee and the Struggle for Independence, 1776-1780* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 2000), 68, 202-203.

<sup>230</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 105-106; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 125, 181.

<sup>231</sup> Jeremy Black, *America as a Military Power: From the American Revolution to the Civil War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 7, 31; Clyde R. Ferguson, "Carolina and Georgia Patriot and Loyalist Militia in Action, 1778-1783," in *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, eds., Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise (Chapel Hill: The university of North Carolina Press, 1978), 175; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 252.

<sup>232</sup> Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 53-54; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, ix; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 12-13; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, xi-xii.

The Continental Army was the moral figurehead of the Revolution. As long it remained in the field no reasonable argument for British victory could be advanced.<sup>233</sup> More than that, however, the Continental Army was critical to military victory. Without a core of Continentals few battles took place where militia stood successfully against British regulars. Victory in those battles where militia alone contended with British regulars is explainable in every case by some major advantage not typically present for the militia when fighting British regulars without Continental support.<sup>234</sup> On the other hand, there were never enough Continentals and even had the Continental Army recruited a substantially larger force it could not have supported the additional men.<sup>235</sup> A second source of manpower was necessary.

In accord with both British and colonial military tradition, militia was that second form of Patriot military manpower. Militia was easier to recruit and less expensive than Continentals.<sup>236</sup> Not only did militia serve as battlefield auxiliaries for the Continental Army and fight the British regulars without Continental support on occasion, militia also engaged enemy militia where no regulars were available. In several southern states Patriot and Loyalist militia

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<sup>233</sup> Matthew H. Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets Only: The British Army on Campaign in North America, 1775-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 8-9.

<sup>234</sup> The only significant battles won by unsupported militia were Lexington/Concord, Bennington, and King's Mountain. All three found the British trapped in open kill zones with the Patriot militia operating from cover. In addition, Patriot militia significantly outnumbered the British at Lexington/Concord and at Bennington. The Patriot opportunity to attack Hessian regiments successively exacerbated the imbalance in numbers at Bennington, giving the Patriot militia an almost three to one advantage in both phases of the battle. At King's Mountain, the wooded hillside acted as a breastwork for Patriot riflemen while disrupting British formations. Patriot militia fought in the manner to which it was most suited while circumstances denied the British that advantage.

<sup>235</sup> Nancy Kouyoumjian Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence: The Relationship between Food and Moral in the Continental Army, 1775-1783" (master's thesis, University of North Texas, 2016), 5-6; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 416-420; E. Wayne Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984), 221.

<sup>236</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 64.

battles determined whether states remained loyal or declared themselves Patriot. In every case, the Patriots won.<sup>237</sup> Militia also conducted both Indian and guerrilla campaigns during the war.<sup>238</sup>

While historians often overstate the guerrilla aspect of the American Revolution, it is also a mistake to understate it. In South Carolina guerilla activity hamstrung British Army offensive operations, making it difficult for the British Army to expand the area it controlled, or even to control the area it occupied. Guerrillas caused British Army casualties, adding to the British Army manpower shortage. They also threatened Loyalists tempted to join the British Army.<sup>239</sup> Perhaps the most important aspect of guerrilla warfare was their propaganda value. Not only did guerillas keep the Revolution alive in British occupied areas, several guerrilla leaders gained notoriety for their success against the British Army.<sup>240</sup> Guerilla warfare may not have been decisive, but it was significant.<sup>241</sup>

Aside from direct combat roles, Patriot militia provided security for important areas within a state, especially when that state was not an active Continental theater. Washington encouraged that practice as an alternative to dispersing the Continental Army.<sup>242</sup> Militia also guarded and moved prisoners of war. Virginia militia which had reached the end of its service marched British soldiers captured at Cowpens to internment in Virginia on its way home.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 1-6.

<sup>238</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 2.

<sup>239</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 89-91; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 329-330.

<sup>240</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 82-84.

<sup>241</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 89-90.

<sup>242</sup> Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 329-330.

<sup>243</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 291, 310; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 195.

Militia guarded the Convention Army that surrendered to Gates at Saratoga.<sup>244</sup> In the same manner, militia frequently guarded supplies from acquisition to distribution.<sup>245</sup>

Militia played an important civic and political role as well. Early in the war the Patriot faction took over most colonial militia, voting Loyalist leaning officers out of their commands.<sup>246</sup> By gaining control of the militia, Patriots avoided the necessity of using the Continental Army to maintain control of areas not close to the main fighting. A strong militia muted Loyalist voices, making Patriot political support even more secure.<sup>247</sup> Militia also provided the basis for the Continental Army draft.

Greene could not have survived without militia support. In the first place, every militia soldier fighting for Greene was one less militia soldier fighting for the British Army. Southern militia, typically mounted, knew local topography, making it useful as scouts and guides. Greene deplored the militia attachment to its horses, although he lacked ability to control it. However, mounted militia were available to support cavalry detachments Greene sent to overcome small forts and garrisons the British Army scattered across the state. Probably of greatest importance, militia was available as auxiliaries in line of battle, providing Greene with the manpower advantage necessary to regain South Carolina. The fact that many militia services went largely unnoticed, does not make it any less necessary.

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<sup>244</sup> H. J. Eckenrode, "Continental and State Troops of Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 50:4 (1942): 335.

<sup>245</sup> Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 54, 118, 219.

<sup>246</sup> Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 225. Selesky points out that not only was the change in militia leadership carried out by a simple vote, in Connecticut it occurred in 1772, years before the Suffolk Resolves spurred general change.

<sup>247</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 16.

The Southern Department, even at its most active, was never the primary theater, in terms of manpower, for either the Patriot or British armies. Greene led fewer than twenty-five hundred men into battle at Eutaw Springs on 8 September 1781, his entire available army at that time.<sup>248</sup> On that date about ten thousand Patriot soldiers, along with nine thousand Frenchmen, were in New York and Virginia or on their way from the former to the latter.<sup>249</sup> With exception of the short time necessary to secure Yorktown, New York City remained the center of George Washington's focus from the time he invested it after the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, until the end of the war.<sup>250</sup>

The same was true for the British Army. At the time Greene assumed command of the Southern Department the British Army had eight thousand men in South Carolina, with fifteen hundred more on the way.<sup>251</sup> It had more than ten thousand men in and around New York City and thirty-five hundred near West Point.<sup>252</sup> With the south never more than a secondary theater and with the small armies both sides employed there, the manpower race was crucial, and small changes in force size made a significant difference.

Greene drew his army from two primary sources. The core of his army was comprised of several Continental Army regiments, all of them trained according to von Steuben's

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<sup>248</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 374-375. This author has seen numbers ranging from twenty-two hundred to twenty-six hundred men. The correct number is impossible to know with certainty. Any number regarding any issue in the Revolutionary War is, at best, an educated guess and subject to differing opinions.

<sup>249</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 449, 453.

<sup>250</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 448.

<sup>251</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 283; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 60-61; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 138; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 121.

<sup>252</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 446.



methods.<sup>253</sup> Some of these regiments were inexperienced, but some were among the most experienced regiments in the Continental Army.<sup>254</sup> That is, they were regulars, organized and trained in the manner of European, and especially British, military units. They knew how to fight and constantly gave a good account of themselves, but not enough of them were available to Greene. Losses at Savannah, Charlestown, and Camden destroyed the South's reserve of regulars. Washington gave Greene what support he had available, but his primary concern remained New York City.<sup>255</sup>

The solution to Greene's problem was militia. Militia was local troops, in this case raised in the south. Although some provincial units existed – state regulars – they were few, as most of them surrendered at Charlestown.<sup>256</sup> Traditionally, colonies used militia only for short periods and only within the colony of their recruitment. Provincial forces enlisted for longer durations and campaigned outside their colonial borders.<sup>257</sup> In a reversal of tradition, during the American Revolution, provincial (state regular) forces typically remained within their home state. Militia, still recruited for short periods, often travelled outside its state borders. The same was not true of Loyalist forces, which followed tradition more closely.

Patriot militia came with significant problems, but it came – and it fought well enough most of the time. Many militia members were experienced soldiers, former Continentals or

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<sup>253</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 373; Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant," 224-225.

<sup>254</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 373; Gallagher, *The Battle of Brooklyn*, 179; Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 391; Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 246.

<sup>255</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 172; Golway, *Washington's General*, 232; Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 195.

<sup>256</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 326-327.

<sup>257</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, xiv.

men who had campaigned in their own states.<sup>258</sup> Throughout the war militia remained available often enough and in large enough numbers to overcome even serious Patriot military losses. The problem was militiamen came and went as they pleased. It remained a common perception throughout the southern campaign that large numbers of militia deserted during or immediately after every major battle, often rejoining the army within a few days.<sup>259</sup> Equally difficult for commanders was the militia's typical insistence on leaving the field as soon as their contract expired, regardless of circumstances.<sup>260</sup>

Nor was it only enlisted soldiers who acted irresponsibly. Militia was responsible to its state, commanded by the state governor and state appointed officers. Its activity on behalf of the Continental cause was often tenuous and termination by either politics or personality was a constant threat. Greene remained bitter for the rest of his life because Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, refused militia support when Greene desperately needed it.<sup>261</sup> At times Thomas Sumter simply declined to cooperate, first with Morgan and then with Greene, causing failure of some operations and jeopardizing others.<sup>262</sup> Sumter's political popularity was such that he suffered no repercussions. To have offended him would possibly have meant losing his force entirely.

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<sup>258</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 326-327. Thayer notes that while just over five hundred of Greene's men were Continentals, he had about one thousand veteran troops with him. The other five hundred could only have come from state forces, almost certainly militia.

<sup>259</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 332; Golway, *Washington's General*, 255; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 435, 444.

<sup>260</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 261; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 463.

<sup>261</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 337-339; Golway, *Washington's General*, 239, 265; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 367, 466, 467, 471-472; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 17-18, 58-59, 165-167, 463-466.

<sup>262</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 74-75, 149-150; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 342; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 172.

American historians and biographers generally overlook the fact that the British Army in the south had largely the same resources, concerns, and solutions as Greene's army.<sup>263</sup> Three streams of men formed the British Army in the south. First was the British regular army, whose organization the Continental Army largely copied. Second were the provincial units, traditionally not enlisted in the British Army, but sent outside the colony for extended campaigns as British auxiliaries. During the American Revolution, the British Army recruited Loyalist provincials directly into their organization, training them as regulars, but they usually served in separate units.<sup>264</sup> British officers commanded Loyalist units but otherwise they were typically officered by Loyalists.<sup>265</sup> They were often light forces such as those commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton at Cowpens and Major Patrick Ferguson at King's Mountain. Trained in the British fashion, little difference existed in their fighting capabilities and those of regulars. Loyalist provincial units in the south came primarily from the north.<sup>266</sup> Regulars and provincial units lacked the necessary manpower to control the south, however.

The answer to the British Army dilemma was the same as that used by Greene – militia. Britain predicated its victory in the south on militia availability.<sup>267</sup> Everyone of importance on

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<sup>263</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 51; Mackesy, *War for America*, 342-344; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 263, 275, 276, 287; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 337; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 21, 378. Spring lists on page 378, in the index, thirteen separate Loyalist provincial units.

<sup>264</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 51-52, 54; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 21, 368-369, 378; Mackesy, 252, 255; Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 14, 50; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 317; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 79.

<sup>265</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 53, 54, 91; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 317; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 79.

<sup>266</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 51; Mackesy, *War for America*, 518; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 317-318.

<sup>267</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 21; Mackesy, *The War for America*, 271-272, 511; Golway, *Washington's General*, 253. Golway here recognizes and admits the importance of militia to the British and the similarities of the British and Patriot military circumstances, but entirely fails to perceive the difference as a significant manpower advantage for the Patriot forces.

the British side agreed that for the southern campaign to work militia recruitment from Georgia and the Carolinas was necessary. Many British, both soldiers and civilians, believed this untapped stream was a flood waiting to burst forth once defeat of the Patriot army in the south broke the dam.<sup>268</sup> Unfortunately for the British Army, the third stream was never more than a trickle, easily dammed by the Patriots.<sup>269</sup>

In South Carolina the need to garrison strategic locations compelled the British Army to spread most of its army across the state. The withdrawal of Cornwallis after Guilford Courthouse increased the strain on British Army manpower. Little chance existed for reinforcement from outside the theater. On one occasion Clinton even called for Cornwallis to send him reinforcements.<sup>270</sup> Thus, during Greene's tenure in command, when Patriot militia combined with Continental forces, they almost always outnumbered the British Army.

The difference in recruiting ability of the armies was based on two circumstances. First, original British planners of the southern strategy, and those they listened to, erred regarding the extent of Loyalist support in the south. Loyalist support in the south, and especially in all-important South Carolina, was never strong. Patriots decisively subdued Loyalists in the state long before the British Army invaded the Carolinas. A perception existed among British planners that backcountry South Carolina contained a Loyalist majority available to counter the Patriot majority of the tidewater. That was incorrect. Even in the backcountry, Patriots almost equaled Loyalists and neutrals combined. Loyalists, believing in their majority in the

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<sup>268</sup> Mackesy, *The War for America*, 43-44, 159, 271-272, 338; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 49-50; 78-79; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 22.

<sup>269</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 50-52; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 22.

<sup>270</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 36.

backcountry, struck early in the war. Larger Patriot forces, mostly from the *backcountry* of South Carolina, quickly defeated them. Patriot militia then established firm control over the entire colony. The truth is that the British Army, depending on local support, never really had a significant chance to win because its inability to recruit limited its manpower greatly in comparison to Patriot forces. That is the reason Patriot forces remained militarily competitive in the south despite severe losses.<sup>271</sup>

The second circumstance granting Patriot forces greater recruiting success than the British Army resulted from the first. Patriots, stronger than Loyalists from the beginning, countered every significant British Army effort to harness Loyalist support. Both Clinton and Cornwallis tried to raise Loyalist militia. Their efforts backfired because both generals miscalculated the numbers so badly. Clinton ordered every military age man to declare his willingness to fight in the Loyalist militia or suffer the punishment for treason. That act drove Patriots, even many who would have avoided military service, into the Patriot militia.<sup>272</sup> Cornwallis made Patrick Ferguson, commander of a provincial regiment, inspector general of militia, sending him on a recruiting excursion to the backcountry. Ferguson's threats as he moved west brought a strong Patriot military reaction. Catching Ferguson at a disadvantage, Patriot militia destroyed his force and killed him.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> This paragraph, at this point in this dissertation, will surely raise challenges because it so contradicts the traditional view and, to this author's knowledge, no previous publication exists which completely supports the information contained herein. However, Chapter 11 of this document collates facts uncovered by several historians, some of whom did not realize the significance of their own findings regarding the manpower issue, demonstrating conclusively that this paragraph, and the conclusions drawn from it, have a solid factual basis.

<sup>272</sup> Robert J. Allison, *The American Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 58; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 267-268.

<sup>273</sup> Ferguson, *Almost a Miracle*, 459-463; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 281-283; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 353; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 257-258; Mackesy, *War for America*, 345.

A few months later Morgan received a similar order from Greene to recruit *Patriot* militia from western South Carolina. Cornwallis sent another British officer commanding a provincial regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, against Morgan. Morgan, whose easy familiarity made him popular with militia, augmented his initial detachment with enough recruits to destroy Tarleton's force. Oddly enough, Patriot forces won both King's Mountain and Cowpens without a significant manpower advantage. The rashness of British commanders played into Patriot hands in each case. Together, the two British Army defeats subdued any remnant of Loyalist enthusiasm in South Carolina and greatly encouraged the Patriots within that state.<sup>274</sup>

In war circumstances often appear worse than they really are. A commander contemplates endless possibilities, many of which, unknown to him, the enemy never had any intention of using, or even access to. Greene constantly worried about the circumstances under which he fought.<sup>275</sup> Despite his worry, the strategic advantage lay with the Patriots. Patriot political support throughout the south meant Greene could always recruit militia when it was necessary. As difficult as it was at times for Greene to manage the militia under his command, the truth, in simplest terms, is that victory in the south went to the side with the best access to local manpower. Greene could get militia when he needed it, the British Army could not.

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<sup>274</sup> Ferguson, *Almost a Miracle*, 488; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 133; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 146; Mackesy, *War for America*, 405; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 361.

<sup>275</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 11, 44-46, 83, 84-86, 87-91; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 11-12, 16, 19-20, 98.

Loyalist militia did exist, of course. William Cunningham was a Loyalist partisan (guerrilla) from South Carolina who became a counter legend to Patriot militia leaders such as Davies, Sumter, and Marion. Known as “Bloody Bill,” he was among the most vicious militia leaders on either side.<sup>276</sup> In North Carolina David Fanning had a similar reputation.<sup>277</sup> Others also supported the Crown faithfully. Still, there were significantly more Patriot militia leaders, and many of them led larger forces. As in every other theater of the war, Loyalist militia turned out, but never in the requisite amounts.<sup>278</sup> Perhaps no one has made that point any better, then or since, than Frederick Mackenzie, an officer in the British Army during the American Revolution. Belittling Greene he wrote, “He [Greene] has been indefatigable in collecting troops and leading them to be defeated.” The clear implication, however unintended, being that even when losing battles Greene could field more men than the British Army.<sup>279</sup> In fact, Greene often more than doubled his Continental force through use of militia.

That Greene had a manpower advantage does not make manpower the decisive issue, of course. Greene certainly conducted a masterful campaign of maneuver. Without doubt a poorly conducted campaign or badly handled battles would have ruined him. Still, Greene never fought without a manpower advantage. The smallest advantage he held in any battle

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<sup>276</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 52.

<sup>277</sup> Hugh F. Rankin, *The North Carolina Continentals* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 363.

<sup>278</sup> Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 78; Mackesy, *War for America*, 36; Golway, *Washington’s General*, 233. Hibbert, a British author, overstates the number of loyal Americans, but still estimates them as only a small portion of the population. Mackesy’s estimate of the loyal population is even further off the mark than Hibbert’s, yet he also estimates the loyalists as only a minority of the American public. Again, Golway points out the use of Loyalist militia, but here he overstates the case in an unnecessary effort to make Greene’s campaign appear difficult and heroic.

<sup>279</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 381; Frederick Mackenzie, *Diary of Frederick Mackenzie, Volume 2* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 373.

was Eutaw Springs. Even there he commanded ten percent more men than his opponent. Yet, Greene never held the field at the end of a battle, and the one siege he personally conducted, at Ninety-Six, also ended in British victory. Despite Greene's lack of tactical success, the British Army retreated after every battle, including Ninety-Six. Every retreat was specifically due to Greene's manpower advantage. That makes it reasonable to assume that even with Greene's operational brilliance, the manpower edge was necessary for victory.<sup>280</sup>

There is no doubt Greene was an exceptionally capable general, but able does not imply revolutionary or unconventional. Greene's army was a conventional one, based on the organization of British regulars and tradition of universal militia service. Continentals and militia each provided strengths the other could not. The armies of his opponents mirrored his own. Armies of both sides faced the same problems and dealt with them largely in the same manner – regulars at the core, militia to supply the necessary numbers, and guerrilla operations where regular armies were unavailable. The difference was in manpower. Greene had adequate manpower available, albeit in a less than dependable form. Patriot forces eventually swarmed the British Army because British recruiting was unable to generate the necessary local manpower. It is difficult to credit Greene with unconventionality when both his peers and his enemies followed the same military recipe he followed. Greene's brilliance undoubtedly saved

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<sup>280</sup> Siry, *Greene*, 71; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 43-44; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 433. Weigley correctly points out that the Patriot army typically needed a substantial manpower advantage to entertain any hope of battlefield success over British regulars in the South. He argues, however, that Greene's success at Guilford Courthouse greatly hinged on the "propitious" moment at which Greene offered combat. He fails to note that what made the moment "propitious," in Greene's mind, was possession of the necessary manpower advantage, without the expectation that advantage would last a significant period. Siry points out that Greene refused to engage Cornwallis until he had a sufficient manpower advantage.



lives and probably shortened the campaign, but his success was based on that most conventional of all issues, the number of men in the line of battle.

## CHAPTER 5

### LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

Most Americans considered the British Army the best led, best trained military force on earth. Not large by European standards, its tradition rivaled that of France and Prussia. Most Patriot military leaders, probably most Americans, were familiar with the British military reputation. No surprise, then, that British Army training and leadership was the model for Patriot forces. Initially the performance gulf between the two forces was wide. Over time, however, the rigors of war winnowed out the worst Patriot leaders and training and experience led to a competitive Patriot army. By the end of the war Patriot soldiers, north and south, accounted for themselves ably on the battlefield, if not equally with British soldiers.

British and colonial military antecedents influenced Nathanael Greene's leadership style and the training of his army drew on those same sources. Lacking access to the harsh discipline of European armies, Patriot leaders followed the colonial practice of developing more personal aspects of leadership. While not particularly charismatic in the manner of Morgan or Washington, Greene's peers and the men under his command respected him. He employed them in battle carefully, diligently monitored their logistics, and fostered training at every opportunity, not only for his Continentals but for the militia under his command. Military training followed the European model, as had traditional colonial militia training. Von Steuben standardized Patriot military training, but retained the European basis. Skirmishing, also known as Indian style fighting, was normally successful only in limited situations.

## Leadership

The habit of command resided in the very fabric of the British Army. Royalty, nobility, and gentry, from which groups military officers were drawn, were social strata above the common man, from which enlisted soldiers were drawn.<sup>281</sup> In addition to British society, traditions of the army and its various regiments supported the status of officers.<sup>282</sup> If that did not work, draconian punishments made certain that not only the victim, but his mates, understood their lives were in the hands of their commanders.<sup>283</sup> British officers had every reason to expect exemplary obedience.

Gentry in America lacked legal standing but existed as a more definite social stratum than in modern America. Although the public expected a certain behavior from gentry, a gentleman was not simply a man with good manners and pleasing social behavior. A gentleman was a man of social distinction. While the public typically accepted a man from a prominent family as a gentleman, family was not the sole determinant. An individual could enter the gentry in a variety of ways including social or political connections, political office, business or property ownership, wealth, profession, or education.<sup>284</sup> No specific steps granted gentry

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<sup>281</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 2-3, 21, 28-29, 35; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 52, 126, 134; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 17; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 29, 219; Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 173; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 184; Conway, "Great Mischief Complain'd of," 378; Stephen Conway, "British Army Officers and the American War for Independence," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 41:2 (1984): 274; Sarah Knott, "Sensibility and the American War for Independence," *The American Historical Review* 109:1 (2004): 30; Robert Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 43:2 (1980): 145.

<sup>282</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 43; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 80.

<sup>283</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 74-75, 91; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 77.

<sup>284</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 4-5, 23, 24, 29-34, 45; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 86-87; Andrew Lawson, *Downwardly Mobile: The Changing Fortunes of American Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16; Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), xviii-xix; Stow Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 2; Walter J. Fraser, Jr., "Reflections of 'Democracy' in

status. Gentry was a status acquired when and to the degree society, especially other gentry, saw you as such.<sup>285</sup>

Gentleman was an important social title brought to America from Britain by the earliest colonists.<sup>286</sup> Public leaders in America, including military commanders, were primarily gentry, not only during the Revolution but throughout colonial history.<sup>287</sup> Status was more important than experience or training as most people believed gentlemen knew innately how to lead.<sup>288</sup> Such men understood business and politics. They connected politically, socially, and professionally with other leaders and worked well with them. They were, most of all, men of courage and honor, whose word other men trusted and whose integrity was beyond question.<sup>289</sup> Washington insisted that Patriot officers be gentlemen.<sup>290</sup>

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Revolutionary South Carolina?: The Composition of Military Organizations and the Attitudes and Relationships of the Officers and Men, 1775-1780," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 78:3 (1977): 203.

<sup>285</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, xv, 25-27; Lawson, *Downwardly Mobile*, 16; Holton, *Forced Founders*, xviii-xix; Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility*, 2.

<sup>286</sup> Edwin H. Cady, *The Gentleman in America: A Literary Study in American Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1969), 15-16; Morris, "Class Struggle and the American Revolution," 6-7.

<sup>287</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 1; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, xiii, 13, 50; Cady, *The Gentleman in America*, 163-164; Patricia U. Bonomi, *A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 2014), 261; John A. Grigg, ed., *British Colonial America: People and Perspectives* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc. 2008), xvi, 248, Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," 145; Harry M. Ward, *Duty, Honor, or Country: General George Weedon and the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979), viii.

<sup>288</sup> Cox, *A proper Sense of Honor*, 21; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, xiii, 13; Shaffel, "The American Board of War," 285.

<sup>289</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 21; Black, *European Warfare*, 215; Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility*, 61, 140-141; Cady, *The Gentleman in America*, 118, 135, 157; Bonomi, *A Factious People*, 96; Major Haydn John White, Royal Marines, "Commanders-in-chief of the American War for Independence: A Leadership Study of George Washington and Sir William Howe" (master's thesis, United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, 2001), 19-20.

<sup>290</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 31, 61; Washington, *The Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 483-484; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 18, 106.

Greene qualified as a gentleman in several ways. His family owned one of the largest businesses in Rhode Island and he managed one of the largest foundries in New England. He displayed the depths of his political connections by both his election to the Rhode Island legislature and his accomplishments while serving in that body. He was reasonably well educated, although largely self-taught. His qualifications as a gentleman allowed his unchallenged appointment as commander of the Rhode Island militia although he lacked military experience or rank. The same was true for his commissioning as a brigadier general, and later major general, in the Continental Army.

Despite being gentlemen, Patriot officers faced issues uncommon in the British Army. Traditions that underpinned command in the British Army had no counterpart in Patriot military life. Continental Congress and state governments were both new, organizing as they went. Exigency and change were the order of the day.<sup>291</sup> Enlisted men suddenly expected to follow commands from men who yesterday were farmers and small businessmen felt no qualms about making their own decisions. It did not help matters that enlisted men often went unfed, undressed, unpaid, and unmedicated when sick, feeling from those ills that they gained the right to ignore orders.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Lengel, *General George Washington*, 86-88; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 123-124; Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*, 6-7; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 43, 147-148; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 434; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IX*, 818-820; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume XII*, 1076; Hunt, *Journals of Congress, Volume XXI*, 1087; Wright, *The Continental Army*, 47, 51, 55-56, 62, 91-94; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 43.

<sup>292</sup> Martin, *Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier*, 40-41, 130-132; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 180-181, 187; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 295; Greene, *Letters of Greene, Volume VI*, 573; Greene, *Letters of Greene, Volume VII*, 8; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 128, 147; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 40, 48-49; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 71, 72, 74, 83, 99, 376; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 45; Fraser, "Reflections of "Democracy" in Revolutionary South Carolina," 206-207; Ward, *Duty, Honor, or Country*, 49.

Making the task of commanders more difficult, at least in the eyes of Washington, was lack of available punishment.<sup>293</sup> British Army punishments were brutal. The colonial tradition was more lenient, and followed by the Continental Congress.<sup>294</sup> At the beginning of the war thirty-nine lashes, obviously drawn from the Bible, was the maximum legal punishment. Congress later raised the limit to one hundred, which many senior officers felt remained too few to compel obedience. Only in 1781 was Washington granted power to administer the five hundred maximum lashes he desired.<sup>295</sup>

Short on organization, support, tradition, and punishment and without means to keep men from deserting, Patriot officers sought other methods to bind soldiers to the cause.<sup>296</sup> It helped that most enlisted men were Patriot by personal conviction.<sup>297</sup> Even so, a man calling

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<sup>293</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 74-75, 90-91, 94-95, 100; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 114-116

<sup>294</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 74-75, 91; Royster, *A Constitutional People at War*, 77.

<sup>295</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 119; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 324, 331; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 806; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VII*, 364; Hunt, *Journals of Congress, Volume XX*, 657; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 91; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 77; Fraser, "Reflections of "Democracy" in Revolutionary South Carolina," 209.

<sup>296</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 376-377; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 24; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 85; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 27; Arthur J. Alexander "Desertion and Its Punishment in Revolutionary Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3:3 (1946): 383; Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," 138.

<sup>297</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 372-378; Martin, *Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier*, 102, 241; Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," 140, 147, 148. Royster argues that the primary reason men stayed with the army was their affinity for the cause of liberty. As Royster points out, desertion was easy and common, yet most Continental soldiers served out their enlistments, often despite desperate conditions. Royster also rightly notes that just because men took money or needed jobs did not mean their only motives were mercenary. Had that been the case, there were other options. Joseph Plumb Martin, for example, points out that the only time in the army when he was not hungry was when assigned to foraging details during the Valley Forge winter. He also notes that he was among the many men who sold their final settlement certificates to get money and clothing for their journey home. Still, he refused to desert and remained in the army until granted discharge after serving in the Yorktown campaign.

Middlekauff's excellent article explores the various reasons soldiers fought during the Revolution, a model of synthesis giving reasonable weight to a variety of causes. High on Middlekauff's list were the influence of the men a soldier served with and professional pride Continental soldiers developed in their units and in their ability to withstand hardship. The primary reason Middlekauff gives, however, is that Patriot soldiers in the American

himself a Patriot did not make him willing to stand in the line of battle. In large measure Patriot soldiers fought for officers they respected and trusted. For that reason, men who raised military formations often received command of those formations. Neither the need for a personal connection between officers and enlisted men or the use of such leaders for recruiting were new in Patriot military practice. Both came from colonial military tradition.<sup>298</sup>

Many militia commanders and some Continental officers such as Morgan, Arnold, and Washington had a charismatic appeal to soldiers.<sup>299</sup> Greene's appeal was never along those lines. Greene made efforts to connect with his men, but he lacked the easy way with them that Morgan had, or the socially and physically towering presence of Washington.<sup>300</sup>

Greene's own leadership was based on different attributes, although ones not necessarily lacked by more charismatic men. Greene had a decisive, no nonsense attitude people instinctively trusted.<sup>301</sup> He cared for his men well.<sup>302</sup> His experience in business and as

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Revolution, especially Continentals, were brave men who believed in their cause. Given the conditions under which they served, the evidence developed elsewhere in this dissertation that most colonists supported the Revolution, and lack of government ability to force them to remain in service, this author agrees with Royster and Middlekauff that no reason existed for Continental soldiers to remain with the army except their affinity for the Patriot cause.

<sup>298</sup> Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, xiii, 13, 27; Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 32-33; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 29-30; Black, *European Warfare*, 89; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 134.

<sup>299</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 74-75, 149-150; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 342; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 172; Paul David Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars: The Views of American General Officers on the Military Establishment, 1775-1781," *Military Affairs* 43:3 (1979): 130; North Callahan, *Daniel Morgan, Ranger of the Revolution* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), 22, 64.

<sup>300</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 178.

<sup>301</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 6; Golway, *Washington's General*, 2-3; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 12; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, ix-x.

<sup>302</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 67; 3-5, 8, 26, 28, 30, 34, 39-40, 47. From 26 December 1780 through 4 January 1781, a period of ten days, Greene wrote no less than a dozen letters requesting some aspect of logistical support. A complete list of such letters while he was in command of the Department of the South is too long for this dissertation, but the eight days reviewed are in no way unusual.

quartermaster general gave him an understanding of both the needs and the methods of keeping an army fed, clothed, and otherwise supplied. He did not waste men's blood. A hard fighter, he picked his battles carefully and always had a chance to win. If battle turned against him, he withdrew before risking loss of his army or spending lives unnecessarily. Each time he fought he gained ground, the enemy always retreating within a few days.<sup>303</sup>

The universal attribute of eighteenth-century leadership was courage. No officer earned the respect of his superiors, his peers, his subordinates, or the public without it.<sup>304</sup> At the Battle of Bunker Hill, Howe was so near the front that Patriot fire killed or wounded every one of his aides and the blood of fallen men stained his uniform.<sup>305</sup> Washington's courage was legendary. At Kip's Bay on Manhattan Island the militia fled. Washington's staff held his bridle to keep him from charging the enemy alone. Outside Princeton Washington did charge the enemy alone, through a hail of musket balls that should have killed him but left him unscathed. Legend makes him the last man to leave Long Island.<sup>306</sup> Morgan, too, was legendary for his courage. In fact, his legend suggests that when ordered to receive five hundred lashes for striking a British officer during the French and Indian War, he accused the British of undercounting by one. He also refused to surrender to the British Army in Quebec, resisting

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<sup>303</sup> This information is available in literally dozens of books, including every biography of Greene. Chapter 9 of this dissertation also deals with this information in greater depth.

<sup>304</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 313-314; White, "Commanders-in-Chief of the American War for Independence, 14-15; Knott, "Sensibility and the American War for Independence," 24; Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," 138; Ward, *Duty, Honor, or Country*, 63.

<sup>305</sup> Anderson, *The War that Made America*, 200,201; Victor Brooks, *The Boston Campaign: April 1775-March 1776* (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Publishers 1999), 157; White, "Commanders-in-Chief of the American War for Independence, 25-26.

<sup>306</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 219; Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 334-335; Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," 138.



until allowed to surrender to a French priest.<sup>307</sup> Major General Benedict Arnold was twice badly wounded leading Patriot forces, once at Quebec and a second time during the Saratoga battles.<sup>308</sup> Such courage was not unusual, but expected. While Greene lacked the charisma of some of his fellow officers, his courage was fully their equal. Greene was near the fiercest fighting in every battle he commanded, in one case having his horse shot from under him.<sup>309</sup>

Patriot officers based their views of military leadership on the British Army model. Officers were from the upper class in both societies. Punishment for officers was significantly different than for enlisted men. Officers never suffered corporal punishment in any form. They might face capital punishment for heinous crimes, otherwise they received reprimands or the army cashiered them after a court-martial. Officers did not share quarters or labor with enlisted men except under the most compelling circumstances.<sup>310</sup> Officers and enlisted did not mingle socially except for designated functions. In both armies it was possible, but difficult, for enlisted men to achieve officer rank.<sup>311</sup> In short, officers and enlisted men were from different classes of civilian life and constituted different classes of military life in both armies. Any differences in leadership standards between the two armies were matters of degree, not substance.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 9-10, 49.

<sup>308</sup> Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 44-45, 75.

<sup>309</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 329, 345, 377, 379; Middlekauff, "Why Men Fought in the American Revolution," 137-138.

<sup>310</sup> Fraser, "Reflections of "Democracy" in Revolutionary South Carolina," 207.

<sup>311</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 2-3, 21, 50-51, 54, 74; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 22; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 119, 126, 132-133, 156.

<sup>312</sup> Fraser, "Reflections of "Democracy" in Revolutionary South Carolina," 209.

## Training

Militia service was a tradition going back to England.<sup>313</sup> From establishment of the first colonies, colonial governments required every resident male within the ages specified by their colony to enroll and serve in the militia.<sup>314</sup> Militia existed for emergencies and typically did not leave the colony or fight long campaigns. For longer conflicts local governments recruited provincials. Provincials were units recruited or impressed, often through the militia, for fighting extended campaigns in alliance with Britain or other colonies.<sup>315</sup> Militia were local military units called out in times of emergency. Local or colonial governments called out militia for many reasons other than war. These included slave uprisings, riots, devastating storms, major fires, or whatever required the services of an organized body of physically able men.<sup>316</sup> Whether militia or provincial, however, the goal of training was to provide colonial soldiers with conventional British Army battlefield ability.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 19; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 76; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 6; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 218; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 252; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 92-93.

<sup>313</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 6, 12, 17; Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, 13, 218; Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution*, 6, 7; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 61, 252; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 92-93, 92-93; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 3; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 185.

<sup>314</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, xiv, 11; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 19, 28; Selesky, *War & Society in Colonial Connecticut*, ix, 3; Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars," 127.

<sup>315</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, xiv; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 19; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 3, 5; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 49.

<sup>316</sup> James B. Whisker, *The Rise and Decline of the American Militia System* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1999), 146-147; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 17, 18; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 112, 132, 156; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 5.

<sup>317</sup> Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 14; Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 1; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 46; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 379-381; John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 133-136. Grenier details the only circumstance known to this author of formal training in skirmishing in North America prior to the end of the American Revolution. That training, which occurred during the French and Indian War, involved a select group of British regulars. It did not involve any Americans, nor was it repeated during the

In the earliest days of the colonies militia training was serious and militia call ups potentially deadly. As the frontier moved west, militias remained important on the frontier and militia training remained serious there, primarily because of the Indian threat. Evidence of the military advantages of an active militia training program with frequent callouts included Greene's preference for backcountry militia to those from the more settled coastal areas.<sup>318</sup> In the more populated east, while there remained some threat of Indian and slave uprisings, the perceived need for military preparedness decreased over time. Militia laws and militia units remained, but training degenerated into a holiday atmosphere. Militia primarily became a recruiting system for provincial units.<sup>319</sup>

Whether on the frontier or the coast, however, training was in European methods of fighting. That followed colonial, as well as British, military tradition. The idea of colonists copying Indian style fighting is a myth more reflective of the degenerate state of American military training than any conscious tactical decision. More accurately called skirmishing, Europeans as well as Americans applied such tactics when appropriate. However, they were successful only under restricted conditions: when used early in battle to disrupt enemy formations (and while supported by regulars); in especially tangled terrain where formations were not possible; in pursuit of a truly beaten enemy; and a few similar situations involving

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American Revolution. No doubt some sort of informal training in the art of Indian fighting existed among frontiersmen throughout the colonial and revolutionary era, but such training appears to stem primarily from hunting, tracking, and trapping activities common to frontiersmen. Otherwise Grenier's assertion that the formally trained British soldiers never reached the competency level of colonial frontiersmen in such skills makes little sense. Chet makes the important point, however, that even when fighting Indians, linear tactics were more effective than skirmishing.

<sup>318</sup> Greene, *Letters of Greene, Volume VII*, 294; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 10.

<sup>319</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 61; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 10, 13.

disorganized, unprepared, or demoralized opponents. Skirmishing used under normal battle conditions often failed.<sup>320</sup>

Most colonies upgraded militia training as war became more likely, but effective training lagged for at least two reasons.<sup>321</sup> First, training was not standard. Several European training manuals were in print, along with a few American manuals. Some Americans altered European drill, making it simpler, but that added to the confusion as much as it helped. Different colonies, even different regiments within a colony, trained their units according to different manuals, each using the manual their regimental commander favored.<sup>322</sup> Such a varied approach complicated movement and firing when regiments were brigaded or placed into divisions, and when men transferred from one regiment to another.

The second problem was the complicated nature of European training. Long term enlistment in most European armies guaranteed a core of trained soldiers.<sup>323</sup> Patriot armies began the war with months to train, at best. Most Patriot soldiers were short term enlistees, just gaining competency when their enlistments expired. For the first three years of the war, the process started anew at the beginning of each year.<sup>324</sup> Loading and firing a musket, while only a single aspect of military training, required almost twenty separate movements.<sup>325</sup> These

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<sup>320</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 2-3.

<sup>321</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 27.

<sup>322</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 43; Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 70-71; Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 126; Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 29; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 184; Sandra L. Powers, "Studying the Art of War: Military Books known to American Officers and their French Counterparts during the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Military History* 70:3 (2006): 790-791.

<sup>323</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 18; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 19; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 12.

<sup>324</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 99; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 73.

<sup>325</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 70-71; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 136; W. J. Wood, *Battles of the Revolutionary War, 1775-1781* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1990), xxiii-xxiv.

movements required completion in unison by dozens, sometimes hundreds, of men, so they all fired at precisely the same moment. Marching, military courtesy, camp life, battlefield maneuvers, and a host of other military lessons were also necessary. Rigorous and continuous training was the only way to accomplish competency, and it required considerable time. Patriot soldiers did not have time.

As the war progressed, two issues aided training competency. First was the decision by Congress to enlist soldiers for three years or the duration. Soldiers then remained in the army long enough to put their training to use. The second issue was the standardization of training under Major General Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, a former officer in the Prussian army.<sup>326</sup> Steuben first wrote a drill manual that, while based on the European model, greatly simplified it. While some commanders had previous simplified European manuals, Steuben's manual gained universal use among Continentals and at least widespread use among militia. From the Valley Forge winter forward the Continental Army had a uniform system that officers and noncommissioned officers all used. The combination of a single manual and long-term enlistments significantly improved Patriot combat performance, especially among Continentals.<sup>327</sup> By the time the Continental Army marched out of Valley Forge it constituted a competent force, and it soon proved that true by holding its own in the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse.<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 287; Allison, *The American Revolution*, 50-51; Powers, "Studying the Art of War," 793-794; Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant," 224-225.

<sup>327</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 287-288; Allison, *The American Revolution*, 50-51; Mackesy, *War for America*, 215; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 23; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 45; Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 44.

<sup>328</sup> Allison, *The American Revolution*, 54; Mackesy, *War for America*, 215; Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant," 225.

Along with the improved performance of Continentals from Steuben's training and extended enlistments, improvement in militia performance was also important. Many of the men who served short enlistments in the Continental Army joined the militia on discharge from Continental service. Such men included veterans of major battles and their training and experience improved their militia units significantly. In addition, militia supported the Continental Army in most major battles of the war, as well as fighting Indians, Loyalists, and even British regulars without Continental help. By the end of the war many militia soldiers were well-trained and experienced and many militia units acquitted themselves well in battle.<sup>329</sup>

What was true of Continentals in general was also true of the Southern Department under Greene. Greene's Continentals came from states north of Virginia. Some were veteran units, others were not. All Continental units transferred to Greene's command trained according to von Steuben's methods before they reached Greene.<sup>330</sup> The militia was a more diverse group. Greene's militia units came primarily from Virginia and the Carolinas. Those men from Virginia and North Carolina undoubtedly contained some ex-Continentals.<sup>331</sup> The militia of South Carolina contained few, if any, former Continentals – just those who avoided or escaped surrender at Charlestown. Its training was more local, although many militiamen were veterans of fighting against Indians and Loyalist militia as well as British regulars.<sup>332</sup> On those

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<sup>329</sup> Cox, *A Proper Sense of Honor*, 43; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 328-333; Nelson, "Citizen Soldiers or Regulars," 127.

<sup>330</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 173; Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant," 224-225.

<sup>331</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 123.

<sup>332</sup> Gary D. Olson, "Loyalists and the American Revolution: Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 69:1 (1968): 218; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 101-102. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 31-32.

occasions when opportunity presented, Greene provided training to all the men under his command, Continentals and militia.<sup>333</sup>

When it fought, Greene's army lined up side by side, loading and firing on command. Greene typically sent forward a few units, especially those armed with rifles, as skirmishers to disrupt enemy attacks, but that practice applied equally to the British Army.<sup>334</sup> Historians, as well as those present at Greene's battles, universally describe Greene and his opponents in similar terms, lines of men either moving forward or holding their position while trading large volumes of fire. The location was the American south, but the manner of action was European.

In an era when social status and physical courage were key aspects in selecting European military commanders, Patriot commanders emulated their methods as far as

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<sup>333</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 291-292, 298-299, 364; Golway, *Washington's General*, 279; Siry, *Greene*, 70; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 143, 186-187. Although most authors do not report specifics showing Greene engaged his men in training, Thayer does report that at Charlotte and Cheraw Greene made efforts to raise their morale, and other authors use similar wording. Such actions must have included training. Thayer also points out forces at the High Hills of the Santee just before the Battle of Eutaw Springs were there for rest, but that certainly would not have meant idleness, and given Greene's penchant for training it is certain he ordered it at every opportunity. Unlike others of Greene's biographers, Tucker refers specifically to Greene training his army at both Cheraw and the High Hills of the Santee. Training would certainly have come from the manual written by Greene's good friend and second in command, von Steuben.

<sup>334</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 329; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 252; Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant," 224; George F. Scheer, Jr., "Henry Lee on the Southern Campaign," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 51:2 (1943): 149. Adams is correct in his assertion that the Continental Army needed improved training, but incorrect regarding the basis of that need. The primary need was for frequent, uniform training. Adams argues because of colonial Indian campaigns and Saratoga that the Continental Army prior to Valley Forge marched in single file and fought Indian style, that is, in loose order or skirmishing. This dissertation primarily deals with such claims elsewhere. Suffice to note that prior to Saratoga the Continental Army marched and fought in several campaigns, including New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, in all cases in a conventional manner and that marching single file, where it might have occurred, was more likely based on terrain or inexperience than tactics. Saratoga, itself, was a conventional campaign, although a large part of the Patriot force was militia. Even prior to von Steuben's manual there were several manuals in use by the Continental Army, including some written by Americans which simplified European training. Ample evidence exists, again dealt with elsewhere in this dissertation, that on many occasions prior to the American Revolution, including campaigns against Indians, American forces used European tactics. Henry Lee's own comment about open order should settle the issue. Adams' work is inaccurate and poorly researched regarding tactical issues prior to von Steuben.

possible. However, draconian punishments and decades of British military tradition were unavailable to Patriot commanders. Patriot leaders such as Washington and Greene substituted a personal connection with their men not from preference but from necessity. There are indications Washington and Greene might have preferred a more British style. Still, personality based leadership dominated the American method of command by the time of the American Revolution.

During the American Revolution, the basis of both Continental Army and Patriot militia training was European, but American emulation of European training did not begin with the Revolutionary War. European style training, modified in some regards, was the method of training practiced by generations of Americans in both Indian and colonial wars prior to the Revolution. By the beginning of the American Revolution that approach to training troops was standard. Early Patriot military training was hampered by lack of uniformity and experience. With extended enlistments, systematic training, and a leavening of experienced soldiers in the militia the Patriot army became a competent force, able to reply in kind to the style of warfare practiced by the British Army.



## CHAPTER 6

### LOGISTICS

Historians universally agree that Greene's army often faced the prospect of starvation.<sup>335</sup> They agree that Greene's logistical circumstances resembled those of Washington. However, most, if not all, fail to realize that Greene's logistical situation also resembled very closely that of British commanders he faced in the south. No army in the American Revolution could depend on its government to feed or otherwise supply it adequately. Every commander resorted to requisitioning supplies from the public to keep his army alive. Both sides frequently paid for what they took with vouchers that were largely worthless. Despite similarities between Greene and his opponents, historians often consider Greene unconventional while they universally tag the British Army as the personification of convention.

Nathanael Greene faced similar logistical issues and applied similar solutions as his colleagues and his opposing counterparts. Supplying British or Patriot armies during the American Revolution stretched governments to their limit. The Continental Congress was financially unable to provide an adequate logistical solution, so Patriot forces largely fended for themselves. Britain sought supply from America but never controlled enough territory for that solution to work adequately. British armies in the north received significant, although inadequate, logistical support. In the south, however, circumstances compelled the British Army to fend for itself in much the same manner as Patriot forces.

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<sup>335</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 232; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 284; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 55; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 132-134.

Initially put into place during a series of colonial wars and tested severely during the French and Indian War, in theory the British supply system for armies in America was well-developed by the dawning of the American Revolution.<sup>336</sup> The British government organized itself into departments, each headed by a director (although often not called by that title). The key department heads operated as a cabinet running the day to day operations of the government, including war. Treasury was the primary supply agency for the army, with input from the War Office. The Board of Ordnance supplied weapons and ammunition for the entire army and the primary logistical needs of the artillery. Responsibility for transporting supplies across the ocean belonged to the Navy Board.<sup>337</sup>

The responsible agencies enlisted contractors for provisions and transport. Local shipping transported provisions to Cork, on the southern coast of Ireland, for inspection and storage there until shipped to America. As the logistical operation grew Cowes (a port on the Isle of Wight) became the collection point for supplies designated for Canada, the West Indies, and Florida.<sup>338</sup> Supplies bound for the thirteen colonies continued shipping through Cork. The small British Army logistical force in America before the war was the basis for the American end of the British Army logistical pipeline during the Revolution.<sup>339</sup> From that group developed a series of military departments, including quartermaster, commissary, and barrack master, which distributed supplies to, or otherwise made provision for, armed forces in North

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<sup>336</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 20; Mackesy, *War for America*, 5; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 19.

<sup>337</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 12-17; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 13-19.

<sup>338</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 19.

<sup>339</sup> Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 9-10; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 20.

America.<sup>340</sup> The Treasury Department also provided funds to various departments to purchase supplies in America, including fresh produce and livestock.<sup>341</sup>

As with every other aspect of government, Patriot military logistics was hampered by inexperience and exigent circumstances. Once Congress moved beyond ad hoc committees it developed a supply system beginning with the familiar. The British Army supply system had operated in America throughout the colonial wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many Patriots were familiar with it so Congress used it as a model, creating a set of military departments resembling those of the British Army. The manner of military department purchasing by the Continental Army resembled the purchasing aspect of the British military departments in America.

The significant difference in the British and Patriot logistical chains was lack of bureaucratic departments within Congress, itself. Oversight boards reported or made recommendations to Congress, but lacked power to make significant decisions. The British bureaucracy, on the other hand, were directly responsible for operations within their area of government, although typically making strategic decisions as a group. That had no counterpart in Congress. Instead, the requisite Patriot military departments procured and stored, as well as distributed, supplies under the direct supervision of Congress.

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<sup>340</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 20.

<sup>341</sup> Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 12; Richard Buel, Jr., *In Irons: Britain's naval Supremacy and the American Revolutionary Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 335; Mackesy, *War for America*, 286, 319; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 17.

Both sides struggled to supply their armies during the American Revolution, although for different reasons.<sup>342</sup> British difficulties included bureaucratic inefficiency, inadequate shipping, and inability to obtain supplies from America. As a result, the British Army suffered significant shortages, especially during its southern campaign.<sup>343</sup>

Britain fought periodic wars in America for more than a century prior to the American Revolution. The last of those wars, the French and Indian War, was in many ways a dry run for Revolutionary War logistics. Logic suggests, then, that the British government had a logistical system in place and only needed to use it. Instead, British government proved inefficient and disorganized.<sup>344</sup> Britain's senior political leaders were often more interested in protecting their fiefdoms than administering the war. They frequently failed to cooperate with each other, sometimes blocking approved war plans.<sup>345</sup> Patronage in the staffing of bureaucratic positions within the civilian government made even mediocrity an aspiration difficult to attain. The system simply drowned those few with skills and the desire to serve.<sup>346</sup>

Shipping was at a premium. The British Army in America, the largest expeditionary force ever deployed outside Britain to that time, operated three thousand miles from England. Given the necessity for repairs and maintenance, inefficiency of British contractors, adverse winds,

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<sup>342</sup> Buel, *In Irons*, 2.

<sup>343</sup> Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 192.

<sup>344</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 6, 14; Tokar, "Recoat Supply," 16; Russell F. Weigley, *The Age of Battles: The Quest for Decisive Warfare from Breitenfeld to Waterloo* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 233; David Syrett, *The Royal Navy in European Waters during the American Revolutionary War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), ix-x.

<sup>345</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 19; Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 243; Tokar, "Recoat Supply," 16; David Syrett, *Shipping and the American War: A Study of British Transport Organization* (London: Bloomsbury, 1970), 11, 19-20; Richard H. Kohn, "Feeding the War Machine, Eighteenth Century Style," *Reviews in American History* 4:2 (1976): 182.

<sup>346</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 5; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 247-248.

and the tendency (sometimes avoidable, sometimes not) of delaying ships in America, ships had difficulty making the trip more than once per year.<sup>347</sup> Britain had the largest, and probably the best, merchant marine in the world. Still, the effort required to feed the army in America not only meant sending food to forces in the rebellious colonies but, as war spread, to those in Canada, Florida, and the Caribbean. Unprecedented in scale, it was a huge stretch in terms of both material and experience.<sup>348</sup>

British strategists wanted to supply their army from America to the greatest degree possible, especially regarding fresh food for men and animals.<sup>349</sup> Preservation methods, while adequate if required, provided limited food choices. A local diet would have provided less spoilage than shipping foodstuffs from Britain, with greater variety. Food transported across the Atlantic took up valuable space and drove up operating costs. Hay and other forage for horses took even more space. Livestock shipped across the Atlantic had high death rates and

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<sup>347</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 126-127.

<sup>348</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 18, 65, 223; Syrett, *Shipping and the American War*, 95, 139, 234, 243, 246; John A. Tilley, *The British Navy and the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 31; Conway, *The British Isles and the War of Independence*, 80, 351; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 14-15; Anderson, *The War that Made America*, 184-185; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 40, 126-128; Black, *European Warfare*, 229; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 136, 164. Middleton was describing the Seven Years/French and Indian War, but that war was in many ways, including difficulty of supply, a precursor to the American Revolution. At the same time, the largest British Army in America during the French and Indian War was about twenty-four thousand men, including Indians and provincials. British, Provincial, and Hessian regulars in America during the American Revolution at times totaled more than forty thousand men. Historically, British armies were much smaller than the force used during the Revolution. Those smaller armies fought in western Europe, where they were much easier to supply, ships making the voyage across the English Channel several times a year.

Mackesy argues obtaining the necessary supplies, rather than shipping, was the heart of the British logistical problem, and was a problem for the Patriot army, as well. Mackesy further argues that the problem originated more with British forces in America than with the government in Britain. Without doubt, both problems were severe.

<sup>349</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 41-42; Syrett, *Shipping and the American War*, 77, 243; Kohn, "Feeding the War Machine," 181.

required that their transports be specially outfitted, unusable for other cargo until renovated.<sup>350</sup>

The British government expected the necessity of shipping clothes, medicines, munitions, and similar items from Britain. Drawing fuel, fresh food, animals, and forage from America would have eased Britain's logistical burden dramatically. Unfortunately for Britain, the British Army never controlled enough territory to meet its logistical needs.<sup>351</sup> Inadequate stocks of food and forage in controlled areas led to requisitioning attempts from civilians in uncontrolled areas, where British foraging parties were harassed by Patriot forces.<sup>352</sup> In the end, most of what the main British Army needed necessarily came from Britain, but that was not the initial plan.<sup>353</sup>

The Continental Congress, meanwhile, faced similar problems for different reasons. As with every aspect of governance, logistics was a new endeavor for Congress. Exigence and change were the order of the day.<sup>354</sup> Initially, Congress assigned logistics to a series of ad hoc

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<sup>350</sup> Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 15, 18.

<sup>351</sup> David C. Hsiung, "Food, Fuel, and the New England Environment in the War for Independence, 1775-1776," *The New England Quarterly* 80:4 (2007): 615, 637; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 30; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 19; Syrett, *Shipping and the American War*, 128; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 33-34.

<sup>352</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 52n, 66-72; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 22; Kohn, "Feeding the War Machine," 181. This is a perfect example of partisan warfare, or *petite guerre*, with regular army forces, although Tokar incorrectly labels all forces involved as guerrillas. Guerrilla armies are irregular indigenous troops who fade into their communities when not fighting. Although guerrillas were undoubtedly involved in logistical interdiction, regular British forces routinely supported foraging parties and very often Continental Army forces or organized militia intercepted. These were conventional soldiers operating under the established chain of command. Such fringe clashes between regular forces are part of what the eighteenth century labelled partisan, but they were not guerrilla.

<sup>353</sup> Syrett, *Shipping and the American War*, 128; Conway, *British Isles and the War of Independence*, 80; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 17; Hsiung, "Food, Fuel, and the New England Environment," 620, 632, 635; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 30.

<sup>354</sup> Buel, *In Irons*, 2; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 20, 32; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 5-6; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 2-3; James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953*

committees.<sup>355</sup> The committee approach quickly failing, Congress devised three logistical systems in succession during the war: the commissariat, specific supplies, and the contract system. Under the commissariat, staff departments such as the quartermaster general and commissary general purchased supplies for the army.<sup>356</sup> With the commissariat's failure, Congress established a specific supply system, calling on states to furnish supplies in lieu of a tax.<sup>357</sup> That failing, Congress initiated a contract system, by which civilian contractors furnished supplies to the army directly.<sup>358</sup> Once these systems failed to sustain forces in the field, armies resorted to requisitioning supply items directly from the public.

A variety of problems assailed Patriot logistics, but the most significant transcended organization or production. Congress lacked money to pay for supplies, however it acquired them.<sup>359</sup> Lack of available food was not a Patriot problem. In fact, producers needed military markets to replace overseas markets closed by war.<sup>360</sup> Meat, for instance, was so abundant

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(Washington: United States Army Center of Military History, 1997), 6; John A. Lynn, *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 176.

<sup>355</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 24; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 3; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 6; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume 2*, 190; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 6.

<sup>356</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 24; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 5; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 9-10; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 8.

<sup>357</sup> Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 5; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 16; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 171; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 67.

<sup>358</sup> Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 5-6; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 211-212, 221; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 242-243, 416-420; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 70, 71-72, 74; Lynn, *Feeding Mars*, 170.

<sup>359</sup> Barbara Clark Smith, "Food Rioters and the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51:1 (1994): 6; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 38, 56, 66-67; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 17-20; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 186; E. James Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance, 1776-1790* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 32-33; George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, Volume 17* ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 121-122.

<sup>360</sup> Buel, *In Irons*, ix, 3; Wayne D. Rasmussen, "The American Revolution and American Agriculture: A Comment," *Agricultural History* 43:1 (1969): 126; Hsiung, "Food, Fuel, and the New England Environment," 623; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 46; Syrett, *The Royal Navy in European Waters during the American Revolution*, 4-6. Syrett raises an interesting similarity between the issues of food and munitions. Munitions were relatively easy for Patriots to

that Patriot leaders felt comfortable using virtually the entire sheep herd for wool production.<sup>361</sup> Regardless of availability or need, however, producers could not sell without profit. Payment was necessary for producers to feed their families, pay their own bills, and provide seed or feed for the following year.

Congress lacked any enforceable method of raising money except printing it.<sup>362</sup> Money printed by Congress immediately began losing value and was worthless by the end of the war.<sup>363</sup> Vouchers drawn on Congress were just as useless because no cash existed to support them. Even staunch Patriots sold their wares on the civilian market, to the French Army, or even the British Army, thereby obtaining payment in coin or trusted currency.<sup>364</sup> Some providers refused to produce rather than accept Continental pay.<sup>365</sup> Congress provided some supplies throughout the war, but never enough to adequately provision the army. As a result, the Continental Army often suffered amid plenty.

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bring onto the continent. In neither case was the problem available supplies. Had the Patriot government had a dependable income, supplies of both food and munitions were readily available.

<sup>361</sup> Hsiung, "Food, Fuel, and the New England Environment," 625-626. Some historians argue that colonists did not like mutton, but David Hsiung effectively debunks that myth. According to Hsiung the actual inhibition was the conscious decision by Patriot leadership to maintain most of the colonial sheep herd for wool production.

<sup>362</sup> Ben Baack, "Forging the Nation State: The Continental Congress and the Financing of the War of American Independence," *The Economic History Review* 54:4 (2001): 641; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 147-148; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 29; Buel, *In Irons*, 5-7, 47. Most historians cited in this chapter argue that lack of money was the primary reason the Patriot army suffered logistically. Buel argues, rather, that lack of food came from shortages of foodstuffs complicated by the incompetence of those tasked with providing food. It appears the financial weakness argued by other historians is more logical, but for this dissertation it matters little. The important issue for this dissertation is that supplies were short for all Patriot armies and that shortages forced Greene and other commanders to take desperate measures to keep their armies together.

<sup>363</sup> Baack, "Financing American Independence," 643-644; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 38, 56, 66-67; Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse*, 32-33; Washington, *The Writings of George Washington, Volume 17*, 121-122.

<sup>364</sup> Tilley, *The British Navy and the American Revolution*, 30.

<sup>365</sup> Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 92, 127, 213, 222-223, 424; Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 47,73.



The insufficiency of Congressional supply systems left the Continental Army under Washington constantly on the verge of starvation or disbandment. The option Washington seized on to provision the army was requisitioning supplies from the producers – the public.<sup>366</sup> Requisitioning, however, required either permission from reluctant state governments (via requisition warrants), or imposition over state objections. The ire of residents was a significant issue in a war that depended on what modern military theorists call the hearts and minds of the public.<sup>367</sup> Nor could armies simply allow civilians to starve. It was necessary to leave enough supplies for them to survive and produce the following year. Finding necessary supplies without the burden falling on too few individuals required knowledge of the population, typically only possessed by local agents.<sup>368</sup> In many cases, however, state governments refused issuance of requisition warrants. In other cases, local governments refused to honor them.<sup>369</sup>

Once the army gathered adequate supplies at least one hurdle remained – transportation. A government that could not buy supplies could not buy wagons; nor horses to pull them; nor hay and grain to feed the horses; nor drivers to handle the teams.<sup>370</sup> To

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<sup>366</sup> Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 47, 67, 78; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 78; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 10*, 192-193; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 20*, 458; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 61.

<sup>367</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 81, 84, 93, 95; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume II*, 118; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 19*, 450.

<sup>368</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 19*, 450; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 81, 83.

<sup>369</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 87, 88-90; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume V*, ed. Richard K. Showman (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 166.

<sup>370</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 60-63; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume 2*, 290; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 10*, 393-394; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 92; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 40, 73, 75-76, 80, 95; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 21, 35, 66; Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 77; James A. Huston, *Logistics of Liberty: American Services of Supply in the Revolutionary War and After* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 147; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 18, 36, 37, 62, 68; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 32-33. Spring makes the valid and important point that wagons were an issue for the British Army, as well as the Patriot army.

illustrate the importance of wagons and the numbers of them required, in his withdrawal from Philadelphia General Clinton's wagon train was twelve miles long.<sup>371</sup> While the British army undoubtedly used more wagons per soldier than the Patriots, the numbers remained prodigious.

Two other issues compounded the problem of transportation. First, many roads were awful, slowing wheeled traffic to a crawl or causing breakdowns. Sometimes lack of development or seasonal issues made roads completely impassable.<sup>372</sup> Second, competition for wagons between various departments and units, as well as with the French and British military, drove up prices.<sup>373</sup> The end result was that both the Continental Army and the British Army frequently found it impossible to purchase the supplies they needed, or to adequately deliver the supplies they did acquire.

Greene assumed command of the Southern Department after the first Congressional attempt at organized logistics had failed and as the second, specific supplies, was failing. Greene had neither adequate money nor any regular source of logistical support.<sup>374</sup> Washington's situation in the north was little different but he had one advantage Greene did not. By this point stalemate marked the war in the northern theaters. Greene required the ability to move

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<sup>371</sup> Conway, *The War of Independence*, 104.

<sup>372</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 131, 406; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 34; Tilley, *The British Navy and the American Revolution*, 178; Stanley J. Olsen, "Food Animals of the Continental Army at Valley Forge and Morristown," *American Antiquity* 29:4 (1964): 507; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 55-56; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 29, 64, 80; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 62; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 63; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 144. Chandler calls the roads in Europe "execrable." Undoubtedly the roads in America were even less developed.

<sup>373</sup> Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 86, 92; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 73.

<sup>374</sup> Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 22.

quickly just to survive, and it was important for him to fight and win battles to restore public confidence after a series of losses by his predecessors.

Greene's logistical support was largely what he could wheedle from Virginia and North Carolina,<sup>375</sup> the states tasked under the specific supplies system with supplying his army. While they provided the bulk of Greene's official supplies, they never provided enough to keep the army in the field. As in the north, the primary issue was Congress' lack of money to buy supplies. Specific supplies depended on the states. Poverty and jealousy made state governments ineffective substitutes for the Continental Congress.<sup>376</sup> The states were almost as destitute and disorganized as Congress, and what they did have they were often unwilling to part with.<sup>377</sup> Virginia, for instance, was so desperate for gunpowder early in the war that the state unsuccessfully tried to make its manufacture a cottage industry.<sup>378</sup>

For both Washington and Greene politics, culture, and economics worked to the detriment of logistics. Jefferson's elegant phrasing notwithstanding, Patriot soldiers fought for life, liberty, and property.<sup>379</sup> The British tradition of civilian control over the military possibly had even stronger support in the colonies than in Britain itself.<sup>380</sup> Colonists retained not only a

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<sup>375</sup> Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 46; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence", 67, 69, 78, 89, 95; Walter Clark and William Laurence Saunders, eds., *The State Records of North Carolina, Volume 15* (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2015), 98-99.

<sup>376</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 173, 186; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 66-67, 72; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 23, 87-88, 241; Fitzpatrick, *Writings of Washington, Volume 17*, 121-122.

<sup>377</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 178; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 56; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 238-239; Jameson, "Subsistence for Middle States Militia," 123.

<sup>378</sup> Reynolds, "Ammunition in Virginia," 57, 59-60.

<sup>379</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 12; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 81; Morris, "Class Struggle and the American Revolution," 5.

<sup>380</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 8.

fear of standing armies, but the belief in their right to control personal property even to the detriment of the cause. Political leaders who did not support property rights risked defeat in future elections and even the ruin of their business careers.<sup>381</sup>

Fear compounded the cultural issue. State political leaders were understandably more concerned about harm the British Army *might* cause within their state than what the British Army *was* doing in other states.<sup>382</sup> Consequently, even states facing no immediate threat sometimes held back money, men, and supplies for their own use and protection. Local politicians, motivated by concerns of their constituents and perhaps threats to their own lives or property, often hoped some other state would sacrifice so they would not have to.

An example of fear leading a southern state to put its affairs ahead of the cause was Jefferson's unwillingness to furnish men for Greene's army. Greene promised Jefferson that Continental soldiers marching for the south would reach Virginia in time to oppose any British Army offensive in that state. Meanwhile, he needed Virginia militia immediately. Jefferson refused, hanging onto his state's militia despite the risk of losing the entire south.<sup>383</sup> A similar issue was Virginia's decision to supply lead to its soldiers and those of North Carolina ahead of the Continental Army at a time when the primary fighting was in New York and Canada.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 8-9; Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 78.

<sup>382</sup> Dougherty, "Federalist and Anti-Federalist Theories," 48.

<sup>383</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 60n, 367; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 337; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 182-183.

<sup>384</sup> Reynolds, "Ammunition in Virginia," 65-66. Reynolds is sympathetic with Jefferson's decisions to protect his state because, as he argues, circumstances required Virginia to support many operations during the war, often at the same time. Reynolds is not entirely incorrect in his assessment. Virginia's contributions as a supply base were the primary reason given by Cornwallis for moving his army into that state after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The truth is that there simply was not enough of everything to go around. Jefferson may not have always made the best strategic decisions, but he apparently did as much as he could for all parties involved.

Another example, this one of holding personal property at the expense of the cause, was the dispute with Virginia over horses. Greene sought cavalry mounts from Virginia, but the state refused him any horses used as breeding stock or above forty pounds in value. Those restrictions made it hard to find mounts that could withstand the rigors of military campaigning. Virginians accused Greene's officers of requisitioning mounts outside limits set by the Virginia legislature, and Jefferson wanted them returned. Greene complied, but complained that it was unwise for Virginians to put their horses ahead of their liberties. In the end, the British Army captured the horses in question and used them as mounts for British cavalry.<sup>385</sup>

Greene's appointment to southern command came at a doubly difficult time. Not only was Continental currency almost completely worthless by December 1780, the logistical situation in the south had reached its peak (or perhaps trough) of despair. The surrender of Savannah and Charlestown and the Battle of Camden all came with loss of large quantities of supplies.<sup>386</sup> At the time Greene assumed command his army contained fewer than two thousand men. Fewer than half those on hand were in condition to march or fight.<sup>387</sup>

The crisis of the public treasury caused two unfortunate circumstances. First, Greene's army, like Washington's in the north, necessarily supplied itself through requisitioning directly

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<sup>385</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 367; Golway, *Washington's General*, 265; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 338-339; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 182-183.

<sup>386</sup> Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 68; Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 78; Carl P. Borick, *A Gallant Defense: The Siege of Charleston, 1780* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2003), 200-201, 247; William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution, Volume 2* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1802), 84-85; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 72.

<sup>387</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 291; Siry, *Greene*, 62; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 137-138; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 60-61.

from the public. Possibly half the food Greene's army consumed during his tenure in command he obtained by requisition.<sup>388</sup> Nor was food the only item in short supply. Clothing was so scarce Greene sent some Virginia troops home until the state provided dress for them.<sup>389</sup> Second, even with supplies on hand, Greene's army, like those in the north, found itself handicapped by lack of transport. The British Army captured many of the wagons used by the southern army in defeats prior to Greene's arrival, and many of those remaining were in disrepair. Horses to pull the wagons were in short supply, as were teamsters to drive them. Teamsters were normally civilians, often owning the rig they drove. Without money to pay drivers they were difficult to hire, requiring the detailing of soldiers as teamsters, decreasing their availability for battle.<sup>390</sup>

Horses, when available for artillery, wagons, or cavalry, were not an unmitigated blessing. They required a minimum of fourteen pounds of hay and seven pounds of grain per day, and really needed twenty pounds of hay and nine of grain daily.<sup>391</sup> A week long campaign required that as many as forty percent of the wagons haul horse feed.<sup>392</sup> That percentage increased in accordance with the length of the campaign.

Another problem that plagued armies of both sides, north and south, was fuel required for cooking and for warmth in inclement weather. Greene's army was never large, even by

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<sup>388</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 98.

<sup>389</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 295; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume 6*, 573; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 68.

<sup>390</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 61; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 72-73, 75, 80, 95; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 543; Clark and Saunders, *State Records of North Carolina, Volume 15*, 628-629; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 37.

<sup>391</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 58; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 144.

<sup>392</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 58-59.

Revolutionary War standards. Still, even two or three thousand men in a single location for several days would strip all the burnable trees within easy reach. All armies used fatigue parties to cut wood and haul it into camp. That caused further wear on wagons and horses, as well as exposing the fatigue parties to enemy attack.<sup>393</sup>

The result was that men often went without. They went without food. They went without clothing. They went without tenting or other protection from inclement weather. They went without wood to cook their food, to warm themselves, or to warm water to wash with. Often men had little choice but to endure those hardships or desert, but when it became possible they took matters into their own hands. Formal requisitioning, with at least a promise of pay, caused enough public relations problems.<sup>394</sup> Soldiers simply taking what they wanted was even worse.

Men chopped down orchards, tore down fences, and damaged or destroyed buildings in their efforts to get wood.<sup>395</sup> They stole fowl and livestock to feed themselves. Men were so hungry they ate the marrow from the bones and broke the jawbones of meat animals to get at the nourishment which "could be found at the tooth roots."<sup>396</sup> They stole clothing not only from civilians but from other soldiers to cover their nakedness and keep warm. One historian

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<sup>393</sup> Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35; Hsiung, "Food, Fuel, and the New England Environment," 645-651; Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 60-62; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 21, 142. Yet another example of partisan warfare fought between regular forces.

<sup>394</sup> Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure*, 84-85; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume II*, 117-118; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume IV*, ed. Richard K. Showman (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 87-88; Jameson, "Subsistence for Middle States Militia," 132; Edward C. Papenfuse and Gregory A. Stiverson, "General Smallwood's Recruits: The Peacetime Career of the Revolutionary War Private," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 30:1 (1973): 119; Rankin, *North Carolina Militia*, 280.

<sup>395</sup> Syrette, *Shipping and the American War*, 126-127.

<sup>396</sup> Olsen, "Food Animals," 508, 509.

likened them to a plague of locusts swarming over an area.<sup>397</sup> They stole or destroyed anything necessary to meet their needs.<sup>398</sup> Greene, and in the north Washington, both took steps to limit soldier's depredations, but to no great avail.<sup>399</sup>

In the north, the improvised logistical system led to mutiny as freezing, starving men could stand their plight no longer.<sup>400</sup> Greene's army suffered no mutiny during active campaigning, although he feared one, and only a minor mutiny in the years after active campaigning ceased.<sup>401</sup> The combination of what the states provided, what the army could formally requisition, and what the men stole was enough, barely, to get them through the war. They were often on the edge of starvation and it is safe to say that Greene spent as much time supplying his army as he did planning campaigns for it.

As with Greene's army, the British government supplied some needs, including some food, to its army in the south. Still, while adequate supplies existed in England, British bureaucratic disorganization and the squeeze on shipping meant southern logistical needs were second to those in the north. Also as with Greene's army, the British Army in the south was, to a significant extent, forced to feed itself.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Carp, *To Starve an Army at Pleasure*, 91.

<sup>398</sup> Carp, *To Starve an Army at Pleasure*, 91; Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 79-81; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 66, 75; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 73, 194, 228; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 233; Hamilton, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, Volume II*, 531; Conway, "Great Mischief Complain'd of," 383-385.

<sup>399</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 231-233; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 3*, 312, 342, 414.

<sup>400</sup> Carp, *To Starve an Army at Pleasure*, 180-181; Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 90; Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 48, 55, 64, 83-84, 95.

<sup>401</sup> Maxwell, "Hungering for Independence," 84, 88-89; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume 12*, 547-549.

<sup>402</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 145; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 33.



The British Army in South Carolina was also largely unable to get money in the form of specie. As a result, it used a voucher system much like that used by the Continental Army, with similar results. Inability of backcountry producers to travel to Charlestown, and lack of certainty they could collect if they made the trip, led to fraud and speculation. South Carolina food producers were often no better off than with Patriot vouchers.<sup>403</sup>

Forced to rely on its own efforts, the British Army in the south used the same expedient as Greene, requisitioning directly from the public. However, it was better organized. The British Army appointed commissaries of capture, men tasked with accounting for and organizing all captured goods. It also appointed a commissary of sequestered estates. That officer supervised the renovation of farms and plantations abandoned by or confiscated from Patriots and operated them as producing entities.<sup>404</sup>

The commissaries of capture rode with forward elements of the army, gathering property before soldiers seized it for personal use. That worked well and the British Army made excellent use of captured goods, although it was barely enough.<sup>405</sup> The commissary of sequestered estates did not work as well. A good idea in theory, the British Army never established necessary long-term control over the state. Even immediately after Camden,

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<sup>403</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 166; Franklin B. Wickwire and Mary B. Wickwire, *Cornwallis and the War of Independence* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1971), 235-236; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 36.

<sup>404</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 86-90; Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns, 1775-1782*, ed., William B. Willcox (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 177; Banastre Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America* (Dublin: Coles, Exshaw, White, H. Whitestone, Burton, Byrne, Moore, Jones, and Dornin, 1787), 86, 186-189; Borick, *Gallant Defense*, 69-70.

<sup>405</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 87-88.

guerilla forces raided plantations and interdicted British Army supply lines.<sup>406</sup> On Greene's return to South Carolina after Guilford Courthouse, the British Army was unable to defend the countryside and soon lost the plantations. Given time for the scheme to mature it might have been very productive. As it was, the commissary of sequestered estates lost thousands of pounds.<sup>407</sup>

In the end, the same restrictions that denied the British Army the ability to feed itself from American sources in the north worked against it in the south. It could not control enough territory to support itself, thus the plan for using military departments to purchase supplies in America largely failed. Inadequately supported by British shipping, the British Army in the south suffered many of the same problems as Greene's forces, despite better organization. British soldiers went hungry, did without adequate clothing, lacked necessary transportation (especially after Cornwallis burned his train), and had difficulty finding fuel.<sup>408</sup> As with Patriot soldiers, British soldiers resorted to theft whenever possible.<sup>409</sup> Also like Patriot soldiers, when British soldiers deemed the situation too intolerable they deserted.<sup>410</sup> More than two hundred fifty men deserted Cornwallis between burning his wagon train and the Battle of Guilford

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<sup>406</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 80.

<sup>407</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 90-91.

<sup>408</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 51, 91, 149; R. Lamb, *An Original and Authentic Journal of Occurrences during the Late American War from Its Commencement to the Year 1783* (Dublin: Wilkinson & Courtney, 1809), 348, 357, 381.

<sup>409</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 79-80.

<sup>410</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 56; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 163; Christopher Ward, *The War of the American Revolution, Volume 2* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 765.

Courthouse, roughly ten percent of his force over a period of less than two months.<sup>411</sup> That percentage of loss on the battlefield is typically considered significant, even substantial.

After Guilford Courthouse Cornwallis, desperate for supplies, marched for the North Carolina coast and then north, into Virginia.<sup>412</sup> Without Cornwallis' army to defend South Carolina no available British military force could stop Greene. The combination of limited manpower and limited supply forced the British Army into coastal enclaves at Savannah and Charlestown.<sup>413</sup> The British navy supplied it there, lest it surrender. With the capture of Yorktown, fighting in the south ended for all practical purposes. However, both sides suffered from limited supplies until war officially ended two years later.<sup>414</sup>

There are few issues regarding the American Revolution about which historians are in greater agreement than the lack of supplies available to Patriot forces. Fewer of them seem aware that the British Army suffered as well, and in the south perhaps just as much and for similar reasons as the Patriot army. Both sides depended on logistical departments within their military structures in America for purchasing supplies, but neither side was effective in that effort. Washington, Greene, Howe, Clinton, Cornwallis, and the latter's successors in the south all struggled with their government's inability to supply them. The result was similar for all involved. All armies resorted to requisitioning directly from the public, although the British

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<sup>411</sup> Bowles, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 56.

<sup>412</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 36-38, 43-44; George W. Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 77:4 (1976): 219.

<sup>413</sup> Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 224.

<sup>414</sup> Adams, "Jean Baptiste Ternant," 238.

Army in the north faced that necessity less than other armies. All of them knew requisitioning alienated the civilian population, but the stakes were great. They chose requisitioning rather than withdrawal or disbandment.<sup>415</sup>

Historians are correct when they suggest Greene was not an innovator regarding logistics. Greene's knowledge of logistics came from his studies of European warfare and the experience he gained first serving under Washington, and then as quartermaster general. As quartermaster general, he requisitioned much of the supplies he gleaned for Washington while begging Congress for the remainder. He operated in the same manner as commander of the Southern Department, begging from Virginia and North Carolina what they could and would give and requisitioning the rest from the public. He did not like requisitioning supplies because he knew public goodwill was important, but he also understood priorities, and priority was survival of the army. In all this his actions mirrored those of Washington and of the British commanders he faced in the south.

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<sup>415</sup> Hsiung, "Food, Fuel, and the New England Environment," 621; Conway, "Great Mischief Complain'd of" 370.

## CHAPTER 7

### INTELLIGENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Information is as crucial as ammunition to the successful prosecution of war. Without intelligence, a general is blind and without effective communications he is crippled. As does any general, Nathanael Greene contended with those issues while commanding the Southern Department during the American Revolution. That he did so in largely the same manner as his peers and his opponents provides yet more evidence he was conventional in all aspects.

Intelligence staffs were rudimentary or non-existent for all armies involved in the American Revolution, the commanding officer typically acting as his own intelligence officer. Participants used diverse methods for intelligence gathering during the American Revolution, all made potentially difficult or dangerous by nature or enemy activity. Even when possessed, intelligence was only as good as its analysis and evaluation, activities which were difficult under the best of circumstances. Officers and noncommissioned officers typically delivered commands by shouting or messenger. Both written and oral communications were subject to loss or misunderstanding. On a tactical level, it was difficult to control forces on the battlefield. Strategically, information was often out of date before a field commander received it. That combination resulted in significant independence for commanders at all levels.

#### Intelligence, Counter Intelligence, and Security

There exists a broad-based view of Nathanael Greene as unconventional, ahead of his time in the application of guerrilla warfare. One element of that view is that Greene, unlike

other army commanders, routinely used mounted guerrillas for gathering intelligence.<sup>416</sup> A close inspection of Greene's intelligence goals and methods indicates that Greene's intelligence operations were similar in every way to those of his peers and his enemies. That implies Greene's intelligence operations were completely conventional.

The modern United States Army defines military intelligence as "information and knowledge about an adversary obtained through observation, investigation, analysis, or understanding."<sup>417</sup> Counter intelligence "includes all actions taken to detect, identify, track, exploit, and neutralize" enemy intelligence efforts.<sup>418</sup> While the definitions are modern, the process is as old as war.

Every commander needs to know what is on the other side of the hill. Intelligence is the effort to understand the plans and ability of the enemy while preserving the secrecy of friendly plans and abilities. Not just gaining enemy information, it involves understanding what that information means. It also concerns denying the enemy information about friendly forces. Intelligence and counter intelligence are opposite sides of a coin and operate from the highest levels of government to the smallest military units.

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<sup>416</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 196; Kyte, "Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 216-217; Scheer, "Henry Lee on the Southern Campaign," 147; Jackie R. East, "Lessons from the British Defeat: Combating Colonial Hybrid Warfare in the 1781 Southern Theater of Operations" (master's thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2014), 13-14; Todd J. Johnson, "Nathanael Greene's Implementation of Compound Warfare during the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution" (master's thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 3; Brian D. Kerl, "Operational Leadership of Nathanael Greene during the Southern Campaign of 1780-1781" (master's thesis, Naval War College, 2007), 12; Jac Weller, "The Irregular War in the South," *Military Affairs* 24:3 (1960) 131; Kristen M. Seielstad, "'On Secrecy, Success Depends:' Intelligence Operations During the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution" (master's thesis, The Citadel, 2010), 10.

<sup>417</sup> Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-101.

<sup>418</sup> Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-81.

Modern military staffs, such as logistics or operations staffs, collect and analyze information regarding their area of expertise and provide their commanding officer with options and recommendations based on their analysis. They are comprised of professionally trained officers and enlisted men led by a senior officer who is responsible to the formation commander for their work output. Staffs began developing by the late eighteenth-century, but were initially limited to logistics.<sup>419</sup> Modern operations, personnel, and intelligence sections remained in the future. Greene, like most senior commanders, had officers assigned to the collection of intelligence but remained his own intelligence chief.<sup>420</sup> There was no intelligence section to collate and analyze data and provide Greene with advice based on that information.

Military intelligence personnel were typically part-time, tasked with gathering information or managing civilian spy networks along with other assignments. Civilian spies were also part-time. They used their civilian businesses or jobs as covers for their intelligence

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<sup>419</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 21, 70, 16; Chauncey Worthington Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume XIV* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1909), 757; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 750; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IV*, 44, Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 186; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VII*, 24; Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 70-71; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 70; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 5; Julian Thompson, *Lifeblood of War: Logistics in Armed Conflict* (London: Brassey's, 1991), 6-7; Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 35-38. Tokar, writing the thesis for his master's degree from the Army Command and General Staff College, argues that the quartermaster general was, in fact, chief intelligence and operations officer – in effect, a modern chief of staff. That, however, is a misreading on his part of Thompson and Creveld. Both Thompson and Creveld argue that the quartermaster general gathered intelligence, but neither suggest the quartermaster general collated or analyzed intelligence or advised the commanding general regarding intelligence issues. Creveld is clear in saying that the quartermaster general is not the operational planner for the army.

<sup>420</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 198, 202; Nathanael Greene, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Volume XII*, Dennis M. Conrad, ed. (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 310-311; David Ritchie, "George Washington's Development as an Espionage Chief" (master's thesis, University of North Texas, 1993), 23; Seielstad, "On Secrecy, Success Depends," 9-10. In his letter, Greene recognizes the help of John Laurens in finding intelligence agents. Although Greene's letter is somewhat ambiguous, Colonel John Laurens merely controlled one of Greene's spy rings, he was not Greene's primary intelligence officer. In similar fashion, during the siege of Boston Lieutenant Colonel Loammi Baldwin collated all intelligence coming out of the city for Washington – more a clerical function than the work of a chief of intelligence. Baldwin did not advise Washington on intelligence matters, nor was he a member of Washington's staff. He was a regimental executive officer.

activities. British Lieutenant General Henry Clinton was the only commander in the American Revolution who had an officer on his staff tasked with reviewing intelligence and advising him from the collated reports, the job of a modern intelligence chief.<sup>421</sup> Even Washington, who ran extensive intelligence operations, was his own intelligence chief.<sup>422</sup>

Some spies on either side acted as double agents. Double agents were spies which both gathered information from the enemy and passed false information to the enemy.<sup>423</sup> In some cases, double agents were enemy spies caught and granted life and freedom for changing sides. However, in some cases they were men or women put into place by Greene or other commanders specifically for the purpose employed.<sup>424</sup>

Historians and analysts speak or write of strategy, operations, and tactics as if they were separate issues so that they might understand and explain the functions of each. That is sometimes misleading, however. While there are broad differences, considerable overlap and fluidity exists. The same is true for strategic intelligence and tactical intelligence. In general, however, strategic intelligence takes place at the highest levels of political and military command. Strategic intelligence concerns itself with whether a nation might go to war and under what conditions, opportunities for advantageous treaties, where an enemy (or a friend)

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<sup>421</sup> Roger Kaplan, "The Hidden War: British Intelligence Operations during the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47:1 (1990): 137.

<sup>422</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 128, 243; Phillip Papas, *That Ever Loyal Island: Staten Island and the American Revolution* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 66-67; Kaplan, "The Hidden War," 124.

<sup>423</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 201, 285; Kaplan, "The Hidden War," 131; Henry Thayer Mahoney and Marjorie Locke Mahoney, *Gallantry in Action: A Biographic Dictionary of Espionage in the American Revolutionary War* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999), 205; Golway, *Washington's General*, 223; Mackesy, *War for America*, 316; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 403; Broadus Mitchell, *The Price of Independence: A Realistic View of the American Revolution* (Oxford, Oxford University press, 1974), 23.

<sup>424</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 201; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume XI*, 75; Ritchy, "George Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 55.



is likely to commit the bulk of its military force, and similar issues.<sup>425</sup> Tactical intelligence deals with issues that directly affect commanders in the field. The best route for the army, the number of men in the enemy force, the enemy supply situation, enemy training levels, or the likelihood of enemy attack are all issues of tactical intelligence.<sup>426</sup>

Like most officers of the era Washington was his own intelligence chief, but several capable officers he chose as heads of various spy rings aided his efforts. Among them were Loammi Baldwin, who gathered and collated intelligence reports from inside Boston during the Patriot siege of that city. At first glance Baldwin resembles an intelligence chief, but his work did not involve either analysis or advice, nor was he assigned as an intelligence officer. He was, rather, the executive officer of an infantry regiment. Washington also made some use of the Boston area spy ring developed by Paul Revere.<sup>427</sup> Thomas Mifflin, at various times a member of Washington's personal staff, quartermaster general, member of the Board of War, and a field commander reaching the rank of major general, initially controlled Washington's spy ring in Philadelphia. He was also a Quaker, helpful in recruiting spies of that denomination, which Washington liked because their religious affiliation generally kept them above suspicion. In New York one of Washington's early ring leaders was John Mersereau, whose exploits resemble

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<sup>425</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 286; Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-177; Mackesy, *War for America*, 197, 287; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 282, 397. On page 282 Ferling argues that Washington used his considerable intelligence skills to spy on Patriots, as well as the British.

<sup>426</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 287; Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-182; Kurtz and Hutson, *Essays on the American Revolution*, 1973), 135.

<sup>427</sup> Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 23-25.

what someone might find in a modern spy novel.<sup>428</sup> Later Benjamin Tallmadge, a cavalry officer and friend of executed Patriot spy Nathan Hale, took over the New York City spy ring.<sup>429</sup>

While several officers proved themselves capable spymasters under Washington, actual spies were much harder to find or replace. Basic training for newly recruited soldiers took only weeks, even days in an emergency. On the other hand, generals often chose spies for irreplaceable social positions, business connections, or advantageous relationships. They required careful protection. That meant transferring them when circumstances became too dangerous. It also meant, when necessary, verifying certain men really were spies, allowing them to avoid punishment as traitors.<sup>430</sup> Humanitarianism also played a role in protecting spies, as punishments for spying were severe, often lethal. Nathan Hale is a good example. A volunteer sent into New York City, an area he did not know well, his Loyalist cousin recognized and reported him, leading to his apprehension. His capture came shortly after a fire that burned much of the city. The British Army blamed the fire on Patriot agents. In that political climate, Hale's death was swift and certain.

Secrecy was paramount in conveying information from spies to their commanders and Washington's spies used many tricks of the trade. Mersereau put his messages in a bottle and rowed them from Staten Island to the Jersey shore, where he left them under a certain rock. When he returned to Staten Island he lit a signal fire to let his contact know the message was

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<sup>428</sup> Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 44-55.

<sup>429</sup> Dorothy Denneen Volo and James M. Volo, *Daily Life during the American Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 138; Ward Melville, "The Re-Creation of a Colonial Village," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 101:3 (1957): 290. The Volos incorrectly characterize Tallmadge as Washington's "chief of espionage." In fact, he was a cavalry officer who ran the spy network in New York City for some time, an assignment resembling that given several other officers by Washington during the war.

<sup>430</sup> Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 44-47.

waiting. Inside the bottle with the message was also a rock or other weight that would take the bottle to the bottom of the water and hold it there. Mersereau tied a string to the weighted bottle and dropped it into the water, holding the other end of the string in his hand as he rowed. If challenged he had only to turn loose of the string.<sup>431</sup> Other methods utilized by spies included codes, codebreaking, invisible ink, and concealed correspondence.

The most elementary method of determining enemy circumstances may well have been simply asking someone who knew. Washington ordered questioning of prisoners, deserters, local citizens, and anyone else who might have knowledge worthwhile to him. If the person had truly important information, such as the old man who brought word that the British Army was flanking Washington at Brandywine or the man who turned in the letter from the Patriot traitor Dr. Benjamin Church, Washington frequently questioned them himself.<sup>432</sup>

Washington had little use for cavalry as combatants, but used it avidly for reconnaissance and intelligence gathering. He designed his cavalry regiments for that purpose, supporting them with intrinsic infantry so they could remain in the field for long periods. Along with Tallmadge, both Henry Lee and Allen McLane gained fame in that role. Lee worked out a plan with one of his non-commissioned officers that almost captured Benedict Arnold, returning him to the Continental Army for trial. The NCO feigned defection and Arnold accepted him, but shipped for Virginia just in time to avoid capture. McLane provided Washington with information protecting him from an enemy attack at Whitemarsh and

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<sup>431</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 48-53; Golway, *Washington's General*, 64; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 332; Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 20-23.

<sup>432</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 48-53; Golway, *Washington's General*, 64; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 332; Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 20-23.

allowing Lafayette a similar opportunity to escape entrapment at Barren Hill.<sup>433</sup> Washington constantly kept patrols in the field searching for information.

Proof that Washington did not waste his intelligence and counter-intelligence comes through just a few of the many examples available. Spies told Washington Howe had scattered his army across New Jersey just prior to the Trenton/Princeton campaign.<sup>434</sup>

Counterintelligence ended Church's work for Britain and led to his eventual exile from the colonies.<sup>435</sup> Washington's agents influenced Clinton twice. They reinforced (perhaps caused) the caution that held Clinton in New York City first in 1777 (where he failed to aid either Howe or Burgoyne) and again during the Yorktown Campaign.<sup>436</sup> Greene was present for all these operations except Yorktown, and played a leading role in several of them.

The British Army used similar methods.<sup>437</sup> Although lack of public support sometimes made it difficult to develop adequate information from spies, at other times the circumstances favored the British Army and they received information freely. Among the most significant British intelligence achievements was recruiting two high ranking Patriot officers – Major General Benedict Arnold, commandant of West Point, and Dr. Benjamin Church, Director

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<sup>433</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 141.

<sup>434</sup> Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 2-3.

<sup>435</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 48-53; Golway, *Washington's General*, 64; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 332; Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 20-23.

<sup>436</sup> Ritchey, "Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 48-55; Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 246; Kaplan, "The Hidden War," 137; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisans*, 163.

<sup>437</sup> Mahoney and Mahoney, *Gallantry in Action*, 162; Conway, *The British Isles and the American War for Independence*, 208; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 94; Kurtz and Hutson, *Essays on the American Revolution*, 136; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisans*, 125, 208.

General of the Medical Department of the Continental Army.<sup>438</sup> Information from spies also aided Cornwallis in his victory over Horatio Gates at Camden, as well as playing roles in several other British combat operations.<sup>439</sup>

As with Patriot spies, British spies also used various codes, invisible inks, and hiding places for their messages. Church, for instance, routinely wrote his messages using code, invisible ink, or both. Washington used his own codebreakers to determine the content of Church's message after its interception.<sup>440</sup> Major John Andre, Benedict Arnold's handler (using modern language), hid the plans for taking West Point in his boot. Unfortunately for him, he dressed in civilian clothing and had a pass from Arnold. Those actions might help escape detection, but if detected under those circumstances they could prove fatal, as they did for Andre.<sup>441</sup>

Spies and traitors were not the only methods of gaining information, of course. As with Washington and Greene, British generals questioned locals, deserters, prisoners-of-war, and any others they might have opportunity to gain information from. Patriot deserters first warned Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Stuart he was in danger of attack at Eutaw Springs.<sup>442</sup> Gage sent spies to question the population and map the land before the shooting war even

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<sup>438</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 48-53, 145-170.

<sup>439</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 60.

<sup>440</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 48-53.

<sup>441</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 145-170.

<sup>442</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 280. Some historians list the last name as Stewart.

began.<sup>443</sup> Patriot deserters also informed Colonel Francis Lord Rawdon, incorrectly as it turned out, that Greene was lacking artillery, prompting the Rawdon's attack at Hobkirk's Hill.<sup>444</sup>

British commanders routinely used cavalry to gather intelligence through pickets, patrolling, and reconnaissance. General Howe's cavalry captured Continental Major General Charles Lee, the second highest ranking Patriot military officer.<sup>445</sup> Groups such as the Skinners and the Cowboys in New Jersey and New York routinely gathered intelligence for the British Army. Both were militia cavalry often operating as guerrillas.<sup>446</sup> General Cornwallis, while in command in the south, was well known for using fast moving cavalry and infantry forces to gather both information and recruits from the locals. The most famous of his light forces were those commanded by Banastre Tarleton and Patrick Ferguson.<sup>447</sup>

Greene's southern spy network never equaled Washington's, but by the time the British Army evacuated Charlestown he did have a good one. Having once declared, "Intelligence is the life of every thing in war," Greene made serious efforts to develop an intelligence network

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<sup>443</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 45-46; John Blakeless, *Turncoats, Traitors, and Heroes* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 51-54; Jerome Carter Hosmer, *The Narrative of General Gage's Spies: March 1775, with Notes* (Boston: The Boston Society's Publications, 1912), 3-38; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 29; Ritchy, "George Washington's Development as Espionage Chief, 82; Kurtz and Hutson, *Essays on the American Revolution*, 131-132.

<sup>444</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 177-184.

<sup>445</sup> John Richard Alden, *Charles Lee: Traitor or Patriot?* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1951), 167-170.

<sup>446</sup> Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 119, 163, 292-293; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 164, 457, 566. The description given by Ferling on page 164 is of the unusual circumstance of the Patriot army having greater difficulty gathering intelligence than the British Army. That happened when Patriot military fortunes were at a low ebb. As noted previously in this dissertation, Ferling is among those historians who argue, if not for a Patriot majority in the colonies, at least for more Patriots than Loyalists. The circumstances Ferling describes on pages 457 and 566, in which the Patriot army is well informed and the British Army has difficulty gaining information, are much more common, as is clear from a comparison of the passages.

<sup>447</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 60.

from the moment he took command of the Southern Department.<sup>448</sup> Strategic intelligence interested Greene, of course. He supplied such information to Washington and Congress when it came to him, and received such information from his superiors when it was available. However, Greene's primary interest was tactical intelligence, and that is what he typically encountered. He avidly sought any information regarding local enemy capabilities or intentions.<sup>449</sup> His methods included spies, scouts, reconnaissance, intercepted letters and dispatches, outposts, pickets, patrols, and interrogations. He interrogated, or had interrogated, those he distrusted as well as those he trusted, including enemy deserters, South Carolina residents, captured enemy soldiers, rescued or escaped friendly prisoners of war, refugees, and anyone else who might provide information.<sup>450</sup>

While still in Charlotte Greene wrote a letter to Francis Marion, a well-known guerilla commander operating in the tidelands of South Carolina. Greene tasked Marion with recruiting spies to provide information regarding British Army units entering or leaving Charlestown.<sup>451</sup> Other militia leaders, such as Thomas Sumter, also provided intelligence for Greene, as did regular officers such as John Laurens.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 200; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume II*, 24.

<sup>449</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 200; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume II*, 24; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 286, 292, 310; Walter Edgar, ed., *The South Carolina Encyclopedia Guide to the American Revolution in South Carolina* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2012) 61, 82.

<sup>450</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 202, 208; Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 224, 225.

<sup>451</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 197-198; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 292-293; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 520; Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 216.

<sup>452</sup> Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 218; Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 212-214, 221-224; Elizabeth Ellet, *Revolutionary Women in the War for American Independence* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 125n, 134.

Greene instructed Marion to find a spy in Charlestown who could gather the necessary information unnoticed. That meant finding a Patriot spy who could move throughout the city without raising suspicion. Finding such a person was not a simple task. If caught, either side typically punished spies severely, often by hanging.<sup>453</sup> A spy could not count on his legal right to wander the city. Spying required someone whose business covered their movements.<sup>454</sup>

Marion tasked his spy with providing information to a civilian courier, also considered a spy, and likely hanged if caught.<sup>455</sup> The courier delivered information from the city to Marion.<sup>456</sup> Information might be verbal or written, and might involve invisible ink or codes. Spies practiced several other methods of concealing messages, as well.<sup>457</sup> The courier could not simply leave town to deliver a message. Marion found a Patriot whose business covered his travels to and from the city.

Once Marion received the information, he forwarded it to Greene.<sup>458</sup> Marion did not carry the message himself, his intelligence operations could not interfere with his field

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<sup>453</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 100; Thomas B. Allen, *George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won the Revolutionary War* (Washington: National Geographic, 2004), 37; Edmund R. Thompson, ed. *Secret New England: Spies of the American Revolution* (Boston: New England Chapter, Association of Former Intelligence Officers, 1991), 38; Golway, *Washington's General*, 230; Conway, *The British Isles and the American War for Independence*, 287; Mackesy, *War for America*, 351; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisans*, 283; Mitchell, *Price of Independence*, 216.

<sup>454</sup> Seielstad, "On Secrecy, Success Depends," 4; Mahoney and Mahoney, *Gallantry in Action*, 310; Ellet, *Revolutionary Women*, 121, 162-163, 174-175; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 453.

<sup>455</sup> Ellet, *Revolutionary Women*, 165, 207; Mackesy, *War for America*, 139.

<sup>456</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 197-198; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 292-293; Greene, *Papers of Greene*, Volume VI, 520.

<sup>457</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 48, 157-158, 162, 181, 182, 201, 285; Kaplan, "The Hidden War," 115-124; Allen, *George Washington, Spymaster*, 36, 62, 65, 67-69, 82, 84, 89-90, 115, 181-182; Thompson, *Secret New England*, 22, 55, 75; Ritchy, "George Washington's Development as Espionage Chief," 84, 85-86; Mahoney and Mahoney, *Gallantry in Action*, 57; Ellet, *Revolutionary Women*, 189; Golway, *Washington's General*, 64; Mitchell, *Price of Independence*, 126, 187.

<sup>458</sup> Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 218.



operations. He sent a dispatch rider. Although at times also called couriers, dispatch riders were soldiers, not spies. As such, laws and customs of war protected them if captured, but that did not mean they or their information were safe.<sup>459</sup> The most direct route from Charlestown to Charlotte was just over two hundred miles. However, the most direct route went through Winnsboro (modern Columbia), which Cornwallis occupied. An alternate, longer route was necessary. Complicating matters, Greene soon left Charlotte, backpedaling to avoid premature battle with Cornwallis.<sup>460</sup> The dispatch rider, of necessity, travelled even further, never certain exactly where either Greene or Cornwallis was located. Trips took more than a week to complete, sometimes more than two weeks.

The dangers of apprehension were obvious, but other dangers also existed. Rivers and creeks might flood; snakes or other animals could unhorse, injure, or kill dispatch riders; roads were often poor and routes poorly marked and hard to find, especially in the dark or during inclement weather. Dispatch riders ran the risk of robbery by civilians or guerrillas of either side, getting sick on the trail, injury to their horse, or many other possibilities. During the era of the American Revolution mere transport of the mail was difficult and uncertain. Transport of military intelligence was an even greater risk. Little choice existed despite the risks, however. The only method of delivering intelligence was by messenger. No other method existed, except that instead of dispatch riders, commanders might employ ships, boats, wagons, stagecoaches, or footmen.

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<sup>459</sup> Ellet, *Revolutionary Women*, 174-175.

<sup>460</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 308.

Whatever information reached Greene required his evaluation prior to acting on it. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, who commanded American military units in both world wars and Korea, reportedly said, “Expect only five percent of an intelligence report to be accurate. The trick of a good commander is to isolate the five percent.”<sup>461</sup> While five percent might not be specifically true, it does illustrate the difficulty of evaluating information obtained by spies. Even if Greene was certain of a spy’s allegiance and that the enemy had not caught and turned the spy, or discovered the spy and fed him or her misinformation, he could not simply assume information delivered was correct. Every commander weighed the logic of information gained by spying and compared it to other information he received.<sup>462</sup> Analysis was often a judgment call and might make or break a campaign.<sup>463</sup>

Like most commanders, Greene concealed the names of his spies lest agents be unnecessarily exposed if information fell into enemy hands.<sup>464</sup> As with other commanders, however, there were also exceptions to Greene’s practice of concealment. Spies walked a fine line. The very nature of their work meant that even if not caught by the enemy, other Patriots

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<sup>461</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Failing Forward: Turning Mistakes into Stepping Stones for Success* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 162.

<sup>462</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 205, 209; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume 11*, 491, 516; Kyte, “Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer,” 225; Mackesy, *War for America*, 2, 447; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 49, 76, 130.

<sup>463</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 198, 208; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume XII*, 310; Nathanael Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume XIII*, ed., Roger N. Parks (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 448; Kaplan, “The Hidden War,” 119; Jack S. Levy and Uri Bar-Joseph, “Conscious Action and Intelligence Failure,” *Political Science Quarterly* 124:3 (2009): 463; Richard K. Betts, “Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable,” *World Politics* 31:1 (1978) 69; Kyte, “Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer,” 224; Mackesy, *War for America*, 31, 43; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 179, 248.

<sup>464</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 200-201, 243; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 85, 227-229; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 597; Ritchey, “Washington’s Development as an Espionage Chief,” 9; Allen, *George Washington, Spymaster*, 58-60, 75.

might suspect them of disloyalty.<sup>465</sup> Retaliation might include execution, imprisonment, confiscation of property, or various other forms of official or unofficial brutality.<sup>466</sup> Greene sometimes took steps to protect spies from punishment. On at least one occasion a spy preferred the risk of having his name in dispatches as final proof of which side he was on.<sup>467</sup> Also, Greene gave some spies certificates proving their true allegiance and protecting them, their families, and their property.<sup>468</sup>

As with Washington and as with Greene's British adversaries, the front line of Greene's intelligence war was his cavalry.<sup>469</sup> On returning to South Carolina after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse Greene kept cavalry in the field constantly, often supported by mounted militia. They, along with infantry units, patrolled roadways, raided pickets, spied out the land, and gathered information in a variety of other ways. Equally important, Greene's cavalry and his own pickets provided a screen which kept the enemy from discerning his plans or surprising him, as demonstrated prior to Eutaw Springs. It was not just cavalry that Greene used for his intelligence efforts, however. Greene expected every commander at every level to gather and

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<sup>465</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 204, 207.

<sup>466</sup> Ritchy, "George Washington's Development as Espionage Chief, 86.

<sup>467</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 211; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume XI*, 545.

<sup>468</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 205, 206-207, 208, 210; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume XII*, 331; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume XI*, 546, 568.

<sup>469</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 202, 212-213; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 375, 388; Edgar, *American Revolution in South Carolina*, 117; Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," 219-220, 223; Scheer, "Henry Lee on the Southern Campaign," 145, 148; Mackesy, *War for America*, 290; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 124, 335; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisans*, 73, 85, 200, 202, 208; Conway, "British Army Officers in the War for Independence," 273.

forward whatever information was available and do his utmost to limit loss of information to the enemy.<sup>470</sup>

Once Greene compressed the British Army into Charlestown and other port cities he reaped the benefits of that effort through several intelligence rings.<sup>471</sup> His primary objective was information concerning size, condition, plans, and movements of the British Army.<sup>472</sup> He expected such information to give him notice of enemy attempts to break out of their enclaves or to inform him of opportunities to attack those enclaves. Fortunately for those fighting, the war ended before either army had the opportunity to make such an attack.

### Command and Control

The heart of battlefield control during the American Revolution was the ability of aides to deliver messages across the field. At the beginning of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse Greene had five aides prepared to support his command.<sup>473</sup> Across the field Cornwallis also had five such aides.<sup>474</sup> That, alone, is too little evidence to prove Greene's conventionality, of course. Still, it is a striking first note that again hints at the similarity of methodology between the "unconventional" Greene and his conventional foes.

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<sup>470</sup> Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 213-214; Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 202; Ritchy, "George Washington's Development as Espionage Chief, 43. After the fall of New York City Washington kept cavalry and infantry pickets around the city for similar reasons.

<sup>471</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 202-211; Edgar, *American Revolution in South Carolina*, 61.

<sup>472</sup> Daigler, *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors*, 198; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 293; Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 221.

<sup>473</sup> Lawrence E. Babits and Joshua B. Howard, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody: The Battle of Guilford Courthouse* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 68-69.

<sup>474</sup> Babits and Howard, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody*, 93.

The modern United States Army definition of a command and control system is “(t)he arrangement of personnel, information management, procedures, and equipment and facilities essential for the commander to conduct operations.” In other words, it is the method of controlling the army and delivering commands to its various subordinate parts, especially during battle.<sup>475</sup> The academic study of command and control is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating largely to World War II, but again the problem is as old as warfare.<sup>476</sup> An army becomes an army by bending individual wills to that of command. Without such discipline, it is a mob easily dispersed or destroyed.

The earliest armies about which we have significant information were compact organizations typically armed with spears or swords and protected by shields and armor. They fought shoulder to shoulder in ranks eight or more deep, standing face to face with the enemy.<sup>477</sup> Their compactness sustained their combat power. The common tactical goal of armies during the era of edged weapons was, in fact, to disrupt enemy formations.<sup>478</sup> However, while tactics were important, it was not the sole reason compact formations existed. Compact formations were also easier to control.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-38.

<sup>476</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 1-2.

<sup>477</sup> Hans Delbruck, *Warfare in Antiquity*, trans. Walter J. Renfro, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 27, 53; John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 24-248.

<sup>478</sup> Michael M. Sage, *Warfare in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 34; Scheer, “Henry Lee on the Southern Campaign,” 149. The tactical advantage of disrupting tight formations had not entirely disappeared by the era of the American Revolution. Henry Lee argues in a letter reprinted in Scheer’s article that among the reasons the Patriot army lost the Battle of Eutaw Springs was that Patriot forces fell into “open order” in the latter stages of the battle.

<sup>479</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 41-43.

The advent of gunpowder weapons brought changes to military formations which arguably continue yet. Armies became increasingly thinner and longer and operated at greater distance from the enemy.<sup>480</sup> At the same time armies increased dramatically in size.<sup>481</sup> As technology became more lethal, the need to spread the army became greater, and the problem of control more difficult. That problem went largely unsolved until the introduction of the man portable radio during World War II.<sup>482</sup> By the era of the American Revolution changes in army organization and tactics were already significant. Control measures for armies of that era struggled to keep pace.<sup>483</sup>

One result of the struggle between growth and control was the development of a meager staff system. Ancient and medieval armies needed little specialized equipment. Men typically furnished their own weapons and armor and provided their own mounts, if used. Food and fodder were their primary concerns while on campaign and at least for short periods they could live by foraging. As armies and populations grew, subsistence warfare became less effective. Technology increased logistical challenges. Medicines and munitions, particularly, required a supply pipeline.<sup>484</sup> Money was also necessary to buy items, such as fresh food, not easily transported across the ocean. Armies took such items by force when necessary, of

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<sup>480</sup> Black, *A Military Revolution?*, 3, 22.

<sup>481</sup> Black, *A Military Revolution?*, 7.

<sup>482</sup> Black, *A Military Revolution?*, 22; Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 152-153.

<sup>483</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 38-39; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 21; Kaplan, "The Hidden War," 117.

<sup>484</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 17, 150-153.

course, but the ethics of the era and the pragmatic necessity of gaining or retaining public support made purchase the preferred choice.<sup>485</sup>

Supply concerns led to development of a logistical staff. In the British Army, the quartermaster general became the prototype of the modern chief of staff.<sup>486</sup> That was not the case in most armies. Still, quartermasters, commissaries, barracks masters, muster masters, medical directors, and similar logistical staff were common in European armies even before the American Revolution. Similar positions existed within the Continental Army.<sup>487</sup>

Operational, intelligence, and personnel staffs were less common and less formal. Henry Clinton was the only army commander involved in the American Revolution who developed an intelligence staff, and he did so slowly.<sup>488</sup> No commander had an operations staff. Each commander (except Clinton concerning intelligence) was his own primary intelligence officer and operations officer.<sup>489</sup>

What senior commanders did have was a system of aides of various ranks which served not only as a truncated staff but as assistants and messengers.<sup>490</sup> These men, often called the commander's military family, were available for almost any type of mission. They might act as

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<sup>485</sup> Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 17.

<sup>486</sup> Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political change*, 70-71; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 21;

<sup>487</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume XIV*, 757; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 750; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IV*, 44, Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 186; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VII*, 24; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 21, 70, 16.

<sup>488</sup> Kaplan, "The Hidden War," 137-138; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 594.

<sup>489</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 38-39; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 70.

<sup>490</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 38-39; Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, 67, 114. John Laurens acted in such a capacity between Washington and d'Estaing in 1778.

spies, such as British Major John Andre.<sup>491</sup> Sometimes they temporarily replaced commanders of similar rank killed or wounded in battle. Some took care of the personal equipment of the commander and handled his correspondence. A common use of such men was the delivery of messages, the rank of the messenger often comports with the importance of the message. Whatever the rank, carrying messages on the battlefield was dangerous as the messenger was a soldier and subject to the same risks as other soldiers. Eighteenth-century battlefields were smoky, dusty places, often large enough the whole battlefield was not open to view at one time. Messengers were subject to stray shells or bullets, stumbling into enemy formations, and enemy fusillades, to name but a few risks.<sup>492</sup>

When off the battlefield it was not just aides which delivered messages or undertook other missions for their commanders. That task fell to anyone the commander trusted, even civilians, especially if they were travelling in the direction a letter needed to go. Greene's own letters sometimes report the person tasked with their delivery, as do those of Washington.<sup>493</sup>

Whatever the source of the message, there were only two forms it could take and one method of delivery. A message was either written or relayed verbally. Either way, it required personal delivery. Those limitations significantly affected both the relevance and accuracy of the message. Months routinely passed between the sending of a message from British Army commanders to their government and its answer.<sup>494</sup> For example, a commander might deliver his letter by a friend or army officer returning to England, or possibly a ship's captain. Even if

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<sup>491</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 411-412.

<sup>492</sup> Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 79-80.

<sup>493</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 19*, 298-299; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 140, 155.

<sup>494</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 85; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 126.



the ship had no other ports of call in America, the trip across the Atlantic took weeks. If the message went by merchant ship it typically landed at Cork, on the southern coast of Ireland, rather than in England. From there the letter carrier transferred his package to someone who carried it across the Celtic Sea to England, and thence to London, to the office of the intended recipient. Moreover, storms sometimes blew wind-powered ships off course or sank them. If the wind did not blow, the ship did not move, or if it blew from the wrong direction it slowed the ship significantly.<sup>495</sup> All this made coordination between London and America difficult.

The problem was less acute for Patriot commanders, especially those in the north. The best roads in the thirteen colonies were those between Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Albany and Saratoga were less than three hundred miles from Philadelphia. Northern commanders, at least, found their ability to communicate with their government significantly easier than did the British Army commanders. The difference was only relative, however. Washington's letters and those of other senior commanders repeatedly show that days, sometimes weeks, passed between sending and receipt of important information, if it arrived at all.<sup>496</sup> There are letters mentioned in the correspondence of both Washington and Greene that the intended recipient never saw – presumably lost, captured, or destroyed.<sup>497</sup>

Greene's correspondence issues were also less difficult than those of British commanders. They were more severe than those of northern Patriot commanders, however, because of the distance and the poorer quality of roads between his army and Philadelphia.

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<sup>495</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 332.

<sup>496</sup> Washington, *Letters of Washington*, Volume 19, 47.

<sup>497</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene*, Volume VII, 132n; Alden, *Charles Lee*, 153.

The distance between Charlestown and Philadelphia is almost seven hundred miles by a modern, direct route. Certainly, it was more than seven hundred miles by the routes then necessary to avoid contact with the enemy. Even over relatively good road a consistent twenty miles a day was a good pace. If Greene was operating deep in South Carolina an answer from Congress or Washington was unlikely in less than two months. It took perhaps half as long or a little more when Greene was operating in Virginia or northern North Carolina.<sup>498</sup>

Time and distance required for the transfer of information led inevitably to the increase of authority for military commanders in the field. Frederick the Great notwithstanding, national leaders commanding their armies in combat were rare in the eighteenth-century. Generals led armies. Generals, even those operating as close to their capitals as Washington, needed latitude. War often moved faster than the messaging systems of the era. As a result, governments supplied their commanders with broad strategic directives and commanders made whatever decisions were necessary to implement those directives, or even changed them if they felt sufficient need.<sup>499</sup> Not always a perfect solution, given the technological restrictions of the era it was the best available.

Latitude was not the prerogative of army commanders alone. Any detached commander, even a captain leading a company, required similar freedom of operation.<sup>500</sup> Cowpens happened after Greene nervously warned Morgan to avoid surprise and not to risk the army without a strong prospect of victory, but left the final decision regarding battle to

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<sup>498</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 102; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 34.

<sup>499</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 116-118; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 46, 52.

<sup>500</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 24; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 52.

him.<sup>501</sup> Henry Lee and his legion routinely operated detached from the main army both in the north, under Washington, and the south, under Greene.<sup>502</sup>

Of course, command and control was not just a strategic problem. Nowhere was the need for quick response more evident than during the chaos of battle. In extreme scenarios, minutes could decide the fate of nations.

Tactically, during the American Revolution armies formed themselves into lines, each comprising multiple ranks. As the map of Greene's largest battle, Guilford Courthouse, shows, Greene formed three basic lines with his army, in modern terminology a defense in depth (see map 2). Each of the blue lines on the map, as well as the red lines of the British Army, was a unit or group of units, formed into two ranks of musketeers or riflemen.<sup>503</sup>

As European nations formed musketeer units they initially fought in ranks as deep as armies armed with swords or spears.<sup>504</sup> European armies using gunpowder weapons gradually thinned to three lines, the fewest most generals believed could stop a cavalry charge.<sup>505</sup> Northern commanders of either side seldom used cavalry units in combat during the American Revolution. In the south, cavalry units were too small to waste in frontal assaults, and commanders typically committed them on the flanks, if at all. Thus, both British and Patriot

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<sup>501</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 589; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 22, 41-42, 73, 106, 107, 146-147; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 301; Golway, *Washington's General*, 245; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 76-77; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 145.

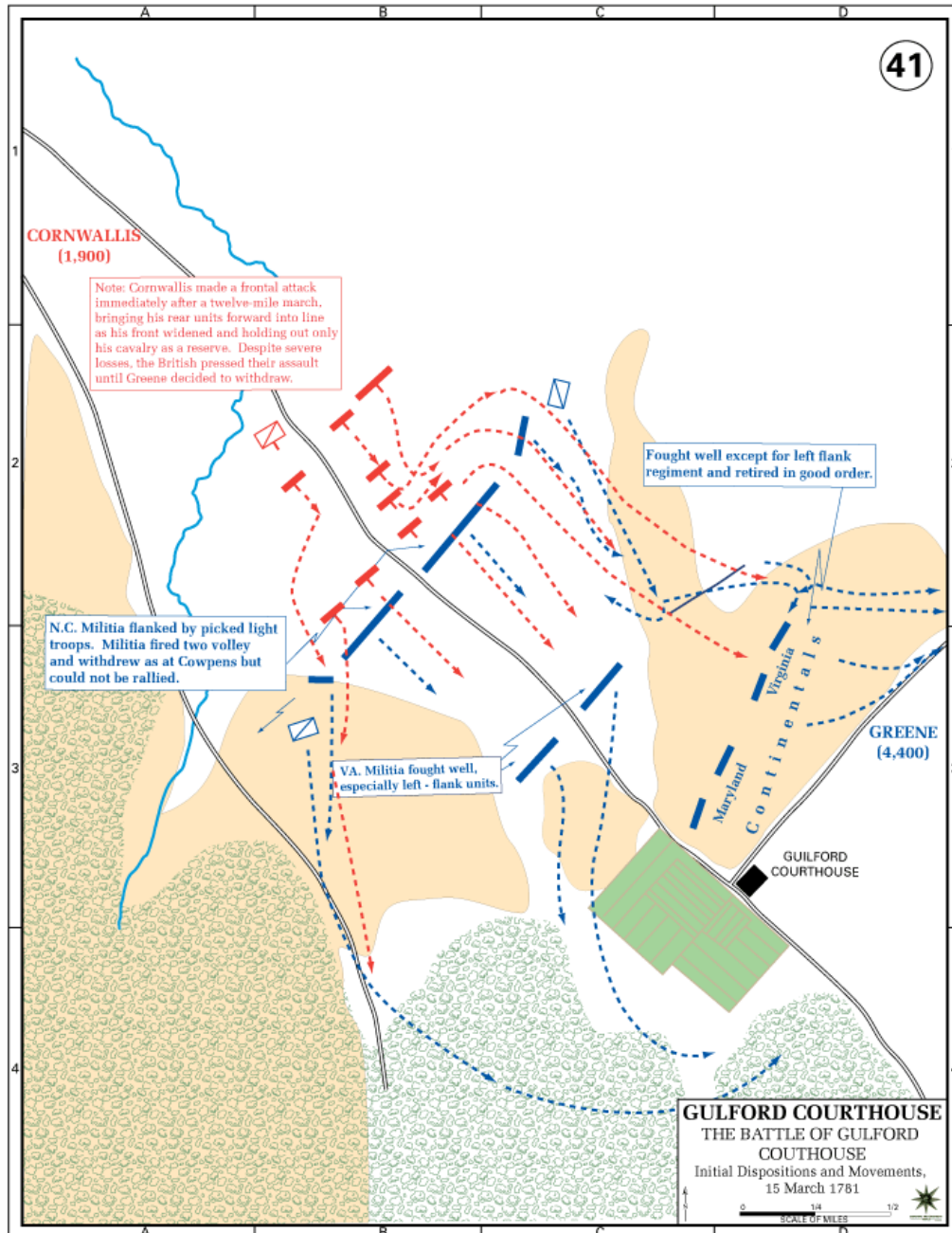
<sup>502</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 147, 253n; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 11*, 206, 241.

<sup>503</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 7, 29, 161-162.

<sup>504</sup> Black, *A Military Revolution?*, 3, 10; Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 53; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, 476; MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 36-40.

<sup>505</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 7, 29, 161-162; Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 53; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 94.

armies typically deployed in two ranks. Longer, thinner ranks were a mixed blessing. Tactically, thinner formations covered a larger front. Still, longer lines were harder to control, requiring more officers and noncommissioned officers.<sup>506</sup>



MAP 2: The Battle of Guilford Courthouse

SOURCE: Department of History, United States Military Academy at West Point

<sup>506</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 53-54.

Army commanders often placed themselves in the rear center of the battlefield or at some other location easily found. Alternately, they placed themselves near the expected point of decision, making themselves available for quick decisions if necessary.<sup>507</sup> If possible, they placed themselves where they could see their entire army, or a large segment of it, and the enemy's army as well. In practice, seeing either army, much less both, was difficult. In Europe, armies of major nations were typically too large. In America wooded terrain often hid one or both armies from clear view.<sup>508</sup> In either case, smoke and dust often obscured a commander's vision even when a line of sight existed.

At the Battle of Brooklyn Howe travelled with the right wing of his army, the decisive element. For most of the battle he could not see the center or left of his army, since the right wing deployed at night.<sup>509</sup> Neither Washington nor Howe could see their entire armies at Brandywine Creek, where Washington stationed himself behind the left wing near Chadd's Ford, expecting the British main attack there. He remained at that location until moving right to confront Howe's enveloping march.<sup>510</sup> Howe rode with his own left wing during the envelopment, remaining near the point of attack.<sup>511</sup> Washington marched into Trenton with Greene's division, hoping that Sullivan's division would show up in time to seal the trap he had planned but unable to see it during the march or affect its arrival or performance.<sup>512</sup> Once in

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<sup>507</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 53-54; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 71-72.

<sup>508</sup> Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 53.

<sup>509</sup> Gallagher, *The Battle of Brooklyn*, 105.

<sup>510</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 68-73.

<sup>511</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 63-64.

<sup>512</sup> Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 230.

Trenton, Washington posted himself on high ground near the north end of town, where King and Queen Streets intersected, a position easily found.<sup>513</sup>

In some battles commanders saw significantly more than in others, of course. At Bunker Hill, General Howe posted himself behind his grenadiers near the center of the field, a position from which he saw at least the basic dispositions of both armies.<sup>514</sup> At Stony Brook Bridge, two miles south of Princeton, Washington easily saw all forces committed by both sides as he personally led the charge against the British Army.<sup>515</sup>

Greene posted himself with his third line, the Continentals, at Guilford Courthouse expecting it to conduct the decisive fighting.<sup>516</sup> The terrain was so wooded his first two lines were hidden from view, which significantly interfered with his control of the battle.<sup>517</sup> Greene saw most of his army at both Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs, in the former riding near the front during his attack and in the latter directing the battle from the second line.<sup>518</sup> In every case where the commanders saw their whole armies, the battle was small. In large battles, and in many smaller battles, viewing the entire battlefield was impossible.

Control of a battle, to the extent battles were controllable, depended on two issues – a widely and clearly disseminated battle plan and messages sent in the heat of the conflict. The utter luck involved in such a system is obvious, but there was no choice. Ideally, the army

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<sup>513</sup> Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 241.

<sup>514</sup> Wood, *Battles of the Revolutionary War*, 14, 23.

<sup>515</sup> Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* 334-335.

<sup>516</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 258.

<sup>517</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 373.

<sup>518</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 345, 377.

commander met with his principal subordinates before battle and went over the battle plan and the assignments of each subordinate commander. They, in turn, met with their subordinates, explained their role in the plan and relayed orders, assignments, and objectives as necessary. Finally, company commanders met with their companies and instructed their men regarding company assignments.

Such careful preparation did not always happen, of course. Sometimes there was no opportunity, and some commanders were more careless than others. However, failure in that regard could be damaging. No way exists to precisely determine the impact of any event on a battle, but evidence exists in at least one of Greene's battles that preparation made a difference. Before Guilford Courthouse Greene followed a procedure resembling that described in the paragraph above. Beyond that, he and other officers walked the lines of their men, who slept in the positions they occupied for battle, and Greene personally explained their roles to many of them. The next morning his men prepared and ate breakfast before the British Army arrived, going into battle rested and nourished.<sup>519</sup>

Cornwallis, on the other hand, force marched his men twelve miles without breakfast; disseminated a hasty plan for frontal assault while his army moved into positions he dictated off the cuff; and stormed directly into the attack with no chance for his men to eat or rest.<sup>520</sup> Cornwallis' actions took place after a march of several weeks existing on slim rations because Cornwallis burned his wagon train at the opening of the campaign.<sup>521</sup> Cornwallis was an

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<sup>519</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 174-175.

<sup>520</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 170.

<sup>521</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 123, 170.

outstanding general who went on to a distinguished future. His army, although significantly outnumbered, was much better trained and more experienced than the Patriot army. Despite his handicaps he forced Greene from the field. Cornwallis' victory was, however, pyrrhic. Greene's army was relatively undamaged and had replacements available. The British Army, although victorious, was on the edge of dissolution, with no replacements at hand.<sup>522</sup> Such narrow victory gives cause to speculate – to the degree such speculation is fruitful – that any major change, such as careful dissemination of a battle plan while resting and feeding his army before battle, might have made a major difference in Cornwallis' favor.

Armies, even with careful preparation before battle, often faced sudden changes or challenges when fighting. During the American Revolution, officers and noncommissioned officers usually shouted orders above the din of battle and passed them from man to man. Information to, and orders from, higher headquarters went by messenger, who might get lost, wounded, or killed along the way. Officers wrote messages in a rush, subject to incompleteness or garbling. The inability to send a message quickly threatened Morgan's battle plan at Cowpens and unhinged Greene's at Hobkirk's Hill.<sup>523</sup> A garbled message almost cost Washington a significant portion of his army during the retreat from Long Island.<sup>524</sup> Battlefield communications always carried significant risk. The ability to pass messages on the field of battle, while tenuous, was potentially decisive.

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<sup>522</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 187.

<sup>523</sup> Babits, *Devil of a Whipping*, 109-112; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 182-183.

<sup>524</sup> Gallagher, *Battle of Brooklyn*, 150-151.



While the weaponry of the American Revolution was significantly advanced from the days of pike or sword, information technology still greatly resembled the days of Joshua and the conquest of Canaan. Gaining, evaluating, and sharing information was vital, but difficult. Time and distance limited every commander's information flow. Nathanael Greene faced the same trials in the search for and use of information as the superiors he served and the adversaries he faced. Like them, he addressed those challenges according to the accepted practices and conventions of European warfare in the Age of Reason.

## CHAPTER 8

### STRATEGY

John Dederer and those who agree with him, such as Lieutenant Colonel Jackie R. East, Major Jesse T. Pearson, and Major Joel Anthony Woodward, and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, argue that Nathanael Greene developed a new form of "hybrid Warfare" which East called the linking of "regular, irregular, and terrorist operations."<sup>525</sup> Dederer, himself, argued that Greene linked "guerrilla war, mobile war, and the strategic offensive."<sup>526</sup> A careful study of Greene's strategy suggests a different view. While Greene practiced maneuver warfare, his strategy resembled that of Washington and was not essentially different from his opponents in the south. What distinguished Greene was his execution of conventional strategy and his ability to attract recruits, not the invention of a strategy new or unconventional for that time.

Greene developed his theater strategy to support the grand strategy developed by Washington and Congress. He avoided significant risk to his army but he knew he could afford casualties better than the British Army. Using that knowledge as his guide, he conducted a sustained offensive against British forces in the south based on classic European attrition strategy. Greene's mobility and use of mounted task forces have led some historians to argue,

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<sup>525</sup> East, "Combating Colonial Hybrid Warfare," 1; Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw," 8; Jesse T. Pearson, "The Failure of British Strategy During the Southern Campaign of the American Revolutionary War, 1780-81" (master's thesis, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), 72; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 5, 8-9; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 103, 265. Both Woodward and O'Shaughnessy use the term irregulars interchangeably with partisan and guerrilla, carrying forward the mistake of equating the eighteenth and twentieth century meanings of the term partisan, as described in previous chapters.

<sup>526</sup> Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw," 8.

incorrectly, that he was a guerrilla commander. Some South Carolina militia units, on their own initiative, operated as guerrillas while Greene was out of state rebuilding his army. On his return to South Carolina most joined his army as conventional auxiliaries.

The argument for unconventional or guerrilla warfare is part of a larger common but flawed argument, the myth of the valiant few. That myth suggests a handful of Patriots, well organized and highly motivated, led a majority of politically apathetic colonists to independence almost against their will. In fact, Patriot military strategy, including Greene's, was successful for the most prosaic of reasons. Most colonists supported the Patriot cause and that support provided a significant Patriot military manpower advantage throughout the war. Not the valiant few, but the committed majority won America's independence.

Strategy is planning, and thus applies on every level of warfare.<sup>527</sup> However, when military or history professionals speak of strategy they typically mean either grand strategy or theater strategy. Grand strategy, the purview of politicians and senior military officers, is the use of national resources for the attainment of national objectives – in other words, control of a nation at war. Theater strategy is the plan by which an army commander gains or retains control of his assigned geographic area, a single theater of operations. A competent theater commander determines theater objectives and strategy with grand strategy in mind.<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 87-91; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 5-6; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 3.

<sup>528</sup> Galin, *FM1-02*, 1-177; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 42.

Patriot leaders did not form their grand strategy for the American Revolution in a clear, farsighted manner. As with most aspects of the Revolution, it came about piecemeal, based on trial and error.<sup>529</sup> Nevertheless, Patriot leaders evolved a well-developed and stable grand strategy from early in the war.<sup>530</sup> Congress initially controlled Patriot grand strategy, diplomatic and military. It maintained control of diplomacy throughout the war. Over time military strategy shifted toward General Washington, based on his successes and his superior knowledge of military issues as compared to most congressional delegates. Washington never had *carte blanche*, however. Congress expected him to keep it apprised of all he did.<sup>531</sup>

Patriot grand strategy entailed five objectives. The primary objective was to maintain the support of as much of the colonial public as possible. Remaining objectives were secondary, their purpose largely to support the primary objective. Lack of funds and manufacturing were key strategic weaknesses for Congress, so one objective was to find allies.<sup>532</sup> Congress hoped allies would provide direct military support, but logistical and financial support were even more important. A second objective, territorial expansion, developed as soon as the war began. The Patriot army quickly invaded Canada while Patriot

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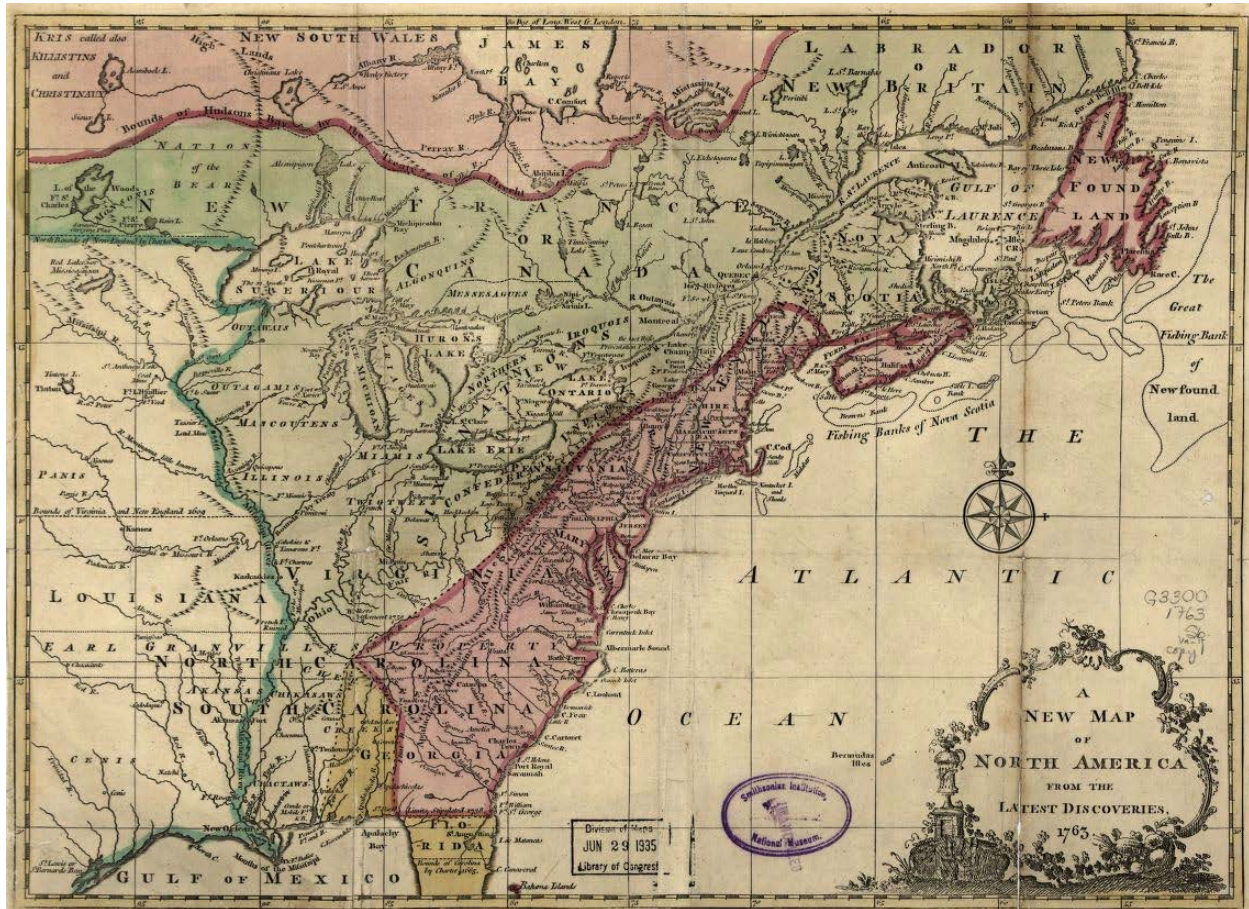
<sup>529</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 50, 58, 201; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 8.

<sup>530</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 201-203; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 12-13; Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History, Volume 1: The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation, 1775-1917* (Washington: United States Army Center of Military History, 2005), 64.

<sup>531</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 60-61; Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms*, 213.

<sup>532</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 116-118; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 79, 187, 210, 212, 253; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VIII*, 518-521; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 31, 115, 144; Neil L. York, "Clandestine Aid and the American Revolutionary War Effort: A Re-Examination," *Military Affairs* 43:1 (1979): 26; Edward S. Corwin, "The French Objectives in the American Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 21:1 (1915): 33; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 305.

leaders cast covetous eyes at both Florida and Trans-Appalachia (see map 3).<sup>533</sup>



MAP 3: Map of North America showing the Proclamation Line of 1763  
SOURCE: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

The additional lands also offered military advantages if controlled. Thus, expansion was popular with the colonial population and the civilian and military leadership. Third, early in the war Patriot military leaders realized they could not defeat the British Army on even terms. Their answer was to delay resolution of the conflict, hoping the British government would

<sup>533</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 41-44, 77, 85, 87-89, 198; William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, ed., Charles Deane (Boston: Privately Printed, 1856) 7-11; Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 70-71, 105; Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*, 4; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 109-110; Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 98-100.

eventually give up and withdraw their army from America.<sup>534</sup> Of course, Washington could not simply refuse to fight. Such a refusal would have damaged the morale of his troops and lowered support for the war across the board. The final objective of Patriot strategy, therefore, was to give battle when a good opportunity presented itself. The last two aspects of Patriot grand strategy most influenced both Washington and Greene regarding their theater strategy.

Neither Washington nor Greene ever intended to avoid combat.<sup>535</sup> Certainly, Congress would not have supported such a strategy. As it was, Congress was so intent on the army fighting battles it sometimes misjudged its generals or made regrettable statements.<sup>536</sup> Nor could the Patriot army have abandoned the east coast and fought a guerrilla war or forted up in the interior, as Major General Charles Lee argued.<sup>537</sup> That would have abandoned the most populous, productive, and prosperous region of the nation, and the area that was home to most of those who fought for the Patriot cause (see map 4).<sup>538</sup>

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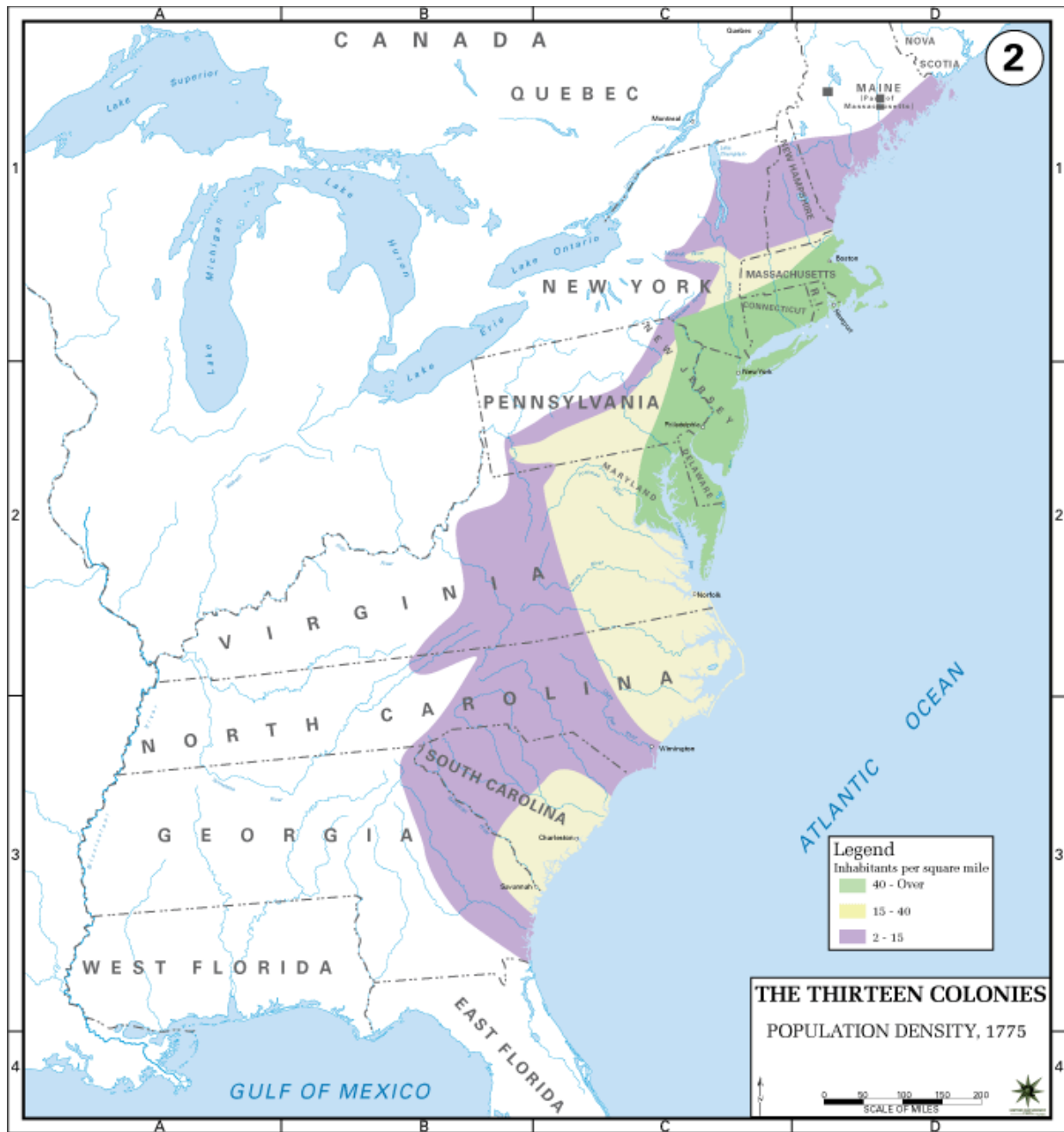
<sup>534</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 155; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 143; York, "Clandestine Aid," 29; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponent*, 37; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 178.

<sup>535</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 143, 173, 175; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 37.

<sup>536</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume V*, 538-539; Adams, *Works of Adams, Volume II*, 280-281. The *Journals* detail a case in which Congress caused the unfair cashiering of Patriot military commanders for having lost a battle and given up a position near Montreal, Canada. In October, 1777 Adams wrote in his diary, "O, Heaven! grant us one great soul! One leading mind would extricate the best cause from that ruin which seems to await it for the want of it. We have as good a cause as ever was fought for; we have great resources; the people are well tempered; one active, masterly capacity, would bring order out of this confusion, and save this country." Adams also suggested that Washington should take on Howe directly. Although Adams did not make this statement publicly, it reflects the lack of confidence and lack of understanding of some Congressional delegates regarding the difficulties faced by the Continental Army and its commanders. Such misunderstandings led Congress to expect the army to act more aggressively than was wise under the circumstances.

<sup>537</sup> William S. Baker, "Exchange of Major-General Charles Lee," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 15:1 (1891): 29; Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 155; Black, *European Warfare*, 158-159; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 136; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 38.

<sup>538</sup> Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 211, 221; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 67-68.



MAP 4: Population Density in the Thirteen Colonies, 1775

SOURCE: Department of History, United States Military Academy at West Point

While Patriot grand strategy remained largely unchanged throughout the war, the same is not true for the British.<sup>539</sup> Yet despite their strategic vicissitudes, the constant feature of

<sup>539</sup> Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 6; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 60, 68, 358.

British strategies from 1775 to 1781 was dependence on support from American Loyalists. Many British politicians and generals initially believed Patriot leaders were a conspiratorial few, the most important of whom were in Boston. The British Army occupied Boston and tried to arrest Patriot leaders and confiscate Patriot weapons. That resulted in open warfare, the Continental Army invasion of Canada, and loss of the New England colonies.<sup>540</sup>

Realizing that significant opposition to British governmental policy existed, British political leadership still believed that opposition was located primarily in New England. Once Britain recovered its balance, which it quickly did, the new grand strategy was to cut off New England from the remainder of the colonies. Britain could then pacify the remaining colonies and rally them to support the defeat of New England. That strategy died when Howe's occupation of Philadelphia facilitated Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga. Both efforts ultimately failed, in part, because expected Loyalist support never materialized.<sup>541</sup> Patriot victory at Saratoga brought France, Spain, and the Netherlands into the war, forcing yet another change in British grand strategy.

The British Army consolidated its hold on New York City and shifted forces to protect Britain's high value sugar assets in the Caribbean.<sup>542</sup> That shift forced British military forces remaining in North America to drop from two offensives per season to one. Britain aimed for the southern colonies, the only region where hope for a Loyalist majority remained. The result

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<sup>540</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 29; Gruber, "The American Revolution as a Conspiracy," 367-369; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, x; Gruber, *The Howe Brothers*, 19-20.

<sup>541</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 58-59; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 244; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 61.

<sup>542</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 183-185; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 83.



was a final disappointment in Loyalist turnout and defeat in South Carolina at the hands of Greene and in Virginia by Washington.<sup>543</sup>

Yorktown led to the final change in British grand strategy. British Army manpower losses were too great to continue the war in America without suffering territorial losses elsewhere. Consequently, British leaders shifted focus from regaining the rebellious colonies to retaining Britain's remaining holdings. The new focus was at least partially successful. British envoys signed the Treaty of Paris of 1783, recognizing the independence of the United States of America in exchange for Britain preserving its remaining possessions.<sup>544</sup> Yet, even after Yorktown there were British politicians who believed Britain could win the war with help of the "numerous' Loyalists in the colonies."<sup>545</sup>

Washington's theater strategy naturally reflected the grand strategy he helped create. He realized early in the war that his army could not match the British Army on even terms. His primary objective, then, was to protect his army, stretching out the war until the British government tired of it. Keeping that in mind, he also needed to control as much territory within his theater as possible, especially major cities. Territorial control helped maintain public support and restricted British Army access to supplies.<sup>546</sup> Finally, Washington wanted to

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<sup>543</sup> Allison, *The American Revolution*, 55-56; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 1, 40; Pearson, "Failure of British Strategy during the Southern Campaign," 8; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 188, 190, 223, 233, 260; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 35, 57; Wilson, *Southern Strategy*, xiii; Stoker, Hagan, and MacMaster, *Strategy in the American War for Independence*, 3; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 25, 98; Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King*, 2.

<sup>544</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 546-547; Gruber, "American Revolution as a Conspiracy," 371; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 306; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, vii; Mackesy, *War for America*, 435.

<sup>545</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 542; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 303; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 187.

<sup>546</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 27-33, 366, 489, 490; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 132.

engage British forces whenever possible.<sup>547</sup> Battles proved the Continental Army could fight and victories, when they came, fostered hope of eventual Patriot success.<sup>548</sup> As long as the Continental Army remained in the field, the Patriot cause retained optimism.<sup>549</sup>

Nathanael Greene had no significant role in the development of Patriot grand strategy, so judgment of him as a strategist relies solely on his command in the south.<sup>550</sup> That Greene's strategy was conventional should surprise no one. Every biography of Greene argues that he learned war primarily through the study of European texts.<sup>551</sup> By the time he took command in the south Greene had commanded a brigade or division in several campaigns under Washington. He understood Washington's strategy and the reasons behind it, and conformed his to it.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 365-367, 467-471; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 114; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 97-98.

<sup>548</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 27-33; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 113-114; Brian M. Linn and Russell F. Weigley, "'The American Way of War' Revisited," *The Journal of Military History* 66:2 (2002): 531; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 178-179.

<sup>549</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 116; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 110; E. J. Grove, "Introduction," in *Strategy in the American War of Independence: A Global Approach*, eds., Donald Stoker, Kenneth J. Hagan, and Michael T. MacMaster (London: Routledge, 2010), 3. Grove is correct in suggesting that Washington's maintenance of an army in the field precluded British victory. He fails to understand Howe's conservatism as rooted in the British manpower shortage, a failing of many American historians but typically understood by British historians.

<sup>550</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 5. Thayer, in contrast to most Revolutionary War historians, considers Greene the mastermind of Washington's campaigns. He overtly argues only that Greene developed Washington's theater strategy, but the underlying implication exists that he also did, or might have, impacted grand strategy. While Greene and Washington were closely associated from the time Washington took command of the army, little support exists for Thayer's argument. Such an arrangement would have made Greene the dominant partner in their relationship. For anyone who has read enough about Washington to understand his character significantly, that seems most unlikely. Washington listened to Greene in council and on occasion deferred to Greene's judgment regarding Greene's direct command (as at Fort Mifflin). That, however, speaks as much to Washington's style of command as it does to any dependence on Greene. He did much the same for Benedict Arnold, Alexander Hamilton, Henry Lee, John Sullivan, Anthony Wayne, and others.

<sup>551</sup> Siry, *Greene*, 10-11; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 40, 47; Golway, *Washington's General*, 42.

<sup>552</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 171-172; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 5.

Greene's operational objectives changed several times during his southern campaign (see Chapter 9). However, Greene's theater strategy remained consistent from the moment he took command and resembled Washington's to a remarkable degree.<sup>553</sup> Most important was the protection and augmentation of his army.<sup>554</sup> Geographically, Greene's objective was to recover South Carolina, denying that state's political and logistical advantages to the British Army. To recover South Carolina Greene needed to defeat the British Army, so when the opportunity presented itself he fought.<sup>555</sup> Greene certainly never intended to lose a battle just to bleed the British Army, but he understood that even if he did lose he cost the British Army more men than they could afford to replace, while the Patriot army could recoup its losses. He expressed that understanding in a letter to Samuel Huntington, President of the Continental Congress, the day after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Greene wrote that he "took the resolution of attacking the enemy...being persuaded that if we were successful it would prove ruinous to the Enemy, and if otherwise, it would only prove a partial evil to us."<sup>556</sup>

Greene's first objective on taking command was to supply and augment the tiny force bequeathed him by Gates, lest it disintegrate. That it might better subsist he split it, moving the portion he commanded east, threatening the coastal cities. He sent the rest, under

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<sup>553</sup> Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 62-64. As Woodward points out, neither Major General Benjamin Lincoln nor Major General Horatio Gates set their theater strategies in accordance with the grand strategy of Congress. Each sought decision through a decisive early battle. However, Woodward incorrectly attributes the development of Patriot grand strategy to Washington, alone.

<sup>554</sup> Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 66; Grove "Introduction," 3. Grove is correct in arguing Greene's preservation of his "army-in-being" was an important aspect of his strategy. He is incorrect in calling Washington's strategy Fabian for reasons noted elsewhere in this dissertation.

<sup>555</sup> Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 74-75; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 109; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 75; William Bradford Willcox, *Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War of Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1964), 445.

<sup>556</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume 7*, 433.

Morgan's command, to the western part of the state on a mission to recruit militia and requisition supplies. He also sent urgent requests for reinforcements and supplies to North Carolina and Virginia. The immediate result was Morgan's success at Cowpens.

Despite Morgan's victory, Greene's army could not match that of Cornwallis. Greene backpedaled into Virginia, gaining time to supply and reinforce his command. Only when his army was significantly larger than the British Army and his logistical situation was as stable as possible did Greene begin his offensive. Against Greene's own expectations he drove Cornwallis into Virginia, changing the strategic balance in the south permanently. From that point, Greene maintained the strategic offensive, aware the British Army could ill afford battle losses and certain that if he could obtain necessary supplies and manpower he could win the campaign.<sup>557</sup> Greene fought two battles and a siege in South Carolina. Each was a technical loss as men judged victory in that era, but each bled the British Army of men it could ill afford to lose, while American losses were replaceable.<sup>558</sup> By the time the war ended, Greene held the entirety of the Carolinas and Georgia except for Charlestown and Savannah.

Although Greene technically lost every battle he fought, he was careful with his army. In fact, his caution may have cost him victory on occasion. He might have pressed on to success, but doing so would have exposed his army to possible disaster, and he could never countenance that risk.<sup>559</sup> Greene maneuvered first to keep his army safe, as when he withdrew

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<sup>557</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 334; Golway, *Washington's General*, 264; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 90.

<sup>558</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 168-169; Willcox, *Portrait of a General*, 381, 501.

<sup>559</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 259, 268, 283; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 329, 345-346, 379; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 435; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 56-157; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 331-332; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 67.

into Virginia in the early days of his campaign.<sup>560</sup> He also maneuvered to put his army in position to give himself every possible advantage in combat, such as assuming a defensive posture, gaining the high ground, or making certain his line of retreat was clear and established. It is difficult to see Greene taking the kind of risk assumed by Morgan at Cowpens, where Morgan backed his army against an unfordable river to discourage desertion by his militia. Greene was bold and energetic, but he was also cautious and careful, always preparing in every way preparation was possible.

Clinton, Cornwallis, and the British commanders who succeeded them in the south employed a theater strategy resembling Greene's, although certainly not based on it.<sup>561</sup> They sought to protect their small army by augmenting it with Loyalist militia; to resolve its logistical situation; to gain and hold Georgia and South Carolina enroute to reconquering the entire south; and to defeat the Patriot army in battle.<sup>562</sup> British strategy initially appeared successful. Savannah and Charlestown fell. The British Army overran Georgia and threatened reconquest of South Carolina. Attempts to sway or coerce local populations to support the British government appeared successful. British victory at Camden further suppressed dissent. The Continental Army fled the state, dispirited and stripped of supplies. Only a handful of guerrillas remained in the field against the British Army.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 72.

<sup>561</sup> Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 5, 41-43, 92. Woodward points out that the British and Americans in the south both used strategic concepts resembling those of modern military leaders, implicitly suggesting the strategic concepts of each resembled the other.

<sup>562</sup> Franklin B. Wickwire and Mary B. Wickwire, *Cornwallis: The American Adventure* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 133-137; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 113, 123; Wilson, *Southern Strategy*, xiv; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 98.

<sup>563</sup> Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 40-41; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, xiii, 76, 84, 87, 128; Wilson, *Southern Strategy*, xv. Woodward calls the two greatest failures of

Unfortunately for Britain, political errors and popular support for the Patriot cause made it impossible to completely suppress the guerrillas before Greene arrived. Around that same time, Patriot military victories at King's Mountain and Cowpens stripped Cornwallis of his light forces and depleted his cavalry. Cornwallis chased Greene but was unable to catch the Continental general before he obtained reinforcements. The depletion of the British Army at Guilford Courthouse and Cornwallis' move into Virginia exposed South Carolina and stretched British Army manpower in that state beyond its limit. British commanders Rawdon and Stuart, successively, tried to hold the state, but had little chance against the more resilient Patriot army. Greene forced their retreat repeatedly, until they held only the major coastal cities.

The maneuver strategy used by both Greene and Washington has led some historians to argue Patriot leaders employed a Fabian strategy or fought a guerrilla war.<sup>564</sup> Such was not the case.<sup>565</sup> Fabius Maximus was a Roman general in the Second Punic War. After several catastrophic defeats by the army of Hannibal Barca, the senate appointed Fabius commander of the Roman army. Fabius realized that while Hannibal was very dangerous on the battlefield, he was operating at the end of an unsound logistical and alliance system. Fabius believed Hannibal

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British strategy in the south their reliance on Loyalist support and their belief that destruction of the Continental forces in the south, accomplished at Camden, would end resistance to British rule in South Carolina. He fails, however, to make the correct manpower connection that was at the heart of both issues. Although he argues the Carolinas and Georgia had a higher percentage of Loyalists than other colonies, the British failures he highlights are evidence the Carolinas and Georgia were predominately Patriot.

<sup>564</sup> East, "Combating Colonial Hybrid Warfare," 1; Dederer, "Making Bricks without Straw," 8; 183-184; Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practices* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1978), 4, 94, 432; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 2-3; Clark G. Reynolds, "American Strategic History and Doctrines: A Reconsideration," *Military Affairs* 39:4 (1975): 183-184.

<sup>565</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 3.

could be defeated by simply avoiding combat with the superior general until his logistics and alliances failed.<sup>566</sup> Fabius' intent was to avoid ever engaging with Hannibal's main force. He shadowed Hannibal, never giving him rest, attacking his allies and detachments when Hannibal was unable to protect them.

Ultimately, by Fabius' thinking, Hannibal's army must either withdraw or disintegrate. He envisioned no climactic battle.<sup>567</sup> Both Washington and Greene, on the other hand, used maneuver to avoid combat only when the odds were poor, for example during the retreat across new Jersey, at White Horse, and during the Race to the Dan. When they believed the odds in their favor, as at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, Guilford Courthouse, Hobkirk's Hill, and Eutaw Springs, they sought combat with British regulars.

Nor did Washington or Greene employ a guerrilla strategy. Guerrillas are indigenous forces which, when not active, typically melt into the population or hide in terrain difficult for conventional forces to reach. Their purpose is not to win wars so much as to spread resistance and keep their cause alive. They normally avoid combat with large enemy forces, focusing instead on disruption of logistics and communications and destruction of infrastructure.<sup>568</sup> Such was never the manner of fighting by Greene, Washington, or any other Continental department commander. Patriot senior commanders sought conventional battle against British and Hessian regulars every time an advantageous opportunity presented itself. The battles

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<sup>566</sup> Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, 193.

<sup>567</sup> Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, 286-287. Even had Washington or Greene used a Fabian strategy, it would not have proven them unconventional. Fabius commanded the Roman legions, among the most conventional armies in the history of warfare. Although in modern terminology Fabian suggests guerrilla, Fabius, himself, practiced an extreme form of mobile warfare with a conventional army.

<sup>568</sup> Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-90.

Washington and Greene fought against the British Army were conventional eighteenth-century battles in every sense of the word (see Chapter 10).

Both Washington and Greene were conventional strategists as well as tacticians. Eighteenth-century strategy was classically attritional in nature. Classical eighteenth-century attrition strategy was, in fact, the baseline against which Prussian Lieutenant General Karl von Clausewitz and his disciple Hans Delbrück, the father of modern military history, contrasted the annihilation strategy which Napoleon popularized in the early nineteenth-century. Certainly, both Fabian and guerrilla operations fall within the umbrella of attrition strategy, but they do not constitute the whole of it. Conventional regular armies often attack the logistics, infrastructure, or communications of their enemies, or seek out enemy units detached from the main army. They also constantly engage in small combats at the points of contact between the armies. With an attrition strategy, the primary objective of the regular army is wearing down both the ability and the will of the enemy. Guerrillas have no monopoly on such strategies.

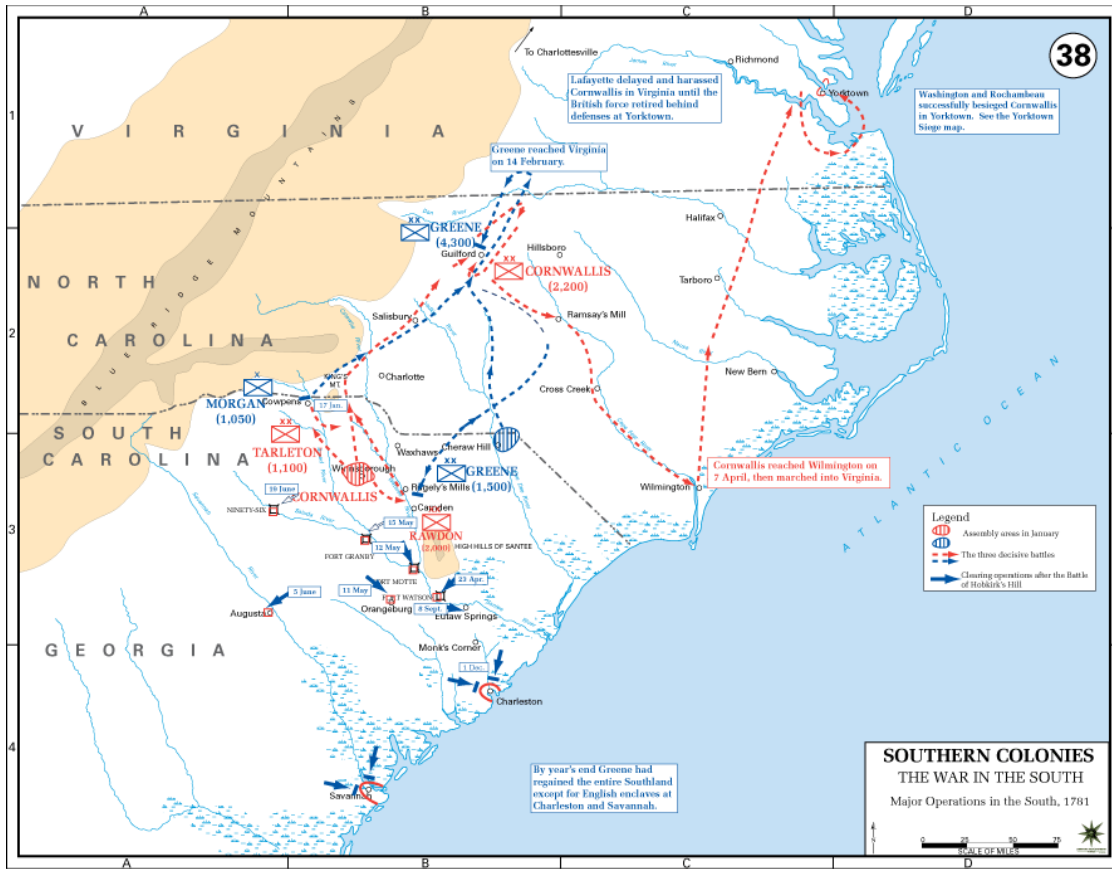
Misunderstanding regarding the terms partisan and guerrilla often inhibit recognizing the difference between guerrillas and regular forces. Partisan, in twentieth-century usage, is synonymous with guerrilla, but that was not true in the eighteenth-century. The past usage of partisan was much broader. It denoted not only guerrilla but special operations and the small firefights that constantly occur when regular armies are close together. Some historians also presume that militia, having fought as guerrillas, remained guerrillas under all circumstances. The truth, in Revolutionary South Carolina, was that early in the war Patriot militia fought as regulars without Continental Army support, then later as regular auxiliaries to the Continentals. Still later, when Cornwallis pushed the Continental Army out of the state, some militia fought as



guerrillas. During Greene's final offensive South Carolina militia again fought as regular auxiliaries to the Continental Army.

The permanency, formality of support services, training, and organization of an army, as well as its objectives and style of making war, is what makes an army regular. Washington was the commander-in-chief of an army that was an agency of a formal government. That government imposed its will on most of the rebellious territory for the entire war. It also garnered the loyalty of most Americans. Washington regularly sought combat with the enemy main force. Although the comparative weakness of his army compelled him to use caution, his purpose was always to defeat the enemy in conventional battle, forcing him to abandon the contest.

Greene's conventional credentials are, perhaps, even more convincing. Greene was part of the same agency as Washington, subordinate to Washington as his commander-in-chief. From his first battle, at Guilford Courthouse, Greene fought the main enemy field army in conventional battles. Beginning with Guilford Courthouse, Greene commanded a strategic offensive that ended only when he trapped the British Army in two coastal enclaves awaiting the termination of hostilities after Yorktown (see map 5). With Greene's return to South Carolina, guerrilla operations largely ceased and those men formerly operating as guerrillas joined Greene as auxiliaries to his Continentals.



MAP 5: The War in the South, 1781

SOURCE: Department of History, United States Military Academy at West Point

The heart of the argument that Greene conducted guerrilla warfare lies in operations conducted by his subordinates. Using the bulk of his army to pin the primary British field army, Greene detached forces made up of cavalry and mounted militia to reduce small British forts around the state. Many historians mistake those small operations for guerrilla warfare. However, neither the size nor the speed of military units differentiate guerrilla from regular army status. Greene's detachments were not operating as guerrillas, they were operating as regulars, duly called into service by their state. They operated under the regular chain of command, supply, and communications. These detachments conducted a series of small sieges, among the most conventional operations of the eighteenth-century. They were part of

a sustained offensive whose objective was the permanent recovery of the interior of the state. They were not the type of hit and run, keep the war effort alive operations many of those same units participated in while Greene was out of state.

Washington and Greene both commanded guerrillas in an executive sense.<sup>569</sup> However, it confuses their purpose to argue either fought guerrilla fashion. They used maneuver to avoid fighting when the odds were too long and to bring on combat as safely as possible when they

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<sup>569</sup> Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 101; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 448-450; Lieutenant Colonel Brian W. Neil, "The Southern Campaign of the American Revolution: The American Insurgency from 1780-1782" (master's thesis, United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2009), 9; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 124, 292; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, xvi, 98-99. In *Washington's Generals and Opponents* Thayer writes the chapter on Greene. Thayer notes correctly that Greene did order Marion to engage in guerrilla warfare for a time. However, as with many others, Thayer is incorrect in his understanding of what constitutes guerrilla warfare. He also misstates Greene's orders to Henry Lee, who was never a guerrilla, although he did operate independently on many occasions. Thayer also fails to note that Greene recalled Marion's force on returning to South Carolina, using it as auxiliaries to his regular army.

Don Higginbotham, writing the chapter on Daniel Morgan in the same book, states that Morgan was the most successful guerrilla fighter in South Carolina. That is incorrect. Morgan began the war as a Continental captain leading a company of riflemen – special operations forces, not guerrillas. His service in South Carolina was as a Continental Army brigadier general, at times leading an independent force but drawing on conventional supply, such as it was, and under orders from the conventional chain of command. The single battle he conducted, Cowpens, although often considered brilliant, was completely conventional. The error again appears to lie in the understanding of what constitutes guerrilla forces and the difference between twentieth-century guerrillas and eighteenth-century partisans.

Likewise, Gordon defines guerrilla warfare as "hit and run." Hit and run tactics do typify guerrilla warfare, but regular forces frequently use hit and run tactics, as well. Gordon also argues that South Carolina guerrilla forces went through the three forms of guerrilla warfare. He describes this as scattered bands, cooperative operations, and fusion into a single conventional army, comparing this to Vietnam and China in the twentieth century. While an accurate description of Vietnam and China, nothing of the kind happened in revolutionary South Carolina. The war started in a conventional manner between Loyalist and Patriot militia. The Patriot militia quickly won and there the issue rested until the fall of Charlestown, a conventional siege by British regulars against Patriot regulars. After Camden, and again while Greene was backtracking through North Carolina into Virginia, when there were no conventional units in South Carolina, patriot guerrilla activity was both successful and important. As soon as Greene returned to the state he absorbed the bulk of the South Carolina militia into his conventional army. From that time militia operated as auxiliaries to the Continental Army under conventional logistics and chain of command. Guerrilla warfare was temporary and only used from necessity. Gordon rightly points out that a form of guerrilla warfare existed in the backcountry right up until the end of the war. On both sides, this was more a war of retribution than for any other strategic objective, and was certainly not part of Greene's campaign. Again, based on his definition of partisan on page 99 of his book, it appears Gordon fails to understand the difference between the term partisan in the eighteenth century and today, when it *is* synonymous with guerrilla.

saw an opportunity to win. In either case, they were always in search of a conventional battle against enemy regulars.<sup>570</sup>

The American Revolution is but one of many wars which generated guerrillas on its fringes. In World War II partisans campaigned behind the lines of the Soviet Union and in Greece, France, Yugoslavia, and the Philippines. The same is true of the Napoleonic Wars, in which guerrillas fought on the fringes in Russia and Spain. In World War I there were guerrilla campaigns in the Middle East. The Civil War produced guerrillas such as Bloody Bill Anderson, William Quantrill, and the James Brothers, who created havoc on the western frontier. No credible historian suggests any of those wars were guerrilla. Such guerrilla warfare occurred on the fringes of the American Revolution in both the north and south. Even so, neither the American Revolution in general nor Greene's southern campaign were guerrilla, Fabian, or otherwise unconventional.

A host of factors shaped Patriot and British strategies during the American Revolution. Not least were the relative wealth of Britain and the Patriots; the difference in military experience and training between the warring groups; logistics; leadership at all levels; and Britain's control of the seas. Despite those and other important matters, the decisive strategic

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<sup>570</sup> Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, 11, 47; Stoker, Hagan, and MacMaster, *Strategy in the American War for Independence*, 5; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 74-76; Neil, "Southern Campaign of the American Revolution," 12. Donald Stoker and Michael W. Jones, writing the chapter on colonial strategy in *Strategy in the American War for Independence*, argue that Washington integrated irregular warfare as a key element of his strategy. Although Washington requested New Jersey guerrilla forces act in support of his recovery of New Jersey, he never commanded guerrillas and they were rarely a part of his strategic thinking. Neil argues Greene planned a hybrid campaign including guerrillas, but he admits that militia fought interchangeably as guerrillas and conventional soldiers and only operated as guerrillas when necessary.

issue during the American Revolution was manpower.<sup>571</sup> The entry of France, Spain, and the Netherlands into the war somewhat balanced the issues of wealth, experience, and control of the seas. Foreign help and accumulated experience at least partially offset the British Army advantages in experience, training, and leadership. Logistical struggles largely equaled out. On the other hand, the manpower situation favored the Patriot army even immediately after the British Army buildup. The entry of France, Spain, and the Netherlands into the war pushed it completely out of balance.<sup>572</sup>

British leaders traditionally struggled to provide adequate manpower for their nation's military adventures, and the American Revolution was no exception.<sup>573</sup> Britain put roughly sixteen and one-half percent of its military age men into uniform during the American Revolution, the most of any war prior to the Napoleonic conflicts. By comparison, in what was an all-out effort to defeat France during the Seven Years War, Britain put only about eleven and a half percent of its military age men in uniform.<sup>574</sup> British naval manpower increased about twenty-five percent from its high during the Seven Years War to its high during the American

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<sup>571</sup> Mackesy, *The War with America*, 36-37; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 46; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 36; Dougherty, "Federalist and Anti-Federalist Theories," 65; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, ix; Gruber, *The Howe Brothers*, 125; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 43, 147, 162, 191, 233, 353; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 98; Wilson, *Southern Strategy*, xiii; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 98; Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King*, 127.

<sup>572</sup> Pearson, "Failure of British Strategy during the Southern Campaign," 51-52; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 302; Willcox, *Portrait of a General*, 62, 286. Historians do not universally accept the argument that the manpower situation initially favored the Patriot army, virtually none to the degree argued in this dissertation. Given the lack of documentation at this point, that assertion is certainly subject to challenge. However, Chapter 11 deals with the issue of manpower in South Carolina in depth and amply supports this dissertation thesis.

<sup>573</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 71.

<sup>574</sup> Conway, *The British Isles and the War for American Independence*, 27-29; Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 214-215.

Revolution.<sup>575</sup> The Revolution also saw a significant increase in the British Merchant Marine as compared to the Seven Years War.<sup>576</sup> Given that Britain was pushed to its manpower limits by the Seven Years War, the American Revolution was an incredible stretch of British manpower.<sup>577</sup>

At the peak of its strength the British Army had available roughly 100,000 men, including Hessians and Americans. About 135,000 men served in the British regulars during the war.<sup>578</sup> British forces were augmented by 30,000 Hessians – named for Hesse but from several small German states.<sup>579</sup> About 50,000 Americans served in Loyalist military units as either provincials or militia. That gave the British Army about 215,000 land fighting men world-wide (not counting militia and other second-line forces in England, or native levies in non-American colonies). From that number Britain kept a significant army in England to protect against a French invasion. Britain also maintained an army strong enough to subdue native populations and contest foreign intervention in each of her extensive territorial holdings outside America. Some of those, such as the army in India, included native soldiers, but others did not. The British expeditionary force dispatched to subdue the rebellion was the largest Britain had ever fielded outside the home islands, at its maximum consisting of between thirty-five and forty thousand men, including provincials and Hessians.<sup>580</sup> Understanding British manpower

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<sup>575</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 330; Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 109.

<sup>576</sup> Paul David Nelson, "British Conduct of the American Revolutionary War: A Review of Interpretations," *The Journal of American History* 65:3 (1978): 624; Larry Neal, "Interpreting Power and Profit in Economic History: A Case Study of the Seven Years War," *The Journal of Economic History* 37:1 (1977): 21-23.

<sup>577</sup> Middleton, *The Bells of Victory*, 10, 24-26, 94; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 57.

<sup>578</sup> Conway, *The British Isles and the War for American Independence*, 29.

<sup>579</sup> Volo and Volo, *Daily Life during the American Revolution*, 96.

<sup>580</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 28; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, x.

requirements makes it clear that Britain fought the entire war on a manpower shoestring, which became even more tenuous after France, Spain, and the Netherlands joined the war.<sup>581</sup>

During the Saratoga Campaign Burgoyne lost about five thousand British regulars.<sup>582</sup> Cornwallis lost almost eight thousand at Yorktown.<sup>583</sup> That was almost ten percent of the total British regular force serving during the war, more than a third of the British regulars serving in America when the army was at peak strength. After Saratoga, the British government ordered Howe to send eight thousand soldiers to the Indies and Florida, as well as a contingent to Halifax.<sup>584</sup> All this fails to consider the daily attrition in small actions, illness, and even in battles won. Understanding why such losses were catastrophic is easy, especially when Loyalists never materialized in large numbers.

The Patriot army fielded fewer men, but also had fewer requirements. There were about two million whites living in the rebellious colonies.<sup>585</sup> More than half sided with the Patriot faction. Fewer than twenty percent, possibly fewer than fifteen percent, considered themselves Loyalists.<sup>586</sup> Using Stephen Conway's shorthand math, which is less than accurate but provides a ballpark figure, more than two hundred fifty thousand Patriot men were of

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<sup>581</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 356.

<sup>582</sup> Allison, *The American Revolution*, 49.

<sup>583</sup> Benson, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 248, 456, 465.

<sup>584</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 156, 185.

<sup>585</sup> Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (Gloucester MA: Peter Smith, 1966), 7.

<sup>586</sup> Ferling, "Galloway's Military Advice," 171; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 312; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 191; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 101-102. Gordon concedes a twenty percent maximum of Loyalists overall but argues a higher concentration for South Carolina. He is correct, but only marginally so. See Chapter 11 of this dissertation.

military age.<sup>587</sup> Out of three million men of military age, Britain put five hundred thousand in uniform (serving in army, navy, militia, and other quasi-military groups).<sup>588</sup> A similar percentage of military age Patriot men would have been slightly more than forty thousand. However, Revolutionary War historians generally estimate that two hundred thousand men – eighty percent of Patriot military age men – fought for the Patriot cause at some point during the American Revolution.

The Patriots had no navy to speak of, and its entire military establishment was available for the war in America. That gave them a distinct manpower advantage in the colonies even without foreign intervention. The Patriot military manpower advantage in the American colonies was two or three to one before Britain transferred a single soldier from North America to the Caribbean in the late 1770s, and before France, Spain, or the Netherlands sent a single soldier into the conflict. In other words, in the period when the manpower ratio was most favorable to Britain, it already faced a manpower crisis. Britain could not afford the manpower losses necessary even to win battles.<sup>589</sup>

The common thread of British grand strategy was the belief in widespread Loyalist support in the colonies. Historians have proposed several reasons why the expected help did not materialize, some of them widely held, others widely argued. The key point is that British policymakers understood they could never conquer a wholly recalcitrant America with thirty-

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<sup>587</sup> Conway, *The British Isles and the War for American Independence*, 28; Greene and Harrington, *American Population*, xxiii. Conway estimates one-fourth of the colonial population was military age males, Greene and Harrington suggest one-fifth or more.

<sup>588</sup> Conway, *The British Isles and the War for American Independence*, 28.

<sup>589</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 185; Stoker, Hagan, and MacMaster, *Strategy in the American War for Independence*, 6.



five thousand men.<sup>590</sup> They believed the Patriot faction was small and depended on the bulk of American manpower choosing the Loyalist faction. Unfortunately for the British Army, American manpower primarily supported the Patriot cause, not the British. There is broad agreement that the failure of Loyalist support was the single most important British failure in the war.<sup>591</sup>

Patriot military victory in the American Revolution was never a product of guerrilla or Fabian strategy. These arguments are simply an extension of the myth of the valiant few – that a small group of men overcame the strongest military force on Earth through dedication, organization, inventiveness, preparation, and perseverance. The truth is that American victory was the victory of a committed majority. The Patriots won because popular support for their cause allowed them to field large military forces, concentrated in a single theater of war. Congress was never able to field the overwhelming army that it desired due to its political,

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<sup>590</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 511; Gruber, "American Revolution as a Conspiracy," 370-371; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 18; Ferling, "Galloway's Military Advice," 173. Ferling's article shows throughout that Galloway not only misjudged his countrymen in America but failed to realize the extent to which the British Army lacked necessary manpower to prosecute the war – errors resembling those of many historians since.

Woodward argues that British strategy intended soldiers only to intimidate the colonists, not conquer them. However, the way the British used their soldiers does not support that argument. Intimidation would seem more likely if the British stationed groups of soldiers throughout the colonies. Typically, there were only a few concentrations of soldiers in the colonies – one of them usually around New York City.

Gruber argues that the British believed an American majority supported the crown and British leaders expected popular agreement with the British use of force. He suggests their error lay in not developing a strategy involving Loyalists until after Saratoga. Given Mackesy's quotation of Roberts and Germain's expectation of at least eight thousand Loyalists in British military units in 1777, any argument that British strategic planning in London did not involve Loyalist support seems difficult to support. It may be true, however, that after Saratoga the British placed more emphasis on greater and earlier involvement of Loyalists.

<sup>591</sup> Mackesy, *The War with America*, 36-37; Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 46; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 36; Dougherty, "Federalist and Anti-Federalist Theories," 65; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, ix; Gruber, *The Howe Brothers*, 125; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 43, 147, 162, 191, 233, 353; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 98; Wilson, *Southern Strategy*, xiii; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 98; Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King*, 127.

bureaucratic, and financial limitations. However, the army was able, repeatedly, to replace its most severe manpower losses. That made it possible for the Continental Army to remain in the field, supported by local militia, until the British Army sustained too many casualties to keep fighting.

Greene's strategy, like that of Washington in the north, was based on the grand strategy developed by the Continental Congress and General Washington. His objectives were to protect his army and regain South Carolina by defeating the British southern army. In furtherance of those objectives, always careful not to overmatch his force, Greene sought repeated battles with the enemy main army. That constituted a conventional attrition strategy by which he wore down the opposition and forced it from the center of the state into a couple of coastal enclaves. Guerrilla strategy is inherently attritional, but Greene never directly commanded guerrillas and their contribution to his campaign, although important, was peripheral.

The suggestion that Greene was a guerrilla commander is but a part of the myth of the valiant few. Beginning at Guilford Courthouse Greene had a significant manpower advantage which he took into every battle he commanded. That advantage allowed him both to replace losses in his army and to send out task forces to reduce the small British garrisons in the interior of South Carolina. Although often so labelled, those task forces were not guerrillas. They were militia called up by their states acting in concert with Continental forces and within the conventional chain of command and support. Greene's strategy was excellent and his implementation of it nearly flawless but it was not particularly unique. Rather, it was similar

both to that of Washington in the north and that which his enemies used in the south. What set Greene apart was not his unconventionality but his grasp of the conventional. That included understanding that his manpower advantage made a conventional strategy viable.

## CHAPTER 9

### OPERATIONS

Operations, a term not used militarily before the modern era, lie at the heart of the view that Greene was an unconventional, guerrilla leader. The central argument for Greene's unconventionality is that he developed an operational style of warfare not popularized until twentieth-century Communist guerrilla revolutions.<sup>592</sup> While Greene would not have used the term operations, he at least partially understood the concept. His operations were, however, rooted in the eighteenth-century, and conventional for that era.

Just as Greene's theater strategy developed from grand strategy implemented by Congress and Washington, Greene's operations derived from his theater strategy. Greene's initial maneuvers were to protect, supply, and augment his army. Those tasks accomplished, he began an offensive that ended only with the termination of hostilities between Britain and the United States. Greene's offensive was a classic, and completely conventional, campaign of attrition. Arguments to the contrary are based on a misunderstanding of what Greene did and of what guerrilla operations entail. Far from unique, Greene's operations were similar enough to those of Washington in the north and of British generals in the south to suggest common

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<sup>592</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 5-7; Dederer, "Origins of Robert E. Lee's Bold Generalship," 122; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-3; Jones, *Guerrilla Conflict before the Cold War*, 1-40; Higginbotham, "Reflections on the South," 668-669; Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 71-72; Weigley, *American Way of War*, 27-39; Weigley, "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War," 410-411; Conway, "The British Army, 'Military Europe,' and the American War of Independence," 77; John Edward Grenier, "The Other American Way of War," 284; Walker, *The Battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens*, 90-91; Pohl, "The American Revolution and the Vietnamese War," 258-259; Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America*, 154-155; Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 97-117; Thomas B. Bennett, "Early Operational Art: Nathanael Greene's Carolina Campaign 1780-1781" (master's thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2003), 18-19, 38, 42; Johnson, "Compound Warfare During the Southern Campaign" 3.

antecedents. Rather than developing a new manner of making war, Greene mastered the conventional.

“Operations” is a term whose meaning has changed within the past century.

Historically, the term described any movement or action taken by an army, and it often still does. For example, a road march might be termed an operation; similarly a person might refer to logistical or intelligence operations.<sup>593</sup> However, the idea of an operational art – a level of military combat between tactics and strategy – was first popularized in Germany between the World Wars.<sup>594</sup> The term was not used in any United States Army document prior to 1982, during the revision of American military doctrine following the Vietnam War.<sup>595</sup> Embracing both the term and the concept, the American army defined operations as the conduct of a campaign to accomplish strategic objectives in a theater of war.<sup>596</sup>

Operations is easily confused with theater strategy or logistics. Strategy is the plan – war on a map. Operations is the implementation of the plan – what takes place on the ground.

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<sup>593</sup> Kajenski, “Kościuszko's Role in the Siege of Ninety-Six,” 14; Stephen Conway, “To Subdue America: British Army Officers and the Conduct of the Revolutionary War,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 43:3 (1986): 381, 382, 393, 398; Marvin L. Cann, “War in the Backcountry: The Siege of Ninety Six, May 22 -June 19, 1781” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 72:1 (1971): 1.

<sup>594</sup> Robert M Citino, *Quest for Decisive Victory: From Stalemate to Blitzkrieg in Europe, 1899-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), xviii; Thomas E. Hanson, “Foreword,” in *The Evolution of Operational Art*, auth., Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, trans., Bruce W. Menning (Ft. Leavenworth: Combat Arms Institute Press, United States Army Combined Arms Center, 2013), iii; Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David J. Ulbrich, *Ways of War: American Military History from the Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 5; Heinz Guderian, *Achtung – Panzer: The Development of Armoured Forces, Their Tactics and Operational Potential* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1992), 25. The title of Guderian’s book proves that the term “operations” was in use in the German army prior to World War II.

<sup>595</sup> Tom Clancy and Frederick M. Franks, *Into the Storm: A Study in Command* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1997), 139.

<sup>596</sup> Galin, *FM 1-02*, 1-139; Clancy and Franks, *Into the Storm*, 139.

Logistics is the manner and means of organizing, moving, and distributing men or equipment.

Operations deals with the purpose of movement. Operational theory argues that there should be a purpose for each move and each battle, focusing on the primary objective.<sup>597</sup>

Operations typically focus on two functions: maneuver and firepower. The goal usually preferred by successful commanders is the use of maneuver to place their army in position to most advantageously deploy its firepower.<sup>598</sup> As Winston Churchill is quoted as saying, "Battles are won by slaughter and maneuver. The greater the general, the more he contributes in maneuver, the less he demands in slaughter."<sup>599</sup> Maneuver is not always possible and where possible it is not always used. Sometimes circumstances outside the control of the commander

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<sup>597</sup> Bennett, "Early Operational Art," iv; Conrad, "General Nathanael Greene: An Appraisal," 9-12. Major Bennett's thesis examines Greene's campaign through the arguments of two of his professors at the School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Dr. Robert Epstein and Dr. James Schneider both argue in their published writings that the operational level of warfare developed only after the American Revolution, while Major Bennett argues that, according to the criteria of each professor, Greene did practice the operational art. Despite a thesis flawed by consistently describing Greene's operations as if combat were his only concern and by inconsistencies in his timeline, Major Bennett is correct as far as he goes. However, he fails to go far enough. Numerous arguments exist showing that the implementation of strategy, operations, tactics, or other facets of warfare began on some modern or semi-modern date. These arguments confuse process with function. Modern military processes, at least among major powers, are much more formal than their antecedents, but the functions of strategy, operations, tactics, etc. remain the same. They provide armies with a uniform means of operation (doctrine) and provide historians, military professionals, and others with a means of analyzing and discussing those operations.

Dennis Conrad, in the example included in this citation, is an excellent case in point. He argues that Greene had no strategy for his southern campaign. He then describes significant portions of Greene's strategy. The truth is that from the first time two tribes threw rocks at one another war was present in all its facets. Over time men have improved, studied, formalized, codified, and otherwise modernized every aspect of war. Still, there was always a plan – a strategy. Some plans were primitive, poorly thought out, or otherwise inadequate, but the plan existed, even if the plan was to stand and do nothing. That was a plan, although probably neither an effective one nor a formal one. The same is true of operations. There was always the application of the plan. It was not always as formal, well-studied, and thought through as it is today, but it existed, as did all other facets of warfare. One of the attributes that makes all wars alike is that all the facets of war were always present. Among those issues which make all wars different is the application of the various facets. The very core of the study of military history is the comparison and contrast of the different facets of war at various times in history.

<sup>598</sup> Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm*, 301.

<sup>599</sup> Edward R. Kantowicz, *The Rage of Nations* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 123.

fix an army in position, and some commanders simply choose a direct approach. Still, most military historians and professionals concede that an emphasis on maneuver coupled with firepower usually brings success more quickly and with less cost than an emphasis on firepower alone.

General Howe's Revolutionary War operations are an example of both the upside to maneuver and the downside to ignoring it. At Bunker Hill Howe frontally attacked well entrenched raw militia, losing forty percent of his attacking force.<sup>600</sup> On Long Island Howe faced some of the best units of the Continental Army, also entrenched and ready to fight. By adroit maneuver he defeated the Continentals with fewer than half the casualties of Bunker Hill, despite significantly larger forces engaged. Continental casualties, on the other hand, were almost tripled from the Bunker Hill Battle. British Army losses on Long Island were around two percent, while those of the Continentals were closer to twenty percent.<sup>601</sup> The difference is stark. Maneuver offers the opportunity to improve on the relative position of an army, making the use of firepower more effective – called a force multiplier by modern military professionals. Both Greene and Washington displayed talent in that regard.

Washington's circumstances limited his initial operations. Congress designated him commander of a disorganized militia and ordered him to turn it into an army while prosecuting a siege against the British Army occupying Boston. Gage entrenched the British Army across the only routes of approach – a narrow, easily defended causeway or an amphibious assault.

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<sup>600</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 59-60.

<sup>601</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 134.

Very aggressive, Washington twice planned attacks. His subordinates dissuaded him in each case. Colonel Henry Knox, the Patriot artillery commander, eventually transported several artillery pieces from Ticonderoga to Boston. Washington used these to end the siege, forcing the British Army from the city.<sup>602</sup>

New York City was the largest, most central port on the North American east coast. Protected from weather and with outlets via either the Narrows or Long Island Sound, it was difficult to blockade, especially if Newport, Rhode Island, was friendly. In any case, Boston had never been a strategic choice, only a circumstantial one. On evacuating Boston, Howe determined to establish New York City as the primary British military base.<sup>603</sup>

Expecting the British Army to transfer to New York, Washington was waiting there with his army when it arrived. He tried to stop the British Army short of the city. That failed and in failure Washington discovered his force was no match for equal numbers of British regulars unless provided advantageous circumstances.<sup>604</sup> The Battle of Long Island fundamentally changed Washington's operational strategy. From that time, Washington typically fought only from behind a defensive barrier or when he held a significant manpower advantage. Such a strategy naturally depended on a maneuver-oriented operational approach.

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<sup>602</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 144-167.

<sup>603</sup> Gallagher, *Battle of Brooklyn*, 13-15.

<sup>604</sup> Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 302, 304. The same paragraph in which Smelser points out the inability of the Continental Army to take on the British Army under equal circumstances makes a second interesting, unusual, and probably valid point. Smelser suggests that at least one small advantage accrued to congressional authorization of a larger Continental Army than it could either recruit, pay, or supply. The British were never certain the Continental Army would not attain the target numbers. Such a circumstance inherently supports Smelser's own argument, and that of this project, that the British commanders in America understood the Patriot army manpower advantage, even if political leaders in England did not.



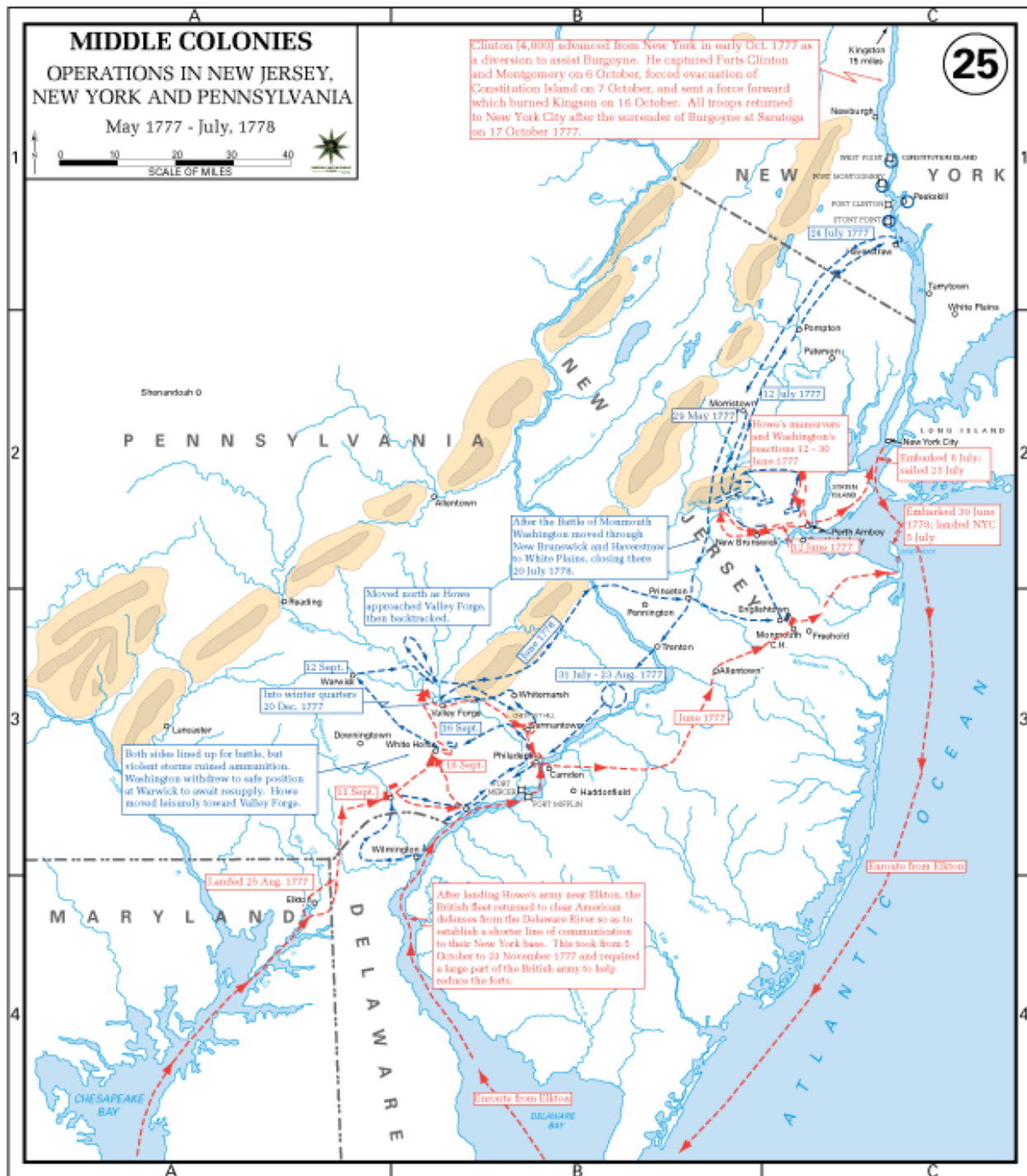
One example of Washington's new operational approach was the retreat across New Jersey and the Christmas counterattack at Trenton. The fall of Forts Mifflin and Red Bank caught Washington in a confused situation. Not only did he lose thousands of soldiers, he lost a significant amount of supplies. With his remaining army divided and in no shape for battle, Washington retreated across the Delaware River, taking all available boats with him.

Washington reorganized and augmented his army while Howe spread the British Army into small garrisons across the state. Trenton, directly across the Delaware from Washington's army, contained a single enemy brigade which Washington attacked with all the force he could gather as soon as opportunity presented. Although Washington's force consisted of but two small divisions, it almost doubled the enemy infantry and it tripled enemy artillery. With the additional advantage of surprise, he quickly overcame the city garrison, capturing most of the soldiers stationed there.

Initially cautious lest he risk his small army or allow rescue of prisoners of war gained by the attack, Washington recrossed to the safe side of the Delaware. However, with his prisoners safely removed from any chance of rescue, he realized the door opened by his attack was still ajar and capitalized on his victory yet further, retaking virtually the entire state of New Jersey. Guerrillas operating on the periphery and conventionally organized militia units on secondary fronts supported his fast-moving campaign.<sup>605</sup> Neither of the supporting forces accomplished much directly, but combined with Washington's own movements they bewildered the enemy into withdrawing from most of the state.

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<sup>605</sup> Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 221-223, 228-235.



MAP 6: Operations in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania May 1777-July 1778

SOURCE: Department of History, United States Military Academy at West Point

An even better example of Washington's maneuver operations is the Pennsylvania campaign (see map 6). Washington initially took position behind Red Clay Creek, harassing the

British Army with his light infantry.<sup>606</sup> Howe moved around Washington's right. Washington marched directly for the primary crossing of the Brandywine River, Chadd's Ford. The position at Chadd's Ford was a strong one had Washington guarded upriver fords, but that error cost him the battle.<sup>607</sup> Washington did make certain of his line of retreat, which saved his army. Defeated but not excessively damaged, Washington retreated to Chester, Pennsylvania.<sup>608</sup>

Washington, his army reorganized, blocked Howe's initial move toward Philadelphia by taking a position at White Horse. As the British Army approached, Washington determined his position lacked sufficient strength and retreated. During the retreat, rain destroyed the poorly made cartridge boxes of the Continentals, ruining their ammunition. Washington crossed the Schuylkill, force marched sixty miles to Warwick, partially in inclement weather, replenished his ammunition and marched back the next day, again covering the Schuylkill crossings before Howe reacted. After blocking a raid led by Continental Brigadier General Anthony Wayne and after mounting a successful raid of his own against Stony Point, Howe finessed Washington out of position and captured Philadelphia.<sup>609</sup>

Unwilling to concede, Washington attacked British forces quartered in Germantown, almost taking the city before bad luck and Howe's quick intervention forced his retreat. Howe's hold on Philadelphia remained in jeopardy, however, as the Patriot army occupied Forts Mifflin and Mercer, between Philadelphia and the ocean, from whence Howe must draw supplies.

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<sup>606</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 61-62.

<sup>607</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 63-76.

<sup>608</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 76.

<sup>609</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 78-89.

Howe captured those forts only after a month-long siege with significant casualties on both sides.

Although Washington ultimately lost Philadelphia, it was a tenacious but conventional defense characterized by both adroit maneuver and hard fighting.<sup>610</sup> Washington constantly maneuvered to block Howe, threatening him with defensive positions costly to take. His army brilliantly executed a desperation march to replenish its ammunition. He attacked a detachment of Howe's army with significant advantage, and at the forts he forced Howe into just the kind of attack the British general wanted to avoid. Washington's maneuver operations in the Philadelphia Campaign were as skillful as any maneuver Greene attempted in the south, and Greene was present and involved in the entire campaign.

While Greene's own operations featured many similarities to Washington's, one difference was the circumstances under which their respective campaigns began. Washington, commanding the army from the beginning of the war, often fought to protect cities and other strategic points. By contrast, the British Army had already captured the cities and strategic points of South Carolina and Georgia by the time Greene took command. Circumstances limited Greene's campaign to regaining them. Not having to defend those fixed points gave Greene a mobility advantage, which he put to good use.<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Taaffe, *The Philadelphia Campaign*, 93-107.

<sup>611</sup> Kerl, "Operational Leadership of Nathanael Greene," iii, 2, 17. In his thesis abstract Kerl gives an excellent description of the situation and challenges facing Greene while failing to note British leadership faced almost precisely those same challenges. He does note on page 2, however, the British use of what he calls "compound war." His thesis is that Greene also used compound war, thus it is clear he is among those who see some similarity in the operations of the opposite sides.

Greene's primary strategic objective, driving the British Army from the south, never changed. However, accomplishing his primary objective involved intermediate objectives.<sup>612</sup> Greene assumed command of a department decimated by a series of defeats. Continentals and militia present for service numbered just over two thousand men.<sup>613</sup> Most of them lacked adequate equipment for campaigning.<sup>614</sup> Cornwallis had eight thousand regulars and was expecting more, at the same time hoping to raise a large force of Loyalist militia to support them.<sup>615</sup> Cornwallis of necessity, scattered many of his units across the state defending strategic forts, towns, and cities, and the roads between them. Those detachments gave the British Army control of the primary routes through the state, but abandoned the remainder of the state to guerrilla bands which spontaneously took the field after the defeat at Camden. Loss of the countryside was unfortunate for the British Army, but secure lines of communication and supply were paramount for the support of its field forces.

After detachments Cornwallis retained more than three thousand men under his immediate command. Another fifteen hundred – men sent under General Leslie from the north – arrived in South Carolina soon after Greene took command of the Patriot forces.<sup>616</sup> Even had Greene possessed equal manpower, his army was in no shape to fight. In his present

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<sup>612</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 447-449; Golway, *Washington's General*, 230; Bennett, "Early Operational Art," 18.

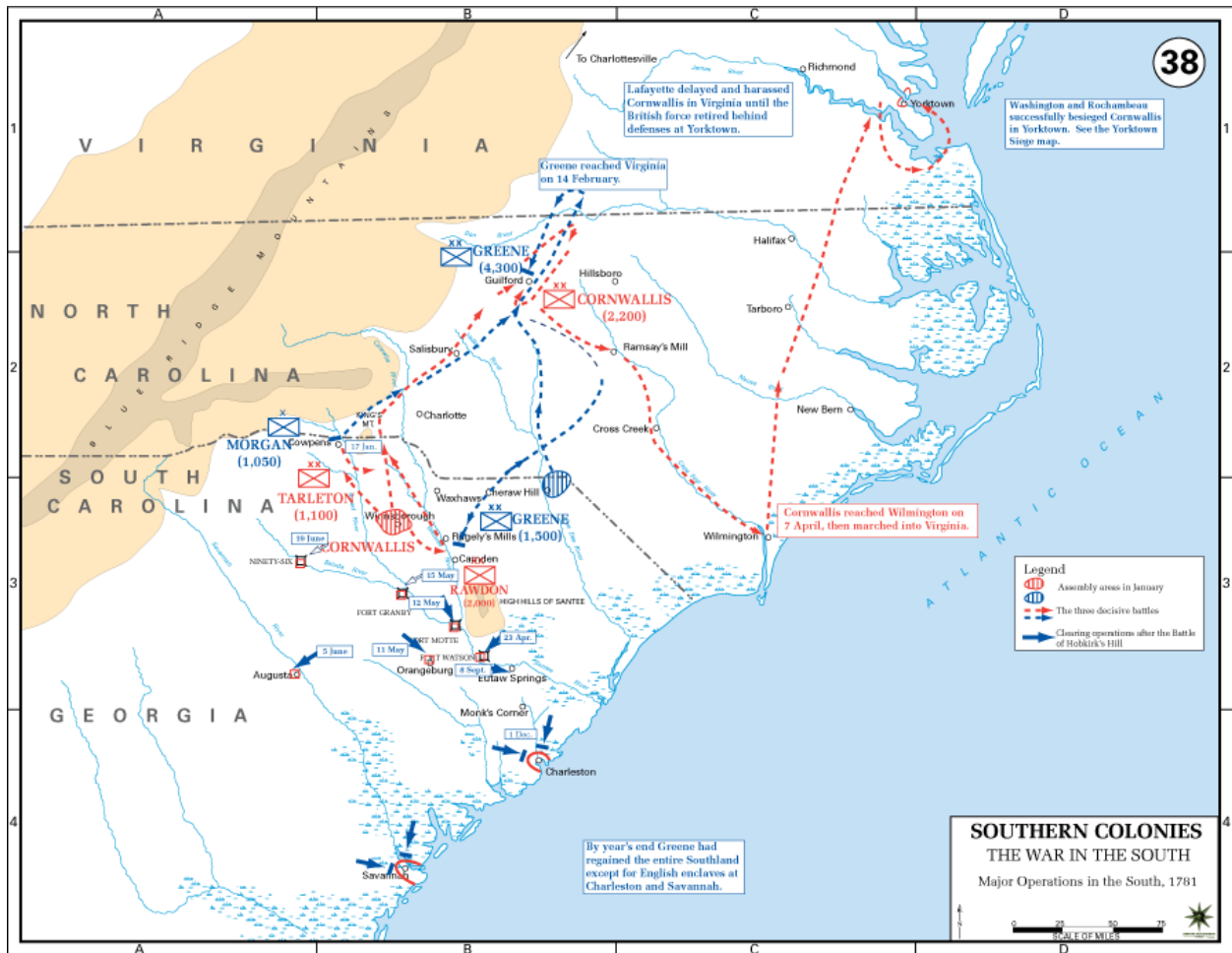
<sup>613</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 291; Siry, *Greene*, 62; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 137-138; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 60-61.

<sup>614</sup> Siry, *Greene*, 62; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 137-138.

<sup>615</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 283; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 60-61.

<sup>616</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 138; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 121.

circumstances, there was no thought of attacking the British Army. He could not even defend himself.<sup>617</sup> Before Greene engaged Cornwallis he needed to supply his army; revive the flagging spirits of southern Patriots; raise and train a force capable of fighting the British Army on relatively equal terms; and establish relationships with local political and military leaders (see map 7).<sup>618</sup>



MAP 7: The War in the South, 1781

SOURCE: Department of History, United States Military Academy at West Point

<sup>617</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120.

<sup>618</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 7-12; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 142-143; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 66; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 292-294.

Greene's situation was not all bad, however. Two months before Greene assumed command of the southern army he received unexpected help. British Major Patrick Ferguson was the inventor of one of the first successful breech loading rifles. He was also a good commander and a hard fighter. However, he held all rebels in contempt. Ordered to the backcountry of South Carolina to recruit Loyalists and intimidate rebels, he threatened Tennessee settlements which had aided the Patriots. Those settlers, known as Over-the-Mountain Men, banded together, tracked down Ferguson and destroyed his force at King's Mountain. Revolutionary War historians have compared King's Mountain to Trenton, and it is an apt comparison. Just as Trenton renewed hope that Washington could continue the war in the north, King's Mountain renewed hope the war was not over in the south.<sup>619</sup> At the same time, guerrilla leaders such as Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, and William Richard Davie of South Carolina and Elijah Clarke of Georgia, acting without orders, formed units in various parts of their states. Their activities hampered the British Army, making it clear neither state had entirely capitulated.<sup>620</sup>

On taking command of the army Greene's first operational goal was to supply his men and recruit enough soldiers to compete with the British Army. Under Cornwallis, the main British force concentrated at Winnsboro (modern Columbia), South Carolina, a central and balanced location allowing Cornwallis to counter any Patriot military move into the state.<sup>621</sup> To

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<sup>619</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 285; Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 232.

<sup>620</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 80-90; Jerome J. Nadelhaft, *The Disorders of War: The Revolution in South Carolina* (Orono: The University of Maine at Orono Press, 1981), 69.

<sup>621</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 22; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 52, 63, 66; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 285, 293, 296-297.

dissolve the British Army concentration and unbalance Cornwallis, Greene took the somewhat unusual step of dividing his army in the face of a superior enemy. Greene moved the force he retained under his personal command from Charlotte into northeast South Carolina, near the small town of Cheraw. The move threatened the British right flank, including Charlestown, and made it easier for guerrilla forces to transmit intelligence.<sup>622</sup> Although it did not solve Greene's logistical problems, it did ease them.<sup>623</sup> For additional help Greene called on Congress, General Washington, and the states, particularly Virginia and North Carolina, for all the manpower and supplies they could spare.<sup>624</sup> At the same time, Greene ordered Morgan to sweep through the backcountry around the British left, gathering supplies, reviving spirits, and recruiting militia – essentially a reverse of Ferguson's last mission.<sup>625</sup>

Splitting his army before a larger enemy was the initial decision which led several twentieth-century historians to incorrectly label Greene a guerilla leader. Dividing his force was certainly a calculated and daring decision. Dividing an army in front of a superior enemy is among the riskiest of military operations. On the other hand, military professionals and historians seldom describe such a maneuver as guerrilla warfare. Nor is it unheard of,

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<sup>622</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 298-299; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 7-10; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 66; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 141-142; Golway, *Washington's General*, 241; Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 102. Unlike the other historians named in this footnote, Muehlbauer and Ulbrich describe Greene's division of his army as unconventional in the sense of being uncommon, but not in the sense of being guerrilla in character. However, they do make the common mistake of confusing the eighteenth-century term partisan with the modern usage of the term guerrilla.

<sup>623</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 7-10.

<sup>624</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 3-5, 6, 7-10, 28-29, 35, 44-46; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 142-143; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 62-63, 69; Golway, *Washington's General*, 240-241; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 292, 294.

<sup>625</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 589-590; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 7-10, 22.



considered suicidal, or a guarantor or harbinger of defeat, as many historians argue in a misguided and unnecessary attempt to bolster Greene's claim to military genius.<sup>626</sup>

For American popular and amateur historians, the most famous case of splitting an army before a larger enemy is undoubtedly the Battle of Chancellorsville. In that battle, Civil War Confederate General Robert E. Lee divided his force before a larger Union force and won a significant victory.<sup>627</sup> No one argues that either Chancellorsville or Robert E. Lee were guerrilla. Commanders of conventional forces have divided armies before a larger enemy at least as far in the past as 52 B.C. That year Julius Caesar divided his twenty-five-thousand-man army in front of the thirty-thousand-man army of Vercingetorix, a Gallic chieftain.<sup>628</sup> Again, no reputable historian considers Caesar a guerrilla.

What Greene did was maneuver to gain an advantage over the enemy before battle. Such maneuver has, on occasion, resulted in opportunities for the smaller force to strike an unrequited blow on the enemy. That happened for Caesar, helping him cross a major river and position himself for successful battle. It happened for Lee, allowing Confederate corps commander Lieutenant General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson to attack the open flank of the Union Army. It has happened many other times in history, including with General Greene, whose detached force under Morgan won a significant victory at Cowpens. Dividing the army, even in the face of a smaller enemy force, has also failed many times in history, of

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<sup>626</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Victory*, 65; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 141; Golway, *Washington's General*, 241; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 297; Wood, *Battles of the Revolutionary War*, 209; Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 71; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 29.

<sup>627</sup> Emory M. Thomas, *Robert E. Lee: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 280-286.

<sup>628</sup> Julius Caesar, *The Battle for Gaul*, Trans., Anne Wiseman and Peter Wiseman (Boston: David R. Godine, 1980), 149. (VII.33-36)

course, as it did for the British Army at both King's Mountain and Cowpens. It is not unique, unconventional, or guerrilla.<sup>629</sup>

Primary objectives for Greene and Cornwallis somewhat defined each other. Greene's objective was to free the southern states under British Army occupation and defend those which remained unoccupied. Cornwallis' objective was to hold the states which he occupied and conquer those yet uninvaded. As with Greene, Cornwallis understood his primary objective meant he must protect his army and keep it in the field and that he must defeat the Patriot army when the opportunity presented. That was true for Cornwallis for the same reasons it was true for Greene. Neither could win without support of the local populace, and whatever their political persuasions many colonists would only publicly support a side they believed was winning.<sup>630</sup>

With the division of the Patriot force, Cornwallis had several options. He could split his army, sending a force after Morgan while keeping a force in front of Greene. He could move his entire army against Greene, but that would place Morgan in his rear and Greene could simply

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<sup>629</sup> For an excellent explanation of maneuver warfare and its impact on military operations in general, this author recommends two volumes by Robert M. Citino, *Quest for Decisive Victory: From Stalemate to Blitzkrieg in Europe, 1899-1940* (University of Kansas Press, 2002) and *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare* (University of Kansas Press, 2004).

<sup>630</sup> Higginbotham, "Reflections on the South in the American Revolution," 666, 668. Higginbotham is correct in his assessment of the need for Clinton and Cornwallis to gain support from the local population, but he fails to note the obvious reason such support was necessary. Britain had only a small army available for America and without local support barely enough manpower to provide replacements if there were no catastrophic losses. By comparison, America was a virtual manpower ocean, and whoever controlled that ocean gained an inestimable manpower advantage. Also, Higginbotham's assessment of the Vietnamization of Vietnam and a similar turning over of the war to local forces in Iraq as resembling the Americanization of the Revolution is in error. The United States wanted to turn the war over to locals in Vietnam and Iraq for political reasons, not because of a manpower shortage. In both cases the United States hoped to eventually leave the war to local forces, altogether. Britain's need for American manpower was not political, it was practical, as their army was too small to obtain its objective without local support. Nor was the British Army trying to leave America. It wanted local forces as auxiliaries only.

withdraw as the British Army advanced toward his force. He could move all or most of his force against Morgan, but that would uncover the all-important coastal cities through which Cornwallis received supplies and reinforcements. His actual choice was to split his own force into three parts.<sup>631</sup>

Hoping to destroy Morgan and regain the supremacy in light forces surrendered at King's Mountain, Cornwallis kept a significant reserve under his direct command at Winnsboro. He sent two thousand men under Lieutenant Colonel Lord Francis Rawdon, a proven leader and tough fighter who Greene would meet again, to Camden to cover the force that Greene led. Cornwallis sent eleven hundred more men under Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, another proven fighter and hard driver, west to fix Morgan. Cornwallis expected to move his own force against Morgan from a different direction, catching the Patriot detachment between two forces. However, Cornwallis started late and played no significant role in the operations preceding Cowpens.<sup>632</sup>

While Rawdon and Tarleton were both good commanders, Tarleton was more daring or reckless, depending on viewpoint. Instead of finding Morgan's position and sending word back to Cornwallis, Tarleton rushed headlong against Morgan's army. Morgan destroyed Tarleton's force, killing, wounding, and capturing over a thousand of Tarleton's eleven hundred men for the loss of one hundred fifty of his own.<sup>633</sup> Morgan's victory, combined with the Patriot victory

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<sup>631</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 479.

<sup>632</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 479.

<sup>633</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 481-487. Regarding the proclivity of historians to paint the southern campaign (and the American Revolution) in guerilla terms, Ferling calls Morgan's plan at Cowpens "unorthodox," from which point he describes Morgan's disposition essentially as a defense in depth with skirmishers in front and cavalry on the flank. He describes Morgan's plan as successive infantry lines attempting to stop the British attack at which time the cavalry would counterattack with whatever infantry support was available. That is, in fact, about as orthodox a

at King's Mountain, changed the manpower balance in the Southern Department significantly. First, the two battles immediately shifted the manpower balance in favor of the Patriot army by about two thousand men. That number is significant in a theater where neither side typically commanded more than ten thousand. Second, the two battles saw the loss of virtually all of Cornwallis' light troops, giving Greene an advantage in that specific and important area. Finally, over time hundreds rallied to the Patriot cause, further shifting the manpower balance in favor of the Patriot army.<sup>634</sup>

Cornwallis, however, had one remaining opportunity. Between eight and nine hundred of the British Army casualties from the Battle of Cowpens were men captured, rather than killed.<sup>635</sup> If Cornwallis and the main British Army could catch Morgan, he might reverse his losses by freeing his men and destroying Morgan's force. He could then turn on Greene with significant advantages. Cornwallis, recalling Rawdon and the remnant of Tarleton's force, set out after Morgan. Unfortunately for him, bad intelligence hampered his chase and he made a slow start. Cornwallis burned his excess baggage and wagons in a misguided attempt to turn his entire army into a light force, hopefully catching Morgan before he reunited with Greene. That was the beginning of the Race to the Dan River.<sup>636</sup>

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defense as it was possible to present during the eighteenth century. The Patriot army used similar plans at Bunker Hill, Long Island, and Guilford Courthouse, as did the British Army at Yorktown and in the Saratoga battles. Similar plans also graced countless eighteenth-century battles in Europe. One modern West Point graduate has assured this author that Ferling's description, with slight changes regarding technology, remains the classic description of a conventional defensive position. The manner of Ferling's process – naming something as unconventional and then describing its conventionality – is the single most common error this author has observed among Revolutionary War historians. Any item or circumstance whose correct description is conventional cannot be unconventional.

<sup>634</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 488; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 146; Golway, *Washington's General*, 247.

<sup>635</sup> Babits, *Devil of a Whipping*, 142-143.

<sup>636</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 163; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 337-341; Bennett, "Early Operational Art," 21-22.

After Cowpens, Greene's operational objective immediately changed. His new objective was to reunite with Morgan, call out available militia, and confront Cornwallis. Unfortunately for Greene, militia failed to respond with sufficient speed or numbers, so Greene changed his plans yet again. Reuniting the halves of his army, Greene fled before Cornwallis, leaving behind local militia leaders such as Marion to harass British Army supply lines and rear area installations.<sup>637</sup>

Greene's retreat, including his executive command of the South Carolina guerrillas, resembled Washington's retreat across New Jersey. Both Greene and Washington led dispirited armies. Both fled superior British forces (led by the same general) against whom they could scarcely have survived, much less won. Both crossed a large river and gathered all available boats to their side, ending the immediate pursuit but creating a low point in their command history. Both Greene and Washington swiftly gathered the best army they could and recrossed the river, seeking combat with enemy forces now smaller than their own. Both generals engaged the enemy in a battle that completely changed the strategic equation in their theater. Greene was not consciously modeling his conduct after Washington, but both men acted in much the same manner under similar circumstances. Washington's campaign occurred first and at a time Greene was commanding a division in Washington's army, so it is difficult to argue that Greene originated any new form of warfare leading up to Guilford Courthouse.<sup>638</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 46-47; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 308-309; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 158-159; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 147.

<sup>638</sup> Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 338-371; Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 115-159; Muehlbauer and Ulbrich, *Ways of War*, 3; Bennett, "Early Operational Art," 20; Kajenski, "Kościuszko's Role in the Siege of Ninety-Six," 17; Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King*, 270. Bennett is not entirely wrong, here, but errs in two specifics. First, like many, he fails to understand that partisan and guerrilla are not interchangeable (Piecuch is also guilty in this regard). Second, he does not understand that militia can fight at one point as guerrillas and another as conventional forces, and thus sees South Carolina militia and guerrillas as different organizations. They

What was true of their conventional operations was equally true regarding their executive command of guerrillas. During his retreat to the Dan and his enforced time outside South Carolina, Greene encouraged guerrillas to operate against the logistics and infrastructure of the British Army. Once Greene returned to South Carolina he recalled the guerrilla commanders which, for the most part, then fought under his command as auxiliaries in conventional combat.<sup>639</sup> Washington, while Greene was under his command, used guerrilla forces in much the same way in New York and New Jersey. Using the cover of Pennsylvania and New Jersey militia acting as raiders and guerrillas, Washington moved into New Jersey to attack British forces at Trenton and Princeton. He ordered further cooperative attacks by militia, some operating conventionally and some as guerrillas, in support of his operations during the following weeks.<sup>640</sup>

Neither Greene nor Washington ever commanded guerrilla operations directly or had direct input into their plans and actions. That is entirely unlike Mao or Giap, who spent years in direct command of guerrilla forces.<sup>641</sup> Historians have argued that Greene, Mao, and Giap all first commanded guerrilla operations and then, as opportunity developed, converted to conventional operations.<sup>642</sup> That was certainly true of Mao and Giap, but it is an incorrect

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essentially comprised the same forces. Likewise, Kajenski errs by referring to "Marion's partisans," which were then fighting as regulars in line of battle.

<sup>639</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 332-344; Golway, *Washington's General*, 261-266; Conway, "To Subdue America," 398; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, vi. Conway argues that Greene personally directed unconventional operations. Pancake is among the few historians writing on Greene who argue that Greene won via conventional operations. Those South Carolina forces that continued to act as guerrillas did so against Greene's wishes, not with his blessing.

<sup>640</sup> Kwasny, *Washington's Guerrilla War*, 99-107.

<sup>641</sup> Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 347, 697.

<sup>642</sup> Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, x, 138-139; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-2; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 5-7.

assessment of Greene's operations and career. Greene assumed command of a conventional army, not a guerrilla one.<sup>643</sup> His initial operations were conventional, maneuvering Continental forces and militia auxiliaries, not guerrillas. The result was a conventional victory at Cowpens, where two conventional armies faced off in conventional fashion.<sup>644</sup> Greene then retreated out of state with his army, the only time he encouraged South Carolina militia to operate as guerrillas.<sup>645</sup> On returning to the state he recalled the militia as auxiliaries. In other words, Greene's force, as Washington's, was regular army supported by militia auxiliaries acting as conventional soldiers.

Cornwallis declined to follow Greene across the Dan River because he conceded that Virginia was predominately Patriot.<sup>646</sup> The end of the race to the Dan brought about another

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<sup>643</sup> Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 20*, 181-183; Gaillard Hunt, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, Volume XVIII* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office 1910), 906; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 7-10, 139-140. The order from General Greene dated 18 January 1781, in which he specifically delineated between Continental, state, and militia officers, and therefore between Continental, state, and militia forces, makes it clear the core of his command was Continental Army, a regular force, not guerrilla.

<sup>644</sup> Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping*, 68-72. These pages show a series of maps from different sources, each of which details the layout of a conventional battle of the flintlock musket era.

<sup>645</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VI*, 459-460; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 194-195, 245-247; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 321.

<sup>646</sup> Higginbotham, "Reflections on the South," 668; Nadelhaft, *Disorders of War*, 69. Higginbotham describes Greene's campaign generally, and that portion against Cornwallis specifically, as "unorthodox" and as "a hit-and-run strategy that no previous American commander in the south had tried." Higginbotham's argument is incorrect in several respects. First, Higginbotham's description of hit and run exaggerates the circumstances as the only time Greene ever ran from the British was during the Race to the Dan, during which time his forces never attacked the British and only defended when necessary. After Greene re-entered the Carolinas he continually pursued the British and sought out battle with their largest armies. Second, Greene's "hit-and-run" strategy was maneuver, which he did apply successfully for his entire tenure in command, but it was significantly more complicated than hit and run. Third, Higginbotham used "hit and run" and "unconventional" pointedly to suggest guerrilla tactics. Once Greene rebuilt his army, he fought it in a fully conventional manner, using his main force against the British main force, as often discussed elsewhere in this dissertation. Fourth, while Greene may have been the first *southern* commander to implement a maneuver strategy, maneuver was not new with Greene. Maneuver was the common manner of Washington's operations during the period Greene served directly under him. Finally, Higginbotham describes the Race to the Dan as if it were a calculated plan to wear down the British, a position supported by Nadelhaft. Greene's own writings suggests no such plan. The Race to the Dan was a desperate attempt by Greene to avoid combat with a larger, better trained, better led British force until he increased his own

change in Greene's operational objectives. Greene's efforts with the North Carolina and Virginia governments and the Continental Congress reached fruition while he rested his army in southern Virginia. Soon his army contained more than four thousand men. The British Army, however, lost men on the march north, distanced themselves from reinforcements, and outpaced its supply. Cornwallis commanded fewer than two thousand hungry men by the time Greene recrossed into North Carolina.<sup>647</sup>

As with Washington safely across the Delaware, once Greene crossed the Dan and reorganized his army he determined to give battle to the British Army. If Greene was careful with his army he knew that even if defeated, replacements were available from Virginia and North Carolina. Meanwhile Cornwallis, even if victorious, would lose irreplaceable troops, inevitably weakening his army to the point of defeat or disintegration. If Cornwallis suffered a significant defeat, he had no real haven and Greene might destroy or capture his entire army in a single battle.<sup>648</sup> Yet Cornwallis saw little danger in fighting the Patriot army Greene commanded, perhaps recalling how easily Patriot forces under Gates had broken. Thus, even with the change in relative numbers, Cornwallis did not change his operational objective.

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forces and set his logistics in order. Its purpose, in other words, was to delay, not to wear down the British. That the latter also happened to a degree was merely good fortune.

<sup>647</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 173; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 161; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 327.

<sup>648</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 430-421, 433-441; Bennett, "Early Operational Art," 26. Bennett also portrays Greene's actions from too limited a view, arguing that Greene understood that Cornwallis had reached his culmination point. Greene's letters, however, suggest he was more concerned about his ability to keep the Patriot army in the field and thus sought battle before his own army dissolved.

Greene's letter to Henry Lee, one of Greene's cavalry commanders, written the day before Guilford Courthouse, shows that Greene believed his circumstances had changed enough to offer battle. A second letter, written the day after the battle to Samuel Huntington, the President of the Continental Congress, explains Greene's thinking regarding why he gave battle when he did. Given Greene's positive indication in the first letter, it is reasonable to trust the second.



As events turned out, Greene did not win the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in the classic sense of holding the field after the battle. Nevertheless, Cornwallis, commanding fewer than half as many men as Greene, sustained double the number of casualties. In percentages, Greene lost roughly seven percent of his force, while Cornwallis lost more than a quarter of his men.<sup>649</sup> That was a loss ratio Cornwallis could not sustain, and he never sought battle with Greene again. Instead, he marched southeast for Wilmington, on the coast of North Carolina, in hopes of succor from the British navy.<sup>650</sup> Eventually, believing it necessary to subdue Virginia, which he saw as the supply base of the South, Cornwallis moved north to Yorktown and final defeat.<sup>651</sup>

Greene initially followed Cornwallis, hoping for another battle. When Cornwallis declined to oblige, Greene again changed his intermediate objective. He determined to leave Cornwallis in North Carolina and turn south, threatening by his movement to liberate South Carolina. He expected to draw Cornwallis south and into another battle. Instead Cornwallis headed north, leaving Greene free to pursue his primary objective, the liberation of the Carolinas and Georgia from British Army occupation.<sup>652</sup> Southern campaign historians and Greene biographers argue that Greene's move south was another guerrilla type operation, misunderstanding the difference between maneuver and guerrilla warfare.<sup>653</sup> Again, clear

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<sup>649</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 330.

<sup>650</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 330-331; Golway, *Washington's General*, 261; Siry, *Greene*, 75.

<sup>651</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 330-331; Golway, *Washington's General*, 261-262; Siry, *Greene*, 76.

<sup>652</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 33-35; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 333-334; Golway, *Washington's General*, 263-264; Siry, *Greene*, 76.

<sup>653</sup> Golway, *Washington's General*, 264; Siry, *Greene*, 76; Weigley, *The Guerrilla War*, 46; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 54-55.

precedents exist. John Churchill, the First Duke of Marlborough, was commanding general of the British forces in the Netherlands during the early stages of the War of Spanish Succession. In 1704, he withdrew his army from the Netherlands and marched two hundred and fifty miles with one enemy army at his back to face another enemy army threatening to force Austria from the war. Defeating the enemy at Blenheim, the duke then marched back to the Netherlands, placing his army in the lines there once again. Other than scope, this maneuver resembled that of Greene leaving Cornwallis behind in North Carolina and was at least as daring. Once more, no one suggests that either Marlborough or the Battle of Blenheim were guerrilla.<sup>654</sup>

As with almost every phase of Greene's campaigns, historians refer to his final offensive as a model of twentieth-century guerilla warfare. Greene's final operations were, in fact, at the very heart of eighteenth-century conventional practice. Greene used militia, often supported by Continental cavalry or artillery, in detachments. South Carolina militia typically declined to campaign without their horses, making it compatible with cavalry and able to support that arm with full mobility. Their goal was to cut off egress from the various small forts around the state before they sent word of their predicament to the primary British Army, and to reduce them before help arrived.<sup>655</sup>

Historians typically consider Greene's detachments as guerrilla units. They were instead combined arms forces of conventional cavalry and mounted infantry, sometimes supported by artillery. For the most part, they conducted the most mundane and common of all eighteenth-century combat missions – sieges of fortified locations. Greene assigned detachments to other

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<sup>654</sup> Chandler, *Marlborough*, 139-157.

<sup>655</sup> Cann, "The Siege of Ninety Six," 5.

operations as well, cutting supply lines and delaying reinforcements among them. Although some of those secondary operations were of a type commonly carried out by guerrillas, they were also common to conventional forces. Greene's mounted detachments operated as conventional forces in his final campaign for South Carolina. Their operations were not raids. Targets of Greene's detachments were not undefended or lightly defended infrastructure or logistical targets behind the front lines. The detachments which fought those battles and conducted those sieges did not hide when not fighting. Greene's forces – Continentals, supported by militia from several states – conducted a sustained military offensive, reconquering all the southern states below Virginia, with exception of two coastal enclaves, Charlestown and Savannah.<sup>656</sup>

Greene's operations continued in a similar vein for the remainder of the war. He commanded in a single siege and two more significant battles, all tactical losses, but each regaining a significant portion of the state. In western South Carolina and Georgia, on the fringes of his campaign, guerrilla activities of the type Greene detested continued. His own operations, however, were fully in accordance with conventional eighteenth-century practice. By the time the British Army surrendered at Yorktown Greene had largely completed the South Carolina campaign. The only thing left was besieging Charleston and Savannah.

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<sup>656</sup> Numerous academic and popular books and articles describe Greene's campaign to retake South Carolina, including many listed as citations in this chapter. Most of them spend several chapters covering the South Carolina campaign, making them cumbersome for citations. While many, including many referred to in this chapter, label Greene's campaign as guerrilla, their descriptions are clearly not that of a guerrilla operation.

Greene's southern victory did not result from a new or innovative form of operations. His operations were uniformly common to the time in which he lived. In many respects, his operations resembled what he saw under Washington or read in contemporary military treatises. Modern operational theory holds that combinations of firepower and maneuver win campaigns. Greene was a maneuver general, but that did not make him extraordinary. The same was true of other great commanders of the era such as Wallenstein, Prince Eugene, Marlborough, Frederick the Great, and even Washington. It is likely Greene read the teachings of those great captains and he was certainly familiar with Washington's operations.

As correctly argued by World War II historian Robert M. Citino in his detailed study of operational combat, maneuver is the only way to win a campaign quickly and cheaply. The importance of maneuver is greater than simply winning quickly and cheaply, however. Greene could not win quickly, but through maneuver he spared his forces and won eventually. The United States Army and the United States Marine Corps both routinely teach their combat arms officers that maneuver is the smart way to conduct operations. The written assignments of several army and marine field officers cited in this dissertation provide evidence of that fact. Many eighteenth-century generals, including Greene, also believed in maneuver, although they would not have recognized the word "operations" in the modern military sense. In other words, it is not necessarily guerrilla generals which win through maneuver, but good generals – often men schooled in early-modern European history. Greene bears limited resemblance to twentieth-century guerrilla commanders at best, and any such resemblance is not what gained him victory in the south. He gained victory in the south through his keen understanding and

employment of the basic elements of eighteenth-century conventional warfare, including logistics, maneuver, firepower, and technology.

## CHAPTER 10

### TACTICS

Historians generally concede Nathanael Greene fought conventional, eighteenth-century style battles.<sup>657</sup> However, many see Greene's tactics as different from other facets of his military leadership. These scholars often discuss Greene's tactics as if they were the conventional portion of "compound" or "hybrid" warfare – a twenty-first century term that, as used in this instance, describes a system marrying eighteenth-century tactics to twentieth-century strategy.<sup>658</sup> This bifurcated view of Greene's leadership is how many scholars solve the problem created by misconstruing his strategy and operations as visionary and ahead of his time. In fact, conventionality flowed naturally from Greene's high-level command functions to his lower-level leadership with no problem to solve. As previously established, Greene's operations were conventional and drew on conventional theater strategy, which itself derived from a conventional Patriot grand strategy. Greene's tactics, broadly conceded as conventional, similarly derived from higher-level aspects of his generalship – primarily operations, logistics, and technology. Nathanael Greene's battlefield tactics are conventional, then, precisely because the higher-level aspects of his military practice were conventional.

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<sup>657</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 53, 55; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 331, 345, 360-361, 376-380; Golway, *Washington's General*, 257-260, 263, 266-268, 280-282; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*; 174-186, 196-197; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 159-160, 171, 174-176, 188-193; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 169-170.

<sup>658</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 53-55; Weigley, *The South Carolina Campaign*, 41-44; East, "Colonial Hybrid Warfare," iii; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 5; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 214; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 1-3; Peter R. Mansoor, "Introduction: Hybrid Warfare in History," in *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, eds., Williamson Murray and Peter R. Mansoor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2-3.

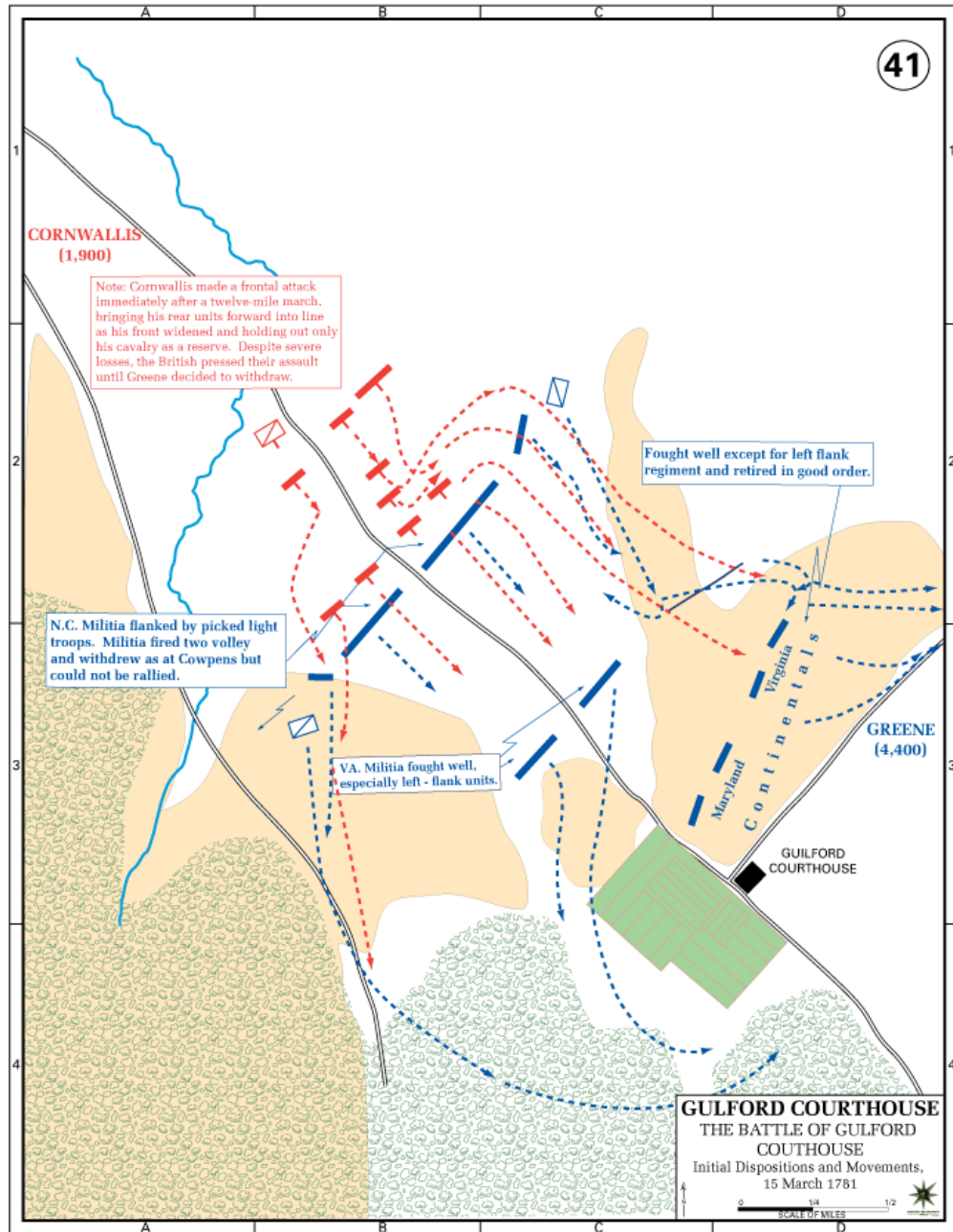
Eighteenth-century tactics, in general, were based on the characteristics of eighteenth-century technology. Available technology similarly influenced Greene's own tactics. Additionally, like other commanders of his era, Greene adapted his tactical approach to his operational method and logistical circumstances. Historians writing about Greene's southern campaign often see in his actions purposes that are at odds with his own stated reasoning. Greene's reasoning is significantly more mundane than what scholars attribute to him, having more in common with Washington in the north and with British commanders against whom he fought in the south than with any modern commander. Far from being a pre-modern aspect of a style of leadership broadly ahead of its time, Greene's battlefield tactics are evidence of a consistently conventional commander. Nathanael Greene was a man of his time; he was a diligent student and practitioner of eighteenth-century warfare, rather than an original thinker on war or an innovative and experimental field commander. His guide was practicality and common practice, rather than theory. In other words, one can see consistency and continuity throughout all elements of Greene's generalship.

During the eighteenth century, infantry was the primary battlefield arm in both Europe and America, and generals built their tactics around that arm. Infantry typically fought in multiple ranks. The fewer the ranks, the longer the frontage covered by the army. At the same time, depth created by multiple ranks was necessary to resist mass cavalry attacks. By mid-century three ranks, the smallest number deemed safe, became common practice in Europe.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> Palmer, "From Dynastic to National War," 93, 99; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, 476; Knox, *The Dynamics of the Military Revolution*, 36-40; Black, *A Military Revolution?*, 10; Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 115.

During the American Revolution circumstances limited the use of cavalry, consequently cavalry forces were smaller than often found in European armies of similar size. Since cavalry was less a threat, both sides stretched their lines thinner (two ranks), covering a broader front.<sup>660</sup>



MAP 8: Battle of Guilford Courthouse

SOURCE: Department of History, United States Military Academy at West Point

<sup>660</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 7, 29, 51, 60, 161-162; Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 123; Lynn, *Tools of War*, 94; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 142.



That armies fought in ranks does not mean the entire army lined up in two or three lines, but that battalions or companies lined up so. The map of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse provides an example of tactical arrangements for both sides in Greene's battles (see map 8). Each thick line on the map represents two ranks of men, the second a yard behind the first. Each man was also about a yard from those on each side of him. Armies fighting in clear terrain typically stood shoulder to shoulder. In wooded terrain lines expanded, allowing slight variations when moving. Soldiers made every effort to keep their lines as straight as possible in either case.<sup>661</sup>

Tactical disposition of forces depended on circumstances and no attempt to describe common battle tactics can cover all circumstances.<sup>662</sup> Conventionally, infantry was the primary force in battles, with the possibility of cavalry, artillery, or engineer support.<sup>663</sup> Commanders arranged Infantry units in ranks, and the placement of individual battalions depended on breadth of the field and the number of battalions that were present. Typically, generals placed battalions side by side, forming a front across all or most of the battlefield. If enough battalions were present it was common to create what modern observers would call a "defense in depth" by placing lines of battalions at intervals behind the front line.<sup>664</sup> Where possible, most

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<sup>661</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 138-142.

<sup>662</sup> Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 109.

<sup>663</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 60; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 65. While there were engineering officers on Greene's staff, there were no engineering units in his army.

<sup>664</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 54. The map of Guilford Courthouse gives a general idea of the dispositions described in this paragraph and those which follow. Again, infinite variations exist and no description of tactics or tactical placement during the early modern era is definitive.

commanders anchored their tactical line between safe terrain features, such as rivers, hills, woods, or fortified places.

When available, generals typically used cavalry in one of two ways. Sometimes they posted it on the flanks as a covering force for the infantry, especially if the flanks were open. (Flanks were “anchored,” when the outside flanks of the outermost units rested on, near, or against some easily-defended terrain feature that was difficult for the enemy to circumvent. Flanks that did not rest on such terrain were “open” or “in the air.”) Horsemen posted on open flanks could interpose themselves between their main armies and flanking attempts by the enemy. Flank placement of cavalry units also made it easy to attack enemy flanks if opportunity presented itself.<sup>665</sup>

The second common tactical use of cavalry was as a reserve, held in the rear of the battle formation. A cavalry reserve served two purposes. First was the traditional use of reserves – conducting a final defense, supporting a successful attack, and mounting a pursuit, or protecting the main force during a withdrawal after an adverse result. Cavalry placed behind an army also curtailed straggling and desertion, both common battlefield problems for eighteenth-century commanders. Where a commander had sufficient cavalry, it was common to deploy some in the rear and some on the flanks.<sup>666</sup>

Artillery was most often placed in the front line, between infantry or cavalry units.<sup>667</sup> Eighteenth-century artillery was a line-of-sight weapon and front-line placement allowed

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<sup>665</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 60; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 51; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 87.

<sup>666</sup> Addington, *Patterns of War since the Eighteenth Century*, 4; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 87.

<sup>667</sup> Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 205.

counter battery fire and disruption of enemy formations prior to actual contact between infantry or cavalry forces, which often decreased the line-of-sight. When not placed in the first line, commanders typically placed cannon at the expected decisive point of the battle.<sup>668</sup> Long range fire was usually with iron balls. The defense typically switched to canister as the enemy drew closer.<sup>669</sup> Canister was a thin metal can filled with musket balls. The can fit inside the muzzle of the cannon, turning the cannon into a giant shotgun.

Previous chapters of this dissertation demonstrate the continuity between Patriot grand strategy, Greene's theater strategy, and Greene's operations. That continuity also reaches Greene's tactics. Operationally, Greene sought to destroy the enemy or drive it from the theater. With his manpower advantage, the fastest and most reliable way to accomplish that was engaging the British Army in conventional battle whenever opportunity allowed.

During the American Civil War President Abraham Lincoln complained he needed a general who understood the arithmetic. By that he meant Union manpower could win the war while losing battles because the Confederates would run out of men first. Lincoln did not wish to lose battles, but he wanted generals to fight regardless of the outcome, since the Confederacy could not withstand manpower losses even in victorious battles.<sup>670</sup> Greene understood the logistical arithmetic similarly during his command in South Carolina. At Guilford

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<sup>668</sup> Palmer, "From Dynastic to National War," 101; Addington, *Patterns of War since the Eighteenth Century*, 4; Chandler, *Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 211.

<sup>669</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 61.

<sup>670</sup> Donald Stoker, *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 218.

Courthouse, for example, he outnumbered the British Army more than two-to-one. Despite Greene's technical defeat, the British Army lost a fourth of its army, men it could not replace.<sup>671</sup> Greene lost fewer than a tenth of his army and needed little time to replace them. He was anxious for another battle with Cornwallis under similar circumstances.<sup>672</sup> Cornwallis understood the arithmetic as well, and was therefore unwilling to risk his army again, choosing instead to leave the theater permanently.<sup>673</sup>

Because the numbers were in his favor, Greene had no need for guerrilla operations. Guerrilla operations are for armies that are ill-equipped by training or logistics to fight conventional battles.<sup>674</sup> Greene, by contrast, had the advantage in men and thus in firepower on the battlefield. Conventional tactics relied on fire production (that is, the number of men in the line of battle). Greene's manpower advantage, therefore, allowed him to rely on conventional tactics.

Modern Revolutionary War historians make too much of guerrilla activities in South Carolina; detachments Greene sent out from his main army; and even the slaughter and destruction of backcountry internecine warfare. None of those issues impact Greene's conventionality on any level. Greene had no need for an unconventional approach. He had confidence in his ability to win using conventional tactics just as he had confidence in a

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<sup>671</sup> Babits and Howard, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody*, 219, 220, 223, 224. Babits and Howard are probably the most dependable historians regarding the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. They estimate Cornwallis' force at 1,900-2,200 men with 532 losses. Best case, almost twenty-five percent of Cornwallis' army were casualties. They estimate Greene's army at 4,000-4,400 men with 263 casualties, not counting the missing, almost all of whom were militia who were available later in the war. Worst case, almost seven percent casualties. Even counting the few captured or otherwise unable to return to the army, Greene's losses were well under ten percent.

<sup>672</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 442; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 333; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 168.

<sup>673</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 335-336.

<sup>674</sup> Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 48.

conventional strategy and operations.<sup>675</sup> His goal, at all three levels, was to fight the British main army at every opportunity. He did approve guerilla activities while rebuilding his army. He also sent out detachments, as explained in previous chapters. Greene used those detachments to mount smaller operations when major attacks were unnecessary. They were, however, regular forces conducting regular operations, permanently recapturing strategic locations for the Patriot faction. They were not guerrillas or raiders attacking communications or infrastructure. Greene's detachments are an example of economy of force – preserving his logistical assets and his freedom of maneuver by limiting the size of the force in contact with the enemy. As for the backcountry guerrilla war in which the two sides slaughtered each other indiscriminately, which one analyst declared a part of Greene's hybrid campaign, he neither used it nor approved of it.<sup>676</sup> Greene's battles, and those of the detachments he ordered, were not guerrilla or Fabian attacks meant simply to keep hope alive. They were attempts to destroy the British Army in the south.

Technology, on the other hand, influenced Greene's tactics as thoroughly as did his operational goals. Technology of the early gunpowder era changed battlefield tactics. In war,

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<sup>675</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 47.

<sup>676</sup> East, "Colonial Hybrid Warfare," 1; Mansoor, "Hybrid Warfare in History," 2-3; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 9, 17, 82, 84, 88, 102; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VIII*, 349. East relies on Mansoor for his definition of hybrid warfare and both overstretch. Mansoor argues that a commander can accomplish some aspects of hybrid strategy without his knowledge. While issues outside the knowledge of a commander can affect the outcome of a battle or campaign, they can hardly be part of a strategy (the plan) so their definition is far too broad. Also, Mansoor, as with many others, incorrectly argues that Cowpens was a mix of regular and irregular warfare, that Greene's detachments were guerrilla, and that French support of the Patriots was equivalent to modern nations supporting foreign insurgencies – the implication being that the entire Patriot military effort was guerrilla. French support of the Patriots was an alliance more resembling those between European nations, although France was certainly the major partner. The fact that in all three of the multinational campaigns conducted by French and Patriot armies their ground forces fought in precisely the same manner demonstrates this was not a regular army supporting guerrillas.

the tactical offensive attempts to close the gap between the two conflicting armies – in other words, to force the defense to give up the ground it is defending. At the same time defenses inherently seek to maintain the distance between the two armies so they can hold the ground they are defending. Blade technology (the use of swords, spears, and lances) commonly begat an offensive tactical approach. Being within striking distance was generally necessary to fell an enemy. The attacker also had the advantage of momentum, especially when mounted.

Gunpowder changed that dynamic.<sup>677</sup> Striking an enemy even at distances of ten or twenty yards shifted the advantage to the defense. Forward movement by the attacker made it more difficult to fire quickly or accurately. Remaining in place, defenders typically concentrated on hitting attackers with as many volleys as possible. The most generally accepted theory of warfare in the eighteenth-century rested on these observations. It postulated the operational (strategic) offensive – threatening enemy troops or assets by maneuver – coupled with the tactical defensive.<sup>678</sup> Typically, generals attacked only when the enemy had been damaged and disorganized by fire or some other advantage existed.

Greene took the operational offensive from the moment he recrossed the Dan River back into North Carolina. However, in two of Greene's three field battles – Guilford Courthouse and Eutaw Springs – he stood on the defensive during the opening phase of the battle, attacking only after the enemy became disorganized from its own offensive efforts. In the third – Hobkirk's Hill – Greene also planned a defensive stand, but a perceived mistake by his enemy led him to attack immediately. Thus, Greene's reliance on conventional tactics are a natural

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<sup>677</sup> Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 16.

<sup>678</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, 2.

development of contemporary military technology, but also consistent with his operational objective.

Logistics, too, played a role in shaping Greene's tactics. Lack of supplies and the undependable nature of Revolutionary War militia hindered keeping an army together for more than short periods at a time. Greene addressed his approach in a letter to Samuel Huntington describing the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Having the force necessary to fight Cornwallis, Greene was anxious for battle because the militia would not stay in the field long, nor could he feed it if it did. That made battle in the short run imperative.<sup>679</sup> In another letter to Huntington, describing Hobkirk's Hill, Greene points out that lack of supplies and manpower kept him from driving the British Army out of Camden, forcing him to await their attack.<sup>680</sup> The opposite situation, having men in hand, influenced Greene to give battle at Eutaw Springs.<sup>681</sup> That was his approach throughout the southern campaign. As opportunity for successful battle presented itself, Greene used it to best advantage.

The idea that Greene's tactics were part of a hybrid approach to warfare has no more basis than suggestions of unconventionality in other facets of his command. His tactics were not a conventional centerpiece in an overall unconventional method of military command. Rather, his conventional tactics flowed seamlessly from his conventional strategy, operations, logistics, and technology. The conventionality of higher-level aspects of his generalship dictated conventional tactics. It was these conventional battles that won the southern

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<sup>679</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 433.

<sup>680</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume III*, 155.

<sup>681</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume IX*, 308.

campaign for Greene, rather than the side shows that often draw so much attention from modern historians.

Modern historians see in Greene's actions an approach ahead of its time, akin to modern operational theory. They see decisions he made for practical, immediate reasons as far-sighted planning and strategy completely unrelated to his stated views of those decisions. Thus, they inadvertently develop a myth of visionary genius from what were ordinary circumstances. Guilford Courthouse is an excellent example.

Regarding Guilford Courthouse, Dederer makes several claims suggesting Greene's prescience. He argues Henry Lee's attack on Loyalists militia at Haw River and the mistaken attack Tarleton made against Loyalist militia in the same area a few days later spurred Greene's reinforcements prior to Guilford.<sup>682</sup> Dederer also argues, "He [Greene] had 'lured the enemy in deep,' augmented his force to achieve numerical superiority, tired and harassed the British Army through a campaign of quick maneuver, and now, at a battle site he picked, Greene would stand and fight. This was a perfect example of strategic flexibility inherent in mobile war."<sup>683</sup> Dederer also suggests it was only after Cornwallis had outrun his support that Greene decided on a conventional battle.

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<sup>682</sup> Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 160-163.

<sup>683</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 52-53. Dederer fails to cite the quote regarding luring the enemy deep. Mobile warfare, as Dederer uses the term, differs from maneuver warfare as typically understood. What Dederer is describing is a type of warfare combining the use of regular, militia, and guerrilla forces. He argues that Mao and Greene were alike in using this type warfare. In fact, Mao combined large guerrilla forces under his direct command with smaller guerrilla forces under regional commanders. Only very late in the war did he develop and use a regular army. Greene's own warfare was distinct from either the description given by Dederer or the type of campaign commanded by Mao in that it was not guerrilla but conventional.



Russell F. Weigley makes similar claims regarding the same battle. “[Greene] believed Cornwallis had so badly overextended himself that the time to fight had almost arrived.”<sup>684</sup> Also, “Greene had waited to give battle only at the moment most propitious for him.” Although Weigley admits Greene’s manpower advantage influenced his decision to fight, he argues the moment was propitious because if Greene defeated the British Army he would win the war in the south.<sup>685</sup> Dederer and Weigley both indicate Greene planned to lure Cornwallis into conventional battle only after wearing the enemy army down through non-battle means while building up his own army. These arguments are at considerable variance with Greene’s statements regarding the campaign, yet neither historian offers any reason for challenging Greene’s version.

In truth, Greene was less concerned about Cornwallis’ army than his own. Greene withdrew from South Carolina not because he wanted to draw Cornwallis away from supplies and reinforcements. Greene withdrew – ran – because he lacked manpower and supplies to win a battle at that time and place.<sup>686</sup> The British Army in the south destroyed two Patriot armies during the year prior to Greene taking command. He feared a significant loss so soon after taking command of the army would dishearten South Carolina Patriots perhaps beyond recovery, as well as damaging his own reputation and possibly ending his career. Despite those issues, however, Greene wanted to join forces with Morgan and fight Cornwallis in South Carolina immediately after Cowpens.<sup>687</sup> He did not do so only because of his inability to gather

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<sup>684</sup> Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 41-42.

<sup>685</sup> Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 44.

<sup>686</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 310-312.

<sup>687</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 219-221.

a sufficient militia force in time. Greene retreated to keep Cornwallis from destroying his army, as Washington had done many times and as many European commanders had done throughout the history of warfare on that continent, a subject in which Greene was well versed.<sup>688</sup>

As for Greene's quick maneuvers, they consisted of backpedaling as fast as he could after Cowpens. Greene narrowly outraced Cornwallis into Virginia. As Dederer points out, after Greene returned to North Carolina he moved his camp every night. He did this not to harass or confuse Cornwallis in the offensive minded manner Dederer argues. Rather, he did so because he felt his army remained too weak for combat and he wished to avoid battle until he felt confident in the strength of his army.<sup>689</sup>

Dederer's argument that actions only a short time prior to Guilford Courthouse were instrumental in recruiting men to participate in that battle are another example of reading too much into Greene's behavior. Certainly, the military situation did play a role in recruiting, and battlefield victories were either inspiring or chilling, depending on viewpoint. However, the stimulus of victory was not immediate, even if individual decisions based on them were. Procedures were in place for recruiting men, either regulars or militia, and the formation and movement of military forces was not a thing accomplished spontaneously for either side.

Victories by the over-mountain-men at King's Mountain, Morgan at Cowpens, Lee at the Haw, and Greene, himself, at Guilford Courthouse all helped recruiting eventually. The first two may have played a role in recruiting prior to Guilford Courthouse, although it is unlikely they were decisive. Almost certainly neither Lee's action at the Haw nor Tarleton's error augmented

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<sup>688</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 225-227.

<sup>689</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 341; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 324.

Greene's army prior to Guilford Courthouse. Greene wrote Washington, Congress, Steuben, and the governors of both North Carolina and Virginia seeking supplies and reinforcements as soon as he took command. He spoke personally to some of those parties even earlier, on his way to assume command in the south. That barrage of letters and meetings is what brought the reinforcements that made Guilford Courthouse possible.

With very few exceptions, men did not just pick up their muskets and march to join Greene's army. Continental units moving south required written orders forwarded through necessary channels. For militia the states, by whatever individual legal process they used, authorized raising militia forces. The state government then sent authorization to towns and counties, which called for volunteers. If the number of volunteers was inadequate local governments implemented a draft or determined to march with fewer men than desired. Once adequate men were on hand they required organization into military formations and appointment or election of officers and noncommissioned officers. All that completed, just marching regiments to the army took from several days to several weeks. All this was a time-consuming process.

The Haw River Massacre, as the public termed Lee's victory, happened on 24 February 1781. Tarleton's error took place even later. Guilford Courthouse occurred on 15 March of the same year, less than three weeks after the Haw. Given travel time for letters and marching, and time for recruiting and organization, it is virtually impossible the massacre brought any significant increase in recruitment for the Guilford Courthouse battle. Governments began processing the forces that reached Greene's army just prior to Guilford Courthouse by the time – or almost by the time – Morgan fought Tarleton at Cowpens.

Had Greene broken Cornwallis' army at Guilford Courthouse, the latter would have been hard pressed to survive. Weigley's argument that such an outcome would have won the southern campaign seems unlikely, however. Guilford Courthouse did remove Cornwallis and his army from South Carolina permanently, with little damage to Greene's army, but British armies in South Carolina still forced Greene to conduct two major battles, a major siege, and several smaller actions to clear the theater. It is difficult to see how Cornwallis' destruction would have materially changed those circumstances. Greene's stated reason for the timing of Guilford Courthouse also varies from reasons described by Weigley. The reason Greene gave for accepting battle was that, for the moment, his army had a significant manpower advantage and an adequate level of supply. Greene did not expect either advantage to last more than a short time.<sup>690</sup>

Historians make similar misstatements regarding Greene's purpose concerning not only his other two battles, but Morgan's victory at Cowpens, the Siege of Ninety-Six, and his use of detachments during the South Carolina campaign. Dederer argues that guerrilla units "charged alongside Continentals" at Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs, a misuse of the term guerrilla.<sup>691</sup> Higginbotham argues Morgan was less conventional than any other Patriot commander, eschewing "bulky" linear formations for skirmish lines, which is simply incorrect.<sup>692</sup> Lumpkin calls Morgan's command a "guerrilla column," and compares the Cowpens campaign to modern guerrilla warfare. In fact, Cowpens was fought and won in a completely conventional

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<sup>690</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 433.

<sup>691</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 55.

<sup>692</sup> Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 209.

fashion.<sup>693</sup> Dederer argues that Greene practiced the “flexibility” of “mobile war” (Dederer’s term for Mao’s unconventional warfare strategy) by laying siege to Ninety-Six, yet siege was the most common method of tactical combat in both Europe and America throughout the eighteenth-century.<sup>694</sup> Dederer also argues that Lee’s cavalry joined with guerrillas to keep the British Army from concentrating its forces.<sup>695</sup> In addition to again misusing the term guerrilla, the British forces to which Dederer refers were spread across the state beginning shortly after the fall of Charlestown and remained at their posts on orders from the theater commander.<sup>696</sup> As part of the British policy of pacification the British army erected small forts at what it considered strategic points – a clear application of European warfare. The truth is the reverse of what Dederer argues. Greene held the primary British Army in place while his detachments reduced the forts and captured their defenders.

It has become popular since the Vietnam War for historians to credit Nathanael Greene with prophetic, even prescient, military leadership that was ahead of its time. Historians hypothesize even his battlefield tactics, which all concede were conventional in the eighteenth-century, as the centerpiece of a hybrid form of warfare. In support of these theories historians find purposes in Greene’s decisions that Greene, himself, never suggested and which are at variance with what Greene wrote about his decision-making process. The truth is much simpler. Greene used conventional battlefield tactics because they suited the conventional

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<sup>693</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120.

<sup>694</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 55.

<sup>695</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 55.

<sup>696</sup> Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 80.

nature of his operations, logistics, and available technology. Those issues surrounding his tactics which historians credit as prototypical hybrid warfare were not. They were routine activities of war in the eighteenth-century resembling activities of other eighteenth-century generals, including other American and British commanders during the American Revolutionary War. Greene was an excellent general, but he was not an unconventional one.

## CHAPTER 11

### SOUTH CAROLINA: A CASE STUDY

The key to Patriot military victory in the American Revolution, including the south, was manpower. Greene never entered battle with fewer than a ten percent manpower advantage. He outnumbered Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse by more than two-to-one. The Patriot military manpower advantage was not only tactical, but strategic. British Army losses were irreplaceable, but Patriot armies, despite similar losses, maintained their strength throughout the war. The same Patriot majority that was the foundation of the military manpower advantage affected other areas of the conflict, including political control, foraging, and mobilization.

The basis of the Patriot manpower advantage was twofold: a Patriot majority in America and British Army commitments worldwide. Basic research indicates Patriot majorities in all thirteen states, although space will not permit a full exploration of that thesis here.<sup>697</sup>

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<sup>697</sup> Peter N. Moore, "The Local Origins of Allegiance in Revolutionary South Carolina: The Waxhaws as a Case Study," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 107:1 (2006): 26-30; Robert Stansbury Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 1-2, 4, 7, 9-14, 18-32, 34, 41, 44, 46, 48-50, 69, 74-76, 83-85, 90-91, 96, 108, 165-166, 194, 220-221, 225-226; Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670-1920* (New York: Oxford Press, 1989), 8, 66-69; Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 7-8, 78-82; Rachel N. Klein, "Ordering the Backcountry: The South Carolina Regulation," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38:4 (1981): 665, 668-669, 678-680; Olson, "Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry," 49, 201-203, 214-215, 218; Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots*, xi-xii; Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers*, 526; Greene and Harrington, *American Population*, 7, 175-176; Smith, "The American Loyalists," 269-270; Howard H. Peckham, ed., *The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 133; Philip Ranlet, *The New York Loyalists* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 5-6, 107-111; Bernard Mason, *The Road to Independence: The Revolutionary Movement in New York* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), 63-64, 75, 251, 254. Greene and Harrington, and Peckham offer numbers without bias. Smith offers formulas for determining the number of Loyalists in the colonies and for determining population growth in the colonies during the Revolutionary War. The growth formula does not work on all individual colonies, including South Carolina, but it remains important to calculations in this chapter. Ranlet and Mason offer proof that New York was majority Patriot, although they do not provide numbers.

Since South Carolina is the most prominent state in this dissertation and the site of most of Greene's operations, political allegiance in South Carolina does warrant investigation here. Many believed – then and now – that South Carolina was a Loyalist stronghold. Arguably, there were more Loyalists in South Carolina, in real numbers, than any state except New York.<sup>698</sup> Nevertheless, Patriots in South Carolina outnumbered Loyalists more than two to one. They outnumbered Loyalists and neutrals combined by one-third. Even the South Carolina backcountry – a region not known for its Revolutionary zeal – held more Patriots than Loyalists. The fact that South Carolina produced among the highest number of Loyalists of any state but still had a strong Patriot majority supports the claim for greater Patriot strength in other states.

The overwhelming manpower advantage of Patriots in both South Carolina and throughout the colonies necessarily redefines both the political and military view of the American Revolution. Politically, the myth of the valiant few – the idea that the bulk of the colonial population acquiesced to a fanatical few who led the country into rebellion, victory, and independence – has held sway almost since the end of the war. Research supports the opposite view. Social pressure was the act of the majority – a political instrument available only because Patriots were the majority. Patriot majority also explains why every Royal governor either sided with the Patriots or fled his colony early in the war; some without a fight, some after failed military efforts. In the future political, intellectual, and social historians should reassess the American Revolution considering this new data indicating widespread

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<sup>698</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 26; Wallace Brown, *The King's Friends: the Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), 289.



Patriot majority. For example, this evidence shows Patriot political and constitutional beliefs were conventional and mainstream, not radical; certainly, in America, perhaps also in Britain.

However, the most immediate impact of the new understanding of political allegiances involves the *military* history of the Revolution. While Greene's circumstances in the south were difficult, his ability to mobilize and replace manpower gave him the strategic advantage from the moment he assumed command. He was soon on the strategic offensive. Britain spread much of its army across South Carolina holding terrain necessary to its effort at pacification, a commitment forced on it by its inability to recruit local militia. The British Army force disposition, combined with the Patriot army's ability to reinforce, meant Greene always had the numerical advantage. Additionally, in the south as in the north, Patriots controlled most of the territory, requiring the British Army to take it from them to re-establish political control. That strategic situation allowed Greene to adopt the tactical defensive, a stronger position than the tactical offensive in eighteenth-century warfare. A careful study of the military situation during the American Revolution suggests the British Army could not afford even the manpower losses necessary to win battles, let alone to recover from battles lost.<sup>699</sup> Greene never considered waging unconventional warfare because it was not necessary. Overwhelmingly, it is armies fighting at a disadvantage which employ unconventional warfare.

Since the manpower situation in South Carolina mirrors that in the north, reassessment of the southern campaign has significant implications for the war overall. Considering the evidence regarding both allegiance and manpower, both Howe and Clinton appear more

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<sup>699</sup> Howe, *Narrative of Howe*, 19, 32.

prudent than traditionally supposed. Given British Army manpower limitations the conduct of more aggressive commanders, such as Burgoyne and Cornwallis, seems almost criminally reckless. By contrast, Washington's ability to bounce back from calamity becomes easier to understand. American victory was not "almost a miracle," as one historian titled his book on the American Revolution.<sup>700</sup> Actually, Patriots dominated most townships and controlled the largest part of the militia, giving them such a manpower advantage that British victory would have been "almost a miracle." Once France entered the fighting William Howe himself argued that loss of the war was inevitable and he noted well before then that he lacked the manpower for victory.<sup>701</sup> Virtually all hardships the British Army encountered in America were traceable to the Patriots' overwhelming and ubiquitous manpower advantages – from foraging, scouting, and intelligence, to civil-military relations and propaganda. Since British war plans hinged on local support, it is difficult to conceive of a realistic opportunity for British military success in the war, especially considering Britain's demanding military and naval commitments outside North America.

Evidence of South Carolina's Patriot majority is pervasive. This chapter briefly reviews the history of the colony, showing the arrival and relations of various social groups and the impact that had on political affiliation. It reviews the colonial South Carolina government, showing that friction was common between the popularly elected house and the appointed royal government long before the series of protests leading to the American Revolution. The

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<sup>700</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*.

<sup>701</sup> Howe, *Narrative*, 19, 32-33.

evidence shows that coercion was a tool in the hands of the majority —it was evident in areas with a clear Patriot majority, but absent in areas where that majority was in question.

Calculations provide estimates of various factions in the state, followed by evidence based on the relative sizes of military forces fielded by the Patriot and Loyalist factions. Taken together, the evidence of Patriot majority in South Carolina is irrefutable, and if one of the most loyal states was thoroughly Patriot, that must impact the historical view of the American Revolution generally.

The first settlers sighted what is now South Carolina on 15 March 1670.<sup>702</sup> They, and those who followed, spread across the rich farmland of the flat coastal plains, known as the tidewater, while at the same time clustering around a series of good ports. Thousands arrived in the tidewater over the next sixty years.<sup>703</sup> The main product of the tidewater, that portion of South Carolina east of the fall line, was rice, but indigo and trade in natural resources was also important.<sup>704</sup> Economic opportunity in the tidewater soon provided many residents with a good living and some with considerable wealth.

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<sup>702</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 1; David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1961), 26-28, 147-148. Wallace, on page 28 of his history of South Carolina, is unclear about the year in which the initial colonists sighted land in South Carolina, citing the date as “March 15, 1669-70.” However, on previous pages he clearly refers to two events occurring after 15 March 1669, one of which happened prior to the departure of the colonists from England and the other during an intermediate stop at the island of Barbados. He also states the colonists sailed for South Carolina from Barbados in November 1669, so it is impossible they could have sighted land in South Carolina on 15 March 1669. Whatever the reason for the misstatement or misprint, Wallace clearly intended to set the year as 1670.

<sup>703</sup> Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 67; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 7; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 17-18; Louis B. Wright, *South Carolina: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), 18-20; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 3-4; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 1.

<sup>704</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 188; Wright, *South Carolina*, 68; Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 21, 32. The fall line is the area where higher ground turns into coastal plain. Waterfalls, rapids, or cataracts

By 1730 the tidewater was well populated but faced two potentially serious problems.<sup>705</sup> First, the tidewater is a relatively narrow strip of coastal land, flat, open, and difficult to defend militarily against attacks from the west. A full-scale Indian war, always a possibility, was a threat to the very survival of the colony. Second, rice required intensive labor. Because of the demands of rice cultivation, slaves comprised the majority of the South Carolina population by the late-eighteenth century.<sup>706</sup> As with an Indian attack, the potential for widespread slave revolt endangered the colony's survival. From the viewpoint of the white colonists the solution to both problems was the same – increase the number of white residents. The method chosen to accomplish that was colonization of the backcountry.<sup>707</sup>

Creating townships in the interior of the colony provided a buffer against Indian attacks. At the same time, it furnished a larger militia in case of slave revolts. To that end, in 1730 the Charlestown government opened several townships in the interior of the colony. It offered free land and other support for those willing to immigrate from Europe or another colony.

Sheltered from the Indian threat by backcountry settlements and with an increased militia, the tidewater soon became comparatively safe.<sup>708</sup> The colony's primary financial and

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often characterize the fall line and, especially before the age of large modern ocean-going vessels, it was often the farthest upstream an ocean-going vessel could travel.

<sup>705</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 1; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 26-28, 147-148; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 17, 20.

<sup>706</sup> Greene and Harrington, *American Population before 1790*, 173; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974), xiv; Greene, *The Quest for Power*, 21.

<sup>707</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 1; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 17-20. Buchanan does not refer to immigration into the backcountry prior to the 1740s, but his reference is clearly to heavy immigration, rather than to the initial establishment of townships in the backcountry that opened that area for settlement.

<sup>708</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 1; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 20. During the colonial era that portion of most southern colonies west of the fall line was typically known as the backcountry. That included South Carolina.

political power resided in the tidewater, and that area was more peaceful, more civilized, and more cultured than the backcountry.<sup>709</sup> The backcountry, a true frontier, was a more difficult place to earn a living and a more dangerous place to live. Many backcountry residents were small farmers and herders, as opposed to traders and plantation owners in the tidewater. Indians were a serious and persistent threat to backcountry towns and farms, and outlaw gangs roamed the region. Fewer roads existed and they were typically of worse quality. The people in the backcountry were usually newer to America, with fewer improvements to their land grants and less accumulated wealth. Fewer stores and other businesses served the backcountry, as well as fewer doctors, courts, and law enforcement officials.<sup>710</sup> Life was simpler, earthier, and often more violent.<sup>711</sup>

Communities settling the backcountry prior to 1763 – the end of the French and Indian War – typically were born in America and migrated from other colonies, primarily Virginia,

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<sup>709</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 19-20, 22; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 7-8; Greene, *The Quest for Power*, 32; Greene and Harrington, *Population before the Federal Census of 1790*, 176; Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream*, 67. Some writers make a distinction between settlements closer to the tidewater, called the midcountry, and settlements in the more distant interior of the colony, called the backcountry. For the purposes of this chapter no substantial difference exists between the two.

<sup>710</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 10-12, 34, 83; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 138; George Lloyd Johnson, Jr., *The Frontier in the Colonial South: South Carolina Backcountry, 1730-1800* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 124; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 85-89. The term “law enforcement” deserves clarification. Law enforcement in colonial South Carolina generally consisted of sheriffs, sometimes with deputies. Sheriffs deputized posses when needed or called out the colonial militia in case of large disturbances. Sheriffs were not the elected officials of today but, as with all administrative positions in colonial South Carolina, were crown appointees. They typically served court papers, enforced court orders, and responded to and investigated disturbances, as well as arresting persons who violated the law. At one point the legislature passed a bill creating a force of rangers for the South Carolina backcountry but the Crown vetoed that plan. Rangers were part-time law enforcement officers, available on call.

<sup>711</sup> Johnson, *The Frontier in the Colonial South*, 114; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 20; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 2, 11.

Maryland, and Pennsylvania.<sup>712</sup> Those early communities, usually of English or Scotch Irish extraction, valued British liberties.<sup>713</sup> They spoke English and supported themselves at least adequately, and sometimes more than comfortably, through agriculture or trade. The customers for their raw materials were typically tidewater commercial enterprises. Their religious affiliation, although usually not Anglican, was traditionally American – whatever their denomination they accepted the predestinarian doctrines of the reformers John Calvin and John Knox. Their kinship, physical and social, bound them together and their political background and economic ties to the tidewater bound them to the Patriot cause. They typically viewed latecomers, which were generally less affluent, as a lower, even criminal class of people.

Latecomers, arriving in the backcountry after 1763, consisted of a different type of settler. Along with English and Scotch Irish, later immigrants included Germans and Swedes.<sup>714</sup> By the time of their arrival earlier settlers had claimed much of the best land.<sup>715</sup> South Carolina allotted land grants according to family size and later arrivals tended toward smaller families, so grants for newcomers were typically both less productive and smaller.<sup>716</sup> Many new arrivals were in America only a short time prior to the Revolutionary War. They had not generally attained the prosperity of those who arrived earlier.<sup>717</sup> They often did not speak English, at least as a primary language. Their religious views centered around the free will doctrines then

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<sup>712</sup> Communities were not townships. Townships were large blocks of land opened for settlement and sometimes used as political subdivisions. They usually contained several communities.

<sup>713</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 28.

<sup>714</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 29-30.

<sup>715</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 29-30.

<sup>716</sup> Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 69.

<sup>717</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 29; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 95.

popular in Europe.<sup>718</sup> They less willingly renounced the concept of royalty and many feared the loss of their land grants if involved in any protest movement.<sup>719</sup> They knew and resented the opinions of the early arrivals regarding their character. Their preference for royal government, lack of interest in British liberties or American politics, and resentment of early arrivals pushed them toward either neutrality or Loyalism. Prior to the American Revolution the two backcountry societies never assimilated. Nor did either assimilate into tidewater society.<sup>720</sup>

Many late arrivals were hard working, diligent people who simply wanted a better life. Some of them eventually prospered, although many were still poor when the Revolution began. Another element existed among them, however. That group, called “hunters” by other backcountry residents, lived a wilder, less settled life, in some ways emulating Indians. They hunted animals, primarily deer, for their hides which were valuable in Europe. Many of them also stole or killed cattle and horses and were involved in other criminal activity.<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> Moore, “Waxhaws as a Case Study,” 28, 30.

<sup>719</sup> Wallace Brown, “The American Farmer During the Revolution: Rebel or Loyalist?,” *Agricultural History* 24:4 (1986): 336; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 95; David Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South-Carolina, From a British Province to an Independent State, Volume II* (Trenton: Isaac Collins, 1785), 64-65.

<sup>720</sup> Moore, “Waxhaws as a Case Study,” 30; Klein, “South Carolina Regulation,” 669.

<sup>721</sup> Johnson, *South Carolina Backcountry*, 115, 118, 168-169; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 88; Klein, “South Carolina Regulation,” 669. Johnson describes the newcomers who became hunters differently than the latecomer group described by Moore. Johnson suggests they, like the early arrivals, were largely Scotch-Irish emigrating from other colonies. That fits Buchanan’s argument. He describes many of the Scotch Irish as squatters who simply took whatever unoccupied land they chose. Klein agrees with the assessment of Johnson and Buchanan. From those arguments, it appears two groups of newcomers existed and, as newcomers generally were poor regardless of their cultural grouping, it is possible the early arrivals painted both groups with the same brush. It is not surprising, of course, that some immigrants to South Carolina continued to follow the backcountry route used by the early arrivals. If, as it appears, two sets of newcomers existed, it is easy to see where the lumping of the two together by the early arrivals could have had a lasting and deleterious effect on relations between the early arrivals and those latecomers described by Moore.

In addition to hunters there were also gangs of outlaws.<sup>722</sup> Outlaws included not only whites, both early and late arrivals, but escaped slaves, freed black men, mulattos, Indians, and part Indians.<sup>723</sup> Hunters differed from outlaws, but it was a thin line that separated them, with many crossing that line occasionally or repeatedly.<sup>724</sup> Outlawry grew increasingly worse until the backcountry residents responded directly. That was the genesis of the South Carolina regulator movement.

By the early 1760s outlaws formed large gangs, preying on travelers, farms, and even whole villages (often containing no more than a few homes). Backcountry residents sought help from Charlestown, but to little avail. The colonial assembly was reluctant to fund any project not directly benefiting the tidewater. By 1767 the number of whites residing in the backcountry was substantially greater than that residing in the tidewater. However, backcountry representation in the House of Commons consisted of only six of fifty seats.<sup>725</sup> Tidewater inattention was matched by British indifference. The government in London increasingly concerned itself only with enforcement of Parliamentary taxation.<sup>726</sup> In 1768 the South Carolina legislature finally passed a law providing some relief for the backcountry, including organizing a group of rangers. The king vetoed the bill and the process had to start again from the beginning.<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>722</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 20.

<sup>723</sup> Johnson, *South Carolina Backcountry*, 115-116, 168; Wood, *Black Majority*, 263,265.

<sup>724</sup> Klein, "South Carolina Regulation," 678.

<sup>725</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 224.

<sup>726</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 10-11.

<sup>727</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 222-227; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 10-11.



Time and patience eventually ran out in the backcountry. As happened on other regions of the American frontier, backcountry men formed themselves into vigilante groups calling themselves regulators. Regulators formed their own courts and arrested or killed many of the outlaws. Those arrested were frequently punished by whipping, probably because prison was not an option. Sometimes regulators assumed guilt and levied punishment too quickly and some regulators undoubtedly used the organization to avenge personal grievances. In any case, such punishments were illegal. Complaints by victims of regulator justice led to clashes between regulators and the Charlestown government. However, many in the tidewater, including Lieutenant Governor William Bull, Jr., sympathized with the regulators.<sup>728</sup> Vigilante violence impelled the South Carolina legislature to establish courts and law enforcement in the backcountry in 1769.<sup>729</sup> Their major grievances addressed, the regulators ceased operations and Bull, in his capacity as acting governor, soon issued a general pardon.<sup>730</sup>

Some modern historians link the South Carolina regulator movement to the Regulator War in North Carolina, which occurred three years after the South Carolina conflict.<sup>731</sup> That misunderstanding may arise from the similarity between Carolina societies, but the regulator

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<sup>728</sup> Klein, "South Carolina Regulation," 679.

<sup>729</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 228.

<sup>730</sup> Johnson, *South Carolina Backcountry*, 114-115; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 11; Wright, *South Carolina*, 98-99; George Edward Frakes, *Laboratory for Liberty: South Carolina Legislative Committee System, 1719-1766* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 95, 103.

<sup>731</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 54; Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution: 1763-1775* (New York: Harper, 1954), 149; John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown Publishers, 1943), 56; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 227, 229; Wright, *South Carolina*, 99. Gipson's reference in the first full paragraph of page 149 suggests that the primary target of the South Carolina regulators, as with the North Carolina regulators, was the tidewater government. That is incorrect. Wright, very influenced by Wallace, published his book in 1976. Wallace published his in 1961. See Wright's "Suggestions for Further Reading," page 215.

movements of the two colonies fundamentally differed.<sup>732</sup> The North Carolina Regulator War occurred between western North Carolina farmers and the residents of the wealthier eastern counties of North Carolina, who controlled the colonial government. It was largely the result of perceived economic inequity.

Lumping together the two conflicts has led some modern historians to assume South Carolina regulators were hostile toward the tidewater government at the time of the American Revolution.<sup>733</sup> In fact, the South Carolina regulator conflict was between early arrivals and latecomers to the backcountry, not between the backcountry and the tidewater or the colonial government.<sup>734</sup> Actions of both the regulators and government officials in South Carolina indicate a significant level of understanding between the two sides.<sup>735</sup> After the Regulator disturbances in South Carolina new business ventures created closer ties between tidewater and wealthier backcountry residents, meaning the early arrivals.<sup>736</sup> Commercial ties between

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<sup>732</sup> Jack D. Fler, *North Carolina Government & Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 3; Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 1-6; Greene, *The Quest for Power*, 39. Fler and Kars describe North Carolina society, and the divisions within that society, in much the same manner as historical writers on South Carolina describe that society and its divisions. The eastern portion of the colony contained a planter aristocracy largely affiliated with the Anglican Church and owning plantations worked by slaves. The interior of the colony contained small farmers with fewer slaves and wide allegiance to dissenter religious denominations, which is any Protestant denomination other than Anglican.

<sup>733</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 54; Morris, "Class Struggle and the American Revolution," 15; Robert M. Weir, "Who Shall Rule at Home: The American Revolution as a Crisis of Legitimacy for the Colonial Elite," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6:4 (1976): 681.

<sup>734</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 18; Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 28; Klein, "Ordering the Backcountry," 668-669.

<sup>735</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 11; Klein, "South Carolina Regulation," 679.

<sup>736</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 18-19; Klein, "South Carolina Regulation," 679-680; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 229-230.

the tidewater and pre-1763 backcountry settlers offer one explanation why early arrivals largely chose the Patriot faction.

Friction between the royal government and South Carolina residents, especially those in the tidewater, began long before the Stamp Act. South Carolina's colonial government functioned through a bicameral legislature and an executive branch headed by a governor.<sup>737</sup> Unlike the United States today, the judiciary was part of the executive branch. Judges and all other government employees served at the pleasure of the Crown.<sup>738</sup> His Majesty's Council was the upper legislative house, its members also appointed by the Crown.<sup>739</sup> The lower house was the Commons House of Assembly, alternately called the House of Commons, or simply the Commons. The voting public elected House members.<sup>740</sup> The legislature could initiate and pass laws. However, the king not only held the veto but had to ratify any new law before it took effect.<sup>741</sup> Even if legislation was ultimately successful the king might delay it for months, even years. If the king vetoed new legislation the only remedy was repeating the entire process. There was no guaranteed acceptance of the repeated process even if the adjusted bill addressed all concerns expressed by the king.<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 110.

<sup>738</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 111, 117; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 11.

<sup>739</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 109; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 12.

<sup>740</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 107; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 4; Wright, *South Carolina*, 98, 224; Greene, *The Quest for Power*, 5.

<sup>741</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 112.

<sup>742</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 11.

Friction between Commons, on the one hand, and the Council and executive on the other was frequent. Commons pressed continually for the same powers within the colony that the lower house of Parliament held in England.<sup>743</sup> Over time, and largely by self-assertion, Commons gained control of colonial finances. In 1725, King George I ruled that Commons had illegally usurped financial control of the colony and ordered it return control to the Council. Commons ignored the order. As the American Revolution began, Commons largely controlled the South Carolina government through the purse.<sup>744</sup>

As the Revolution approached, tidewater Patriots became more organized. They formed the Provincial Congress on 11 January 1775, including more delegates from the backcountry to attract that population. The situation in the tidewater quickly deteriorated for the Loyalists, and Governor William Campbell fled to the protection of the British fleet. As royal government collapsed the provisional Congress formed a popular government and the various organs of the Patriot party thereafter operated under its control.<sup>745</sup>

The historical argument for coercion in the colonies preceding and during the Revolution is that it was the work of a daring and prepared minority. South Carolina challenged that argument as early as the Stamp Act. According to *South Carolina Gazette* articles running from 18-28 October 1765 mobs roamed the streets of Charlestown periodically for nine days after stamped paper arrived in that city. A *South Carolina Gazette* article on 23 October 1765 noted that the colonial governor, fearing an attack on the ship that brought the stamps to

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<sup>743</sup> Wright, *South Carolina*, 108-109.

<sup>744</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 231; Greene, *The Quest for Power*, 53; Jack P. Greene, "The Role of the Lower Houses of Assembly in Eighteenth-Century Politics," *The Journal of Southern History* 27:4 (1961): 464-465.

<sup>745</sup> Wright, *South Carolina*, 256.

Charlestown, ordered them transferred to a fort in the harbor. Another article from the *South Carolina Gazette*, this one dated 20 October 1765, noted there were no deaths or serious injuries, but considerable property damage occurred and the crowd searched any homes suspected of hiding stamped paper.

Few more than five thousand white residents lived in Charlestown, a small town by virtually any standard – perhaps a mile long and averaging half that wide.<sup>746</sup> About thirteen hundred white men lived in a city with a relatively stable population for the previous thirty-five years.<sup>747</sup> The city was self-contained, its distance from other towns making it completely distinct. The stamped paper arrived on 18 October 1765. The *South Carolina Gazette* reported on 20 October 1765 that on 19 October a mob estimated at two thousand demonstrated against the stamps, causing some property damage and threatening more, as well as threatening personal injury. On 22 October 1765, an article in the *South Carolina Gazette* noted that the lieutenant governor posted a sizable reward, fifty pounds sterling and a pardon, for information revealing members of the mob. No one came forward. A 29 October 1765 article in the *South Carolina Gazette* estimated that the day previous to its publication eleven thousand people, well over half the residents of the tidewater, witnessed the resignation of the two South Carolina stamp distributors. Many Charlestown residents had lived in the city most or all their lives. Travel was at walking speed and interaction between residents was common. The same 20 October 1765 *South Carolina Gazette* article stated the mob resolutely, perhaps

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<sup>746</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 197; Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 8; The number of residents given by Coclanis includes African-American slaves.

<sup>747</sup> Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 67.

intentionally, ignored courts and law enforcement officials as if daring them to intervene. It is inconceivable that the rioters were not widely known. The reason for lack of legal action against any member of the mob was its support by most Charlestown citizens. Should the sheriff arrest any member of the mob he risked a full-scale riot.<sup>748</sup> In Charlestown, and where such actions occurred throughout the tidewater, rioters enforced the will of the majority on the minority, and not the other way around.

As war approached Patriots using coercion and other methods of resistance flouted tax laws, avoided quartering of soldiers, forced participation in non-import/export agreements, kept merchants from landing or selling tea in the city, controlled both gunpowder and munitions, and generally enforced the will of the majority on those who resisted.<sup>749</sup> Those actions, most taking place in the tidewater, occurred without serious opposition because an overwhelming majority of the residents favored the Patriot party.

It is beyond dispute the tidewater was overwhelmingly Patriot. Long before the British Army invaded South Carolina, and before coercion became the norm, South Carolina backcountry residents declared sides.<sup>750</sup> Initially both Patriots and Loyalists in the backcountry believed they had a chance to win and a chance to lose. Neither side was certain they could force the other to submit, and neither tried. Precisely because neither side knew which held

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<sup>748</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 232; Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 80; Dirk Hoerder, *Crowd Action in Revolutionary Massachusetts, 1765-1789* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 132. Both Chet and Hoerder provide examples of laws and their enforcement affected by rioting and other popular resistance.

<sup>749</sup> Wallace, *South Carolina*, 231-242; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 13-14, 30.

<sup>750</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 22-24; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 263; Wright, *South Carolina*, 128; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 23; Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 26; Olson, "Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry," 202-203; William R. Ryan, *The World of Thomas Jeremiah: Charles Town on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 184.

the majority, leading men announced their positions, hoping to carry the backcountry for their cause. Although discussion undoubtedly took place in each settlement, the opinions of influential men typically brought consensus to their communities.

During the Revolution, backcountry communities divided politically according to the time of their settlement, which had both ethnic and economic overtones.<sup>751</sup> Communities in backcountry townships were typically close-knit, often bound by blood, religion, ethnicity, history, circumstances, community, and politics.<sup>752</sup> Whatever they did they usually decided on and did together. That applied to their political affiliations during the American Revolution.

As war approached, tidewater planters grew concerned about the backcountry, which had not clearly announced a position on the conflict. Suspicion existed that many in the backcountry were Loyalists and some Patriots feared they might carry that area for the crown. Shortly after Lexington and Concord the South Carolina Council of Safety organized a commission led by William Henry Drayton, an influential planter and among the most zealous Revolutionaries. The commission included religious and political leaders respected by backcountry residents. Their goal was to convince backcountry residents to sign the Continental Association, a document stating support for the Continental Congress. The commission debated backcountry Loyalist leaders in several locations. It was more successful in getting backcountry residents to reveal their positions than getting them to change their stance, however. Backcountry groups supporting the Patriot faction quickly signed the

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<sup>751</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 27-28; Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, 78-82; Robert M. Calhoon, *The Loyalist Perception*, xiii; Robert M. Calhoon, Timothy M. Barnes, and George A. Rawlyk, *Loyalists and Community in North America* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1994), 3, 5. The pages cited for Klein and Calhoon are those referred to by Moore in his article.

<sup>752</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 88; Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 28.

Association. Neutral and Loyalist residents refused to sign and were generally beyond persuasion.<sup>753</sup>

Drayton decided the only way to secure the backcountry was to arrest Loyalist leaders, thereby cowing and disorganizing Loyalists in general. He gained permission for his plan from the Provisional Legislature, calling out approximately one thousand militia for support. Loyalist and neutral leaders raised an even larger force, about twelve hundred men. The two sides met at the Saluda River in September 1775 and Drayton, uncertain of victory, revised his stance. He sent a message to the Loyalists that he would not force anyone to sign the Association, nor would he take any other action against them unless they acted in opposition to it. He also invited them to a conference at Ninety-Six.

Among the more respected Loyalist leaders, only Thomas Fletchall attended the conference. He agreed Loyalists would not oppose Patriot political control of the colony unless forced to sign the Association. Several Loyalist leaders repudiated that agreement, but most people returned home, at least temporarily.<sup>754</sup> The Treaty of Ninety-Six procured only a short truce, however. Loyalists feared Patriots would arm Indians and turn them against Loyalist settlements. Responding to that fear, Loyalist leader Patrick Cuninghame led a raid in December 1776, confiscating a load of gunpowder routinely provided to the Indians under treaty. Loyalists knew the gunpowder was not for military use by the Indians. Rather it allowed them self-sufficiency through hunting. Nevertheless, distrust between the two parties was so great Loyalists refused to risk use of the powder against their settlements.

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<sup>753</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 92-100.

<sup>754</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 96-100.



Patriot Militia Major Andrew Williamson led a force of nearly six hundred men to recover the gunpowder. Learning that almost two thousand Loyalists were approaching his force, he built a fort near Ninety-Six. Desultory fighting lasted three days, with a few killed and wounded but no clear victory.

Patriot Militia Colonel Richard Richardson gathered a militia force as he marched to relieve Williamson. On hearing of Richardson's approach, the Loyalists fell back, their army disintegrating as it withdrew. Richardson arrived at Williamson's location with over three thousand men. His army eventually increased to five thousand, about a thousand of them from North Carolina.<sup>755</sup> The remaining four thousand were all from the South Carolina backcountry. Badly outnumbered, the Loyalist force virtually evaporated. Richardson's men captured hundreds of Loyalist militiamen and several Loyalist leaders. Many of the more committed Loyalist leaders, who expected little mercy if captured, fled the colony rather than surrender. Those involved in the operation remembered it as the Snow Campaign from the inclement weather the Patriot militia experienced during their return home.<sup>756</sup> Little further organized resistance occurred in the colony until the British regular army invaded late in the war.

The communal nature of South Carolina politics not only explains how colonists chose a political faction, it provides a method for estimating the numbers of each faction. Essentially, the 1763 population was the number of Patriots in the state. Subtracting that number from the 1776 population – and considering the tidewater with its different dynamic – provides the

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<sup>755</sup> Olson, "Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry," 218; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 101-102.

<sup>756</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 102; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 31-32. The Snow Campaign did not end with the conflict between Patriots and Loyalists. There was also conflict with the Indians. The hardships of the return home followed the Indian conflict.

number of Loyalists and neutrals. The best population estimate for South Carolina in 1776 is 70,000 white residents, of whom 22,000 lived in the tidewater and 48,000 in the backcountry.<sup>757</sup> The clear majority of people living in the tidewater were Patriots. At the beginning of the war probably fewer than ten percent of the tidewater white population were either neutral or Loyalist. A safe estimate then, is that at least 20,000 Patriots lived in tidewater South Carolina in 1775, along with perhaps a thousand which were loyal and another thousand which were neutral.<sup>758</sup>

The best population estimate for South Carolina in 1763 is 40,000, with 20,000 each in the backcountry and the tidewater.<sup>759</sup> Those estimates suggest 28,000 newly arrived whites settled in the backcountry between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. If so, roughly 40,000 Patriots lived in South Carolina on the eve of the American Revolution, along

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<sup>757</sup> Greene and Harrington, *American Population Before 1790*, xxiii, 176. Based on militia numbers, Dr. Milligan's figure is more likely correct than the estimate of Henry Laurens. Greene and Harrington argue one-fifth of the population was military-age males. Since all military-age men enrolled in the militia by law, 70,000 should be an accurate estimate.

<sup>758</sup> Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators*, 182; Klein, "South Carolina Regulation," 665; Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 66-68, 246; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 22-24; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 263; Wright, *South Carolina*, 128; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 23; Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 26; Olson, "Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry," 202-203; Ryan, *Charles Town on the Eve of Revolution*, 184. In 1770 there were about 50,000 white residents in South Carolina. About 30,000 of them lived in the backcountry. That leaves about 20,000 white residents in the tidewater. Tidewater population was stable from 1740 until 1770, but reached 28,644 by 1790. That is an increase of slightly more than 425 per year from 1770 until 1790. By 1776, there were perhaps 22,500 residents of the tidewater. That leaves about 48,000 residents of the backcountry when war began. Coclanis gives the very precise figure of 19,066 white residents in the tidewater in 1770, as does Buchanan, who copies Coclanis. Coclanis does not reveal where he obtained that number. In any case, it is impossible to precisely calculate the rate at which people moved into the tidewater from 1770. Estimates are all that is possible for both annual growth and the specific population of the tidewater in 1776.

<sup>759</sup> Greene and Harrington, *American Population before 1790*, 175; Coclanis, *Shadow of a Dream*, 66-68. Greene and Harrington estimate the number of whites living in South Carolina in 1763 at "30,000 to 40,000." In 1757 South Carolina fielded 6,594 militia, indicating approximately 33,000 white residents already lived in the colony. For 1765, Greene and Harrington estimate 40,000 residents based on "7,000 or 8,000 militia." Based on these numbers and the near explosive growth rate of the colony, it appears 40,000 is the more nearly correct number for 1763.

with 30,000 neutrals and Loyalists, combined. More neutrals and Loyalists combined lived in the backcountry than Patriots – 28,000 neutrals and Loyalists compared to 20,000 Patriots.<sup>760</sup>

Based on 3,900 South Carolina men serving in the Loyalist military forces during the Revolutionary War there were about 15,300 Loyalists in the state.<sup>761</sup> Subtracting that number from 30,000 total Loyalists and neutrals leaves 14,700 neutrals.<sup>762</sup> Those numbers show the Loyalist population as twenty-two percent of the total, the neutral population as twenty-one percent, and Patriots as fifty-seven percent.

It is possible to draw some conclusion from those numbers. First, even the backcountry held significantly more Patriots than Loyalists (20,000 to 15,300). Second, South Carolina contained a higher percentage of Loyalists than the whole of the colonies, twenty-two percent in South Carolina compared to slightly fewer than twenty percent generally.<sup>763</sup> Finally, the percentage of the population that supported each of the warring factions is slightly higher than

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<sup>760</sup> 20,000 people living in the tidewater and 20,000 living in the backcountry in 1763. 28,000 arriving in the backcountry and about 2,500 arriving in the tidewater between 1763 and 1776, for a total of 48,000 in the backcountry and 22,500 in the tidewater on the latter date. If ten percent of tidewater residents were neutral or Loyalist, and if the 28,000 arriving in the backcountry between 1763 and 1776 were primarily neutral or Loyalist, about 30,000 neutrals and Loyalists lived in South Carolina. The 20,000 in the backcountry prior to 1763 and the slightly more than 20,000 remaining in the tidewater after deducting the neutral/Loyalist faction leave roughly 40,000 Patriots in the colony.

<sup>761</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 30; Greene and Harrington, *American Population before 1790*, xxiii; Smith, "The American Loyalists," 270.

<sup>762</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 226; Smith, "The American Loyalists," 269. Lambert subtracts one-fourth of the men serving in the militia because a quarter of the households provided more than one man, but he adds 900 men to the Loyalist military total as serving in other capacities. In effect, Lambert's argument regarding households with multiple men serving in the military is null.  $3,900 / 4 = 975$ . Thus, Lambert subtracts 975 military men and adds 900 men who were not in the military. This leaves a difference of just 75 men between the formula as argued by both Smith and Greene and Harrington, and the formula as argued by Lambert. The basis for both formulas is the argument by Greene and Harrington and Smith that twenty-five percent of eighteenth-century late arrivals were of military age, not that they were serving in the military. That suggests there could be slightly more Loyalists and slightly fewer neutrals, but no more accurate figure is available. The math works out as:  $3,900 \times .75 = 2,925$ ;  $2,925 + 900 = 3,825$ ;  $3,825 \times 4 = 15,300$ .

<sup>763</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 1.

the national average. That polarization is not surprising considering the amount of fighting in South Carolina and the harshness of the civil war in that colony.

The relative size and effectiveness of each side's military forces support the same conclusion as arrival and population data. As early as the Snow Campaign in November 1775 backcountry Patriots recruited double the militia of Loyalists and took control of the colony until British regulars invaded in 1780.<sup>764</sup> Backcountry Patriot militia conducted the Snow Campaign without the aid of forces from the tidewater.<sup>765</sup> That indicates total Patriot militia in the colony may have been more than three times that of Loyalist militia. A closer look at the military forces of each side bears out the Patriot manpower preponderance.

Lambert argues 3,900 South Carolina men served in Loyalist military units and there were, by his calculations, a total of 15,300 Loyalists in the state.<sup>766</sup> On its face, that means every military age Loyalist man served in the Loyalist military forces in some capacity. Obviously, that is impossible. Since no population can field so near one hundred percent of its military age forces, Lambert's figures require explanation, which he does not provide. Several circumstances, when taken together, do help explain this phenomenon, however.

First, in the American Revolution almost all numbers are approximations. Possibly the number of Loyalists was closer to 16,000 or even slightly higher, or slightly fewer men served in the South Carolina Loyalist militia than estimated. Second, Lambert's definition of Loyalism (counting only those who served in the military or performed some other specific Loyalist

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<sup>764</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 25, 100-102.

<sup>765</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 31.

<sup>766</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 226.

service) is too narrow. Some Loyalists wished victory for the crown but avoided personal involvement, just as some Patriots remained uninvolved.

Third, South Carolina fought a true civil war within the larger Revolution. Animosity on both sides generated intense hatreds and a fractured society that clearly defined friends and enemies. Men in such a political climate found remaining neutral difficult.<sup>767</sup> It is reasonable, given the level of hostility in the colony, that South Carolina had a higher percentage of men in combat than many other colonies.

Fourth, many men in South Carolina fought on both sides. They were not necessarily neutral, indecisive, or traitors to their original cause. Civil conflict in the South Carolina backcountry was undoubtedly worse than in many other states. Caught in circumstances forcing them to join the “enemy” militia or lose their property, freedom, or lives, they acted as they believed the situation required. Without a doubt, that increased the number of men fighting for both factions.<sup>768</sup> A similar circumstance is the multiple counting of Loyalists who fought in both the regulars and the militia, as happened among both Loyalists and Patriots.<sup>769</sup>

Last, the number Lambert argues served in the Loyalist military is the total for the war. Lambert’s population number is the number of Loyalists residing in the state at a given moment. People aged into and out of the military manpower pool during the war and people moved into and out of the state. According to a formula from an article by Paul Smith, more

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<sup>767</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 124; Moore, “Waxhaws as a Case Study,” 29-30.

<sup>768</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 69, 90-91; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 70; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 297, 301, 319-320.

<sup>769</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina loyalists*, 108; Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots*, xi-xii; Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army*, 526.

than 4,200 military age Loyalist men may have lived in South Carolina during the war.<sup>770</sup>

Coupled with the other circumstances described, growth in the military manpower pool helps explain the high percentage of South Carolinians who served in the Loyalist military forces.

Exact numbers are little, if any, easier to determine for South Carolina Patriots.

Historian Francis Heitman counted 376,771 men serving in Patriot military forces during the

Revolutionary War, a figure far too high.<sup>771</sup> The most accepted modern estimate for men

serving the Patriot cause in some military capacity is closer to 200,000, little more than half

Heitman's estimate.<sup>772</sup> Heitman lists 6,417 Continentals and approximately 20,000 militia, for a

total of 26,417 South Carolinians who served in the Patriot military, also far too high.<sup>773</sup>

Heitman almost certainly counted South Carolina Continental Army regiments both as

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<sup>770</sup> Smith, "The American Loyalists," 269-270; J. Potter, "The Growth of Population in America, 1700-1860," in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, eds., David Victor Glass and David Edward Charles Eversley (London: Edward Arnold, 2008), 644-646; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 225-226; Greene and Harrington, *American Population before 1790*, 176. About 2,507,000 white people lived in the colonies when war began. 2,950,000 lived in the colonies at the end of the war, for a birth rate 2.2 percent higher than the death rate. Discounting the infant mortality rate, roughly half the total death rate, about 260,000 colonists died during the American Revolution (about nine percent of the population). Add that number to the number of colonists living at the end of the war. The total number of white colonists living during the American Revolution was roughly 3,210,000. That formula works well for the colonies, but it does not always work in a local setting. One of the local settings in which Smith's formula does not work is South Carolina. While the population of the colonies increased during the Revolutionary War, the population of South Carolina decreased slightly. Nevertheless, young men undoubtedly did reach military age during the war, expanding the military recruitment pool for both sides. Simply applying Smith's final multiplier of roughly nine percent to Lambert's Loyalist population figure of 15,300 gives a Loyalist population for South Carolina for the entire war of almost 17,000.

<sup>771</sup> Heitman, *Officers of the Continental Army*, 526.

<sup>772</sup> Peckham, *The Toll of Independence*, 133; Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, 547; John Shy, "The Legacy of the American Revolutionary War," in *Legacies of the American Revolution*, eds., Larry R. Gerlach, James A. Dolph, and Michael L. Nicholls (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1978), 45.

<sup>773</sup> Heitman, *Officers of the Continental Army*, 526; Greene and Harrington, *American Population before 1790*, xxiii, 176; Wright, *The Continental Army*, 305-309. South Carolina's population at the beginning of the Revolutionary War was about 70,000, which suggests a military manpower pool near 14,000 for all factions. Heitman's estimate approaches forty percent of the total number of South Carolina residents during the Revolution. Having previously established the Patriot population of South Carolina was near 40,000, the estimated Patriot military manpower pool was approximately 8,000.

Continental and state forces.<sup>774</sup> That being the case, the entire complement of 6,417 listed Continental forces should be subtracted from the estimated militia total for the colony. There remains approximately 13,600 militia and state defense forces. That still leaves 20,000 men serving in South Carolina military forces (6,400 Continentals and 13,600 state defense/militia), a number remaining much too high. Half that number is a more nearly accurate figure, although still high.<sup>775</sup> The real number was likely between 8,000 and 9,000. After applying the circumstances affecting Lambert's Loyalist estimate to the Patriot estimate those numbers seem reasonable.

Even by the smallest reasonable estimate, South Carolina Patriot military forces fielded more than twice the men recruited by the South Carolina Loyalist military. If Patriot and Loyalist populations were of an approximate size they should have fielded similar numbers. The primary historiographical counterargument is that many Loyalists felt no need to involve themselves directly in fighting the war, depending on British regulars for that task. Circumstances in South Carolina belie that argument. From the earliest days of the war, before the British Army invaded the state, South Carolinians on both sides turned out by the thousands.<sup>776</sup> Additionally, the relative number of military men serving in each faction in South Carolina roughly corresponds with the relative number of people in each faction. Among the possible reasons for the imbalance in the number of men the two factions fielded, the simplest and best supported is that many more Patriots existed than Loyalists.

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<sup>774</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 305-309; Heitman, *Officers of the Continental Army*, 526.

<sup>775</sup> Peckham, *The Toll of Independence*, 133; Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, 547; Shy, "Legacy of the American Revolutionary War," 45.

<sup>776</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 96-102; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 21-32.

The size of the militia force available to South Carolina Patriots helps explain the resilience of the Patriot cause in South Carolina. Regulars from outside the colony, supported by militia primarily from the Carolinas and Virginia, typically conducted conventional fighting in South Carolina. Clinton, Cornwallis, Rawdon, Stuart, Lincoln, Gates, Greene, and Morgan all organized their armies in that fashion. However, the South Carolina militia was the core of that state's Patriot resiliency, not forces from out of state.<sup>777</sup> Even when Continental forces in South Carolina surrendered or fled the colony, the British Army could not quell the South Carolina Patriot militia. Militia leaders across the state, acting on their own initiative, formed guerrilla units challenging British Army control of the state until the Continentals returned.<sup>778</sup> Those same forces joined the Continentals when they returned to the state, playing a significant role in its final re-conquest.<sup>779</sup>

The South Carolina Patriot militia held no better men or leaders than the colony's Loyalist militia. Loyalist leader Thomas Brown, for instance, demonstrated a level of strategic and tactical thought significantly higher than the more famous Patriot Thomas Sumter.<sup>780</sup> The difference between the two organizations was in the far greater manpower of the Patriot

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<sup>777</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*; Lawrence E. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping*; Wood, *Battles of the Revolution War*. These books and many others covering the operational and tactical aspects of the Southern Campaign of the American Revolutionary War all describe the Continental and British regular forces in general, and particularly in the south, as fighting beside militia forces.

<sup>778</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 181-191.

<sup>779</sup> Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 151-152, 319-333; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 176-22; Johnson, *South Carolina Backcountry*, 129-130; Wallace, *South Carolina*, 307-317. Again, virtually any work detailing the campaign in South Carolina notes the support Patriot militia provided to the Continental army.

<sup>780</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 51; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford Courthouse*, 96, 301, 390-392; Olson, "Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry," 49; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 28-29, 48-49, 74-76, 96. Some British officers lacked confidence in Brown. That was not for any perceived failing as a military leader, but for his tendency to rouse the countryside against the British by his vindictiveness.



military forces. Even in bad times, Patriots retained enough leaders and men committed to the cause to maintain a significant presence in the field. In similar bad times for Loyalists, Patriots drove Loyalist militia underground or from the colony.

Such resilience is a testament to Patriot popularity. The Patriot majority made it impossible for the British Army to control the colony. Those who would have reported Patriot activities either from conviction, self-preservation, or desire for reward or recognition dared not expose themselves to retaliation. The more so since even British regulars (not to speak of Loyalist militia) repeatedly proved unable to protect them. In the end, the reason the British Army failed to subdue Patriot militia was widespread Patriot support among South Carolinians.

On the eve of the American Revolution the white population of South Carolina ranked numerically in the bottom third of the rebelling colonies. Only the white populations of Rhode Island, Delaware, and Georgia were smaller.<sup>781</sup> At least two Revolutionary War historians argue that, in absolute numbers, only New York had more Loyalists than South Carolina,<sup>782</sup> and one argues South Carolina held more Loyalists than New York.<sup>783</sup> Nevertheless, population count, settlement history, military forces, and political strength all show a distinct manpower advantage for the Patriot faction. On the other hand, no contradictory evidence exists showing a Loyalist majority, or even equality of Loyalist and Patriot numbers. Clearly, in South Carolina, Patriots outnumbered Loyalists two or three to one. The fact that South Carolina, among the

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<sup>781</sup> Greene and Harrington, *American Population before 1790*, 7.

<sup>782</sup> Moore, "Waxhaws as a Case Study," 26; Brown, *The King's Friends*, 289.

<sup>783</sup> Fiske, *The American Revolution*, 87, 213, 274, 280.

smallest colonies, had among the largest Loyalist populations yet was so predominantly Patriot, offers a strong indication that the remainder of the colonies also had large Patriot majorities.

This has a significant impact on understanding the war. The myth of the valiant few is unsupportable. Patriots did largely as they pleased because they had both the political and military strength to enforce their will on the minority, including the royal government. The royal governments of all thirteen colonies quickly fell. Some tried unsuccessfully to stop the rebellion with armed force, others simply fled to the protection of the British military. Every royal governor knew shooting had begun, yet not one commanded the necessary resources to hold his colony for the crown. The British Army concentrated in Massachusetts, but even there it retained only two cities – Boston and Charlestown. That indicates a large Patriot majority. In short, the accumulated political data does not show a valiant few miraculously winning despite overwhelming odds, but victory by a committed majority, upending the reigning political view of the Revolution.

Militarily, Greene's situation initially appeared grim but that was short-lived. Time was always on Greene's side. He needed only to remain out of British Army reach long enough to gather reinforcements and supplies to seize the strategic offensive. The British strategic plan was for Loyalist militia to hold key terrain while regulars sought out and defeated the Continental Army. The inability to recruit militia in large numbers, an issue settled years before the invasion of 1780, forced the British Army to extend its reach beyond what it could safely grasp. Unless Greene made a serious error the combination of British Army dispersion and the Patriot manpower advantage, both based on Patriot ability to out-recruit the British Army, doomed Britain to slow failure, at best.

As it was in the south, so it was in the north. Unable to recruit large numbers of militia as auxiliaries and security forces, the British Army could not afford losses even from successful battles.<sup>784</sup> Losses such as those at Princeton, Trenton, Bennington, and of course Saratoga were irreplaceable. Similar Patriot military losses, as on Long Island, at Fort Mifflin and at Red Bank were replaceable. That had a paralyzing effect on both Howe and Clinton. Given the disparity of the manpower situation, neither of the British commanders-in-chief could devise a successful strategy. Both realized their limitation even if their political masters in London did not.

This reassessment of the war on the American side requires a reassessment on the British side as well. Instead of a realistic appraisal, the British government based its strategy on hope – primarily the hope of support by “good Americans.”<sup>785</sup> Both its strategy and its logistics depended on that hope. New England exposed the weakness of British strategy. Not understanding the cause of failure, Britain applied the same strategy to the middle states where it failed again, confirming its weakness. Regardless, the British Army took the same strategy south. Only after failure in the south did it realize its “good Americans” were no more than a significant minority of the colonial population. By then it could only abandon the colonies and attempt retention of the remainder of its kingdom. There was neither the money nor the men for any other option.

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<sup>784</sup> Howe, *Narrative*, 19, 32.

<sup>785</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 43, 159, 511; Allison, *American Revolution*, 58; Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, 434; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 410.

Throughout the war British leadership misunderstood the nature of the rebellion, buying into the myth of the valiant few and almost willfully overlooking the committed majority. Failure to understand the myth led British leaders to believe only a miracle could deprive them of victory. Commanders in America, first Gage, then Howe, then Clinton, realized much sooner than their government that they lacked the manpower to win. London recalled Gage because he warned them of it. Howe resigned because of it. Clinton repeatedly complained to the government in London regarding their failure to comprehend the truth of it. The myth of the valiant few has become the British national myth of the American Revolution in much the same manner the “stab in the back” myth did for Germany after World War I. It explains British military failure while limiting British culpability. American historians have largely subscribed to the same myth, arguing that Patriot victory was a miracle. There was no miracle. Patriot victory, while not foreordained, was from beginning to end the most likely conclusion of the American Revolution.

## CHAPTER 12

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation challenges widespread historical assumptions about Nathanael Greene. Without disputing Greene's success or his ability, it transforms Greene from prophet of modern warfare to practitioner of pre-modern war. Careful and thorough investigation shows Greene practiced methods of his own time, not those of the future. This work places him solidly within eighteenth-century military culture. In doing so, his campaign, and the Revolutionary War, take on new meaning.

Greene's reputation as an innovative commander links to a grand narrative of the war in which a handful of determined Patriots defeated the power of Britain with an unconventional approach the hidebound British Army could not emulate. In fact, Greene personified conventionality and the myth of the valiant few is indeed a myth. Greene won the southern campaign because he had a significant manpower advantage over the British Army. That advantage enabled Greene to seek repeated battles with the British Army, which could ill afford the losses entailed from sickness and small firefights, much less those from significant battles. Other Patriot commanders, including Washington, won for the same reason. Patriot majority impacted more than the military aspect of the Revolution, however; it also impacted cultural, political, and social facets of the Revolution.

The myth of the valiant few impacted British policy even before the Revolution began. British policies from the Stamp Act protests forward presupposed the Sons of Liberty were a vocal minority, while the myth was the basis for British strategy throughout the conflict. British

historians since that time have uniformly relied on the myth to explain British defeat.<sup>786</sup> The earliest American historians argued that Patriot supporters outnumbered Loyalists in the colonies,<sup>787</sup> but that changed early in the twentieth century.<sup>788</sup> American historians since then have joined their British counterparts in support of the myth of the valiant few. Their error stems from linguistic misunderstanding and misuse, and from misunderstanding Greene's strategic intent (and that of other Continental commanders) as compared to twentieth-century guerrilla leaders.

Nathanael Greene was not a guerrilla commander and he never led guerrilla forces. Nor was he otherwise unconventional. His was not a Fabian strategy, and he did not develop hybrid warfare in any form. He never claimed to operate outside convention. He described his battles and operations in terms of maneuver warfare, offering no suggestion he considered himself guerrilla, unconventional, or even innovative.<sup>789</sup> Innovation was not his way. Through meticulous study and hard work, he mastered every detail of any project he undertook,

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<sup>786</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 2, 37; O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America*, 11, 36, 53, 98, 175, 333; Galloway, *Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion*, 54, 58, 90-91; Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion*, 145; Ketchum, *Decisive Day*, 99; Boucher, *Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, xlv; Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels*, 9-10; Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, 334.

<sup>787</sup> Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South Carolina*, 67; Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution, Volume I*, 185; Warren, *History of the American Revolution, Volume 1*, 11, 18, 167; Snowman, *The American Revolution: Written in Scriptural, or, Ancient Historical Style*, 68; Ellet, *Domestic History of the American Revolution*, 37; Fiske, *The American Revolution*, 87, 213, 274, 280.

<sup>788</sup> Fisher, *True History of the American Revolution*, 160-163.

<sup>789</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 326; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 419-421. In this letter to Jefferson, Greene points out clearly his intention to give battle as soon as circumstances permit. Meanwhile he hopes his movements will distract the enemy, avoid placing his own army at a disadvantage, and give civilians the impression he is contesting the enemy in the effort to protect their property. That is the essence of a maneuver strategy by a weaker force. It fails in several respects to define guerrilla activity, however.

including military operations. He excelled by executing principles of conventional eighteenth-century warfare better than expected.

The term “conventional” demands a standard. This dissertation uses several such standards with the expectation that Greene must reasonably meet every one. One is the military practice of nations Greene would have considered conventional. That includes the general practice of early modern warfare in Europe, particularly in Britain. The Continental Congress modeled the Continental Army after the British Army.<sup>790</sup> That shows in the civil-military relationship, the single battalion regiment, and many other aspects of Patriot military organization.<sup>791</sup> Greene no doubt studied several European generals in books he obtained from Henry Knox and others.<sup>792</sup> Certainly, his tactics resembled those of conventional European generals, including some of the best-known names of the era.<sup>793</sup>

European military commanders did not fight just in Europe. They practiced their craft in North America as well, throughout a series of colonial wars against one another and at times involving both colonists and Indians. Many Patriot commanders during the American Revolution, including Washington, learned practical military command from service with the British Army during colonial wars, especially the French and Indian War. They were overwhelmingly conservative in their approach to military matters. In fact, the only senior

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<sup>790</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume 1*, 97, 99, 103; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 45; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 358-359; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VII*, 364; Hunt, *Journals of Congress, Volume XXII*, 129; Hunt, *Journals of Congress, Volume XVII*, 508.

<sup>791</sup> Wright, *The Continental Army*, 158.

<sup>792</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 47; Golway, *Washington's General*, 42; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 17.

<sup>793</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 53, 55; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 331, 345, 360-361, 376-380; Golway, *Washington's General*, 257-260, 263, 266-268, 280-282; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*; 174-186, 196-197; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 159-160, 171, 174-176, 188-193; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 169-170.

officer in the Continental Army to vocally support a guerrilla strategy was not an American, but former British officer Charles Lee, who never believed Americans could defeat the British Army with conventional warfare.<sup>794</sup>

Colonial military practice was also important to Patriot military organization and operations. Militia recruitment and organization during the Revolution was in part a continuation of colonial practice.<sup>795</sup> Division of state forces into provincial and militia was a colonial practice as well.<sup>796</sup> Colonial methodology penetrated deep into the Continental Army recruiting system, for instance playing a significant role in forming regiments from individual states.<sup>797</sup> Greene's appointment as Brigadier General of Rhode Island militia was based on those same antecedents.<sup>798</sup>

Each of the previous methods are important in assessing the conventionality of Continental officers such as Greene, and of the American Revolutionary War in general. Two further methods concern Greene more specifically. The first is Washington's military practice. Several historians argue that both colonial and Revolutionary military practices – including those employed by Washington – were generally unconventional.<sup>799</sup> While this dissertation

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<sup>794</sup> Baker, "Exchange of Major-General Charles Lee," 29; Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*, 155; Black, *European Warfare*, 158-159; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 136; Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution*, 38.

<sup>795</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, xiv.

<sup>796</sup> Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness*, xiv.

<sup>797</sup> Kurtz and Hutson, *Essays on the American Revolution*, 50.

<sup>798</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 50, 65-66; Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 21-22, 27-28; Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army*, 11.

<sup>799</sup> Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 8-9; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 5-7; Dederer, "The Origins of Robert E. Lee's Bold Generalship," 122; Siry, *Greene*, 64-65; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 1-3; Jones, *Guerrilla Conflict before the Cold War*, 1-40; Higginbotham, "Reflections on the South," 668-669; Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 71-72; Weigley, *American Way of War*, 27-39; Weigley, "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War," 410-411; Conway, "The British Army, "Military Europe," and the American War of



opposes that view, even if that was the case, if Greene followed Washington's practices he was not developing a new or prophetic form of warfare. Greene learned practical aspects of managing an army and fighting a war while under Washington's command.<sup>800</sup> As shown in relevant chapters of this dissertation, Greene's strategy, operations, tactics, intelligence methods, handling of militia and guerrillas, and every other important aspect of his work strongly resembled that of Washington. Washington's influence was present in all Greene did as an independent commander.

Second, British military practice in the southern theater of North America also proves Greene's conventionality. Few historians even mention the similarity of circumstances facing British and Continental armies during the southern campaign. Yet, both armies were without adequate supplies or money.<sup>801</sup> Both desperately needed militia support to win.<sup>802</sup> Both depended on high concentrations of light forces.<sup>803</sup> Both operated in a large theater with too few men to cover the theater adequately. Both resorted to frequent use of detachments,

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Independence," 77; Walker, *The Battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens*, 90-91; Pohl, "The American Revolution and the Vietnamese War: Pertinent Military Analogies," 258-259; Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 97-117; William F. Marina, "The American Revolution and the Minority Myth," The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017]; Higginbotham, *War and Society in Revolutionary America*, 153-155. Dederer and Grenier are perhaps the leading figures of this camp. Other historians who believe the Patriot military practiced unconventional or guerrilla warfare or copied twentieth century revolutionaries include Siry, Weigley, Jones, Higginbotham, Conway, O'Shaughnessy, Walker, Pohl, Asprey, and Marina.

<sup>800</sup> Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume I*, 97, 99, 103; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume III*, 358-359; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume VII*, 364; Hunt, *Journals of Congress, Volume XXII*; Hunt, *Journals of Congress, Volume XVII*, 508; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 45; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume II*, 109-110; Shaffel, "The American Board of War," 187; Ford, *Journals of Congress, Volume IV*, 127-129.

<sup>801</sup> Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army*, 22; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 145, 166; Tokar, "Redcoat Supply," 33; Wickwire, *Cornwallis*, 235-236; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 36.

<sup>802</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 76; Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 21; Mackesy, *The War for America*, 271-272, 511; Golway, *Washington's General*, 253.

<sup>803</sup> Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 114; Mackesy, *War for America*, 341.

especially of light or mounted forces. Both sides used similar intelligence methods.<sup>804</sup> The two sides used similar strategy, tactics, and operations. Virtually every chapter of this dissertation illuminates in some manner the similarity of British Army circumstances to those Greene faced. Similar circumstances consistently led to the same or similar decisions by Greene and his opponents. No doubt exists that the British Army was conventional. Thus, if Greene acted largely in the manner of the British Army, it is impossible to see him as unconventional.

Historians and biographers investigating Nathanael Greene's southern campaign typically assess only his strategy and his militia and cavalry operations. They gloss over remaining aspects and circumstances of his military command, either ignoring them or treating them as irrelevant or incidental. This leads to unsupportable conclusions such as that Greene's strategy resembled that of modern guerrilla leaders or that his militia was essentially guerrilla. The fact remains, however, that even in the areas historians typically investigate closely, Greene was conventional. His militia and cavalry typically conducted sieges of small forts while his primary army pinned the British field force in place. That is completely conventional, and in fact was a routine practice of eighteenth-century European warfare.

This dissertation investigates more than a dozen aspects and circumstances of Greene's military command, as well as reviewing some issues regarding his personality. It reveals certain aspects of Greene's character. Greene was an intelligent man who loved learning and had the capacity to throw himself into new projects with enthusiasm.<sup>805</sup> His moral courage was

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<sup>804</sup> Mahoney and Mahoney, *Gallantry in Action*, 162; Conway, *The British Isles and the American War for Independence*, 208; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 94; Kurtz, *Essays on the American Revolution*, 136; Kwasny, *Washington's Partisans*, 125, 208.

<sup>805</sup> Greene, *Life of Nathanael Greene*, 100-101; Johnson, *Sketches and Correspondence*, 9-11, 14.

sufficient for commitment to dangerous causes and making difficult decisions.<sup>806</sup> He could make up his own mind and he trusted his own judgment, sometimes stubbornly so. Although Greene professed the modesty considered polite for his era, he believed so strongly in himself he sometimes became indignant if questioned or challenged. However, despite his intelligence, self-confidence, and strength of character, no evidence exists that he was particularly innovative. His genius, to use eighteenth-century terminology, was his ability to learn and to apply what he learned with good judgment. That was so with his education, pre-war occupation, political service, military service under Washington, service as quartermaster general, and his command of the Southern Military District.

Greene lacked direct control over certain aspects of his military situation: national command arrangements, Continental Army organization, and leadership qualifications among them. In those and similar areas, investigations made in this dissertation concern whether his circumstances were conventional and whether his view of those circumstances was conventional. In areas in which Greene did exercise control, this investigation focuses on whether Greene's own decisions and actions were conventional.

Although the American Revolution featured guerrilla operations, the American Revolutionary War was a conventional war, not a guerrilla war. Not only Washington and Greene, but every department commander in the Continental Army, led conventional armies composed of regular forces using conventional methods. The goal of Patriot commanders during the American Revolution was to defeat the British Army in a conventional contest and

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<sup>806</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume I*, 33-35. Tucker, *Rise and Fight Again*, 14; Siry, *Greene*, 6.

drive it from the continent. Conventionality was not due to inflexibility or lack of insight by Continental Army commanders. Patriot leaders were conventional because the technology of the era made conventional operations and tactics the most trusted means of success.<sup>807</sup> Guerilla operations occurred only in areas the Continental Army could not hold, and only for as long as the Continental Army could not operate in those areas. Most guerillas joined conventional forces and fought in the line of battle at the first opportunity, especially in the south.

The question naturally arises then, if prophetic, unconventional strategy, logistics, and operations do not explain Greene's southern victory, as many have argued, what does? Greene, although using his resources brilliantly, won the southern campaign because he fought it with a significant manpower advantage. He outnumbered his opponent in every battle. His ability to replace losses put unbearable pressure on the British Army, which could not match Patriot military recruitment because the manpower pool it depended on – American colonists – overwhelmingly favored the Patriots.

By the first shots of the war the colonial majority supported the Continental Congress.<sup>808</sup> With their majority, Patriots quickly controlled most colonial militia and replaced royal governments with Patriot state governments. The Patriot majority also explains why Americans united sufficiently, if not perfectly, behind a national government. Militarily, the Patriot majority translated into a force with greater resilience than the British Army. Without a strong,

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<sup>807</sup> Black, *European Warfare*, 64.

<sup>808</sup> William F. Marina, "The American Revolution and the Minority Myth," The Independent Institute, <http://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1398>, [accessed May 29, 2017]; Smith, "The American Loyalists," 269; Calhoun, "Loyalism and Neutrality," 235; Calhoun, *Tory Insurgents*, 356.

adequately funded Patriot government a large Continental Army was impossible. The Continental Congress lacked funding to pay or supply a significantly larger force – it lacked funding to *adequately* pay or supply the force it recruited. However, the population advantage meant that, when necessary, Patriot reinforcements and replacements were always available, if at times only for limited periods due to the lack of dependability of the militia.

Historians have argued that South Carolina was more Loyalist than Patriot, especially in the backcountry, and that South Carolina had more Loyalists in real numbers than any colony except New York. Yet, even backcountry Patriot supporters outnumbered Loyalists by as much as a third. Patriots more than doubled the number of Loyalists statewide. If South Carolina, with among the highest loyal populations of any state, was overwhelmingly Patriot, that significantly discounts the argument that a minority took the colonies to war, or that Patriot political and social activity was accomplished by boldness and guile. Patriots, in every case, took their colonies to war because theirs was the majority view in the colony.

On the other hand, Britain stretched its military manpower beyond the breaking point.<sup>809</sup> British leaders knew they could not conquer two million people living in an area of several hundred thousand square miles with fewer than forty thousand men, the most regulars they could reasonably expect to maintain in America.<sup>810</sup> They, like the Continental Army, depended on American loyalty. Casualties on each side during the Revolutionary War were relatively even, but by war's end the British Army was unable to replace its losses.<sup>811</sup> Patriot

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<sup>809</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 57.

<sup>810</sup> Spring, *With Zeal and Bayonets*, 28; Billias, *Washington's Generals and Opponents*, x.

<sup>811</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 558-559. As with any Revolutionary War numbers, casualty numbers are no more than estimates. Ferling argues losses by Patriot forces were at least 25,000 and by all British forces serving in America, including Germans and Loyalists, at least 21,000. There were no doubt casualties on both sides that were

military forces, by contrast, were as strong as ever. The greatest misfortune of British strategists was that they never realized, some even after Yorktown, that the numbers on which they depended were not there.<sup>812</sup>

Britain's manpower disadvantage was well known to senior British military officers in America, if not always appreciated by their political leadership in London.<sup>813</sup> At least in part, the problem developed from the British government's misunderstanding of the raw numbers. Even after Cornwallis withdrew into Virginia, the British Army in the deep south was larger than Greene's. It remained so throughout Greene's campaign. Operationally, however, thousands of British soldiers garrisoned Charlestown and other southern ports, loss of which would have disrupted British seaborne logistics and nullified their ability to withdraw from the theater.<sup>814</sup> Inevitably that would have meant British Army surrender in the south. Hundreds more soldiers held important locations across the interior of the state.<sup>815</sup> Strategically, few replacements were available from outside the theater due to Britain's worldwide commitments – in fact, on one occasion Clinton requested Cornwallis send forces from the south to New York City if possible.<sup>816</sup> The British Army combination of low manpower availability and high manpower requirements left Greene with a field army larger than the British field army.

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unaccounted for, as well as a significant number of casualties to both sides from campaigns fought outside North America and generally not involving American forces of either side.

<sup>812</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 542; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 303; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 187.

<sup>813</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 511; Gruber, "American Revolution as a Conspiracy," 370-371; Woodward, "British and American Strategy in the Southern Campaign," 18; Ferling, "Galloway's Military Advice," 173.

<sup>814</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 546.

<sup>815</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 283, 307.

<sup>816</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 36.

Given that Greene still lost every battle, having a larger field army was certainly important. However, a larger field army was not the ultimate key to Greene's success. The most important factor in Greene's favor was the resilience his army gained through support of the colonial majority. More than half of South Carolina residents supported the Continental Congress against Britain, whereas fewer than one-quarter were Loyalists. Simply put, that gave Greene twice as many men to draw on as his opponents. However, that formulation understates Greene's manpower advantage in South Carolina. Most South Carolina Loyalists lived in the backcountry where, although still outnumbered by Patriots, numbers were more nearly equal. The Snow Campaign early in the war, and King's Mountain and Cowpens later, cowed backcountry Loyalists, convincing them the British Army could not protect them. Before Greene even began offensive operations, Patriot militia had dissuaded many backcountry Loyalists from active participation in the conflict.<sup>817</sup> Much the same situation existed in other states, if for locally different reasons.

At the same time, South Carolina Patriot militia forces strong enough to significantly interfere with British Army operations were at Greene's disposal when he returned to South Carolina after Guilford Courthouse. Simply put, the disparity in manpower resources meant the British Army could not afford losses even in military victories. Consequently, each successive British commander fought a single battle against Greene and then, afraid his army would disintegrate if involved in further combat, retreated, declining further confrontation.<sup>818</sup>

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<sup>817</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 495-496.

<sup>818</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 175-176, 183-184, 220; Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 330-331; 348-350; 380.

Greene did not fight the war seeking innovative ways to avoid direct combat against a large, well-furnished army led by tradition bound generals. Rather, the fight was between two undersized, under-supported armies, led by capable, even brilliant, commanders. Strategy, operations, tactics, technology, and virtually every other aspect of the two armies, except their access to replacements and reinforcements, were similar. British forces remained better trained overall, but late in the war even Patriot militia had a leavening of trained, experienced men. A few Continental battalions were as good, or nearly as good, as the British battalions.

The southern theater was not the only one affected by the manpower disparity. As in the south, every major city and various other strategic locations held by the British Army in the north required garrisons. Only during battles around New York City did the British Army substantially outnumber the Patriot forces. Through careful maneuver and with militia support, Washington typically placed similar or greater numbers than the British Army into battle. Even so, unless Washington significantly outnumbered the enemy he typically found a good defensive position from which to fight. However, despite the numbers on any given battlefield, Washington's real strength was the same as Greene's – he could replace and reinforce his army to a much greater extent than could the British Army.

In respect to manpower, the Saratoga Campaign also resembled the campaigns of Washington and Greene. Burgoyne began the campaign virtually unopposed. He captured Fort Ticonderoga with a slight advantage in numbers. By Freeman's Farm, the numbers were decidedly in the Patriot army's favor and by the time Burgoyne surrendered, the British Army



was overwhelmingly outnumbered. Again, British garrisons, irreplaceable British battlefield losses, and Patriot militia brought about a change in relative manpower.<sup>819</sup>

Historians often malign certain British generals, particularly Howe and Clinton, for their caution in the field. However, both understood the severe limitations on British Army replacements and supplies. Both were present at Bunker Hill when entrenched Patriot militia shredded a British frontal assault. They sensibly found it prudent to avoid any battle that posed risk of significant manpower losses. Propaganda aside, they knew Patriot soldiers would fight and under the right circumstances were a dangerous foe. Unaffordable losses were the likely result of rash attacks against them.<sup>820</sup> Burgoyne and Cornwallis, although also present at Bunker Hill, failed to heed its lesson and were more aggressive with their commands. Both lost their armies, a combined result that led to Britain's loss of the American colonies.

Historians have not traditionally viewed the American Revolution as a systemic British Army manpower failure. Rather, they portray Greene as a visionary practitioner of modern military techniques foreshadowing twentieth-century guerrilla leaders. That view fails, however, to demonstrate a shared intent with modern guerrilla leaders.<sup>821</sup> Written works of twentieth-century revolutionaries – not just Mao and Giap, but Castro, Guevara, and others –

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<sup>819</sup> Conway, *The War of Independence*, 94-99.

<sup>820</sup> Howe, *Narrative of Howe*, 19, 32.

<sup>821</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 7, 52-53, 57; Weigley, *The Partisan War*, 41-42, 44; Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 120; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind* 428; Allison, *The American Revolution*, 65; Morton, *The American Revolution*, 65; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 463-464; Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 168; Golway, *Washington's General*, 241.

indicate they were looking for a new kind of war.<sup>822</sup> The Cuban, Vietnamese, and Chinese wars each began with small groups of dedicated communists having only a few light weapons available to them. Emerging leaders lacked sole control of their organizations, and committees controlled each revolutionary group during its opening phases. Those revolutionary cells also lacked a significant following. To survive leaders strove to attract a following, build an army and, not least, build a controlling organization – a government.

The collective answer of these twentieth-century revolutionaries included a rediscovery and repopularization of guerrilla warfare. Initially revolutionaries mounted military operations to gain notoriety and popular support among the people. As its followings grew revolutionaries took on more ambitious objectives. Small guerrilla groups hid among the population when not in the field, drawing on it for supplies and intelligence. Larger groups found areas, usually remote, where little or no governmental control existed.<sup>823</sup> Only after years of guerrilla warfare did these revolutionaries successfully stand against regulars in open battle. Guerrilla leaders who attempted conventional battle prematurely, as in the 1968 Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War and in Cuba in July 1953, often suffered disastrous casualties.<sup>824</sup>

Unable to compete with large modern regular armies, guerrilla leaders relied on a style of warfare that avoided direct combat with regular forces. Guerrilla leaders sought to interdict

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<sup>822</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Mao's Road to Power, Volume 2*, ed., Stuart R. Schram, trans., John King Fairbank (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1994), 227; Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army: The Viet Cong Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries* (New York: Praeger, 1962), 20-21; Fidel Castro, *History Will Absolve Me*, trans., Lyle Stuart (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1961), 21-22; Richard L. Harris, *Che Guevara: A Biography* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), 78-79; Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 9.

<sup>823</sup> Mao, *Mao's Road to Power, Volume 2*, xviii; Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 46.

<sup>824</sup> Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (New York: Presidio Press, 1982), 112; Luis Martinez-Fernandez, *Revolutionary Cuba: A History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 24.

enemy supplies and communications, control the population, ambush enemy patrols, and overwhelm isolated enemy garrisons.<sup>825</sup> Revolutionary leaders deliberately developed a style of warfare they could pursue indefinitely without bringing war to a conclusion. Their goal for most of their revolutionary existence was harassment of the enemy, and they gained control of large areas only slowly. Twentieth-century revolutionary leaders started with the expectation they would spend years, even decades, in low intensity conflict before outcomes began to turn their way.<sup>826</sup>

In Vietnam, guerrilla operations lasted from French reoccupation after World War II until American forces withdrew almost thirty years later.<sup>827</sup> Guerrilla campaigns wearied foreign military forces – first France and then the United States – into leaving, they did not drive them from the country through battle.<sup>828</sup> Beginning in 1927 a weak Chinese Communist Party depended on guerrillas to harass the ruling Kuomintang Party.<sup>829</sup> Throughout World War II, the Communists hoarded their forces,<sup>830</sup> letting the Kuomintang fight the war against Japan.<sup>831</sup>

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<sup>825</sup> Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 48.

<sup>826</sup> Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 47-48; Mao, *Mao's Road to Power, Volume 4*, 295-300.

<sup>827</sup> Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*, 25, 159.

<sup>828</sup> Giap, *People's War, People's Army*, 46. Both the French and American decisions to withdraw from Vietnam were ultimately in response to conventional battles – the French at Dien Bein Phu and the Americans in the Tet Offensive of 1968. While it is true the French lost their battle at Dien Bein Phu, the loss was not militarily disastrous. The Americans won the Tet battle, militarily. However, public perception of those battles was ultimately ruinous to the political will necessary for each nation to maintain military involvement in Vietnam.

<sup>829</sup> Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795-1989* (London: Routledge, 2001), 217.

<sup>830</sup> Hans J. van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 59.

<sup>831</sup> Hsi-sheng Ch'i, "The Military Dimension, 1942-1945," in *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan, 1937-1945*, eds., James C. Hsiung and Steven L. Levine (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 162-165.

Only after World War II did Mao move from guerrilla operations to conventional warfare.<sup>832</sup> In a war lasting more than twenty-two years, fewer than five featured conventional campaigning.

The Patriot government, on the other hand, was more advanced when fighting began. A majority of the population moved into the Patriot orbit during a series of political disputes in the years between the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. A long militia tradition placed weapons in Patriot hands. Military experience as provincial forces in the colonial wars of the eighteenth century created military institutions, leaders, experience, training manuals, and recruiting procedures. A fledgling Patriot government already existed and enjoyed broad support from the general population. All thirteen colonies immediately established state governments. The national government made contact with potential allies. The Patriot government began the war with a large army, operational from the first day of fighting. It controlled almost all the disputed territory from the war's beginning and maintained control over most of it throughout the war.

On assuming command of the Continental Army Washington immediately sought conventional battle.<sup>833</sup> Although he lost battles early in the war he never considered conversion to guerrilla strategy. Inexperience – both his and his men's – initially forced Washington to fight only when he had a clear advantage or when circumstances justified risk of defeat. Despite those restrictions, he sought conventional battle when any favorable

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<sup>832</sup> Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare*, 229; Hans J. van de Ven, ed., *Warfare in Chinese History* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2000), 331.

<sup>833</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 71-72.

opportunity presented. Washington's goal was a military victory that would end the war, not the war's indefinite extension.<sup>834</sup>

In the same manner, from the time Greene took command of the Southern Department he prepared for conventional battle that would destroy the British Army in the south.<sup>835</sup> Greene could not engage the British Army until he reinforced and supplied his army. He nevertheless intended to fight conventional battles with British regulars at the earliest opportunity in the hope of driving British forces in the south from the continent.<sup>836</sup> Both Washington and Greene used militia, but they used it conventionally, as auxiliaries to their Continental forces. They had no need for an unconventional approach to war. They began the war with a government, majority support in the country, control of most of the theater of war, and an army they believed could defeat the British Army.

Commanders in crisis are at times driven to innovate or experiment. Greene faced difficulties, of course, but his own letters show he believed victory was within his grasp if men and supplies remained available.<sup>837</sup> No evidence suggests Greene saw himself in a desperate situation, or that he was a man inclined to experimentation or theory.<sup>838</sup> Moreover, his experience in the south gave him no reason to question his basic instincts and original strategy. From the beginning of Greene's command, he pressed for a quick end to the war to the

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<sup>834</sup> Palmer, *The Way of the Fox*, 116, 119, 124-125, 140; Washington, *Writings of Washington, Volume 6*, 27-33.

<sup>835</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 291, 309; Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 186.

<sup>836</sup> Lumpkin, *Savannah to Yorktown*, 220-221.

<sup>837</sup> Greene, *Papers of Greene, Volume VII*, 419-420.

<sup>838</sup> Greene's requests for support, although at times plaintive, are more indicative of the kind of letters most generals in stressful commands would write than of a general who believed loss of a campaign was imminent.

greatest degree consistent with his means, the exact opposite of twentieth-century guerrilla leaders.

Another impediment to understanding Greene's conventionality comes from confusion regarding terminology. Militia uses were myriad during the American Revolution. People of the Revolutionary era considered many of those uses partisan. However, comparatively few militia activities were guerrilla and those were arguably of greater propaganda than military value. Compounding that error, historians adopt a view of guerrilla warfare so broad as to allow classification of virtually any military action as guerrilla. They argue that all partisan actions, virtually all mobile actions, and any action by small forces was guerrilla. They also argue that once a unit operated as a guerrilla force it remained a guerrilla force forever.<sup>839</sup> At least one, John Grenier, goes even further, suggesting that eighteenth-century guerrilla warfare is congruent not only with twentieth-century guerrilla warfare but with modern low intensity conflict.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>839</sup> Dederer, *Making Bricks without Straw*, 55.

<sup>840</sup> Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 1-10; Weigley, *The American Way of War*, xvii-xxiii. Grenier also extends the common error of including special operations and peripheral warfare as guerrilla. Additionally, he confuses grand strategy with operations. Grenier argues that colonial and early American wars against Indians were largely attrition, and that is true operationally. However, the Clausewitzian/Debruckian terms annihilation and attrition, to which Grenier refers, are grand strategic concepts, only. A nation may strategically wage a war of annihilation against an enemy while using an operational approach of attrition. Both the Union in the Civil War and the Allies in World War I waged just such wars. Annihilation was the grand strategy commonly used against the Indians, but attrition was often the operational approach. This undercuts Grenier's argument with Weigley in which he challenges Weigley's assertion that the American military has always preferred a strategy of annihilation. Indian wars throughout the history of not only the United States but the colonies which preceded that government were, in fact, fought with what Weigley calls the American way of War, a strategy of annihilation.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, the eighteenth-century term partisan does not equate to the twentieth-century meaning of guerrilla.<sup>841</sup> Historians attempting to prove Greene was a harbinger of modern guerrilla methods must use modern definitions – otherwise their arguments are meaningless. In the eighteenth century, partisan simply meant small wars. It included guerrillas, but also described special operations and all kinds of peripheral operations. Guerrillas are grassroots military organizations which, at least initially, operate outside a specific chain of command. Popular Revolutionary War guerrilla leaders recruited bands locally when no state government could provide support. They were responsible for their own supply and operated outside control of any higher authority. Although some guerrilla leaders cooperated with Continental commanders when possible, others did not. Guerrilla operations certainly took place during the American Revolution, but Greene was not a participant.

Rather, Greene operated under the chain of command of an army that was a department of an established, if new and shaky, government. Militia units under his command, although often having served previously as guerrillas, no longer operated as such. Called up by their state government, militia formed into conventional units, depended on conventional logistics (such as they were), and operated under conventional chain of command. Those units fought a sustained campaign for the liberation of South Carolina. Many of their actions were sieges, the most conventional of eighteenth-century operations.

Most southern militia brought horses when it reported for duty, so it moved quickly. Its operations were not mere raiding, however. They were part of a sustained offensive designed

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<sup>841</sup> Satterfield, *Princes, Posts and Partisans*, 1-3; Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, 52n, 66-72; Black, *European Warfare*, 60; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, 538-546; Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, 15.

to defeat the British Army and drive it from the state. It was frequently detached in small units, operating in that manner because Greene, with the primary Patriot army, limited the ability of the primary British field force to oppose them (called pinning in modern military parlance). Any approaching major battle typically found as much militia as possible, including former guerrillas, standing with the main army in the line of battle.<sup>842</sup>

Organization, rather than mobility or unit size, defines the difference between regular and guerrilla forces. Mobility is one operational method, the other being firepower.<sup>843</sup> While mobility is characteristic of guerrillas, it was also characteristic of many commanders never considered guerrilla leaders, including Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Robert E. Lee, and several German generals during World War II.<sup>844</sup>

Likewise, small forces are not necessarily guerrilla even though guerrillas often operate in small forces. Large conflicts in antiquity, such as the Peloponnesian War and the Punic Wars, generated small operations including patrolling, pickets, foraging, intelligence gathering, and similar activities common when large armies are close together in any era.<sup>845</sup> Similar small operations occurred throughout the wars of Louis XIV, the Napoleonic Wars, the American Civil

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<sup>842</sup> Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 344, 375-377.

<sup>843</sup> Robert M. Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 301, Black, *European Warfare*, 105-106.

<sup>844</sup> David G. Chandler, *The Art of Warfare on Land* (London: Hamlyn, 1974), 46; David Gates, *The Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815* (London: Arnold, 1997), 8; Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *Lee & His Army in Confederate History* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 177-178; Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm*, 31-32, 61-62, 63; Black, *European Warfare*, 128-129.

<sup>845</sup> Donald Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Viking, 2003), 238; Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, 343-344; David R. Smith, "Punic War, Third (149-146 BCE), Course," in *Conflict in Ancient Greece and Rome: The Definitive Political, Social, and Military Encyclopedia, Volume 3*, eds., Sara E. Phang, Iain Spence, Douglas Kelly, and Peter Londey (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016), 1158.



War, and both World Wars to name but a few.<sup>846</sup> At the same time, in World War II the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, among others, recruited large guerrilla forces.<sup>847</sup>

Greene is the Continental Army general most often credited with commanding unconventional operations. The fact that Greene was a conventional commander means historians cannot sustain an argument that Washington was Fabian or that the American Revolution resembled modern guerrilla wars. Greene's campaigns, as with those of other theaters, is representative of conventional, rather than unconventional warfare. As with Greene's southern campaign, Patriot forces in general won because they could replace losses and the British Army could not.

Victory in the southern campaign rested on a single aspect – recruitment. Not innovative or unconventional generalship but manpower, that most basic and conventional military resource, was decisive in Greene's southern campaign. Historians should not regard Patriot victory with surprise; it was not the miracle that people have argued then or since. Given the information now available regarding the manpower disparity and the degree to which it favored the Patriots, a Patriot military victory was the war's most likely outcome.

American Revolution historiography revolves around the myth of the valiant few, an argument as old as the American Revolution itself. British leaders based their political and

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<sup>846</sup> Satterfield, *Princes, Posts and Partisans*, 1; Lund, *War for the Every Day*, 15; Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siecle*, 542-546; David Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer: A History of the Peninsular War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2001), 34-35; Stephen W. Sears, *Gettysburg* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 502; John W. Gordon, *The Other Desert War: British Special Forces in North Africa* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1987), xvii, 1-4.

<sup>847</sup> J. Lee Ready, *World War II Nation by Nation* (London: Arms and Armour, 1995), 282-283, 317.

military strategy on this myth.<sup>848</sup> Thomas Gage, military governor of Massachusetts and commander-in-chief of British forces in North America, had a long familiarity with the American colonies which included participation in the French and Indian War and marriage to an American woman. Despite his clear warning of a Patriot majority, the government in London believed opposition to British colonial policy was the work of a handful of “demagogues.”<sup>849</sup> Government officials listened only to those who thought as they did. Although many opportunities existed, neither the government nor the military made any significant effort to obtain intelligence regarding colonial political allegiances.

The myth was born in the protests of the Stamp Act. From 1763 until 1775 protests of British tax laws interspersed periods of professed loyalty. Imperial officials in both America and England believed that despite intermittent protests the population was loyal. Americans reinforced that belief after each new dispute by returning to their daily activities amid copious professions of loyalty. Nor is it possible to say exactly when British belief passed from truth to wishful thinking. For most of those years even the most ardent American Patriots considered themselves British patriots also, believing they stood for the rights of men in England just as surely as they stood for their own. Quite possibly it was not until the British government’s response to the Boston Tea Party – the Coercive Acts and the Quebec Act – that the majority finally and completely joined the opposition.<sup>850</sup> Only with the fighting around Boston did some

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<sup>848</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 43, 159, 511; Allison, *American Revolution*, 58; Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause*, 434; Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 410.

<sup>849</sup> Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion*, 145; Ketchum, *Decisive Day*, 18. Ketchum quotes Gage as warning the British government, “If force is to be used at length, it must be a considerable one, and foreign troops must be hired, for to begin with small numbers will encourage resistance, and not terrify; and will in the end cost more blood and treasure.”

<sup>850</sup> The Quebec Act was not specifically a response to the Boston Tea Party, but many Patriots saw it as such.

British military leaders begin to understand the scope of American resentment. Even then, British political leadership, and to be fair a significant number of senior British military officers in America as well, failed to grasp the truth regarding the circumstances they faced. The belief that began during the years of protest hardened into the dogma that was the genesis of the myth of the valiant few.

Failure in Boston convinced the British government only that New England was largely Patriot. Certain that all remaining colonies supported the Crown, the British Army invaded both New York and Pennsylvania. Both invasions eventually failed, leaving the British Army only New York City and some nearby territory. The same story developed in the south. Believing thousands of Loyalists awaited, the British Army invaded the south in hope of support from local Loyalists. The opposite happened. Yet, despite six years of abject failure, even after Yorktown some in the British government refused to give up the chimera of a loyal majority in the colonies.<sup>851</sup>

Early British historians perpetuated the myth on their side of the ocean. They failed to perceive American unity and how that unity and the vast theater in which they fought limited British military capabilities. They focused instead on the perceived failings of individual leaders and the entry of France, Spain, and the Netherlands into the war. While important, these issues were nowhere near as decisive as the manpower advantage held by the Patriot military.

Joseph Galloway, an original delegate to the Second Continental Congress, became a leading Loyalist and fled America for England. From there, before the war ended, he wrote a

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<sup>851</sup> Ferling, *Almost a Miracle*, 542; Smelser, "An Understanding of the American Revolution," 303; O'Shaughnessy, *Men Who Lost America*, 187.

history of the American Revolution in which he called the Patriot faction “inconsiderable.”<sup>852</sup> Peter Oliver was the brother of Andrew Oliver, lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, and was himself the chief justice of the superior court of Massachusetts, the highest court in that colony. He left Boston with Howe and never returned, also settling in England. In 1781, just a year after Galloway, he published his own history of the Revolution, calling Patriots “demagogues” and arguing that “the generality of people were not of this stamp.”<sup>853</sup> Jonathan Boucher, a close friend of George Washington who joined Galloway and Oliver in choosing Loyalism and moving to England, published a history of the Revolution in 1797, declaring Patriots “fall far short of the numbers which are so ostentatiously boasted of.”<sup>854</sup> From those early historians until the twenty-first century British historians have argued for a large Loyalist faction even as they tried to explain defeat under such advantageous circumstances.<sup>855</sup>

The earliest American Revolutionary War historians did not share the historical British view of rampant Loyalism in America. David Ramsay was a doctor who served as such in the South Carolina military forces and who served both as a representative to the South Carolina legislature and delegate to the Second Continental Congress. He wrote the first American history of the Revolution. Published in 1785, just two years after the war, it was also the first book copyrighted in the United States. That initial history concerned only South Carolina, his

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<sup>852</sup> Galloway, *Progress of the American Rebellion*, 94.

<sup>853</sup> Oliver, *Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion*, 145.

<sup>854</sup> Boucher, *Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, 366.

<sup>855</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 36, 83; O’Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America*, 117-118; Middleton, *The War of Independence*, 41-42; Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence*, 284.

home state. In 1789, he published a broader history covering the entire war. In both works he noted Loyalist impact, but painted them as a clear minority even in South Carolina.<sup>856</sup>

Ramsay was from the deep south. Mercy Otis Warren painted an even harsher picture from Massachusetts. She describes Loyalists as significant in numbers but cowed and in the minority.<sup>857</sup> Ramsay and Warren well represent early American historians.<sup>858</sup> Their view of the war, as well as Boucher's comment, supports the argument that Greene felt no need for unconventional practices, believing he had the manpower to win with a conventional strategy, based on superior manpower.

Throughout the nineteenth century the American historiographical view of a Patriot majority during the American Revolution remained unchallenged.<sup>859</sup> That changed in 1902, with publication of *The True History of the American Revolution* by Sydney George Fisher.

Fisher took at face value statements by James Galloway, British Major General James

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<sup>856</sup> Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South Carolina, Volume I*, 67; Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution, Volume I*, 185.

<sup>857</sup> Warren, *History of the American Revolution, Volume 1*, 11, 18, 167.

<sup>858</sup> John Rodgers, *The Divine Goodness Displayed in the American Revolution: A Sermon Preached in New York, December 11, 1783* (New York: Samuel Loudon, 1784), 31; John Wingate Thornton, *The Pulpit of the American Revolution: or, the Political Sermons of the Period of 1776, with a Historical Introduction, Notes, and Illustrations* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), 262-263. There were, of course, several other histories of the American Revolution written by Americans during the war and the years immediately following. These include works by William Gordon, George Minot, Hannah Adams, Benjamin Trumbull, and John Marshall. Reviews of these works reveal no information regarding their position on political affiliation or political commitment of the colonists. Although it is impossible to speculate with certainty, it appears that if Loyalists posed a strategic threat – if as many of them existed as Patriots – historians who lived through the war would have taken greater notice of them.

<sup>859</sup> Snowman, *The American Revolution: Written in Scriptural, or, Ancient Historical Style*, 68; Ellet, *Domestic History of the American Revolution*, 37; Fiske, *The American Revolution*, 87, 213, 274, 280; Lorenzo Sabine, *The American Loyalists, or Biographical Sketches of Adherents to the British Crown in the War of the Revolution* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1847), 65. The first three are examples of nineteenth-century histories of the American Revolution by American historians who argue Loyalists were in the minority. Ellet does not specifically argue more Patriots than Loyalists, but her description makes her view clear. Fiske, in addition to his views on Loyalist numbers overall, argues that the most Loyalists were in South Carolina, followed by New York. Sabine also argues Loyalists were a minority, but suggests they were a large one, with as many or more Loyalists as Patriots in five of the nine states outside New England.

Robertson, and John Adams regarding adherents to the various colonial political factions.

Basing his argument especially on a single statement Adams made off-the-cuff in a personal letter written in 1815, Fisher argued that approximately one-third of American colonists were Patriot and a similar percentage each Loyalist and neutral.<sup>860</sup> Fisher's uncritical observation became the primary basis of belief regarding political affiliations in the colonies until the present time, although some historians began to question that view by the late-twentieth century.

Rather than challenge Fisher's weak thesis, most American historians of the twentieth and twenty-first century tried – like their British counterparts – to explain Patriot military victory as miraculous. Depending on the era two basic approaches were apparent. The first, extolling American virtue and republican government, is a carryover from the nineteenth century, but deployed well into the twentieth.<sup>861</sup> A second approach, developed against the backdrop of America's involvement in Vietnam, was to paint the American Revolution as a guerrilla war resembling Communist revolutions fought during the mid-twentieth century.

American historians seldom delve into the extent or cause of Britain's manpower issues – which would have remained serious even had Britain recruited enough men to fill every existing regiment. While acknowledging that Great Britain was fighting a world war, American authors discuss the war in strictly American terms, independent of the global context that shaped it for Britain. The war encompassed India, Africa, Europe, America, the West Indies, and the Atlantic. Britain also faced the threat of a French invasion of the home islands.

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<sup>860</sup> Fisher, *True History of the American Revolution*, 160-163.

<sup>861</sup> Cohen, "Foreword," 5.

Compounding the matter, for the first time in a century of warfare between Britain and France, Britain had no allies. Few nations were willing even to rent their forces to Britain as mercenaries. The British Government faced the possibility of defeat on multiple fronts, whereas Patriots had the luxury of focusing strictly on the North American theater. America was not only the most difficult possession for Britain to retain, other possessions were strategically or economically more important. Britain's strategic decisions were necessarily based on its worldwide situation.<sup>862</sup>

What modern British and American historians share is a prevailing belief regarding the political affiliations of Americans in the Revolutionary War. According to the myth of the valiant few, there were roughly equal numbers of Patriots and Loyalists, each a minority of the colonial public. This myth depicts a daring and well-organized Patriot minority ousting royal governments, raising an army by threat and impressment, forming a national government, and with help from France just managing to eke out victory. Militarily, the myth suggests a few officers, most importantly Washington and Greene, developed an unconventional strategy to lead a small and starving army to victory. Arrayed against the Patriot army was a set of overcautious British commanders whose own army, although well-supplied and equipped, was unable to adjust to American conditions. Such a view challenges credulity in several aspects and fails to define Patriot victory in terms of military realities.

Nations fight wars, and historians typically analyze them, by a set of general military principles. These are not necessarily the fixed principles taught in military academies, but are

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<sup>862</sup> Mackesy, *War for America*, 443.

basic and generally held, although loosely defined, ideas of how armies fight and win military conflicts. The key issues of the American Revolution were the disparity of manpower, the size of the theater of war, and the limitations of supply. The American victory becomes significantly less perplexing, or miraculous, when examined through the prism of these factors.

The British Army simply could not afford any serious losses given its lack of manpower and its worldwide commitments. Even losses from disease, foraging expeditions, and minor clashes between scouting patrols were impossible to replace, especially after France entered the war. The Patriots' strong political control in the American theater forced Britain to occupy the entire theater and garrison at least the most critical locations to win the war. The British strategic hope of controlling territory through Loyalist civilian governments proved false everywhere. Similarly, relying on Loyalist troops to serve as garrisons proved illusory. When a Loyalist majority failed to materialize in the thirteen colonies, British commanders had no choice but to garrison their strongholds with regulars, thus draining British field forces of valuable manpower. Patriot military forces, on the other hand, needed few garrisons, depending instead on governmental and social pressure to maintain control of rear areas in the absence of military force, and to draw resources, including replacements and reinforcements, from those areas.

Patriot soldiers faced a logistical nightmare throughout the war. They suffered in a nation of plenty because an inexperienced and underfunded government could not provide them adequately with necessities. Still, because they controlled most of the theater of war, they could survive by requisitioning supplies. Britain never controlled sufficient territory to support its forces. Nor could it husband sufficient shipping to completely supply its armies.



Forced to requisition supplies in Patriot held areas, and subjected to interference from the Patriot military, the British Army suffered more losses they could not afford. At the same time, the inability to guarantee adequate food, fodder, and munitions limited the offensive capabilities of British commanders.

Two things exacerbated Britain's problems. First was the necessity to take the strategic offensive – the circumstances of the war forced Britain to advance into and occupy enemy territory and to carry the attack in most battles. In general, offensive operations at any level cause greater supply expenditures and more casualties than do defensive operations. The second factor was the entry of France, Spain, and the Netherlands into the war. That forced Britain to extend its navy, army, and logistics across a broad array of theaters, while the Patriot military concentrated in a single theater against a single enemy. In the end, the breadth of British military commitments overwhelmed British manpower, materiel, and finances.

This description is admittedly simplistic but it encapsulates the basic circumstances of the American Revolution. The antithesis of the myth of the valiant few, manpower favored the Patriot army, as did the size of the theater, the number of theaters in which the British Army fought, logistical circumstances, and Britain's diplomatic isolation. American commanders such as Washington and Greene knew that, and they understood that by taking the fight to the British Army they forced on the enemy casualties it could ill afford. Understanding these Patriot military advantages in the American theater, they believed if they could avoid catastrophe, they would win.

This dissertation primarily concerns the distorting impact of the myth of the valiant few on the military history of the southern theater of the American Revolution. By implication, it

also challenges the broader military history of the war. Current historiography argues a bold, wily, and prepared minority overcame an unprepared cadre of Loyalists and a mostly apathetic public. The data turn this view on its head. This dissertation posits that the mundane factors that explain most other military victories throughout history also explain American victory. Not the valiant few, but a committed majority – both on the field of battle and on the homefront – delivered independence to the United States of America. Only three colonies – Virginia and the Carolinas – found it necessary to wage military campaigns to secure Patriot governments in their state; the other ten royal governments all succumbed to political pressure before military force was necessary. Patriots used coercion and social pressure to recruit the neutral faction and suppress Loyalists because they were the majority. No significant region of the rebellious colonies remained loyal to Britain without the presence of a British Army.

Indeed, the myth's effects penetrate beyond the battlefield into colonial society, politics, economics, and culture, both before and during the war. The impact of the new understanding of colonial political affiliation on the broader – non-military – historiography of the American Revolution will hopefully unfold in coming years. If the myth of the valiant few indeed recedes in the face of more accurate data, the revision in other fields of Revolutionary scholarship should be as thorough as that in the field of military history.

It is impossible to predict the specific impact of the myth on any given area of historical scholarship without careful study, but impact seems very likely in some areas. Politically, the myth suggests the Revolution was an elitist movement led by a vocal few who coerced or influenced a mostly apathetic public into joining. Accordingly, this narrative paints the Sons of Liberty as vocal fanatics surrounded by a silent, and not necessarily agreeable, majority. The

best evidence, however, suggests the Sons of Liberty spoke for the majority and that the Revolution was, likewise, a populist movement. Thus, if the myth of the valiant few presents American Revolutionary ideology as radical and novel, the new evidence suggests it was in fact conventional and, indeed, conservative. The new evidence also helps explain the clash of images between “radicals” and men such as George Washington or Nathanael Greene, men widely perceived then and now as staunchly conservative, politically. The myth of the valiant few intertwines with the story of America’s founding, which itself informs public understanding of the whole of American history. Reconsidering accepted narratives on the Revolutionary era based on the data could therefore reshape early-national narratives as well, from Federalism and nationalism to the coming of the Civil War, to the Constitution’s original intent.

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