

The battle of fort necessity

War



The Battle of Fort necessity, also know as the Battle of The Great Meadows, is considered the flashpoint of the French and Indian War that started on the morning of July3, 1754. The battle between British and French forces and their respective Indian allies, took place 65 miles north of Fort Duquesne (located at the forks of the Ohio River) in the Ohio River Valley in present day Pennsylvania (Purvis 143).

Most notably the commander of the British Colonial forces was a 23 year old, Virginia military officer, by the name of Lieutenant ColonelGeorge Washingtonwho initially had been sent into the area with 200 men to assist with and protect the construction of a British fort at the forks of the Ohio. On April 20, 1754 news arrived that the French had already seized the fort and renamed it Fort Duquesne.

(Marston 11, 12). Washington began construction of Fort Necessity on 24 May after receiving intelligence that a party of French troops were moving against him (Marston 12). On 27 and 28 May, Washington took 40 militia soldiers and with the aid of his Indian ally, Half king of the Iroquois Confederacy, ambushed the French party killing 10 of their number, including their commander Joseph Coulon de Villiers (North 72).

Washington knew that a strong French attack was imminent and retired to Fort Necessity to make preparations. With the arrival of Captains Lewis and Mackay and about 100 regular British soldiers a 2 few days before the battle brought the number of the garrison of Fort Necessity to around 400 men (Axelrod 216). On the morning of 3 July, 900 French and Indians, under the command of, Louis Coulon de Villiers (Joseph Coulon de Villiers brother), surrounded and attacked the fort.

Washington had misjudged the distance from the wooden palisade his men had constructed to the wood line making their positions within musket range as well as having dug their entrenchments too shallow, to only about a depth of 5 feet. To make matters worse, it had begun to rain water logging the British trenches and fouling their muskets. After nine hours of fighting, with their supplies depleted and suffering not only losses under fire, but a considerable number of desertions, Washington accepted the inevitable and surrendered to the French (Marston 13).

It would be the only surrender of his military career. 3 Works Cited Axelrod, Alan. *Blooding at Great Meadows: Young George Washington and the Battle that Shaped the Man*. Philadelphia: Running Press, 2007. Marston, Daniel. *The French-Indian War, 1654-1760*. London: Taylor and Francis, 2003 North, Sterling. *George Washington: Frontier Colonel*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co, 2006 Purvis, Thomas L. *A Dictionary of American History*. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 1997