

A narrative of the american war for independence assignment



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The American Revolution was a long, painful, bloody, war. Up until this time nothing had ever been seen of such proportions on American soil. The outset of this event would change life drastically around the world. The outcome would determine trade, the way war was waged, it would hurt the pride of a might nation and a new nation would be formed with a resolve like none other before her. With all of these one would wonder how could this happen? What occurred during this time that made these changes take place?

Who was involved and what happened? First of all, from the outset this new land was founded by people with dislike and disgust for the British Empire. They wanted nothing to do with their intolerance. England had oppressed them for religious reasons as in the case of the separatists and puritans. Some such as the Scotch-Irish had been moved around from place to place by England and never really found a home. They became some of our earliest pioneers pushing the boundaries of our country. Others such as indentured servants had more promise and opportunity with a free ride in turn for several years of work.

With all sorts of people coming into their colonies, England started to become very nervous about colonial government. Restrictions began to be emplaced on them with little effect. Laws and restriction just seemed to aggravate the colonists. They were being taxed increasingly without representation, without protection, and with abuse of their " God given rights" to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. By the end of the French and Indian War and the end of events such as the Boston Massacre and Tea Party the nation was in open rebellion and flagrantly exposing their dislike for England.

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The Revolution was just around the corner. The First Day of the War was marked with a shot that has become famously known as the “ Shot Heard Around the World”. In April 1775 troops were sent to the town of Lexington to capture large stores of weapons and the Rebel Samuel Adams and John Hancock. The “ Shot” was fired and a massacre took place. Next the British were on to Concord they were to see this unsightly outburst of rebellion against the crown to the finish. They moved of Concord in force but were met by fierce resistance by the Colonial Minute Men who had gathered from all around after hearing about this upset.

They took this matter into their own hands stood up and pushed the British back causing 300 English casualties. Soon after, Congress had to reconvene, since things had obviously not gotten better. They now had a dilemma there was a Revolution on their hands but could they really stand up against their Mother Country? There was much debate over this but as John Adams has said, “ The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people”.

This thing was inevitable but one last plea had to be made, hence the “ Olive Branch Petition” was drafted and sent the England as an army was being raised under the appointed George Washington. Ben Franklyn was sent to Paris to enlist the French in our aid. Our hope for freedom, George Washington was now in charge. Under his command was “ not an army but a gaggle” as the History Channel put it. He was left with troops that had no experience whatsoever. There had never been an army before. Before the Revolution there was just the British. No system was in place there was limited ways of supplying the troops.

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Washington may have been in over his head, but what could he do? He had to push on training troops in rudimentary things and meticulously establishing the fighting force that would win the Revolution. Meanwhile, the men of Boston were left to themselves with the immediate problem of thousands of English militants blockading their city's harbor. The Battle of Bunker Hill was now inevitable. In this battle the English seemed quite cocky. Willing to expend their troops under general Gage. Three waves of troops went up the hill against the shredding American musket fire.

On the third wave it appears that the Americans ran out of ammunition and they had to retreat. Later, they would take and hold Dorchester Heights to take the city of Boston. On the northern front a brash ambitious Benedict Arnold had an idea to take Fort Ticonderoga. He convinced Congress to allow him to go, but no troops were given to him. On the way he met up with Ethan Allen and his men who were after the same objective. They disagreed on every point basically but taking the fort. Arnold thought he could just take control of the troops, but they were loyal to Allen.

When they got to the Fort it wasn't even a fight, the British simply just surrendered. Though it was truly Benedict's idea Ethan Allen took all the credit, even though much of it had been done by Arnold. This caused quite a bit hurt to Benedict's honor something which would not be uncommon in his career. Now with the Fort captured they could take the cannon painstakingly toward Boston. They could now use them to eradicate the British from the city. Benedict Arnold's next assignment would be an attempt at taking the city of Quebec, with the idea of taking the offensive and attacking Canada.

It was a success not in that they accomplished their objective but that they stopped an advancing British Army. Also, in the north the battle of Saratoga was waged where general Horatio Gates took out one of England's northern armies under general Burgoyne. On the side of the Americans was a radical revolutionist name Thomas Paine. Paine had nothing to do with the actual fighting, but his role was in stimulation. He wrote multiple pamphlets one of which was entitled Common Sense, it was printed over 120, 000 times, which was a very high volume for that time. This led to the general persuasion of the public mind.

It stimulated the colonist who had been sitting idly, to do something about the cause before it was too late. With this he helped Washington recruit troops, gain financial aid, and receive supplies. After all of this had occurred, the Declaration of Independence was signed and winter was starting to set in. Washington with his troops in shambles now had to stop for the winter. However, going a long winter with low moral and little hope can seem to be a bad idea. So he came up with a plan to take the German mercenaries known as Hessian by surprise at Trenton on Dec. 26, 1776.

The Germans had been up late drinking and parting because of Christmas. Now all of a sudden Washington and his troops cross the Delaware River, catch them off guard, and take them out. This was precisely what Washington needed to keep support for the war. Washington fared well that winter but during the next year it became increasingly apparent that the troops were inadequately trained. So during their next winter, with nearly two years of fighting under the belt it was time to rest again and get the

troop into shape. General Washington picked a strategic location near Philadelphia named Valley Forge.

Here he would enlist the aid of Barron von Steuben who would formulate a system for training the troops. He did an excellent job. He started out with one unit and by the end of the winter the army was equipped to properly engage the British in combat. Washington was now eager to try his newly trained troops before their enlistments were up. If they did not attack quickly and prove themselves his troops would go home, and the cost of fighting would be regarded as too high for replacements to come. So in haste set in place the battle of Monmouth Courthouse.

It was a blistering hot day but the men survived. It was realized that the men could stand up to the most highly trained army in the world, the British Army. This engagement resulted in a stand off with neither side gaining anything, which in the eyes of the colonist is pretty good. Apart from the Army which was beginning to be quite professional, the Navy was beginning to be formed. We had but four ships in the entire Navy, which was nothing to fear for the British. A bold young man would step into the spotlight, with the goal of terrorizing the British and taking the fight home.

John Paul Jones was now asking Congress to commission him as a privateer. They did so and gave him command of a ship named the Ranger. With this ship he had much success privatizing the coast of mainland Britain. The British caught on quick and chased him to France. There he stayed until he could receive his pride and joy the Bonne Homme Richard. With this he was actually able to take down the Serapis which was a " Ship of the Line". In this

battle he gave his famous cry, " I have not yet begun to fight". Meanwhile, one of America's most trusted heroes was about to have his name become synonymous with the word traitor.

After having receive command of Philadelphia, Benedict Arnold came under increased attack from all around. His whole carrier he had been passed up for promotion, he was dishonored, and under appreciated. Implications that he was taking advantage of Philadelphia's citizens sent him over the edge. Now he looked at a way to give his new command of West Point over to the British. From then on he would be regarded as America's traitor. By the later part of the war England decided that what they were doing in the north wasn't quite working.

They devised a new plan that aimed south in hopes of finding many loyalists waiting to aid in America's demise. Before this the South had been generally unharmed. The biggest thing that had happened was the burning of Norfolk. Most of the South was untouched and the fighting that did occur was more like mob warfare between Patriots and Tories. That would all change with the British occupation of Charlestown. It was the 4th largest city and it was idea for the British to take. The British laid siege for nearly a month before Benjamin Lincoln was forced to surrender.

This lead to an entire campaign in the south, and British general Cornwallis is appointed to take charge. On the American side general Horatio Gates is appointed by Congress but later replaced by Nathaniel Green after an embarrassing defeat. The campaign is primarily a cat and mouse game with Cornwallis vs. Green and fellow generals the British: Tarlatan and the

Americans: Daniel Morgan. There are two particular battles in which the British are firmly defeated. First, in the Battle of Cowpens, Morgan discovered how to use militia effectively.

By goading Tarlatan into attacking him he was able to instigate a charge. Without being aware of his mistake Tarlatan fell right into his trap, which consisted of Colonial regulars waiting on the other side of the ridge. Soon after at the battle of Guilford Courthouse, Cornwallis wins the day by firing on his own center. He loses nearly twice the troops that Green does. It was a distasteful victory and he grudgingly decides to retreat to Yorktown. With the arrival of the promised French support, the opportunity to gain a swift end to the war presented itself.

Admiral de Grass was in the Caribbean and came up to defeat the British in the Chesapeake. Now with further troop landings and Washington's arrival along with French generals Rochambeau, and Lafayette, Cornwallis was completely surrounded and had no chance but to surrender. The defeat at Yorktown marked the final decisive battle. For more than two years, the fighting went on in small skirmishes around the country. Parliament had decided not to continue the war and recognized the United States as a country. The war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in Paris on September 3, 1783.