



Revolutionary Times



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Battle(s) of Saratoga (1777)

The Battle of Saratoga, fought in two stages on September 19 and October 7, 1777, proved to be a turning point in the Patriots' struggle for independence.

Major General Horatio Gates and Brigadier Benedict Arnold commanded the Patriots' army of around 12,000 to 15,000 militia and troops. Major General John Burgoyne commanded the 7,500 British and German Hessian forces.

The British army was seeking to gain military control of the strategically important Hudson River Valley.

To disrupt the British advance, Gates had his troops erect defenses on the crest of Bemis Heights. From there, Patriots' artillery had the range to hit both the river and the road.

The two armies engaged in combat at Freeman's Farm on September 19. While the British held off the Patriots, their losses were great. Burgoyne's battered forces dug trenches and waited for reinforcements, but none came.

On October 7, Burgoyne launched a second, unsuccessful attack on the Patriots at Bemis Heights.

On the morning of October 8, General Burgoyne's army tried to escape north, but they were forced to stop and encamp near the town of Saratoga.

The British dug in and prepared to defend themselves, but within two days the Patriots had them surrounded.

With no means of escape, Burgoyne's army surrendered on October 17, 1777.

Saratoga was the greatest victory yet won by the continental army; nearly 6,000 enemy soldiers were taken, along with 42 cannon, and massive quantities of supplies.

Following the Patriots' victory, morale among continental troops was high. The revolutionaries scored a decisive victory that finally persuaded the French to sign a treaty allying with the Patriots against Britain.

The French were not alone in supporting the Patriots after Saratoga; the Spanish and later the Dutch provided support, as well.

The entrance of France into the war, along with its financial and military support, in particular its navy, was in the end crucial to Washington's victory at the Battle of Yorktown in October 1781, which effectively ended the war.

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

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