

The Battle of Rhode Island

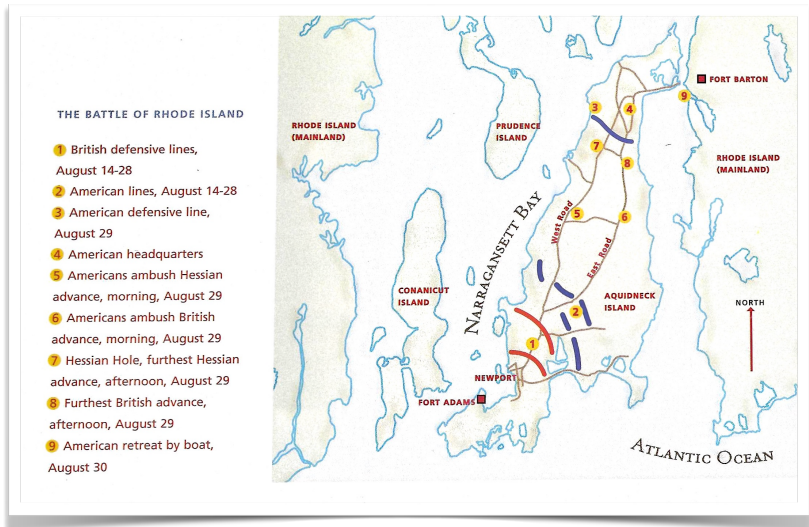
The Rhode Island Campaign set the Battle in Motion

British and Hessians land on Aquidneck Island - December 1776. Occupation was hard: goods could not come in or out, people couldn't move around, houses were taken over by British for barracks, troops took food, wood, livestock of citizens.

French are Allies

1778 the French joined the Americans. They made a plan to rescue Aquidneck Island. This was called the **Rhode Island Campaign**. The French would attack from the South and the Americans would come from Tiverton to the North of Portsmouth. The French ships came into Newport Harbor in July. The Americans came over from Tiverton August 11. A three day storm damaged the French ships that had gone out to sea to battle the British Navy. The French left for Boston for repairs

The Americans had moved all the way South towards Newport. When they knew French were not coming back, the Americans decided they had to retreat to fight another day. This successful retreat is called the **Battle of Rhode Island**.



August 29, 1778 - Brief Action Guide to the Battle

Dawn: British notice that Americans have left their positions. Their General (Pigot) moves forces up East and West Road to chase after Americans. All along East and West Roads the Americans have stationed small groups of soldiers to slow down the British and Hessians.

The first action is at 7 AM: Hessian forces spot Americans (led by John Laurens and Silas Talbot) behind stone walls near Union St. and West Road. Hessian soldiers drive them north.

Second action is at 7:30 AM. American forces led by Wade are hiding behind stone walls on the corner of East Road and Union Street. They surprise the British who send one line of men up Middle Road while another continues up East Road.

8:30 AM: On the West side Americans are forced to retreat across Lawton's Valley to Turkey Hill near Hedley Street and West Road. General Sullivan tells the Americans to get back to the main lines by Butts Hill.

9 AM on the East Road by Quaker Hill American troops are facing attack from three sides. The British are coming up Middle Road and East Road and the (OVER)



The Battle of Rhode Island Highlighted Ability of Americans

Although the Battle of Rhode Island had no clear winner, American fighters proved their worth.

The Black Regiment pushed back the Hessians and held a critical position. That proved their worth as soldiers.

Americans were in a dangerous position following the French departure. They were outnumbered and were fighting with troops that were not professional soldiers. They Americans proved their bravery and ability.

The American goal was to retreat safely and they accomplished that. The British goal was to capture the American Army and they let the Americans slip away.

This was the first joint effort of the French and American alliance. That alliance was important to the success of the Patriots.

Hessians are coming East down Hedley Street. Quaker Hill was the scene of intense fighting.

9:30 The Americans retreated toward Butts Hill. From top of Quaker Hill, the British could see strength of American positions. British General Smith was under orders not to begin a general fight, so he decided against an attack of Butts Hill.

10 AM: Hessian troops arrive at Turkey Hill. The Americans had positions on Durfee's Hill and Butts Hill. Samuel Ward and the 1st Rhode Island Regiment (Black Regiment held fortification by Durfee Hill. The Black Regiment troops pushed Hessians back. The Regiment, with the help of the 2nd RI Regiment would push the Hessians back yet a third time.

11:30 AM: Hessian attack the fortification again. The Black Regiment holds their position. British ships Sphynx, Spitfire, and Vigilant fire at the American positions from the West shore, but they did little damage. The Americans held their position.

1PM: the British ships planned to attack American positions from the rear, but General Greene's men dragged cannon down to the beach and forced the British ships to retreat.

2 PM: British General Pigot reached Quaker Hill to observe the action. He ordered more Hessian troops to re-enforce those on West Road.

4PM: American General Glover saw movement in British lines and ordered troops from Connecticut and Massachusetts to positions behind stone walls, but the British did not engage.

From 7PM (August 29) to 3AM (August 30) :
Musket and cannon shots were heard for seven hours.

The Battle of Rhode Island was basically over. The Americans and British forces retired to their lines. The British troops expected to do battle the next morning, but the Americans had already retreated across the Sakonnet River to Tiverton.