The Staff Ride Handbook for The Battle for Kings Mountain, 7 October 1780

Harold Allen Skinner, Jr.

Combat Studies Institute Press
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Foreword

The *Staff Ride Handbook for Kings Mountain, 7 October 1780* is the latest in the Combat Studies Institute's *Staff Ride Handbook* series. Harold "Allen" Skinner's well-researched handbook uses the pivotal battle of Kings Mountain as a means to allow organizations at any echelon to study leadership at the tactical and operational levels of war. In particular, readers with combat experience in Afghanistan and Iraq will find many striking parallels between the employment of militias and citizen-soldiers in contemporary operations, and the British pacification efforts during the Southern Campaign of 1780-1781. Study of the Kings Mountain battle through an operational and strategic lens will highlight how following or ignoring commander's intent can lead to disastrous strategic consequences. Finally, commanders at all levels will find the Kings Mountain Staff Ride an excellent tool to "sharpen the saw," improving leadership and professionalism among officers and noncommissioned officers.

Donald P. Wright

Army University Press

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No written work is done in a vacuum, and I would be remiss if I did not recognize those who positively influenced my development as a staff ride facilitator. I had the good fortune to go on staff rides led by the Combat Studies institute twice, first in 2006 as a Command and General Staff College student, and again in 2012 during the Military History Instructor Course (MHIC). Kudos to CSI staffers Ken Gott and Charles D. Collins, who not only provided gracious feedback and correction, but freely shared information that greatly improved the first chapter. Secondly, my deepest thanks for the friendship and mentoring extended by John "Jay" Boyd, Ph.D., the former Director of Army Reserve History. His emphasis of offering staff ride facilitation support to Army Reserve units served as the catalyst to writing this handbook. Certainly, many thanks are owed to Maj. Gen. (Retired) Janet Cobb, Maj. Gen. Arlan DeBlieck, and Mr. Pete Quinn, the leadership team at the 81st Readiness Division (RD) during this writing project. I am grateful for their support in allowing me to work on staff ride products in the course of my Command Historian duties. The superintendent and staff at Kings Mountain National Military Park deserve especial thanks for their care and maintenance of the battlefield, and the answering of many small questions about aspects of the battle. Special thanks to the Clemson University Army ROTC Class of 2018, and the leaders of the 4th Brigade, Great Lakes Division, 84th Training Command, who helped to validate the information in Part III. Finally, gratitude for the unfailing support from my wife and children, who patiently endured many of dad's battlefield and museum "field trips" over the years. Naturally, the opinions and conclusions in this work, along with the ownership of any errors or mistakes, are mine alone.

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Illustrations

Introduction

Armies of British Loyalists and Patriot militiamen fought the Battle of Kings Mountain, located about eight miles northeast of modern day Blacksburg, South Carolina, on the afternoon of 7 October 1780. Insignificant in terms of size, the Patriot victory at Kings Mountain upset the British attempts to gain permanent control of the Carolinas—and by extension fundamentally changed the course of the war in the South. The strategic and operational implications tied to the Kings Mountain battle will provide military professionals much to ponder about the nature of irregular conflict and counterinsurgency in the modern era.

When viewed within the context of the British strategic goals for the Southern Campaign, the Patriot victory at Kings Mountain destroyed the British center of gravity, a well-organized Loyalist militia capable of securing South Carolina in the absence of British regulars. Not only did the disaster of Kings Mountain demoralize the surviving Loyalists, but it convinced the British ground commander, Lord Charles Cornwallis, to curtail attempts to recruit additional Loyalist militia regiments. Absent an effective Loyalist militia, the British did not have the manpower to both pacify South Carolina and continue the process of conquering the vast territory that lay between Charleston and the Chesapeake. By the time Cornwallis attempted to recruit fresh Loyalist militiamen in the time period before and after the Guilford Courthouse battle, few Tories were willing to risk their lives and property in service to the King.

Viewed from the American perspective, the victory of Kings Mountain attains even greater significance. The unexpected Patriot success halted the string of British victories in the south and raised morale after a summer of depressing reversals. Recruiting of Patriot militiamen improved enough to embolden Gen. Nathanael Greene, the Continental commander of American forces in the south, to take the offensive. The Kings Mountain battle was followed by American victories at The Cowpens in January 1781 and at Guilford Courthouse in March 1781. Unable to rally Loyalist support, starved for supplies, and critically short of manpower after his pyrrhic victory at Guilford Courthouse, Cornwallis had no choice but to withdraw his shattered regiments to Wilmington, North Carolina to refit. Greene swiftly took advantage of Cornwallis' withdrawal by marching into South Carolina to begin the process of reducing the remaining British bases.

The successful outcome of Kings Mountain provided the Continental Army with fresh insights in the organization and employment of militiaman in combat against British heavy infantry. Prior battles, particularly

Camden, had shown the folly of pitting militiamen in open battle against well-trained British Regulars. However, Kings Mountain showed that militiamen, if properly led and given tactical tasks within their capabilities, could be highly effective in battle. When intelligently paired with Continental forces, American militia proved an effective force multiplier—a lesson successfully applied by Daniel Morgan at The Cowpens in January 1781 and, to a lesser degree, by Nathanael Greene at Guilford Courthouse in March 1781. Incredibly, the British made no attempt to draw tactical lessons from the battle, as evidenced by the failure of British commanders to employ riflemen or skirmishers in the subsequent battles of the Southern Campaign. As a consequence, British soldiers paid dearly at The Cowpens and Guilford Courthouse for their leaders' short-sightedness.

Although Greene's army never won a single battle during the remainder of the Southern Campaign, his presence in the interior forced the British to abandon their isolated bases and retreat to their coastal enclaves by late 1781. Sir Henry Clinton, British commander in chief in America, correctly described the significance of the Kings Mountain defeat, and the ruin of the Loyalist militia concept, to the subsequent course of the war; a defeat which "unhappily proved the first link in a chain of evils that followed each other in regular succession until they at last ended in the total loss of America."[1] Although the battle took place over 236 years ago, study of the Kings Mountain campaign and battle will reveal many valuable insights into the operational and strategic levels of war, particularly in planning and executing counterinsurgency operations. Many lessons are to be found at the tactical level as well; of particular interest to junior leaders are the vignettes which highlight the exercise of leadership in combat, and how the participants faced their moment of destiny in battle.

Planning and Organization

The *Staff Ride Guide to the Battle of Kings Mountain* provides a systematic approach to analysis of this key battle in the American Revolution. Part I provides a basic description of the Patriot (or Whig) and Loyalist (or Tory) armies, their weapons, tactics, logistics, communications, and medical support. Part II provides a campaign level overview followed by a detailed description of the battle of Kings Mountain. Part III consists of a suggested itinerary of sites (or stands) to visit on the battlefield. Each stand is organized with directions, orientation to the battle site, detailed description of the action that occurred at the location, vignettes drawn from participants in the battle, and suggested questions for analysis. Part IV provides a suggested outline for the integration phase, where students synthesize their classroom and field phase learning, ideally to glean rele-

vant lessons for their future role as an Army leader. Appendix A provides thumbnail biographical sketches of the major participants, Appendix B has a detailed order of battle, and Appendix C gives a timeline of the campaign. Lastly, a selected bibliography is included with recommended sources for preliminary study.

This handbook will serve as a handy starting point for both the staff planner and training instructor preparing to conduct a staff ride. Part V (Support) of this guide of this guide is directed at the staff planner, the person who will handle all of the administrative, training, and logistics coordination inherent with any training event. The bulk of this guide is intended for the instructor, the individual who guides the execution of an applied history training event. To do so, the facilitator must become thoroughly familiar with the material, which is best done in conjunction with a personal reconnaissance to walk the battlefield and understand the relationship between the terrain, the physical features present at the time of the battle, and the historical events as they unfolded on the ground.[2] Before conducting the guided walk of the battlefield, the instructor should encourage students to review the read ahead material to gain a basic knowledge of the campaign and battle. The instructor should make available the bibliography, which includes many digital documents easily downloaded at no cost to the student. Fortunately, a fair amount of primary source material concerning the battle exists, although most of it is from Patriot sources. At a minimum, the author recommends the *Kings Mountain National Military Park Historic Resource Guide* by Robert Blythe, *et al*, which is available via download from the National Park Service history publications repository.[3]

Individual study by the student is followed by an instructor-facilitated classroom study which imparts basic historical and operational knowledge. To best increase student buy-in and participation, the instructor should use a seminar format where students are given an assignment to present a short, functional briefing which describes a particular facet of the battle such as a major battlefield personality, Warfighting Function, branch or functional area, or major events before and during the battle.

The walking portion of the staff ride should easily fit into a day, as the entire battlefield (less the visitor center video and terrain map) is surprisingly compact, with all points easily reachable by foot. The Kings Mountain ridge is encompassed by paved trail that features modern information markers at points of historical interest. The battlefield is mostly preserved in its original condition, with two major exceptions. First, several monuments were installed after the battle which have no connection to the

events of the battle, with the marker commemorating President Herbert Hoover's visit as the most obvious example. Secondly, the undergrowth seen today was not present in 1780, as grazing livestock kept the small plants closely cropped.

The sequence of stands in the guide is written to facilitate a logical flow with minimal backtracking; but the facilitator can easily add, modify, or delete stands as needed to best support the training objectives. Each stand is written incorporating the US Army's Combat Studies Institute's staff ride logic structure: Orient, Describe, and Analyze (ODA).[4] First, orientation to the terrain and physical conditions (time, weather, and lighting) present *at the time of the battle.* Next, the instructor describes a particular action or aspect of the battle, when possible using the included vignettes from participants of the battle to illuminate the reality of the conflict. Particularly useful here are role players describing their character's decisions and actions during the battle. Lastly, students provide input and insight derived from their study into critically examining the actions of the historic participants, aided by the included analysis questions and historical vignettes. Most importantly, the facilitator should guide discussion towards helping the students link their insights and analysis to the contemporary operating environment, and finish the stand with a short discussion summary. At the end of the walk comes the critical point of the entire event: the integration phase. If time permits, this phase should occur as soon as possible to allow students to capture, synthesize, and orally articulate their observations and insights. To omit or rush this portion is to miss the entire point of the staff ride: *What did I learn, and how do I apply what I learned today to improve myself and my profession?*[5]

Notes

1. William Willcox, ed., *The American Revolution: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns, 1775-1782* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954), 206.

2. Curtis King, *The Staff Ride* PowerPoint presentation for the Military History Instructor Course, (Fort Leavenworth Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 2013), 1.

3. For the Kings Mountain Resource Guide, navigate to: http://www.npshistory.com/publications/kimo/hrs.pdf. Accessed on 23 August 2016.

4. King, *The Staff Ride* PowerPoint presentation, slides 10 and 13.

5. Matthew Cavanaugh, *The Historical Staff Ride, Version 2.0: Educational and Strategic Frameworks* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, Unpublished thesis paper, 2013), 4-6. Accessed online on 15 July 2016 at http://www.usma.edu/cfe/Literature/Forms/AllItems.aspx?View={E9A9D254-BC63-4D63-9AFF-A054AED394DB}&FilterField1=Author0&FilterValue1=Matthew%20Cavanaugh. Staff ride facilitators are strongly encouraged to read Cavanaugh's paper as a means of ensuring the staff ride is conducted with sufficient historical rigor.

Part I

The Opposing Forces

The battle of Kings Mountain lends itself well to the study of the art and science of war, providing good examples of the unchanging nature of combat; the anger, dread of injury, fear of failure—human feelings common to all battlefields across time. Moreover, study of the Kings Mountain battle provides excellent examples of how leadership is exercised in combat. Lastly, the battle lends itself well to the study of the strategic and operational factors that played out before and after the battle. Of particular relevance to the intended audience of this book, military professionals, studying Kings Mountain in the context of the Southern campaign provides historical examples of the entire continuum of war from passive insurgency to total war.

Before studying the battle of Kings Mountain, it is important that the reader understands some key background details of the British and American sides. Part I of this book provides a concise survey of the organization, weapons, tactics, and support functions for the British and American sides, which will help the reader better understand the events and courses of action within their proper historical context. For consistency, this volume generally follows the outline and concepts in previous *Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Handbook* volumes, tailored to the Southern Campaign of 1780-1781.

Unit Organization

The State Militias and the Continental Army

Much of the governmental structure established in Colonial America was imported from England. One such element was the organization of all able-bodied males, from 16 to 60 years of age, under military discipline for the common defense of the community—the "militia." Each man was required to periodically "muster" for training, bearing the required firearm, powder horn, cast lead balls, and *accoutrements*. In times of threat from hostile Indians or European interlopers, the militia were called up and just as quickly discharged from service when the crisis was passed. The militia were deemed sufficient to provide both internal and external security, and few regular troops were stationed in America prior to the French and Indian War (1754-1763). During the French and Indian War, a significant number of American militia auxiliaries fought with British regular army troops against French regulars, militia, and Indian allies, predominantly

in areas that now embrace parts of southern Canada, New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Disagreements over the cost sharing of the quartering and feeding of the regulars during and after the war helped to sour relations between the Americans and the Crown, and was one of the contributing factors to the outbreak of the Revolution in April 1775.[1]

After the battles at Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire sent militia units to reinforce the Massachusetts regiments besieging the British forces in Boston. Each state nominated their own commander in chief, and provided logistics support for the militia units. Naturally, unity of command suffered as a result, which led to the creation of a new national armed force subject to the Continental Congress' authority. On 14 July 1775, the Second Continental Congress approved the creation of the Continental Army and formally mustered the existing militia regiments in Continental or regular service for a period of six months under the command of Virginia militia Col. George Washington. During the rest of 1775 and early 1776, Washington worked to standardize the organization of the Continental regiments, retain quality officers and soldiers, and recruit new men. By March 1776, Washington succeeded in organizing the Continental Army into a force of some 13,000 officers and men in 27 regular regiments. Meanwhile, the Continental Congress worked to create the infrastructure needed for the long term prosecution of the war. Territorial departments were created for the command and control and sustainment of Continental soldiers in a given area. Congress organized the Southern and Middle Departments in February 1776, followed by the Northern Department in April 1776. A Continental major general was designated as commander of all Continental units, as well as any state regiments detailed for Continental service, in the department. In the event of combat, the department commander could either take tactical control of Continental units, or exercise operational command of a subordinate field commander. Significantly, the department commander had no command authority over the state militia units in the department without the governor's approval. When state militia units were released to the department commander for operational use, the tour of duty was typically limited by the state governor from one to six months.[2]

In the Continental Army the infantry regiment, commanded by a colonel and assisted by a lieutenant colonel and a major, was the largest, permanent tactical unit, . The authorized strength of the regiment was 728 officers and men, organized into eight companies of four officers, eight noncommissioned officers, two musicians, and 76 privates. Length of enlistment period varied for the men, while the officers were generally

commissioned for the duration of the war. Enlisted soldiers were usually drawn from the lower strata of society, often landless workers, farmers, or unskilled laborers. The officers were typically drawn from the prewar gentry or mercantile class, thus bringing in social and political connections that could both facilitate and complicate matters of command and control. The mounted combat arm—cavalry (light and heavy), dragoons, hussars, etc.—played only a minor role in the American Revolution due to the difficulty in obtaining trained men and horses, and the high cost of sustaining the horses in the field. The Continental army only raised four regiments of light dragoons, supplemented by locally raised militia cavalrymen. Officially authorized 280 officers and men, the Continental dragoons were chronically understrength during the war. Despite the technical nature of the artillery arm, which normally demanded a strong industry and highly skilled specialists, the Continental Army was able to field a fairly robust and effective artillery force, supported by artificer companies. Within the regiment, the standard tactical unit was the company, and the basic element of fire was the gun crew or team. For major operations, the department commander would group his regiments into a temporary army, subdivided into wings, divisions, and brigades. Divisions and brigades were generally commanded by a brigadier general or senior colonel. Staff roles were filled by officers detailed from the subordinate regiments, supplemented by skilled civilians.[3]

Providing specialized logistics support to the Continental Army were artificer companies that fell under the purview of the Quartermaster Department. In the Southern Department, Salisbury, North Carolina became the sustaining base for the Continental Army, with warehouses for equipment, food, ammunition, as well as the skilled artisans necessary to manufactured or repair equipment. This base provided support during the Southern Campaign until early February 1781, when the approach of Lord Charles Cornwallis' field army forced the evacuation of the stores and artisans across the Dan River into Virginia.[4]

Particularly in the Southern department, the Continental army was heavily dependent on the support of state militia regiments in carrying the war through to a successful conclusion. Although most states adopted a standard structure for their militia regiments, wide variations in the actual strength, organization, and length of enlistment were common. There were a number of advantages and disadvantages that came with militia organizations. When properly mustered by the state government, militiamen would report with their basic arms and *accoutrements*, and initially would not require more than a resupply of food, powder, and lead. When operat-

ing in or adjacent to their home district, the militiamen were an invaluable source of local intelligence. When intelligently led and employed according to their strengths, American militia units were potent force multipliers on the battlefield.

However, militia regiments came with significant weaknesses, chief of which was their inability to fight British regulars in open combat. If led well, they would stand for a time under heavy fire, but even the best would break under the threat of a bayonet charge since few were trained or equipped to fight in such a manner. The effectiveness of militia tended to drop the further they marched from home, due to concerns over their homesteads, and their lack of familiarity with the territory. Even with quality leadership, discipline in militia units ranged wildly depending on the fortunes of war, and a battlefield reversal would often result in widespread desertions. When operations dragged out for an extended period of time, the Patriot militia units could quickly drain scarce resources from the already strained Continental quartermasters.[5]

From the perspective of Congress and General Washington, South Carolina was a quiet backwater for the early years of the war, in large part due to the British failure to establish a presence within the state. Only when British troops from Florida, led by Maj. Gen. Augustine Prevost, captured Savannah in December 1778, did the Americans realize the British had shifted their strategic focus back to the South. In response, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln was sent to Charleston to organize a new Southern Army. By early 1780, Lincoln had a reasonably strong force, made of Continental infantry regiments raised in Georgia, the Carolinas, and provisional Virginia state regiments. Supporting the infantry were Continental dragoons and the Pulaski Legion, a mixed dragoon-infantry regiment, and nearly 400 artillery pieces. When faced with a British amphibious campaign against Charleston, Lincoln blundered by allowing his Continental and militia forces to become bottled up in Charleston proper. After a protracted siege, Lincoln surrendered the Southern Army on 12 May 1780. While the Continental prisoners were locked up in warehouses and hulks to slowly die from starvation or disease, most officers and militiamen were paroled. Further disaster ensued when the 3rd Virginia Continental Detachment, commanded by Col. Abraham Buford, was overtaken and destroyed by Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's British Legion at the Battle of Waxhaws.[6]

The American response to the Charleston debacle was to transfer the Maryland-Delaware Division and 1st Continental Artillery to North Carolina to form the nucleus of a new Southern Army. Despite Gen. George Washington's objections, the Continental Congress gave the command of

the Southern Department to Gen. Horatio Gates, the hero of the Saratoga battle. Rather than taking time to organize and train his new force, Gates unwisely decided to attack the key British forward base at Camden. After a long march through the sweltering pine barrens of central South Carolina, the Gates' army was surprised by Cornwallis, and badly smashed at the battle of Camden on 16 August 1780. With the withdrawal of the shattered remnants of Gates' army back to North Carolina, only scattered bands of Patriot militia remained to contest British control. As a consequence, Cornwallis faced no further organized Continental presence in South Carolina from mid-August until well after the Kings Mountain battle on 7 October 1780.[7]

The Patriot force at Kings Mountain consisted exclusively of volunteer militiamen drawn from county militia regiments, each commanded by a colonel. The colonel was appointed from the ranks, usually on the basis of political or economic status in the county. Slightly more than half of the Patriot men in the punitive expedition were frontiersmen from the far western counties of North Carolina and Virginia—the "Overmountain Men." The remainder were men from the "Back Country," the region between the eastern piedmont of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the Carolina midlands. Many Patriot militiamen had fought in combat against marauding Indians; as such most were skilled skirmishers but not trained or inclined towards fighting with standard line infantry tactics. Although tinged with some hyperbole, John Watts DePeyster's description of the Patriot militiamen at Kings Mountain was largely accurate:

> It is a great error to suppose that this body of 3000 American Whigs—the number reported by General Davidson writing of the assemblage at Gilbert Town 10 October 1780—were new to the exigencies and dangers of battle. Their fighting qualities could not be regarded as otherwise than respectable by professional soldiers…Many of them had been acclimated to something like regular war by engagements, skirmishes and collisions with loyal uprisings and regular forces. They were of totally different and far better stuff than the militia who threw down their arms after a single scattering discharge, or without firing at all…If they were not regular soldiers they were brave men and stalwart adversaries, and if they did not understand the tactics of the Continentals, they had tactics of their own which suited the region in which they had to operate. The tactics of the associated Whig colonels…were far superior to those of Ferguson…the British tactics were those of the Romans, complete in

> the valor that dies fighting but does not conquer the aggregate craft and courage of men skilled in the use of firearms.[8]

The British Army

Strategically, British operations in North America were directed by Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the American Colonies. To oversee execution of the military strategy in North America were two commanders each with a defined geographical area of responsibility. Overseeing the Quebec Province was Maj. Gen. Guy Carleton, Governor-in-Chief, who oversaw both political and military developments in the Canadian territory. Superintending British military and political affairs in America was Sir Henry Clinton, who functioned both as Command in Chief and Governor-General of British controlled territories. Clinton stepped into this dual role in 1778 after Gen. William Howe was recalled back to Britain after the Saratoga disaster.[9]

As in the American Army, the infantry regiment was the basic permanent tactical unit in the British army. For field operations, a number of regiments were organized into temporary brigade, which were in turn grouped into wings or divisions. A field army was commanded by a major or lieutenant general while the brigades and divisions were commanded by brigadier and major generals with temporary ranks. British regiments differed in size and organization compared to the simpler Continental regiments. British regiments were led by a colonel, assisted by a lieutenant colonel, a major, and a small specialist staff. Two companies were left in Great Britain to recruit and forward replacements, leaving eight line companies, supported by a light infantry company and grenadier company available for deployment. Ostensibly intended to perform skirmish and flank protection duties, the light infantry and grenadier "flank companies" were often pulled from regimental control and grouped into *ad hoc* battalions under division or army control. Compared to the theoretical fighting strength of a Continental regiment, 640 muskets, the British regiment was weaker with only 448 muskets. In reality, the available strength in regiments on both sides was considerably less due to combat losses, sickness, and taskings. Besides the weaker infantry regiments, the British army in America had few mounted troops, as only two regular dragoon regiments were deployed from England during the war. The British compensated for this weakness by raising Provincial volunteer dragoons from Loyalists in New York and New Jersey. One of the best known examples was the British Legion, led during most of the Southern Campaign by Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton. The artillery arm of the British Army was encapsulated in what were termed the Royal Artillery Regi-

ment. These units were nominally organized into battalions, but like the regiment, the battalion was essentially an administrative echelon. The battery, or "company" as they were then termed, was the primary tactical echelon of the Royal Artillery. These companies had a standard organization but were typically organized based on the available weapons, usually 3 and 6 pounder cannons.[10]

The British Army clearly had numerous advantages over the Continental Army. First and foremost, it was a well-established, organized, professional military force with a long and proud tradition of victory on the battlefields of Europe. A fair number of the officers and noncommissioned officers were combat veterans, and as a whole, the better disciplined British army was capable of molding new recruits into professional soldiers in a relatively short period of time. As a consequence, the generally better led and trained British army won the majority of battles involving regular forces. However, the British army had significant weaknesses. Although the Royal Navy dominated the Atlantic, supply lines between England and North America were long and vulnerable to enemy interdiction. As a consequence, logistics shortfalls were a constant concern for officers, while British soldiers often contended with threadbare uniforms and empty haversacks while campaigning in the interior. Soldiering was not considered an honorable profession, and the risk of dying in the wilds of North America did little to stimulate recruiting in Britain. Even after suitable recruits were found, the process of sending new men across the Atlantic to a friendly port, then overland to join a regiment was a difficult task. Consequently, British regiments were chronically undermanned through the war, and the Crown was forced to hire Hessian and Scottish mercenaries for additional combat power.[11]

As a means of offsetting manpower shortages, Gen. William Howe, first commander in chief of the British army in North America, encouraged prominent Loyalists to recruit and outfit Provincial detachments. Provincial recruits were enrolled under similar enlistment terms as regulars, except the term of service limited to the duration of the war. Provincial officer commissions granted by Howe were similarly limited to the duration of the war. Unless the officer was fortunate enough to become part of the American Establishment, he was not entitled to half pay and the permanent retention of his rank upon demobilization of the unit. In the pecking order of the British Empire, Provincial officers were considered of lower status than their regular counterparts, and the militia officers of even less standing. Thus, Provincial captains could, and often did, command Loyalist militia officers of higher rank while on operations in the field.[12]

The Loyalist Militia

One of the more unusual factors in the Kings Mountain battle is the fact that both armies—with the significant exception of the Scottish born Maj. Patrick Ferguson—were composed almost entirely of native born Americans.[13] Furthermore, the majority of the combatants, excepting the Loyalist American Provincials, were short-service militiamen. The Loyalist (or Tory, those who supported British rule) force was built around a battalion of the Provincial Corps of Americans, which had been recruited from among the solidly loyal Tory enclaves of New York and New Jersey.[14] The Provincials, numbering around 140 men, were highly proficient not only in the British heavy infantry tactics of the day, but also fully capable of performing light infantry tasks like skirmishing. On the battlefields of South Carolina, the Provincials stood out in red uniform coats with distinctive colored trimming that told them apart from British regulars.[15]

The rest of Ferguson's corps were comprised of two classes of Tory militiamen. The first consisted of regiments raised by Ferguson in the rural pro-Loyalist districts of western South Carolina, near the forward operating base of Ninety-Six, South Carolina. These first-class Loyalist militiamen were short-service volunteers, mostly young and unmarried men, who were obligated for six months of active service per year. By the late summer of 1780, Major Ferguson had thoroughly trained the first class Loyalist militiamen in standard British volley fire and bayonet tactics, and had even fought a couple of minor skirmishes against Whig irregulars. So, the first-class Tory men were not regulars, but more experienced compared to the second contingent, Loyalist militia raised in the Tryon County, North Carolina area. The North Carolina men were members of the second class, or standing militia, called out for a short term emergency, lightly equipped, and minimally trained.[16]

Weapons

The primary infantry weapon used by the Loyalists was the Long or Short Land Pattern musket, a .75 caliber, smoothbore, flintlock firearm. Commonly known as the "Brown Bess," the British musket fired a 1.5 ounce lead ball, and was equipped with a 16-inch socket bayonet for close quarters. Although many Loyalist militiamen were armed with Brown Bess muskets, enough men were armed with rifles or other non-regulation firearms for Ferguson to issue instructions on how to fabricate crude plug bayonets from hunting knives. Ferguson's men were trained to operate as a cohesive whole, capable of a sustained rate of three to four volleys per minute while ammunition lasted. In terms of strict accuracy, the smooth-

bore musket had an effective range of 100 meters—one-third less than that of a rifle.[17] British Maj. Thomas Hanger provided a comparison of the relative accuracy of rifle and musket in a postwar book:

> I have often asked American riflemen, what was the most they thought they could do with their rifle? They have replied, they were generally sure of splitting a man's head at 200 yards… rifle shooting begins to excel at the distance where the musket leaves off…a soldier's musket, if not exceedingly ill bored and very crooked, as many are, will strike the figure of a man at 80 yards; it may even at a hundred, but a soldier must be very unfortunate indeed who shall be wounded by a common musket at 150 yards…and, as to firing at a man at 200 yards with a common musket, you may just a well aim at the moon and have the same hopes of hitting your object…I do maintain… that NO MAN WAS EVER KILLED, AT TWO HUNDRED YARDS, by a common soldier's musket, BY THE PERSON WHO AIMED AT HIM.[18]

The disadvantages aside, military muskets had several advantages over the long rifle. First, muskets were designed for hard usage, and because they were mass produced, were easily repairable in the field. Next, the smoothbore was much less affected by the fouling common to black powder firearms due to the loose fit of the ball in the barrel. Also, when a heavy lead musket ball did make contact with a human being, grievous wounds were sure to follow. To increase the chances of a hit, militiamen sometimes modified the standard cartridge by adding three buckshot to form "buck and ball" cartridges, which theoretically increased the lethality of a British volley at ranges inside 60 meters. Finally, a musketeer wielding a bayonet-tipped Brown Bess had a great advantage over a rifleman in close-quarters combat—assuming the rifleman was foolish enough to go toe-to-toe with a trained Redcoat.[19]

The Patriot militiamen were generally armed with "Pennsylvania" or "Deckard" rifled flintlock muskets ranging in calibers from .36 to .48. Unlike the mass produced Brown Bess, rifles were finely crafted, albeit brittle, hunting weapons best suited for skirmishing and long distance engagements. In the hands of a skilled marksman (in which most Overmountain Men were out of sheer necessity) a rifle could accurately hit a squirrel at 200 meters and a man sized target out to 300 meters. However, the rifle had serious drawbacks which limited its usefulness on the battlefield. For one, the rifle was much slower to load as the riflemen had to measure powder from a horn before nesting the ball into a

greased patch, and pounding the whole into the rifling with a ramrod—a task made worse once unburnt powder fouled the bore. Secondly, the rifleman lacked a bayonet and, even armed with a tomahawk, was at a significant disadvantage to a bayonet armed attacker. Variations in calibers meant each rifleman had to cast his own bullets, thus riflemen could seldom share bullets. Finally, the rifles were lightly built and easily damaged if used in hand to hand combat.[20]

Theoretically, officers on both sides would carry swords as a badge of rank and for melee combat. In practice, however, few Patriot officers could afford the cost of a sword. Accounts of the battle describe Ferguson and his subordinate officers as armed with swords for mounted and dismounted combat. British officers would sometimes carry .62 caliber smoothbore flintlock pistols as a tertiary weapon.

Tactics

The "armies" that fought at Kings Mountain employed markedly different tactics. In "classic" linear tactics, British infantry regiments would form in columns for movement to contact. For combat, the regiments would reorient into two to three lines to bring all muskets to bear on the enemy. Volley fire was conducted by companies or battalions in sequence, in order to keep continuous fire on the enemy. Only in the event of a severely weakened foe, or a threatened overrun by a superior enemy, would an entire regiment fire a massed volley, since by doing so the entire unit would lose its offensive power (except for a bayonet charge). Volume of fire over accuracy was stressed for the musketeers, as volley fire was intended primarily to shock and disorganize the enemy ranks. Once the enemy line was sufficiently disorganized, the infantry were sent forward in a mass bayonet charge which often carried the day.[21] Ferguson largely copied the standard British musket and bayonet tactics when training his men, although accounts of the battle indicate that he employed rifle-armed militiamen as sharpshooters.

Ferguson's position atop Kings Mountain dictated a non-standard deployment, which was described as a hollow rectangle running the length of the ridgeline, with the companies in column, not line formation. Presumably, Ferguson did this to facilitate bayonet charges and volley fire by company, but by doing so he ran the risk of masking the fire of other units within the column. To control the fire and movement of his regiments, Ferguson devised a series of signals delivered by a silver whistle. For early warning, Ferguson deployed pickets, but his dispositions proved ineffective in giving an early warning of the approaching Patriot

force, probably due to the dense woods on the lower slopes obscuring the line of sight, while the sodden leaves muffled their footfalls. In a combination of (perhaps) arrogance and ineptitude, Ferguson neglected to have his soldiers construct any form of abatis, cut down trees with sharpened branches to slow the advance of the enemy, or breastworks for cover from enemy fire.[22]

In the move after the brief halt at the Cowpens, Patriot commanders formed their mounted men into a flying column, a detachment of light infantry, mounted on horses for a fast movement towards the enemy (distinct from cavalry as the men dismounted at a safe distance and proceeded to march on foot to make contact with the enemy), while the footmen marched behind in support. One in the vicinity of Ferguson's camp, the Patriot men dismounted under the cover of an opposing ridgeline and left a small detachment to guard the animals. The regiments formed into columns for the final march to the release point, where each regimental colonel took charge and led his men into position. Once in attack position, the militiamen deployed from columns into a loose line to encircle the hill with an unbreakable cordon before ascending the hill to engage the Tory enemy with rifle fire. In keeping with commander's orders, the rifleman advanced in buddy teams, firing and maneuvering from cover to cover, with little effort at synchronizing the actions of squads and platoons.[23]

Variations in the terrain slowed the deployment of some of the Whig regiments; faced with a gentle upslope, Campbell's and Shelby's men had an easier approach march and started engaging the Tory pickets even as Cleveland's North Carolina militiamen were still wading across a stream to reach the base of the ridge. In return, the same open terrain left Campbell's and Shelby's regiments men open to a disciplined bayonet charge from the Provincial Corps. Not trained or prepared to face a wall of steel bayonets, the Whig riflemen fled in headlong flight down the spur and up the adjoining ridge, leaving many wounded Virginians on the hillside. The experienced Patriot leaders adapted to subsequent charges by having their men give way slowly but in good order just beyond reach of the Tory bayonets. Those Patriot men not within reach of the bayonets engaged the linear Loyalist formation with enfilade fires. The Whig tactic of withdrawal largely mitigated the effectiveness of the subsequent Loyalists bayonet charges; consequently Patriot losses dropped off while those of Loyalists mounted as the battle grew in intensity.[24]

While the battle raged at the shallow end of the ridge, an unequal contest played out on the northern end as Whig riflemen picked off hap-

less Loyalists silhouetted on the topographical crest of the ridgeline. The handful of Tory riflemen protecting the flanks were quickly neutralized despite having taken cover:

> During the fight some of the Tories at the West end of the summit were secured among some table or bench rocks. Whenever one popped up his head, a ball from some unerring rifle…pierced through…Upwards of 20 were found dead after the battle among the rocks, their heads being thus pierced with bullets.[25]

Although noisy and spectacular, the musket fire from the Loyalist main line produced few casualties, as the act of firing downhill exaggerated the natural tendency of musketeers to fire high, a critical error not corrected by Ferguson or his officers. After a short period of time, perhaps 30 minutes, Campbell and Shelby's men forced the Tory troops back far enough to gain possession of the high ground on the southern portion of the ridge, thus compressing Ferguson's men into an indefensible hollow on the northeast section of the spur—at which point the outcome of the battle was a foregone conclusion.[26]

Analysis of the tactics of Kings Mountain reveals several lessons applicable to the current operating environment. Most tellingly, Ferguson's failure to adapt his tactics to the enemy and terrain doomed his command to a bloody end. Within the Protection warfighting domain, Ferguson never seemed to have seriously prepared for an active defense of the ridgeline. Survivor accounts do not mention any efforts from Ferguson or his subordinate officers to prepare defenses, conduct training, or perform rehearsal actions; instead, Loyalist actions in the hours leading to the battle seemed focused more on housekeeping details.

On a positive side note, Ferguson's Tory militiamen seemed well trained and disciplined, and fought bravely despite their disadvantaged position, which points to the value of good leadership and training in preparing new soldiers for combat. Furthermore, Ferguson's field expedient creation of bayonets for his North Carolina militiamen serves as a good example of the use of "out-of-the-box" thinking to solve tactical problems. During the battle, Ferguson and his officers led bravely from the front: "The British tactics were those of the Romans, complete in the valor that dies fighting but does not conquer the aggregated craft and courage of men skilled in the use of firearms."[27]

Analysis of the Patriot success emphasizes the value of surprise, security, personal leadership, and the initiative of subordinates working within the commander's intent to accomplish a mission. During the approach march, Patriot commanders worked effectively within the Intelligence do-

main, employing scouts, interrogating locals for information, and cross checking each report to ensure accuracy. The sufferings of the Patriots before and after the battle highlight the importance of logistics arrangements to sustain combat power while deployed. Finally, the trials endured by the surviving Tories after the battle speaks to a need for good planning for handling enemy wounded and prisoners in accordance with the Laws of War and regulations.

For the subsequent course of the American Revolution, the Whig victory at Kings Mountain challenged the generally held opinion that militia were worthless in a fight. Instead, the battle showed that militia, if properly led and permitted tactical flexibility on the battlefield, were capable of punishing regular troops—a lesson which British Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton failed to heed before leading the British Legion against Col. Daniel Morgan's command at the Cowpens in January 1781. There Morgan skillfully employed his rifle-armed militiamen to great advantage. First, by masking the deployment of the Continental line which forced the British to deploy their line prematurely. Secondly, the militia skirmishers stopped an initial Tory dragoon sortie and disrupted command and control in the enemy infantry by targeting officers. Before being decisively engaged, the Patriot skirmishers fought a delaying action while withdrawing into the main line of Patriot militiamen deployed in a reverse-slope defense. Morgan cannily instructed the Patriot militia to fire only two volleys before withdrawing in good order behind the protection of the Continental line, leaving behind a gravely disrupted British infantry line. Finally, after Morgan's Continentals had fixed and weakened the British regulars, the American riflemen swept back on to the battlefield to complete the envelopment of the British line. Very much a product of the Kings Mountain battle, Morgan's victory at Cowpens further confirmed the combat power of a well-led combined arms team—a timeless lesson certainly appropriate for the 21st century battlefield.[28]

Logistics

Each side operated with a significant set of logistics constraints that shaped the course of the campaign. One of the major factors affecting the timing of the campaign was the fall harvest season. The Patriot militiamen temporarily suspended active operations in the late summer so as to allow the men time to bring in their fall harvest. The same logic delayed Cornwallis' march into North Carolina, thereby giving the Loyalist militia time to gather the harvest into the British field depots. Finally, Cornwallis' concern with the security of his key logistics base at Ninety-Six was a major factor in sending Ferguson's corps to secure the upcountry.[29]

Although the British Empire had a reasonably efficient logistics system in place at the start of the war, the requirement to move supplies over hundreds of miles placed a severe strain on their lines of communication. Assuming the supplies shipped from England were not spoiled or destroyed in transit, quartermasters at the port of Charleston had to receive, store, and distribute the supplies across a considerable distance, on unimproved roads, all while under constant threat of rebel attack. To accomplish distribution tasks in the Southern campaign, Cornwallis' quartermasters established a main depot at Charleston, South Carolina and field magazines at Camden, Ninety-Six, and Augusta. Tarleton's mounted dragoon, supported by Tory militiamen, were used to maintain the security of the lines of communication:

> It was about this time (June 1780) that Cornwallis changed his instructions previously given his friends in the northern Province relative to their rising in aid of the Crown. He now considered it ill advised to march his army through North Carolina before the harvest, and took strong measures to induce impatient partisans not to rise until after the crops had been gathered…the work of supplying the base at Camden with salt, rum, regimental stores, arms and ammunition was under way, so that a further advance of the army beyond that point would be safeguarded. Due to the distance of transportation and the excessive heat of the season, the work was one of infinite labor, requiring considerable time.[30]

In the field, wagon teams were used to haul essential supplies such as ammunition, flour, fodder, and support items such as tents and equipment. Although necessary for the campaign, the presence of 17 wagons and a small herd of cattle slowed the effective rate of Ferguson's march and required the diversion of combat troops to serve as escorts. Furthermore, the heavy wagons had no "off-road" capability and were limited to moving on the handful of decent roads in the more settled areas. Finally, the horses and draft animals consumed large quantities of fodder and grain, "fuel" requirements which limited their "effective operating range" to no more than four days without replenishment. Consequently, Ferguson was dependent on obtaining food and forage from farms and settlements along the route of march, a critical vulnerability that impacted the outcome of their mission. First, pausing to forage detracted from the main Tory mission to secure the territory and destroy Patriot forces. Moreover, foraging detachments and supply convoys were vulnerable to the type of low-risk, high-payoff raids favored by Patriot guerillas. Lastly, Ferguson's decision to send out a battalion-sized foraging party

(around 200 men) on the morning of the battle seriously weakened his combat power at a critical moment.[31]

Besides the tactical impact of logistics constraints, foraging operations affected the battle for the "hearts and minds" of the locals. Despite Ferguson's best efforts to treat the locals respectfully, foraging parties often behaved brutally towards vulnerable women and children. The cumulative effort of British and Loyalist foraging in the countryside angered many civilians, thus drying up sources of supplies and recruits for the Crown. Aside from purely tactical considerations, Ferguson seems to have selected his position atop Kings Mountain for its proximity to the main road and nearby water spring. In an interesting contrast to the austere Patriot logistics situation, an anonymous Loyalist officer wrote in a January 1780 letter about the privations endured by Ferguson's men:

> [I can] say with propriety, that there is not a regiment or detachment of His Majesty's service, that ever went through the fatigues, or suffered so much, as our detachment…That you may have some faint idea of our suffering, I shall mention a few particulars. In the first place we were separated from all the army, acting with the militia; we never lay two nights in one place, frequently making forced marches of 20 and 30 miles in one night; skirmishing very often; the greatest part of our time without rum or wheat flour—rum is a very essential article, for in marching ten miles we would be obliged to ford two or three rivers, which wet the men up to their waists.[32]

Playing a critical part in the outcome of the battle was a shortage of ammunition among the Tory militiamen. Ferguson's sizeable ordnance store—1200 stands of weapons plus a considerable amount of bulk powder and balls in total—was withheld for arming new recruits. Despite the abundant ordnance stores, accounts of the surviving Loyalists universally blame the defeat on a lack of ammunition. For example, Loyalist Surgeon Uzal Johnson's description of the battle:

> The North Carolina Militia had twice repulsed a body that attacked their Line, unfortunately their ammunition being now exhausted they were obliged to give way [After Ferguson's death, Captain DePeyster attempt to rally the defenders]… Captain DePeyster then gave the word to form and charge, the cry throughout the Militia line was, we are out of ammunition, this being our unhappy condition, and the militia (tho they stood and fought bravely while their ammunition lasted)

> were now getting in the utmost disorder, it was thought most expedient to send out a flag to save a few brave men that had survived the heat of action.[33]

Yet, Patriot riflemen James Collins' account indicates a sizeable ordnance store:

> After the sizeable amount of British ordnance stores formed a valuable windfall for the Patriots, who cleverly used the Loyalist prisoners to haul the remaining weapons and powder to safety across the mountains after the booty was shared out among the men: In the evening [after the battle] there was a distribution made of the plunder; and we were dismissed. My father and myself drew two fine horses, two guns, and some articles of clothing, with a share of powder and lead.[34]

What to make of the discrepancy? Although contemporary accounts do not give any more information, the author suggests that the matter lies in the difference between prepared ammunition and bulk ordnance stores. Both British Regulars and Tory militiamen were trained in a standard system of rapid volley fire with the musket. To facilitate faster firing, each musketeer carried a basic load of paper cartridges (each containing gunpowder and a lead ball) in a cartridge box. Normally, field trains carried an additional supply of manufactured cartridges, as well as the materials to make more cartridges in the field. Most importantly, British soldiers had no easy way to reload with bulk powder and ball as they were not issued powder horns or measuring cups.[35]

By comparison, riflemen carried lead balls in a leather pouch, and powder in a horn. Loading the rifle first required the measuring of a powder charge in a measuring cup, which then went into the bore of the rifle. The powder was immediately followed a lead ball wrapped in a greased patch, all packed into the bore by the ramrod. Compared to the efficient musket cartridge system, loading a rifle was time consuming; yet as long as the powder and balls were available, the rifleman had the ability to keep fighting. So taking all evidence in consideration, the Loyalist troops probably fired off their basic load of cartridges in a series of hasty and ineffectual volleys. Once the cartridges were gone, the ammunition-less North Carolina militia units panicked and disrupted the cohesion of the Loyalist defense. The entire episode not only further reflects the failure of the Tory militia officers to exercise good fire discipline in the ranks, but also points to Ferguson's poor logistics planning, as he failed to ensure a backup supply of cartridges were available in the ordnance stores.[36]

Despite all of the frictions and inefficiencies, the British did at least have a reasonably effective logistics system. In comparison, the Continental logistics system in the south during the war consisted of little more than a system of desperate improvisation. By summer 1780, the Patriot cause was so impoverished that Horatio Gates was unwilling or unable to supply ammunition to the Overmountain Men. Short of money, Shelby and Sevier raided the county treasury which yielded just enough money to cover the cost of producing lead and powder sufficient for the expedition. No organized commissary or quartermaster department existed, so each Patriot man was ordered to report for duty with a rifle, a haversack filled with food, and (if available) a "basic load" of powder and balls. The men marching from Quaker's Meadow found the accompanying herd of cattle an impediment and, after slaughtering several for dinner, abandoned the rest on the wayside. At the Cowpens, the hungry men confiscated cattle and corn from a wealthy Loyalist for a hasty meal cooked over campfires. The approach march was fueled by more corn gleaned from nearby fields, supplemented by an occasional pumpkin or sweet potato.[37]

After the battle at Kings Mountain, the Patriots gratefully divided up the spoils from the Loyalist supply train, chiefly guns, powder and lead, and consumed what little food was left in Ferguson's wagon train. The Overmountain Men and their prisoners alike suffered food shortages as the return march crossed areas that had already been foraged. What little was available consisted of sweet potatoes, green pumpkins, and raw corn gleaned from nearby fields. As bad as the food situation was for the Patriots, the prisoners fared worse and many, too weak to travel, were left to die on the road. The lack of food made the temper of the Overmountain Men worse, and likely played a part in the execution of several prisoners at Bickerstaff's Old Fields before the Patriot army dispersed for home. Captain DePeyster noted afterwards: "The mounted riflemen who 'fought the battle were fasting and almost famished.' Consequently, as the countryside could not have afforded provisions, they would have had to break up in a few hours more to obtain the necessities of life."[38]

Communications

Lines of communication in South Carolina consisted chiefly of unimproved roads, usually old Indian trails cut out of the surrounding wilderness. Rivers and streams in northeastern South Carolina were unbridged and often ran perpendicular to the existing roads, so large bodies of men had difficulty crossing except at fords. Even so, fords were passable during spells of dry weather; during heavy rains the only way across was to use ferry boats, assuming any were available, or by the risky expedient of swimming men and horses.

Communications in the 18th century were handled either in face-to-face conversations or by letters delivered by messenger. No standardized format existed for field orders, which were often issued in such vague terms as to leave a field commander wide latitude in executing them. Messengers were vulnerable to capture and exploitation, and messages often went undelivered or were delayed so much in transit as to make them useless.

To illustrate the problems inherent with the courier system, consider Ferguson's movements before the Kings Mountain battle. During his withdrawal from Gilbert Town, Ferguson sent messages to Lt. Col. John Harris Krueger at Ninety-Six, as well as General Cornwallis, asking for reinforcements. Ferguson only received a reply from Lieutenant Colonel Krueger, who refused to send reinforcements. The messengers to Cornwallis were delayed in transit to Cornwallis by hostile Patriot sympathizers. Consequently, Cornwallis did not receive the request for reinforcements until Ferguson was already "weltering in his gore" atop Kings Mountain.[39] One of the possible reasons Ferguson chose to remain at Kings Mountain was the need to wait for the dispatch of reinforcements from Cornwallis' base at Charlotte Town.

During the battle, the commanders communicated with their men by oral orders, and motivated their soldiers through display of personal leadership at critical points in the battle. On the Patriot side, each commander led from the front, a dangerous practice illustrated by Major Chronicle's death, shot down in the act of ordering his men to attack. Atop the hill, Major Ferguson and his officers directed the battle on horseback, moving to points of crisis with great speed. Another example of Ferguson's technical abilities was his use of a silver whistle to clearly transmit commands to his units. This system was well rehearsed before the battle, and proved effective in transmitting fire and maneuver orders over the chaotic and deafening sounds of combat.

Intelligence

Intelligence was gathered primarily by scouts and spies, and at times actionable intelligence was hard to acquire. For example, Patriot scouts temporarily lost Ferguson's trail along the Broad River, and there was much confusion as to his intended destination—Ninety-Six or Charlotte? Had Ferguson not obligingly stopped at Kings Mountain, the delay engendered by losing the trail of the Tory force could easily have resulted in failure of the pursuit mission. As the Patriot council of colonels selected information and tried to guess Ferguson's whereabouts, Col. James Williams (a South Carolina militia officer and rival to partisan leader Thomas Sumter) rode into their camp and declared that Ferguson was en route to

Ninety-Six. Shortly thereafter Col. Edward Lacey (also a South Carolina militia officer, but from Sumter's command) arrived and contradicted William's account by saying Ferguson was camped at Kings Mountain. Who to believe? After processing the evidence, the Council of Colonels determined that Williams had provided misinformation, intending to coopt the Overmountain Expedition into attacking Ninety-Six.[40] That matter settled, the Patriot officers decided to use The Cowpens as an intermediate staging base to rest the men, gather intelligence and plan the next move.

After arriving at The Cowpens, the Patriots received fresh intelligence, provided by a physically handicapped Patriot spy, Joseph Kerr, who had scouted Ferguson's camp. As Ferguson's force was so close to Charlotte and safety with the main British army, the Whig council of colonels decided to immediately dispatch a flying column of mounted men from The Cowpens to overtake Ferguson's corps. Scouts preceded the main body, and continued to gather corroborating information about the Ferguson's dispositions. Loyalist women were tricked into describing Ferguson's exact location on the ridgeline; a position which Major Chronicle immediately recognized as a former hunting camp. A couple of Tory scouts were caught, and revealed another crucial piece of information: the location of the picket line. Finally, the capture of Tory courier John Ponder produced a key detail they needed to identify Ferguson on the battlefield: he always wore a distinctive checked duster.[41] In summary, the Patriot force effectively used scouts and spies to collect a constant stream of intelligence. The Whig colonels effectively processed the information and correctly determine Ferguson's location and defensive dispositions. By way of comparison, Ferguson seemed to rely mostly on passive information gathering from spies or Tory sympathizers. Despite the looming threat, Ferguson made little effort to gather fresh information by scouts and roving patrols. As a consequence, he was tactically surprised at the start of the battle.

Weather forecasting in the 18th century consisted largely of direct observation, looking for signs of weather changes in the wind direction and clouds. Weather played a great role in the preparation for and outcome of the battle at Kings Mountain. A prime concern before the battle was to keep powder dry, since flintlock rifles with wet powder were essentially useless. Persistent rain plagued the Overmountain Men in their march down the eastern slope of the mountains, and was so bad at one point to compel a halt until the rain slackened. The overnight ride from the Cowpens was made more miserable by a steady downpour, so great that the Overmountain Men took off their shirts and jackets in an attempt to cover their powder and rifles. The heavy downpour likely lulled Tories into a false sense of security, while the

Whig riflemen certainly benefited from the sodden terrain, which muffled the sounds of movement and telltale clouds of dust.

Medical

The close-ranged nature of the Kings Mountain battle produced so many casualties that even hardened frontiersmen were sickened by its bloodiness. Total deaths came to 194: 28 Patriot and 156 Loyalists. Another 163 Loyalists and 62 Patriots were seriously wounded and many more received minor wounds. After the battle, the victorious Patriots left the Loyalist wounded on the battlefield, while the Patriot wounded were gathered up and treated by their unwounded comrades. The Patriots allowed medical treatment of the Tory wounded, by the sole Loyalist surgeon, Uzal Johnson, but otherwise did nothing else to help the enemy. Accounts on both sides praised Johnson's efforts in tending to the wounded, which entailed extracting bullets, amputating limbs, and dressing wounds with whatever material was available. Gut shots or head wounds (which were very common among the exposed Loyalists) were usually fatal. Assuming the patient survived the initial shock of the injury and subsequent surgery, many died due to gangrene or secondary infections. Those that recovered were often crippled for life, a grim reality evidenced by the many applications Whig militiamen submitted to the new United States government for disability pensions.[42]

As noted earlier, Ferguson was buried in a ravine near the top, along with a dead camp follower by the name of Virginia Sal. The remainder of the dead, both Patriot and Loyalist, were not treated as well; may were simply tossed in separate ravines by Tory prisoners overseen by a rear guard of Virginians. The thin, rocky soil and lack of suitable tools meant that burial parties were only able to cover the corpses with logs, detritus, and rocks. Left exposed to the elements, the decaying remains drew scavengers and for many weeks the battlefield was a ghastly scene of decay, overran with hogs and wild dogs feeding on human flesh. When the Patriot force departed on the morning of 8 October, their non-ambulatory wounded were transported on litters similar to an Indian *travois*: two long poles fastened to the side of a horse, with a blanket or tarpaulin hung between to form a hammock-like bed. The more fortunate Tory wounded were recovered by family members drawn to the ridge by the sounds of battle:

> the scene became really distressing. The wives and children of the poor Tories came in, in great numbers. Their husbands, fathers and brothers lay dead in heaps, while others lay wounded or dying, a melancholy sight indeed![43]

Notes

1. Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History,* Volume 1 (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 30-32.

2. Steven Clay, *Staff Ride Hanbook for the Saratoga Campaign, 13 June to 8 November 1777* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2018), 3-5.

3. Clay, 6-8.

4. Lawrence Babits and Joshua Howard, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody: The Battle of Guilford Courthouse* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 25.

5. Robert K. Wright, *The Continental Army* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 2006), 67-75.

6. Babits and Howard, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody*, 6.

7. John Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution: A Battlefield History* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 92-95.

8. John Watts DePeyster, "The Affair at Kings Mountain," *The Magazine of American History*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (December 1880): 408-409. Besides greatly exaggerating the American numbers and fighting prowess, DePeyster unfairly maligns the performance of the Loyalist militia, who by most accounts fought bravely and only surrendered after their ammunition ran out. Moreover, many of the Tory militia from North Carolina were as skilled frontiersmen as their Patriot enemies.

9. David K. Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of Carolina and Georgia, 1775-1780* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 59-60.

10. Clay, *Staff Ride Guide to the Saratoga Campaign*, 19-22.

11. Clay, 22.

12. Robert S. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 149-150.

13. James Ferguson, *Two Scottish Soldiers: A Soldier of the American Revolution* (Aberdeen, Scotland: 1888), 80. Ferguson's permanent rank in the 71st Regiment of Foot (Highlanders) was major. Along with his appointment as the Inspector General of Militia, Ferguson received a brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel, and a brigadier generals commission in the Loyalist militia. For consistency, the author will refer to Ferguson as a major.

14. Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds., *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 2000), 236. Those Americans advocating resistance to Crown policies self-titled as Whigs, while Loyalists (those loyal to the Crown) were called Tories as a means of smearing the opposition as enemies of American liberty. In return, Loyalists derisively called the radical Americans Patriots or Rebels.

15. William S. Stryker, *The New Jersey Volunteers (Loyalists) in the Revolutionary War* (Trenton, NJ: 1887), 4-5.

16. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution*, 113, 134-139.

17. Lawrence E. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping: The Battle of Cowpens* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 13.

18. George Hanger, Ge*neral George Hanger to all Sportsmen, Farmers, and Gamekeepers* (London: 1814), 145, 205. Hanger, although not present at Kings Mountain, was a contemporary of Ferguson's, and the second in command of Banastre Tarleton's British Legion during most of the Southern Campaign.

19. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping*, 13.

20. Babits, 14-15.

21. Clay, *Staff Ride Guide to the Saratoga Campaign*, 48-49.

22. Wilma Dykeman, *With Fire and Sword: The Battle of Kings Mountain 1780* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, no date), 58.

23. David Dameron, *The Battle of Kings Mountain* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 58-59.

24. Robert W. Brown Jr., *Kings Mountain and Cowpens: Our Victory was Complete* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009), 74-75.

25. Robert Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain: Eyewitness Accounts* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2007), 64, statement of Silas McBee.

26. Dameron, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 69.

27. DePeyster, "The Affair at Kings Mountain," 409.

28. Stewart, *American Military History,* Volume I, 102-105.

29. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution*, 138-139.

30. No author, *Historical Statements Concerning the Battle of Kings Mountain and The Battle of the Cowpens*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1928), 9-11.

31. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain: Eyewitness Accounts*, 131.

32. Lyman Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes* (Cincinnati, OH: Peter G. Thomson, 1881), 516-517. Draper reprints an anonymous article, commonly attributed to Lieutenant Allaire, published in the Rivington *Royal Gazette* 24 February 1781.

33. Wade S. Kolb and Robert M. Weir, eds., *Captured at Kings Mountain: The Journal of Uzal Johnson, A Loyalist Surgeon* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 31. See also Allaire's account which repeats the comment about the North Carolina troops running out of ammunition.

34. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 35.

35. Ryan S. Gale, *A Soldier-Like Way: The Material Culture of the British Infantry* (Elk River, MN: Track of the Wolf, Inc., 2007), 26-27.

36. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping*, 15.

37. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 224-226.

38. DePeyster, "The Affair at Kings Mountain," 418.

39. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 70.

40. A. S. Salley, ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution* (Columbia, SC: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1921), 15-21. This passage outlines the entire back story, from Hill's perspective, of Colonel Williams' alleged treachery.

41. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 275.

42. Babits and Howard, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody*, 93-94.

43. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 34.

Part II

The Southern Campaign Overview

To fully understand the strategic and operational dynamics leading to the battle of Kings Mountain, a brief historical review of the American Revolution is in order. After the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775, the British laid plans to reestablish order and loyalty in the rebellious colonies. Believing that the center of Patriot resistance was in the New England area, Lord Frederick North (principal military advisor to King George III) devised a strategy of divide and conquer. First, isolate the Americans with a close naval blockade. Secondly, split the northeast from the middle colonies by securing the Hudson River Valley; thirdly, isolate the grain producing states of Pennsylvania and Maryland. Lastly, secure the Carolinas by seizing Charleston and Savannah. American Commander in Chief George Washington adopted a strategy of attrition from sheer necessity, fighting only when necessary and making all efforts to preserve what he saw was the American's center of gravity, the regular or Continental army. By doing so, Washington hoped to not only exhaust the British, but to encourage intervention in the war by one of England's traditional enemies. Despite a promising start with several battlefield victories early in the war, British efforts to coordinate strategy and operational plans foundered due to bitter rivalries between senior leaders. One of the worst examples was seen in 1777, when Gen. Sir William Howe focused his efforts to capture the strategically meaningless enemy capital at Philadelphia, instead of cooperating with Gen. John Burgoyne's army marching south from Canada via the Hudson River Valley. Howe's refusal to assist Burgoyne, despite expectations from London, left Burgoyne's army over extended and unsupported and ultimately vulnerable to encirclement by American forces. As a consequence, Burgoyne's force was cut off and forced to surrender at Saratoga in October 1777.[1]

The British Southern Campaign

The American victory at Saratoga paved the way to open French involvement in the war, with a consequent loss of British strategic freedom of maneuver. The American victory at Monmouth Court House on 28 June 1778 showed conclusively that Britain was no longer capable of beating the resurgent Continental army. Hoping to regain the initiative in North America, Lord North and Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, the overall commander-in-chief of the British army in America, turned their thoughts back to the South. South Carolina loomed large in their strategic calculus for both

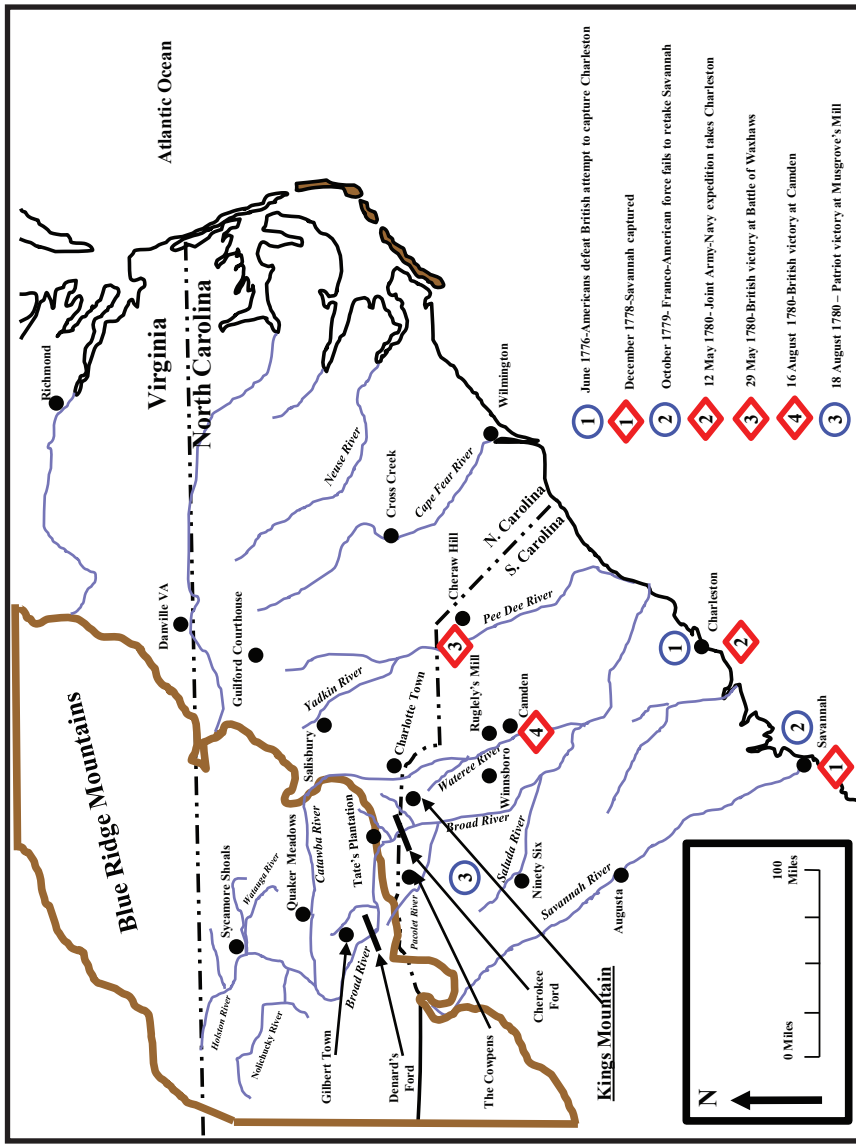

Figure 1. Operational Overview, 18 August 1780. Graphic created by the author.

military and economic reasons. Economically, British control of Carolina rice and indigo crops would help to pay for war costs. Militarily, the Royal Navy could use the protected anchorage of Charleston Harbor to support their Caribbean operations, while the army could use South Carolina as a springboard for operations towards the Chesapeake. Diplomatically, uncontested control of the Carolinas would strengthen the negotiation position of the Crown for eventual peace talks. Tory expatriates in London promised a strong showing of Loyalist support at the reappearance of British authority. By all appearances, a campaign in the Carolinas appeared to be the type of low-risk, high-payoff operation the British sorely needed to regain the initiative in the war. Accordingly, Clinton and North settled on a new plan to secure the Carolinas. By leveraging support from the Royal Navy, Clinton could quickly project combat power from New York into the South before the Continentals could react. Once Savannah and Charleston were secured, British regulars would establish a strong outpost line along the Savannah River to block Continental incursions from Virginia. While the British mobile elements mopped up any insurgents in the area, trainers drawn from regular units would work to organize and train an effective Loyalist militia. The key assumption underpinning the entire British campaign plan was the use of well-trained Loyalist militia to successfully pacify and secure South Carolina. Absent that, Sir Henry Clinton simply did not have enough manpower in North America to secure both New York and South Carolina.[2]

Besides the rational strategic calculations, Clinton had a personal motivation in leading a Southern Campaign, that of revenge. Paired with naval Commodore Sir Peter Parker, Clinton had been deeply embarrassed by his part in a joint Army-Navy operation that utterly failed to take Charleston in June-July 1776, an enterprise marred with lack of cooperation, misunderstanding and timidity. The failure at Charleston came shortly after the American Declaration of Independence, and served notice to all involved that the Americans planned to fight hard for their freedom. Consequently, American morale in the South soared, while British hopes of a quick end to the rebellion were dashed. Clinton's reputation within the Army and Royal establishment was deeply damaged by the Charleston debacle. Moreover, the experience deepened Clinton's mistrust of peer officers in the Army and Navy. In 1780, Clinton managed to put aside his misgivings, and drew up an impressive campaign plan to capture Charleston via an indirect approach. Clinton made good use of Capt. George Elphinstone, a British naval officer assigned to command the naval elements supporting the army's sea landing and river crossings. Elphinstone ably served as a

liaison officer between Clinton and VADM Mariot Arbuthnot, so that the Charleston campaign would resemble a truly joint Army-Navy operation. Clinton's planning was done in secret, so the British were able to gain the strategic initiative from the Americans, who failed to recognize the shift in British strategy.[3]

The shaping phase of Clinton's campaign opened when a British expedition from St. Augustine, Florida easily captured the vital river port of Savannah and secured much of the Savannah River line during the winter of 1778-1779. Shocked by the loss of Georgia, Congress dispatched Gen. Benjamin Lincoln with a contingent of North and South Carolina Continentals to Charleston to organize a Southern army with hastily mobilized militia units. Disaster soon befell the Americans when a combined Franco-American assault failed to retake Savannah in October 1779, thus leaving Charleston uncovered and vulnerable to an amphibious assault. Consequently, Clinton's assault force of some 8000 infantry, plus some 1500 dismounted cavalrymen, landed without incident to the east of Charleston harbor on 11 February 1780. Clinton had learned from his failure in 1776, and the Charleston campaign plan was carefully thought out and, thanks to Captain Elphinstone, well-coordinated with Vice Admiral Arbuthnot. Despite instructions from Washington to not carelessly risk the Continentals, Lincoln allowed local political leaders to constrain his freedom of maneuver and British troops easily cut off all land and river communications with the outside world. After a siege lasting several weeks, Lincoln surrendered the city and his army of 5446 men on 12 May 1780, the largest surrender of American arms during the war. Afterwards, the Continental soldiers were sent to prison ships, with the Continental officers and the Patriot militiamen paroled and released to home. The taking of Charleston was the single greatest victory of the British for the entire war, and at that time the Carolina seemed all but secured.[4]

Consolidation and Pacification

During the consolidation phase after the fall of Charleston, the British Legion, a mixed infantry-cavalry force commanded by Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, overtook and wiped out a withdrawing Continental regiment at the Waxhaws along the border with North Carolina. Tactically, the Waxhaws capped off the seemingly triumphant British campaign in the South. When viewed within the context of the British pacification strategy, Tarleton's performance Waxhaws produced an Information Operations (IO) disaster. Whether true or not, accounts of brutal bayonetting of defenseless Continentals stiffened American resistance to British recruiting and pacification efforts. Clinton added fuel to the fire by issuing a couple of poorly

worded proclamations. The first offered a full pardon to ex-rebels in exchange for an oath of allegiance to the Crown, lenient treatment resented by Loyalists, who expected harsh treatment for their traitorous neighbors. Clinton's second proclamation demanded oaths of loyalty to the King and mandated active service in the Loyalist militia from all men living within British controlled territory. Clinton's proclamation handed the American cause another easy IO victory, as many of those militiamen released after the capture of Charleston no longer felt themselves legally bound by their paroles and returned to active resistance.[5]

In June 1780, Clinton and a sizeable portion of the field army returned to New York to reinforce its garrison. Left behind was Lord Earl Cornwallis and a contingent of 8000 regulars and provincial troops to maintain base and line of communication security. Maj. Patrick Ferguson of the 71st Regiment of Foot (Highlanders) was appointed Inspector of Militia, and tasked to organize and train Tory militia regiments to take over security duties at key forward bases like Ninety-Six. Cornwallis originally expected Ferguson to have completed his organizational tasks by the spring campaign season, thus freeing Cornwallis to march into North Carolina, and to repeat the same pacification process until he reached the Chesapeake. At the time, Cornwallis' success seemed assured, as he faced resistance only from a handful of poorly armed Patriot partisan detachments, like those led by Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter. Pacifying efforts in the Carolinas quickly went awry as misbehavior by the Tory militiamen, taking advantage of the British army presence, further angered the large number of uncommitted Americans hoping to stay neutral in the conflict. Fueled by actual and imagined British excesses, Patriot insurgent attacks grew in frequency over the summer of 1780, and fights between Patriot and Tory militia groups assumed the bloody character of a civil war.[6]

Shocked by the Charleston debacle, the Continental Congress reacted by sending Gen. Horatio Gates to organize a new Southern Army near Hillsborough, North Carolina. Gates unwisely chose to immediately march on Camden, instead of taking time to mold a trained and cohesive force of Continentals and militiamen. Forewarned, Cornwallis quickly regrouped his scattered infantry units from their forward operating bases and advanced detachments of the two armies bumped into each in a swampy pine barren during the night of 15-16 August 1780. Surprised by British troops so far from Camden, Gates compounded his error by deploying the tired and dispirited militiamen as regulars, ordering them into line on the American left, opposite the best British troops. Faced with a disciplined bayonet advance, the poorly equipped militia folded

and fled, allowing the British infantry to enfilade the Continentals while Tarleton's dragoons sliced into their rear. In all, the Americans sustained roughly 1200 casualties, with large numbers of Continentals taken prisoner. Gates himself shamefully abandoned the army on the battlefield and ran for safety in Charlotte Town, leaving the dispirited remnants to make their own way back to Hillsborough. With this latest battlefield success, and the destruction of organized Continental resistance in the region, Cornwallis was ready to advance into North Carolina in the next phase of his offensive plan.[7]

Yet, Cornwallis was compelled to pause and reorient his tactical focus on the rapidly growing insurgent attacks on Loyalist forces in South Carolina. Tarleton was dispatched to patrol the area, and on 19 August the British Legion won another smashing victory, catching Thomas Sumter's partisan command foolishly exposed in their camp at Fishing Creek. Tarleton's dragoons easily scattered the partisans and nearly bagged Sumter in the process. On that same day, a mixed battalion of 500 Tory Provincial and standing militiamen was badly beaten by 200 mounted Patriots at Musgrove's Mill. Despite the disparity in forces, the Loyalists lost 63 killed and 70 taken prisoner in exchange for 4 killed and 12 wounded on the Patriot side. From Cornwallis' perspective, Musgrove's Mill was the latest in the string of battlefield failures by the Loyalist militia, which stood in stark relief to the combat record of Cornwallis' regular units. Despite the rosy promises of the expatriate Loyalists, all indications showed the Tory militia could not, unsupported, keep the insurgents in check.[8]

Orders to March

In Cornwallis' army, Maj. Patrick Ferguson was something of an odd man out. Originally a major of the 71st Regiment of Foot (Highlanders), Ferguson gained positive attention from General Clinton for his good battlefield performance and innovative practices during the New York and New Jersey campaigns. Shortly after the capture of Charleston, Clinton appointed Ferguson as the Inspector General of Militia, and ordered him to Ninety-Six to organize the Loyalist militia. Ferguson received a battalion from the Provincial Corps of America, approximately 125 New England Loyalists, to serve as trainers and cadre for the Carolina militia. In the hierarchy of the British army, Provincials were neither regulars nor militia, as they were American born Loyalists recruited and organized under the authority of the Royal governor, and enlisted for full time service during the war. Unlike the militia, the Provincials were paid and equipped, and drilled to the same standard as regulars and performed just as well during the early battles of the Revolution.[9]

Working diligently over the summer of 1780, Ferguson enrolled around 5000 men in Loyalist militia regiments; of that number he enlisted around 1500 militiamen of the best, generally single and landless men, into active service for six month. Ferguson drilled his corps in standard British infantry tactics, dense columns of troops performing volley fire and shock action with the bayonet. In common with many other British officers of the period, Ferguson felt that bayonet-armed infantry were unequalled in battle. In fact, Ferguson opined to Clinton that the British infantry had "gain'd that superiority in the woods over the Rebels which they once claimed!" Ferguson also took his men on patrols into the eastern foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to toughen them up and gain some operational experiences. Tory forays into the previously unmolested sanctuary areas aroused concern in the "Overmountain" region, those Patriot settlements on the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains.[10]

Despite considerable effort from Ferguson and his Provincial cadre, morale and dedication within the ranks of the Loyalist militia was never quite as good as their Patriot enemies. The string of defeats at the hands of the Rebel insurgents during the summer of 1780 merely deepened the sense of moral inferiority the Loyalists had developed early in the war. Moreover, Cornwallis harbored deep reservations about Ferguson's fitness for an independent command: "I am afraid of his getting to the frontier of N. Carolina and playing us some cussed trick." Cornwallis expressed his reservations to Clinton about the subject: "He [Ferguson] says he is sure he can depend upon [the militia] for doing their duty and fighting well; but I am sorry to say that his own experience as well as that of every officer is totally against him." Lt. Col. Nisbet Balfour, British commander of Ninety-Six, who saw Ferguson regularly during that summer of 1780, drew a similar conclusion: "As to Ferguson, his ideas are so wild and sanguine…it would be dangerous to trust him with the conduct of any plan."[11]

Incredibly, Cornwallis overcame his reservations and decided on a risky, but potentially winning plan to employ the Loyalist militia in an independent offensive role: Major Ferguson was ordered take his corps into western North Carolina to continue recruiting and organizing Tory militia companies, protect Loyalists, and suppress the Rebels. By doing so, Cornwallis expected Ferguson to stabilize the security situation to the west sufficiently to allow the British regulars to resume their march into North Carolina after gathering in the fall harvest. At the time a seemingly minor change in the operational plan (so minor that Cornwallis did not clearly notify Clinton of his decision), Cornwallis' decision set in motion a

train of events which led to the complete disruption of the British strategy in the Carolinas in the space of six weeks.[12]

Operating in accordance with Cornwallis' order, Ferguson's corps left Ninety-Six in late August 1780, marching some 50 miles northwest along the Broad River to the suspected Rebel enclave of Gilbert Town. Arriving in the town on 7 September 1780 to find the place empty of hostile Patriots, Ferguson set up a temporary forward base. Tory patrols were sent out to look for rebels, while Provincial cadre worked on training a fresh group of 500 North Carolina Loyalist recruits. Possibly feeling a bit overconfident in his position, Ferguson issued a threatening proclamation to "Back Country" rebel settlements across the Blue Ridge Mountains—a message which Ferguson would soon have abundant cause to regret: "If they did not desist from their opposition to British arms, he [Ferguson] would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay their country waste with fire and sword."[13]

Ferguson Stirs Up a Hornet's Nest

Ferguson's message was delivered to Col. Isaac Shelby, commander of the Burke County North Carolina militia regiment, via Samuel Phillips, a paroled prisoner and kinsman of Shelby's. Shelby, a prewar militia leader with extensive experience in the Shawnee border skirmishes, supported the Patriot cause and had successfully led his riflemen in several Patriot victories, most recently at Musgrove's Mill. Well aware of the growing threat posed by Ferguson's recruiting efforts, Shelby already had plans in place to attack Ferguson's patrols, but after the completion of the fall harvest. Provoked by Ferguson's threats and presence so close to the frontier settlements, Shelby decided to organize a punitive expedition to eliminate Ferguson and the threat from the Tory militia corps. Shelby first rode to nearby Washington County, North Carolina where he convinced Col. John Sevier of the need for immediate action. Messengers were dispatched to Col. William Campbell of Virginia, and Col. Charles McDowell of Burke County, North Carolina, calling for a militia rendezvous at Sycamore Shoals (near modern Elizabethton, Tennessee) on 25 September 1780. Each riflemen was ordered to assemble with their own rifle, and accoutrements, along with a basic supply of food, principally ground corn and maple sugar.[14]

Lacking specie and Continental dollars, Shelby and Sevier were forced to appropriate the Burke County treasury to pay for ammunition and supplies. Fresh gunpowder was made at a nearby mill, while lead for rifle balls was hastily dug from a nearby mountain cove. As there was not

enough time to preserve meat, a small beef herd would provide fresh meat for the men during the approach march. Their preparations complete, the Patriot detachments mustered at Sycamore Shoals on 25 September 1780 to organize for war. The requirement to maintain security against Indian raids meant only a portion of manpower from each county regiment was available for extended service. Colonels John Sevier and Isaac Shelby each led a regiment of some 240 men; Colonel Campbell brought the largest regimental detachment, 400 men, while company-sized elements came from Carolina and Georgia settlements on the eastern slope of the mountains. After camping overnight in the open, around 1200 Whig militiamen assembled for a hasty prayer from a local clergymen before marching towards Quaker Meadows, a spot west of modern day Hickory, North Carolina to meet further reinforcements.

A muster soon revealed that two of Sevier's men had disappeared, likely Tory sympathizers who had deserted to warn Ferguson of the Patriot expedition. Determined to retain the element of surprise, the Patriot expedition marched along a less traveled route to the Quaker Meadows rendezvous. Once at Quaker Meadows, the men remained in camp to take shelter from heavy rainfall, while a council of colonels sent a message to General Gates' headquarters in Hillsborough, asking for supplies and a Continental officer to take charge of the expedition. Preoccupied with his own problems, Gates ignored the request. After learning of Gates' rebuff, Shelby avoided a potential crisis of command by shrewdly nominating Campbell as the overall commander. As a Virginian, Campbell was an outsider and thus less likely to arouse resentment than a commander from North Carolina. Resuming their movements, the Patriot column entered Gilbert Town only to find it empty of Ferguson and his Tories, who had decamped heading to unknown parts.[15]

The Search for Ferguson's Corps

In the intervening time, Ferguson had marched his corps southward to an encampment on the Broad River in Tryon County, South Carolina. While in camp, Ferguson received the first indications of Patriot pursuit from a Loyalist scout on 30 September. Ferguson inexplicably lingered in camp for three days, doing little more than to send a report to Cornwallis along with a request for reinforcements from Ninety-Six (a request refused by the new base commander, Lt. Col. John Harris Cruger). After an unsuccessful appeal for reinforcements from local Tories, Ferguson broke camp and by 3 October his command had marched to Tate's Plantation, in the fork of Buffalo Creek and the east bank of the Broad River, a location still 50 miles from Charlotte. While resting at Tate's, Ferguson wrote conflicting letters to Cornwallis; the first implied Ferguson was seeking a battle,

while the next revealed Ferguson's concerns about a battle when he sent a second request for reinforcements. After remaining idle at Tate's for three days, Ferguson abruptly ordered his men to break camp before daybreak on 6 October. After crossing the Broad River at Cherokee Ford, and completing a march of 16 miles in driving rain, Ferguson directed his men off the Charlotte Town road to a campsite atop a spur of high ground running from Kings Mountain. While the Tory militiamen remained idle in camp trying to stay dry, Ferguson wrote letters requesting reinforcements from Charlotte Town and nearby Tory militia units.[16]

Meanwhile, the Patriot commanders had marched south along the west bank of the Broad River, under the mistaken assumption that Ferguson was withdrawing southwestwards towards Ninety-Six. Arrival of two South Carolina militia officers, Col. James Williams and Col. Edward Lacey brought confusion as to Ferguson's correction location. Williams asserted that Ferguson was heading towards Ninety-Six, while Lacey insisted that Ferguson was rapidly retreating to the east to rejoin Cornwallis' army. After some heated discussion and interrogation, the Patriot commanders accepted Lacey's version of events. After sending out fast scouts to pinpoint Ferguson's whereabouts, the Patriot commanders set out from their camp leading a flying column of the mounted men in fast pursuit, with the dismounted men following in support. After briefly gaining and losing Ferguson's trail along the Broad River, the Patriot flying column arrived at The Cowpens on 6 October for a rendezvous with more Patriot militia. While the men feasted on fresh beef and corn confiscated from a local Tory, the Patriot regimental commanders analyzed a report from a trusted scout that confirmed Ferguson's location atop Kings Mountain—still within striking distance but also dangerously close to Tarleton's dragoons at Charlotte Town.[17]

The Patriot Approach March

After a contentious council of war, the Patriots broke camp and resumed the pursuit in a final bid to catch Ferguson. The flying column marched through the night under a steady rain, where a lost trail and short rest halt kept the mounted column from reaching Cherokee Ford until daylight. To protect their hunting rifles and gunpowder from the moisture, the men wrapped their rifles with shirts, jackets, or blankets. Fearing that Ferguson might still escape, Isaac Shelby compelled the other Patriot commanders to continue their approach march without a rest halt.[18]

Once across the Cherokee Ford, the Patriots received several bits of priceless human intelligence. One woman described the exact loca-

tion of the Loyalist campsite on a spur of Kings Mountain close to a spring of water; a location which Maj. Joseph Winston recognized as a familiar hunting campsite. Most helpfully, one source revealed that Ferguson wore a civilian red and white checked duster over his uniform, thus making target identification of Major Ferguson much easier. Further interrogation revealed that, other than posting a meager picket force, the Tories had not prepared defenses or conducted battle drills for a defense of their hilltop camp.[19]

The Patriot Deployment

Around 1500 on the afternoon of 7 October 1780, the Patriot force arrived in the vicinity of Kings Mountain. A low ridge to the northeast provided concealment for their horses, which were tied off and left under the guard of a detachment of riflemen. The Patriot officers quietly assembled atop the ridgeline for a leader's reconnaissance. Lacking trained soldiers and the means for communications once the battle commenced, the Patriot commanders had to make a simple plan of attack: one column of Patriot regiments, led by Colonel Campbell would encircle the ridge from the south, while a second column, led by Colonel Shelby, would encircle the northern face. Once the encirclement was complete, the Patriot commanders would signal the attack with a rousing battlecry. No provision was made for complex maneuver or movement, no rehearsals were done, and each regimental commander was trusted to fight his own battle. Once the enemy was engaged, the Patriots would fight until every Tory was killed or dispersed. As the Patriot regiments assembled in line, the men made last minute preparations, checking rifles for readiness and inserting small slips of paper in their hats, a crude means of identifying friendlies on the battlefield. Fortuitously for the Patriots, their arrival coincided with the absence of a sizeable Loyalist foraging party, which left Ferguson with exactly 982 men on the mountain to resist the onslaught of over 900 Whig attackers.[20]

At first glance, Kings Mountain seemed to give great advantage to the defending Loyalists. The open top of the ridgeline afforded a commanding view of the surrounding low ground, while steep slopes on three sides of the spur inhibited large-scale troop movement. A nearby spring provided a ready source of water, and the road network provided easy movement of reinforcements from Charlotte, or if necessary, easy retreat towards Cornwallis' army. However, the disadvantages of the position soon became apparent as the battle was joined. The sides of the ridge were covered with mature trees and large boulders, which provided the Whig riflemen effective cover against Loyalist musket fire. The same broken terrain hindered the Loyalist's ability to execute coordinated bayonet charges. Ferguson's

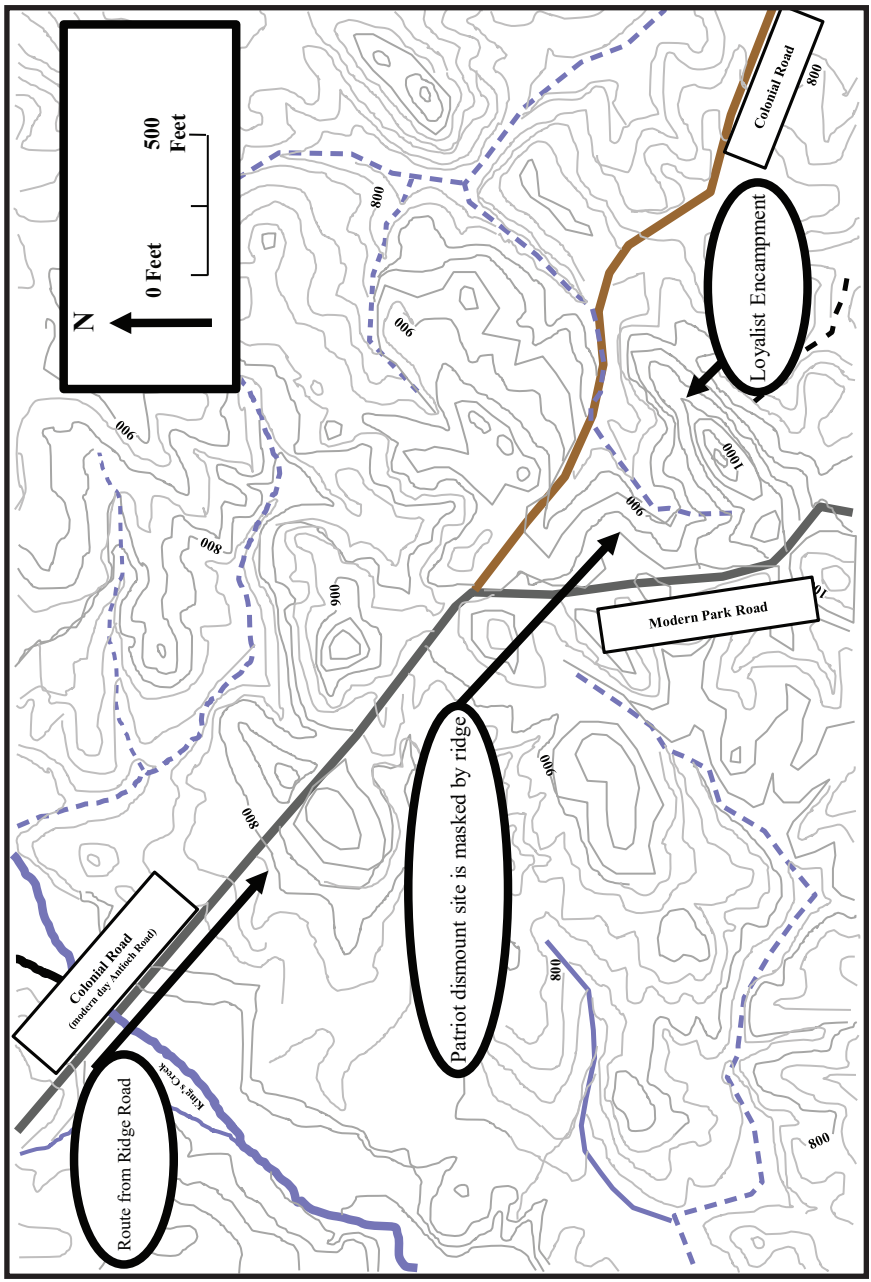

Figure 2. Major Features around Kings Mountain. Graphic created by the author.

position atop the geographic crest of the ridgeline left his men with little to no cover or concealment. Furthermore, the positioning of the Loyalist troops on the high ground worsened the natural tendency of musket armed troops to fire high; after the battle, many Patriot riflemen reported that the Loyalist volleys passed harmlessly overhead. Last of all, Ferguson did not order his men to construct obstacles and fortifications, leaving the densely packed Loyalists without cover or concealment.[21]

Opening Engagements

As the Patriot divisions approached Kings Mountain, scouts were able to neutralize several Tory pickets without firing a shot , and the sodden terrain allowed the Patriot columns to approach without the telltale noise or dust plumes. The Patriot plan quickly went awry when Maj. Joseph Winston's regiment, designated as the unit blocking Ferguson's line of retreat mistakenly marched to the wrong hill, while Col. Benjamin Cleveland's men sank into a swampy patch of ground on the north face of the ridgeline. To the southwest, one of Campbell's scouts shot a Tory militiaman, thus alerting the Loyalists to the presence of an enemy force. Realizing that the Tory force had been alerted, Campbell ordered his men into the attack without waiting for the closing of the cordon. Battlecries from the Virginia riflemen were quickly answered by the long drum roll which ordered the Tory militiamen into fighting formation. The narrow ridgeline constrained Ferguson's deployment options, and he ordered his men into what was later described as columns of regiments-formations best suited for bayonet charges. Seen from above, the Loyalist corps probably resembled an elongated hedgehog, with bayonets oriented to point downhill. The Loyalist officers mounted horses and were armed with swords; Ferguson was easily recognized by his distinctive checked duster, sword in left hand and a silver whistle which was used to issue commands to his troops.[22]

Once Ferguson realized the presence of enemy troops so close to the northwest, he ordered the Provincial battalion from its position near the campsite to reinforce the line. As Campbell's men ascended the hill, a disciplined Provincial bayonet charge swept down the hill, stabbing several Patriots, who lacking bayonets were largely defenseless. The remaining Whig riflemen scattered and ran, many running down the saddle before being collected again by Campbell and his commanders. The Provincials regrouped on the high ground, and in turn repulsed Shelby's and Sevier's men with bayonet charges—all orchestrated by Major Ferguson. While the see-saw battle took place along the shallow part of the ridge, the remaining Patriot regiments had closed the ring around Kings Mountain. Steadied by their officers, the Patriot riflemen quickly adapted their tactics. When

faced with a bayonet charge, those Patriots in the path simply withdrew out of reach, while riflemen on the flanks took cover and engaged the Loyalists with enfilade fire. Slowed by combination of steep terrain and Tory musket fire, the remaining Patriot regiments slowly tightened the cordon as the riflemen individually fired and advanced up the ridge, moving from cover to cover. Faced with mounting casualties, and unable to effectively close to bayonet range, the Loyalists were soon forced to halt their downhill bayonet charges.[23]

The Patriots Rally

As the ineffectiveness of Ferguson's tactics became apparent, and ammunition supplies ran low, morale in the Tory militia ranks slumped. Recognizing their hopeless position, Ferguson's second in command, Capt. Abraham DePeyster suggested surrender; to which, Ferguson snarled he would never capitulate "to such a damned banditti."[24] Ferguson and his officers rode along the perimeter, exhorting their men and tearing down the first of several white flags of surrender to appear. The swarming tactics of the Patriot riflemen eventually swamped the Tories, and the intermingled men from Shelby's, Sevier's, and Campbell's regiments gained the high ground on the western sector of the ridge. The surviving Tories were soon crowded into a lower saddle of ground near their campsite, where they were raked by accurate rifle fire from above and below. At that juncture, Ferguson led a final bayonet charge to the southeast in an attempt to break the Patriot cordon closest to the main road. Ferguson was almost immediately hit by multiple rifle balls and knocked dead from his saddle. Command of the Loyalist remnants devolved upon Captain DePeyster, who had little choice but to call for quarter. The Overmountain Men, fueled by anger over British atrocities, "hurried" the Loyalists "into oblivion" before the Patriot commanders could restore order in the ranks.[25]

The Aftermath

After an hour of brutal combat, the battle was over, resulting in the near-total annihilation of Ferguson's Provincial corps, less the foraging party which escaped the encirclement after a brief skirmish. In total, the British lost 225 killed, 123 wounded, and 716 captured, with material losses including some 1500 rifles and muskets, and several wagons with ordnance stores. In return, the Patriots suffered only 28 killed and 62 wounded. After collecting the prisoners in a corner of the ridge, the Overmountain Men turned to treating their injured and preparing for withdrawal at daybreak the following morning. Unwounded Loyalist prisoners were allowed to wrap Ferguson's remains in a raw beef hide and bury the body

in one of the draws off the ridge. Otherwise, the hapless Tories were left unattended where they lay on the battlefield, although the single surviving Loyalist surgeon was allowed to treat his own wounded. At daybreak a small detail of Virginia men oversaw the hasty burial of the dead by Loyalist prisoners and Tory family members who had been drawn to the sounds of the battle. Before the main body of the Overmountain Men departed, the spoils of the battle—mostly guns, powder and shot, and personal items looted from the dead—were shared out as a means of compensation for the expedition before the wagons and tents were set on fire. The main body of Patriots departed during the midmorning, accompanied by the litters of wounded and the ambulatory prisoners. The prisoners was forced to carry away the valuable stock of captured firearms, after their flints had been carefully removed.[26]

In spite of their stunning victory, many of the Patriots still harbored grudges against the Tories in general, and against many of the most prominent prisoners in particular. Angered over news that Lieutenant Colonel Cruger had recently hanged several Whig militiamen at Ninety-Six, the Patriot regimental commanders convened a hasty court martial at Biggerstaff's Old Fields on 14 October. Nine Tories were hung before Campbell convinced the others to halt the executions. Still fearing pursuit from Tarleton' dragoons, the Overmountain Men immediately resumed their withdrawal, marching an additional 32 miles until the entire force crossed the flooded Catawba River early on 16 October. After resting until daybreak, the Patriot army disbanded with the individual regiments heading to their home counties. Tired and concerned with their own escape, the Patriots allowed many of their prisoners to escape while on the march. Only a small remnant of 130 prisoners was delivered to the Continental Army at Hillsborough by a contingent of troops from Campbell's command.[27]

Alerted of the disaster by Ferguson's foraging detachment, Cornwallis briefly ordered Tarleton to pursue and recover the prisoners, only to quickly countermand the order after he took stock of the situation. Overextended, short of supplies, plagued by sickness in the ranks, and suddenly bereft of his flank security, Cornwallis realized he had no choice but to abandon his offensive plans, and withdraw to South Carolina.[28] News of Ferguson's destruction further depressed Tory morale, and recruiting dropped off as most Loyalists were no longer willing to openly risk their lives and property in service to England. Short of men and supplies, and lacking the essential support of the Tory militia, Cornwallis had little choice after his pyrrhic victory at Guilford Courthouse in March 1781 but to abandon his effort to conquer the Carolinas. After refitting his shattered army, Corn-

wallis marched out of the Carolinas forever, seeking a decisive victory against the Continentals in Virginia; a campaign which ended in ignominy at Yorktown in October 1781.[29]

Cornwallis' departure left the British garrisons in South Carolina isolated and unsupported. Gen. Nathanael Greene gladly seized the initiative forfeited by Cornwallis, and marched his Continentals into South Carolina, where he worked cooperatively with Patriot militia bands to eliminate British forward operating bases. Despite some tactical reverses (Greene never won a single battle while in command of the Southern Army) the lack of an organized militia and sufficient field forces left the British without good options in the Carolinas. By April 1781 the British had entirely ceded control of the interior, holding on only to the coastal enclave of Charleston. The last major battle at Eutaw Springs in September 1781 cemented the American control of the countryside, and aside from a few insignificant Tory raids, the British remained isolated and impotent in Charleston until the end of the war.[30]

Notes

1. David K. Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775-80* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 59.

2. Robert S. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 79-81.

3. Andrew D. Dauphinee, "Lord Charles Cornwallis and the Loyalists: A Study in British Pacification during the American Revolution, 1775-1781" (Philadelphia: Temple University, Master's Thesis, 2011), 15-16.

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8. Dauphinee, "Lord Charles Cornwallis and the Loyalists," 39.

9. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution*, 149-150.

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14. Dameron, 30.

15. Brown, *Kings Mountain and Cowpens*, 48-49.

16. Peckham, *Sources of American Independence*, 295.

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18. Dameron, 43.

19. Brown, *Kings Mountain and Cowpens*, 60.

20. Brown, 63-64.

21. Robert M. Dunkerley, *Kings Mountain Walking Tour Guide* (Pittsburgh, PA: Dorrance Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), 13-15.

22. Brown, *Kings Mountain and Cowpens*, 65-66.

23. Wilma Dykeman, *With Fire and Sword: The Battle of Kings Mountain 1780* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1978), 62-63.

24. Dykeman, 65.

25. Dykeman, 65-66.

26. Dameron, *Kings Mountain*, 82-83.

27. Dunkerley, *Kings Mountain Walking Tour Guide*, 26-27.

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29. John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), 383.

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Part III

Suggested Stands and Vignettes

Introduction

The next portion of the staff ride is the field study phase, which encompasses walking the battlefield of Kings Mountain, and discussing aspects of the battle while on the ground where the action took place. A considerable portion of the field study will include strategic and operational details to place the battle in its proper historical context in order to help the student better understand the events before, during, and after the battle, critically analyze the significance of those events, and from that analysis discuss relevant insights into the profession of arms.

Methodology

The field-study phase consists of walking to particular locations on the battlefield and participating in a discussing of events using the ODA structuring technique (orientation, description, and analysis). The structuring and sequence of the stands are done so by the end of the terrain walk, once the students have had time to thoroughly analyze pertinent aspects of the battle.

Orientation

The purpose of an orientation is to ensure participants understand the physical characteristics of the location as it was during the battle. The initial orientation at the start of the terrain walk should be detailed, with subsequent orientation tailored to the needs of the students. Here the instructor can gauge student situational involvment with some simple open ended questions. Suggested minimums include:

A. The previous location. If visible, point it out. If beyond line of sight, use a map board and cardinal directions.

B. The current location on the map with key terrain features. Highlight any differences in the terrain or vegetation at the time of the battle and today.

C. Weather and light data at the time of the battle.

D. Time of the day and season of the year.

E. Point out the approximate location for units and any permanent or temporary structures that were present during the battle.

Description

The purpose of the description is the ensure students are familiar with the historical events that occurred in the vicinity of the stand location. A common method is to chronologically review the following key elements:

A. Unit movements.

B. Combat actions: attacks, maneuvers, defends, withdraws.

C. Most importantly, leader movements, location, decisions and action.

D. Individual soldier acts of bravery or cowardice.

As much as possible, the instructor should minimize lecturing in favor of student led description, as a means of maximizing experiential learning by the briefer. Here the instructor should a specific study area to each student, based on a historical figure (Maj. Patrick Ferguson, or Col. William Campbell, for example), areas based on warfighting functions (Movement and Maneuver, Fires, Intelligence, Protection, Sustainment, Mission Command, and Leadership) or specific battlefield functions, such as Cavalry, Infantry, Quartermaster, and so on. After the orientation, the instructor should ask the student to describe character actions, or their findings based on their specific study area. Role playing here is particularly good at drawing out insights as the role player can try to explain the character's possible decision making process with the information at hand. Open ended questions are key here to help flesh out details, and the instructor should correct errors or omissions as needed.

Analysis

The heart of the staff ride consists in the analysis portion of each stand. Open ended questions are directed at the students to get them to consider the how and why behind the action, thereby gaining some insight into the timeless aspects of warfare. Generally speaking, analytical questions fall into two categories, historical evaluations and modern relevancies:

A. Historical Evaluations. Here, the instructor guides the students through questions regarding the historical leaders, their units and systems in their historical context. More than "Monday morning quarterbacking," questions here should focus on the factors (facts, assumptions, mental and physical factors) that influenced a leader decision. Other focus areas should include the exercise of command and control, how

leaders trained and prepared for combat, and how weapon systems were integrated into combat.

B. Modern Relevancies. Here, the instructor helps participants draw out relevant insights for the military professional. One method is to view historical factors within the context of modern doctrine. For example: "Consider hasty versus deliberate mission planning in the context of the historical attack plan; what could they have done differently?" Or, "Using Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-90, Chapter 4 as a guide, what were some defensive planning shortfalls?" Open ended questions here are particularly useful, so as to avoid simple yes or no answers: "Why did a particular action fail or succeed?" Or, "What were some of the factors leading to the successful friendly attack?"

C. Encourage debate and disagreement among students, and certainly point out that there are often multiple points of view to an issue. The instructor should be prepared to respectfully challenge student to logically defend their arguments. Here, humility and tact are essential, as many times students will reveal fresh insights not readily apparent even to an experienced instructor. Also, the instructor should encourage students to record their thoughts and observations *as they occur*, rather than waiting for the end of the terrain walk, which will make for a more productive integration session.[1]

Miscellaneous

The suggested route for the Kings Mountain staff ride incorporates 14 stands which are all accessible by foot within the bounds of the National Park. A full itinerary from start to finish should take approximately 6 hours. Stands 1 and 2 reinforce the preliminary study class and visitor's center visit (video and exhibits), giving the student a good grasp of the strategic and operational context for the Kings Mountain battle. The remaining stands focus on the tactical fight.

The 1.5 mile walking trail is well maintained but has some steep grades, and the adjacent woods harbor poison ivy, stinging insects, and venomous snakes. Consequently, students should wear appropriate field wear (hiking boots and long pants) and insect repellant. The trail has no toilet or water facilities so students should carry water and make a restroom stop before leaving the visitor's center.

Each stand is standardized to support an order flow to the terrain walk. Directions help the instructor guide students from one stand location to the next. The orientation paragraph aids the instructor in accurately orienting the students to the historical terrain and actions. The description section provides a narrative guide with information specific to the stand. Primary source vignettes are included, human interest stories that provide a personal context to the discussion, thereby helping to illuminate the "face of battle." Finally, suggested analysis questions help the instructor stimulate critical thinking and discussion about the "how" and "why" of the events discussed at the stand.

Stand List and Proposed Itinerary

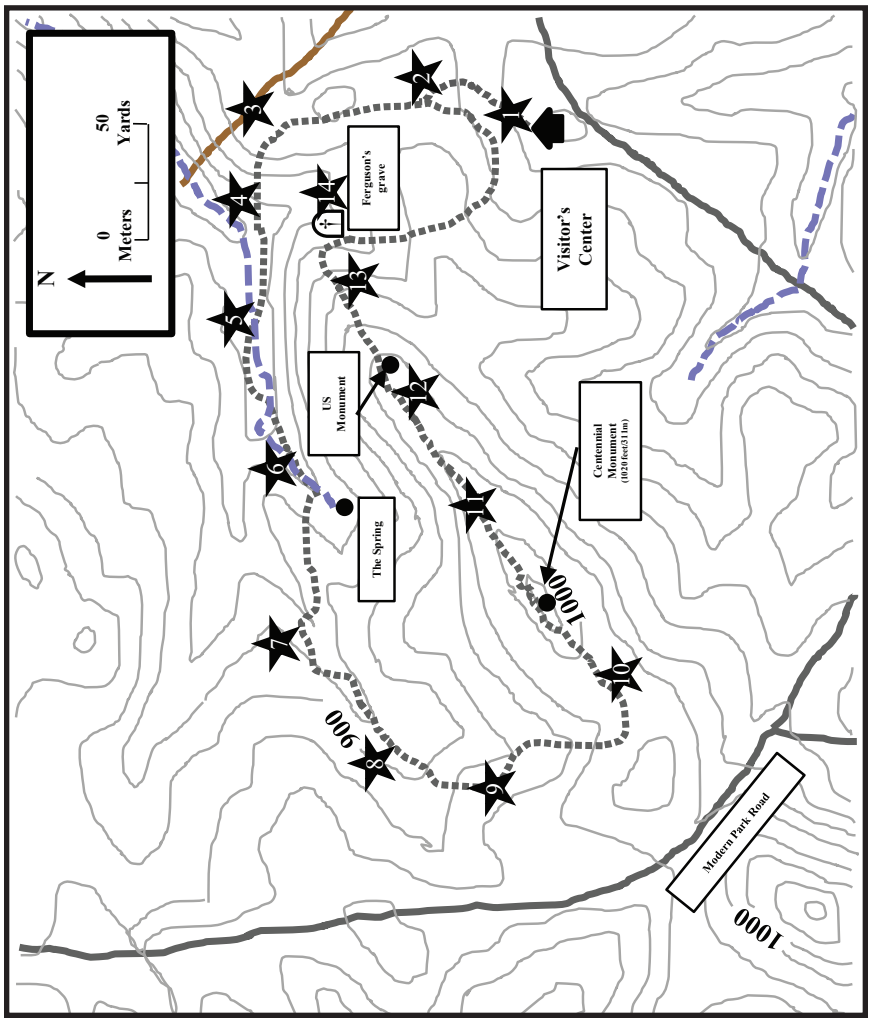

Figure 3. Suggested Routes and Stands. Graphic created by the author.

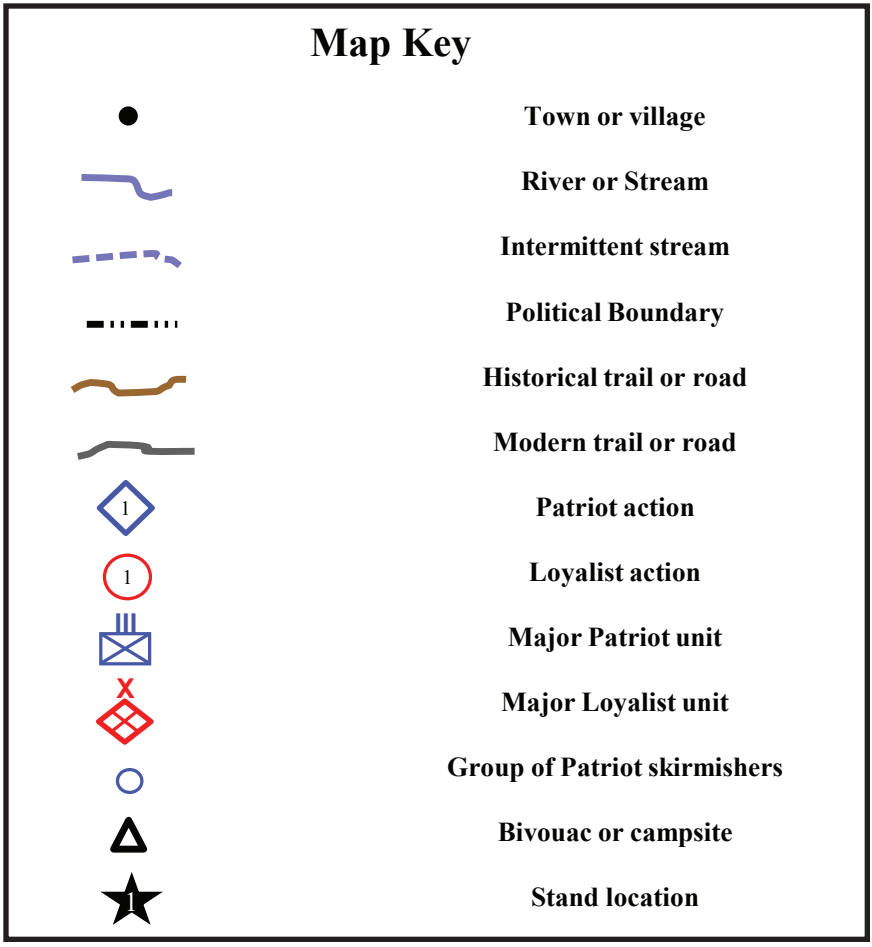

Figure 4. Map Key for all Subsequent Maps. Graphic created by the author.

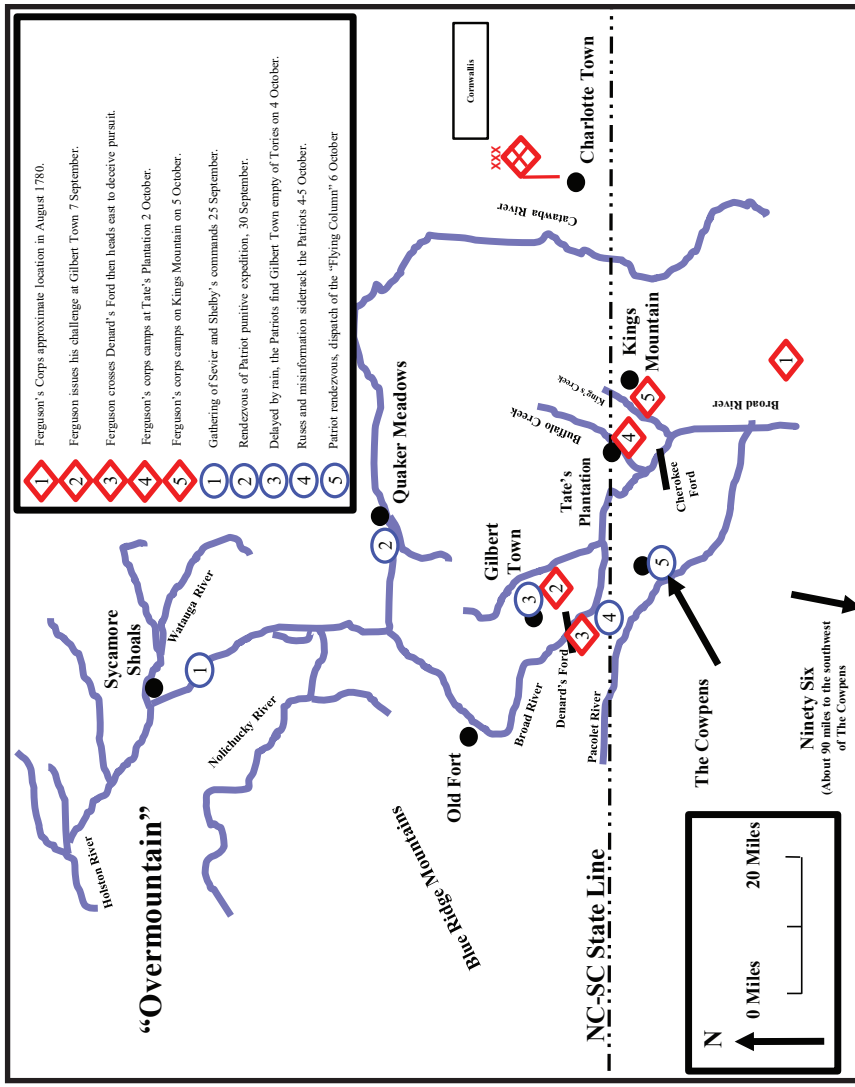

Figure 5. Operational Situation. Graphic created by the author.

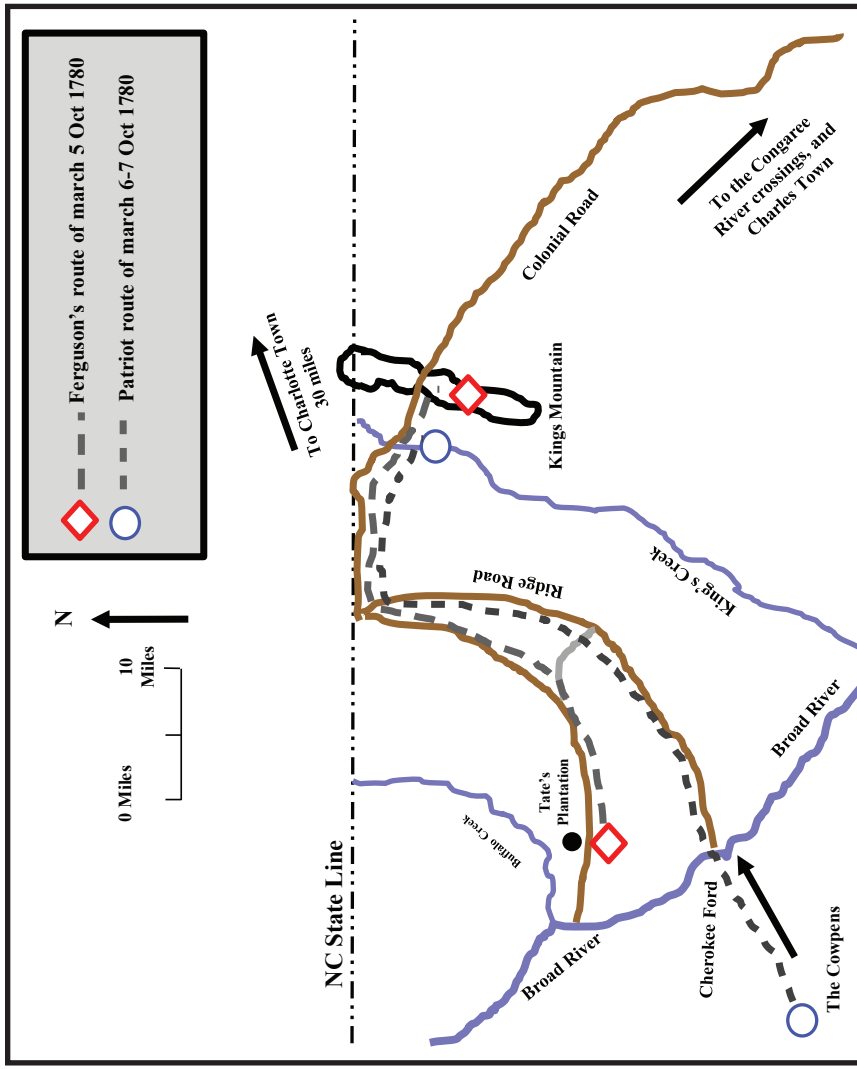

Figure 6. Operational Movements. Graphic created by the author.

Stand 1: Major Ferguson's Road to Kings Mountain (Operational Orientation)

Directions: The Kings Mountain Visitors Center is administered by the National Park Service (NPS), and is located off South Carolina 216, at 2625 Park Road, Blacksburg, SC 29702. Upon arrival at the visitor's center, the suggested starting point for the event is the official NPS video. Once complete, direct students to assemble at the back veranda of the visitor's center, overlooking Kings Mountain. From this location, all subsequent stands are done in a counterclockwise movement along the battlefield trail.

Orientation: Standing at the back of the veranda, first orient the students to the cardinal directions of the compass before orienting them on Kings Mountain proper, clearly visible to the northeast. Kings Mountain is located approximately 35 miles from Charlotte, North Carolina to the northeast, 75 miles from the key British logistics base at Ninety-Six to the southwest, while Camden is some 90 miles to the southeast. The state line between North and South Carolina is around 1.6 miles due north of the visitor's center. About 100 yards to the north is the trace of the historic road that both Tories and Patriots used in their approach to Kings Mountain. Compared to today, the ridgeline of 1780 was covered with mature trees, but with little undergrowth as free ranging cattle would have closely cropped the vegetation. The battle took place in mid-October of 1780, so some leaves were still present on the trees, but many probably had fallen. The weather in the days leading to the battle was dominated with a chilly rain, with the consequent mud and swollen streams to inhibit cross country movements.

Description: By October 1780, the American Revolution had been ongoing since April 1775, and both sides were weary from the protracted struggle. Popular support for the war in England was not strong; yet, King George III remained determined to pursue the war, hoping to defeat the Continental regular forces, and induce the civilian population to return to obedience. But Great Britain faced many challenges in pursuing their strategy, as the war in the American had turned into a costly venture for a nation saddled with a heavy debt and old enemies, France and Spain, close at hand. By 1780, British strategy had turned towards the South. Hoping to take advantage of the latent Loyalist (or Tory) population in the Carolinas, Sir Henry Clinton took advantage of British control of the seas to quickly mass and project combat power in the South. Despite some temporary setbacks, British amphibious forces captured Savannah and Augusta in Georgia, and took Charleston in a well-executed siege operation.

Surprised by Clinton's bold move to the south, the Americans badly fumbled their response. A buildup of Continentals and Carolina militia was caught in the surrender of Charleston in May 1780, and a follow up force of Continentals led by Gen. Horatio Gates was largely destroyed by Lord Charles Cornwallis at Camden in August 1780. Even after disposing of the enemy regular forces, Cornwallis' faced a major challenge, pacifying a restive state with only 8,000 regular and provincial troops. Clinton and Cornwallis both well understood the need for an organized militia to help pacify the interior and free up the regulars for offensive duties. Maj. Patrick Ferguson was appointed inspector of militia of the Carolinas and Georgia with orders to enroll young males into six months of active militia service. Originally, Cornwallis was to remain in South Carolina to continue pacification work until the Loyalist militia was efficient enough to take over. Instead, Cornwallis decided to aggressively advance his offensive timetable to take advantage of the Continental weakness following Gates's defeat. In August 1780, Cornwallis ordered Ferguson to lead the American volunteers and a field army of the active militia towards the Blue Ridge Mountains, to screen Cornwallis' left flank while he marched into North Carolina. Once in the piedmont, Ferguson was to occupy Gilbert's Town, recruit new militiamen and suppress the hostile Whigs. American strategy during the Revolution was much simpler and defensive in nature, focused on exhausting the British will while avoiding destruction of the Continental army. To counter the British move into the Carolinas, Congress attempted to send sufficient Continental forces to keep the British off balance and unable to consolidate their gains—a defensive strategy unhinged by Horatio Gates' blundering at Camden. Until Congress could reconstitute the Continental army in the south, isolated Patriot guerilla bands were all that was available to harass British forces.

After a long march, Ferguson and his Loyalist corps arrived in Gilbert's Town on 7 September 1780. Tory presence so close to the mountains, and Ferguson's threatening demands were enough to provoke the mustering of a Patriot punitive expedition, organized by Col. Isaac Shelby.

Vignettes

Maj. Patrick Ferguson's path to his doom at Kings Mountain began with his receipt of instructions from Sir Henry Clinton in May 1780:

> By virtue of the commission of Inspector of Militia, with which you are vested, you will use your best endeavors, without loss of time, to form into corps all the young or unmarried men of the provinces of Georgia and the two Caro-

lina's as opportunity shall offer, to serve under the orders of Lt. Gen. Earl Cornwallis, or other general officer, commanding in these provinces.

This militia you will form into companies consisting of, from 50 to 100 men each, and will when the local and other circumstances will admit of it, form battalions consisting of, from 6 to 12 companies each, allowing such as cannot conveniently be assembled in battalions, to remain as independent companies.

Each company is to be under a lieutenant chosen by the men, to whom you may add, if you find it necessary, an ensign from the non-commissioned officers and others who have served in the army, to assist in establishing a certain degree of order, regularity, and discipline, which however must be done with great caution, so as not to disgust the men or mortify unnecessarily the love of freedom.

On every occasion you will pay particular attention to restrain the militia from offering violence to innocent and inoffensive people, and by all means in your power protect the aged, the infirm, the women and children of every denomination from insult or outrage, endeavoring as much as possible to subsist your men and supply their wants at the expense of the known obstinate enemies of the King and constitution alone.

Beside this body of militia to act offensively with the army you will promote the establishment of a domestick militia for the maintenance of peace and good order throughout the country, composed of the men who have families, under their own officers, ready to assemble occasionally in their several districts.

These instructions and every thing relating to the militia to be subject to such alterations and restrictions as may be ordered by Lt. Gen. Earl Cornwallis or other general officer commanding His Majesty's forces in the Carolinas and Georgia for the time being...May 22nd 1780. Signed H. Clinton.[2]

In August 1780, Major Ferguson received his orders from Cornwallis to pacify the left flank of the British. After a largely fruitless upcountry sweep, Ferguson's corps arrived at Gilbert's Town in early September 1780. Undoubtedly frustrated at his lack of success, Ferguson sent a provocative verbal message to the Patriot militia officers in the Overmountain Country: "If [you] do not desist from their opposition to the British

arms, he [Ferguson] would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay their country waste with fire and sword."[3]

Col. Isaac Shelby responded to Ferguson's daring but ill-considered threat by persuading other militia commanders, chiefly Col. John Sevier, to muster their men at Gilbert's Town to form a punitive expedition to crush Ferguson's corps. Once assembled at Gilbert's Town on 4 October 1780, the militia colonels held a council of war, and sent a request for support to Gen. Horatio Gates, the commander of the Continental Southern Army:

> Sir, We have collected at this place about 1500 good men, drawn from Washington, Surry, Wilkes, Burk of North Carolina, and Washington County, Virginia, and expect to be joined in a few days by Colonel Williams of South Carolina with about a thousand more. As we have at this place called out militia without any order from the executive of our different states…we think such a body of men worthy of your attention and would request you to send a general officer immediately to take the command of such troops as may embody in this quarter. Our troops being militia, and but little acquainted with discipline, we would wish him to be a gentleman of address, and be able to keep a proper discipline, without disgusting the soldiery. Every assistance in our power shall be given the officer you may think proper to take command of us…We are in great need of ammunition, and hope you will endeavor to have us properly furnished. Colonel [Charles] McDowell will wait on you with this, who can inform you of the present situation of the enemy, and such other particulars respecting our troops as you may think necessary. Your most obedient and very able servants, Benj. Cleveland, Isaac Shelby, John Sevier, and W. Hampton, Wm. Campbell, Jo. Winston.[4]

Gates, consumed with his own affairs in the aftermath of the Camden disaster, declined to support the request, leaving the Whig commanders no choice but to go it alone without official sanction or support. Compared to the relatively well supplied Loyalist force, the Overmountain Men were ill-equipped; patriotic fervor and determination drove their attempt to destroy a sizeable and well organized Loyalist militia corps. Capt. David Vance, a North Carolina militia officer in the Patriot expedition, relates the decision:

> Then it was suggested by Shelby, that a sufficient force could be raised over the Mountains, with the assistance from Wilkes

> and Surrey counties, to defeat Ferguson. This was agreed to by all officers present. The troops were raised without Government orders; each man had to furnish his own provisions, arms, ammunition and horse, and all his equipage, without the value of a gun flint from the public; without pay, or expectation of pay or reward, even to the amount of a Continental dollar depreciated to 800 to 1. They were all volunteers; they were under no compulsion to go, but each man in advance consulted his own courage, well knowing he was going to fight before his return.[5]

After stirring up the Whig hornet's nest at Gilbert's Town, Ferguson marched to Denard's Ford on 1 October 1780, where he issued another provocative declaration:

> Gentlemen: Unless you wish to be eat up by an inundation of barbarians…I say, if you wish to be pinioned, robbed and murdered, and see your wives and daughters, in four days, abused by the dregs of mankind—in short if you wish or deserve to live, and bear the name of men, grasp your arms in a moment and run to camp. The Back Water men have crossed the mountains…if you chose to be degraded forever and ever by a set of mongrels, say so at once, and let your women turn their backs upon you, and look out for real men to protect them. Pat. Ferguson, Major 71st Regiment.[6]

Shortly afterwards, Ferguson received his first solid indication that the Overmountain Patriots were seeking battle. This intelligence impelled Ferguson to continue his withdrawal, but instead of taking the most direct route to Charlotte Town or Ninety-Six, Ferguson kept his militia corps close to the Broad River valley. Ferguson's erratic movements in the days leading to the battle a certain indecision, whether to risk a battle or withdrawal to safety. Diary entries by a Royal Provincial officer, Lieutenant Anthony Allaire, reflect Ferguson's indecision:

> Sunday, October 1st. Got in motion at five o'clock in the morning, and marched 12 miles to Denard's Ford of Broad River, and took up our old ground where we lay the [previous] 8th September.
>
> Monday, 2nd. Got in motion at four o'clock in the afternoon; forded Broad River; marched four miles; formed in line of action and lay on our arms. This night I had nothing but the canopy of heaven to cover me.

> Tuesday, 3rd. Got in motion at four o'clock in the morning; marched six miles to Camp's Ford of Second Broad river, forded it and continued on six miles to one Armstrong's plantation, on the banks of Sandy Run. Halted to refresh; at four o'clock got in motion; forded Sandy Run; marched seven miles to Buffalo creek; forded it; marched a mile farther and halted near one Tate's plantation.
>
> Friday, 6th. Got in motion at four oclock in the morning, and marched 16 miles to Little King's Mountain, where we took up our ground.[7]

During Ferguson's approach march towards Kings Mountain, a local Patriot spy by the name of Joseph Kerr gathered priceless information on Ferguson's dispositions. As Kerr displayed an obvious disability, he was able to move freely within the Loyalist camp without arousing suspicion:

> Declarant…joined Colonel Williams. From there they marched men to the Cowpens in order to join what were called the "Overmountain Troops" under the command of Colonels Sevier, Cleveland, and Shelby. Colonel Steen informed the other officers that this declarant was known to him as a faithful and efficient spy… [The Whig commanders] then held a council in the presence of this declarant. They knew that Ferguson, with his British and Tories was then stationed about 20 miles from them at Peter Quin's old place about six or seven miles from Kings Mountain…the result of this council held by the officers was that this declarant should go and reconnoiter Ferguson's position, which he did.
>
> He found the British and Tories encamped about 100 yards apart, and their arms stacked up and no sentinels. This declarant gained easy access to them by passing himself as a Tory… He ascertained from the Tories that they intended on the evening of that day to go from Quin's old place to the top of Kings Mountain and remain there for a few days in order to give protection to all the "rebels" who would join Ferguson's standard. After obtaining this information…this declarant returned the next day…he reached the encampment about sunset [6 October 1780]. The officers immediately collected round this declarant in order to ascertain what his discoveries had been. He gave a brief but circumstantial account of them…

> The conclusion was that they would march that very night in the direction of Kings Mountain, a distance he believes of about 27 miles.[8]

Analysis

1. What was the comparative strategic situation in 1780?

2. What were the comparative operational and campaign plans for the American and British sides?

3. How did Ferguson's execution of the plan meet, or fail to meet, Cornwallis' implied vision?

4. How did Ferguson's offensive mission meet Clinton's strategic vision?

5. What comparisons and contrasts can we draw about the employment of militia or irregular forces in the current or future operating environment?

Stand 2: The Tactical Situation

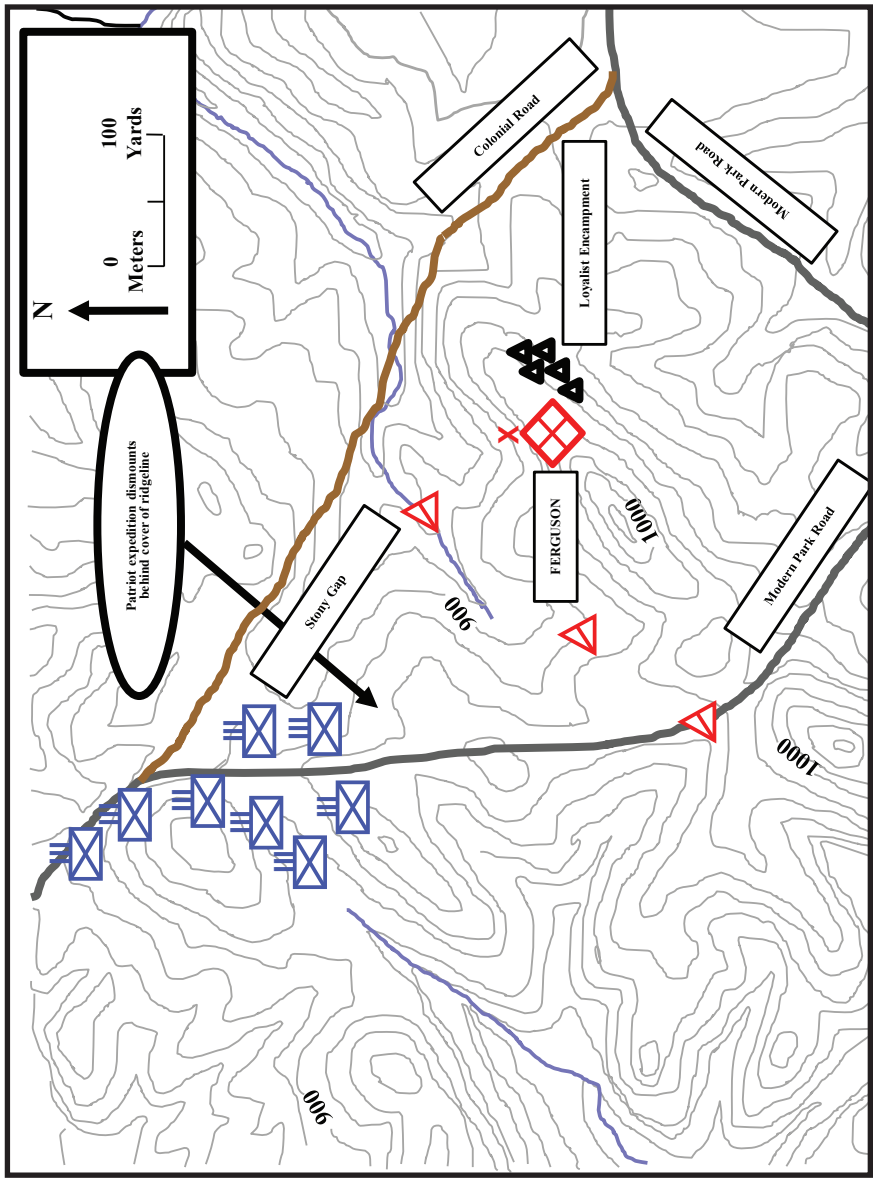

Figure 7. Patriot Dismount Point. Graphic created by the author.

Directions: From the visitor's center pavilion, move to the right (north) to the start of the walking trail.

Orientation: This stand covers the actions up to around 1200 on 7 October 1780. Around a mile to the northwest, the "flying column" of approximately

900 mounted Patriot militiamen are quietly approaching Kings Mountain. Nestled in a small draw on the near side of Kings Mountain, about 500 yards from this location is the campsite for the Tory militiamen.

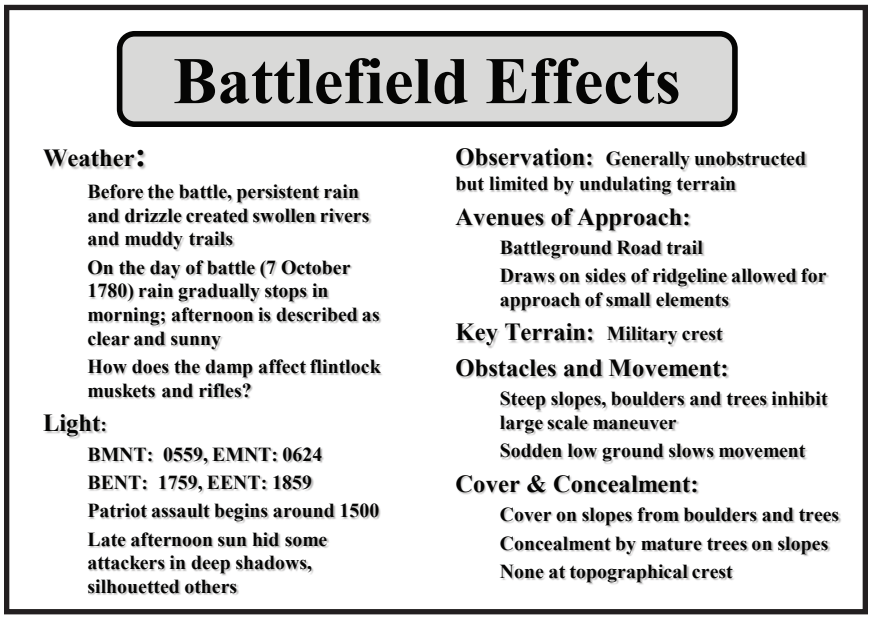

Figure 8. Battlefield Effects. Graphic provided by the author.

Description: The Loyalist men are in camp, with most men probably huddled in their tents to avoid the chilly October rain. The morning was described as cold and rainy in the morning, but by midafternoon the rain had largely passed and the cloud cover began to break. Daylight at this time and location lasts about 11 hours, so lengthening shadows would have covered the lower slopes. Atop the ridgeline, the lack of concealment would have left any Tories along the topographical crest readily visible to the Patriot sharpshooters lurking below.

In his tent atop the hill, Ferguson was confident enough to write a report to Cornwallis claiming that his position atop Kings Mountain is too strong for the Patriots to overrun: "I have arrived today at King Mountain and I have taken a post where I do not think I can be forced by a stronger enemy than that against us. I have wrote for the militia assembling under Colonel Floyd to join me tomorrow evening if not destined for other service."[9] His overconfidence was reflected in a generally lax attitude among the Loyalists. Pickets were pushed out to watch for the enemy approach, but no apparent effort was made in erecting fortifications or conducting defensive rehearsals.

While the Tories rested in camp, the Patriot expedition had rode on through the night from the Cowpens without stopping for rest or hot food. In an interesting reflection of the leadership dynamics within the expedition, Shelby refused a request from the other regimental colonels, Campbell included, for a rest halt during the night. The persistent rain that plagued the Patriot expedition finally quit around noon, and spirits rose in the Patriot ranks as an autumn sun warmed the air. The Overmountain Men approached Kings Mountain by riding southeast along the same unnamed trail (Battlefield Road) used by Ferguson's men. Here the Patriots had the advantage of two local militia officers as guides, and the hilly terrain and sodden landscape helped to mask the indications of their approach.

During the final approach march, the Whig commanders continued to receive timely and actionable intelligence. First, a friendly scout confirms the layout of Ferguson's camp. Further information come from captured Tories who give up additional details about Ferguson's dispositions atop the ridgeline, and the location of the Loyalist pickets. Not only are Ferguson's security arrangements poor, he carelessly sent out a sizeable foraging party, thus weakening his numbers even as the Patriot expedition bore down on the Loyalist position.

The Patriot column arrived at a suitably concealed position to dismount and deploy, on a ridge to the north, around 1430 on 7 October 1780. After their advanced guard neutralized some unwary Tory pickets, the Patriot men dismounted and tied off their horses under the under the watchful eye of a rear guard. After discarding unneeded items, the Patriot riflemen quietly formed into divisional columns: marching to the east and south were the regiments of Major Chronicle, Colonel Cleveland along with an ad hoc South Carolina and Georgia battalion, approximately 440 riflemen. To the north and west: Shelby, Campbell, Sevier, and McDowell, all led by Winston's battalion. While the men assembled, the regimental commanders performed a visual reconnaissance and finalized their plan of attack: Once Campbell gave final orders, the regiments were to march to their jumping off points, deploy to form an impenetrable cordon around the hill, and kill every Tory in sight.

Vignettes

Alexander Chesney was a Loyalist militia officer who kept a detailed record of his adventures while attached to Ferguson's corps:

> Our spies from Holsteen as well as some left at the Gap of the Mountains brought us word that the Rebel force amounted to 3000 men; on which we retreated along the North side of

> the Broad-river and sent the waggons along the South-side as far as Cherokee-ford, where they joined us [as] we marched to King's Mountain and there encamped with a view of approaching Lord Cornwallis' army and receiving support.[10]

The Patriot flying column endured miserable marching conditions during the pursuit of Ferguson:

> The rain continued to fall so heavily during the forenoon that Colonels Campbell, Sevier, and Cleveland concluded from the weary and jaded condition of both men and beasts that it was best to halt and refresh…Riding up to Shelby, and apprising him of their views, he roughly replied with an oath: "I will not stop until night, if I follow Ferguson into Cornwallis' lines!" Without replying, the other Colonels returned to their respective commands, and continued to march. The men could only keep their guns dry by wrapping their bags, blankets and hunting shirts around the locks, thus leaving their own persons unpleasantly exposed to the almost incessant stormy weather which they had encountered since leaving the Cowpens.[11]

Pvt. Benjamin Sharp described the clearing of the Tory picket line:

> In the afternoon [we] fell in with three men who informed us that they were just from the British camp, that they were posted on the top of King's Mountain, and that there was a picket-guard on the road not far ahead of us. These men were detained lest they should find means to inform the enemy of our approach, and colonel Shelby, with a select party, undertook to surprise and take the picket; this he accomplished without firing a gun or giving the least alarm, and it was hailed by the army as a good token.[12]

Patriot scouts captured 14 year old Loyalist messenger John Ponder:

> Interrogating young Ponder as to the kind of dress Ferguson wore, he replied that while that officer was the best uniformed men on the mountain, they could not see his military suit as he wore a checked shirt, or duster, over it. Colonel Hambright at once called the attention of his men to the peculiarity of Ferguson's dress: "Well , poys" said he in his broken Pennsylvania German accent, "when you see dot man mit a pig shirt on over his clothes, you may know who him is, and mark him mit your rifles."[13]

After the Whig divisions were assembled to march on Kings Mountain, Colonel Campbell gave a stirring final exhortation:

> Before taking the line of march, Campbell and his leading officers earnestly appealed to their soldiers—to the higher instincts of their natures, by all that was patriotic and noble among men, to fight like heroes, and not give an inch of ground, save only from the sheerest necessity, and then only to retrace and recover their lost ground at the earliest possible moment. Campbell personally visited all of the corps; and said to Cleveland's men, as he did to all "that if any of them, men or officers, were afraid, to quit the ranks and go home; that he wished no man to engage in the action who could not fight; that as for himself, he was determined to fight the enemy a week, if need be, to gain the victory." Colonel Campbell also gave the necessary orders to all the principle officers, and repeated them, so as to be heard by a large proportion of the line, and then placed himself at the head of his own regiment, as the other officers did at the head of their respective commands.[14]

Analysis

1. What risks did Colonel Shelby assume when he compelled the Patriot expedition to keep marching without rest or food? What measures could he have taken to mitigate the risk?

2. Since Major Ferguson knew of the proximate threat from the Patriot expedition, how sound was his decision to remain atop Kings Mountain? How could he have mitigated the risk?

3. What were some mental factors or perceptions that could have influenced Major Ferguson's decision making? What similar factors influence decision making today?

4. How did the Patriot leadership gather and analyze information in order to come up with an accurate picture of the enemy? How does this process compare to today's processes for gathering and analyzing information?

5. Consider hasty versus deliberate mission planning in the context of the Patriot attack plan. What were its strengths and weaknesses?

6. Using Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-90, Chapter 4 as a guide, what were some of Ferguson's defensive planning shortfalls?[15]

7. The Patriot plan of execution was simple: "all that was required or expected was that every Officer and man [they] should ascend the mountain so as to surround the enemy on all quarters."[16] Two principles of mis-

sion command are “exercise disciplined initiative” and “accept prudent risk.” How does the Patriot order adhere to or deviate from those principles? What risks did the commanders assume with giving such broad orders? What are some possible mitigation measures?

Stand 3: Major Winston's Missteps

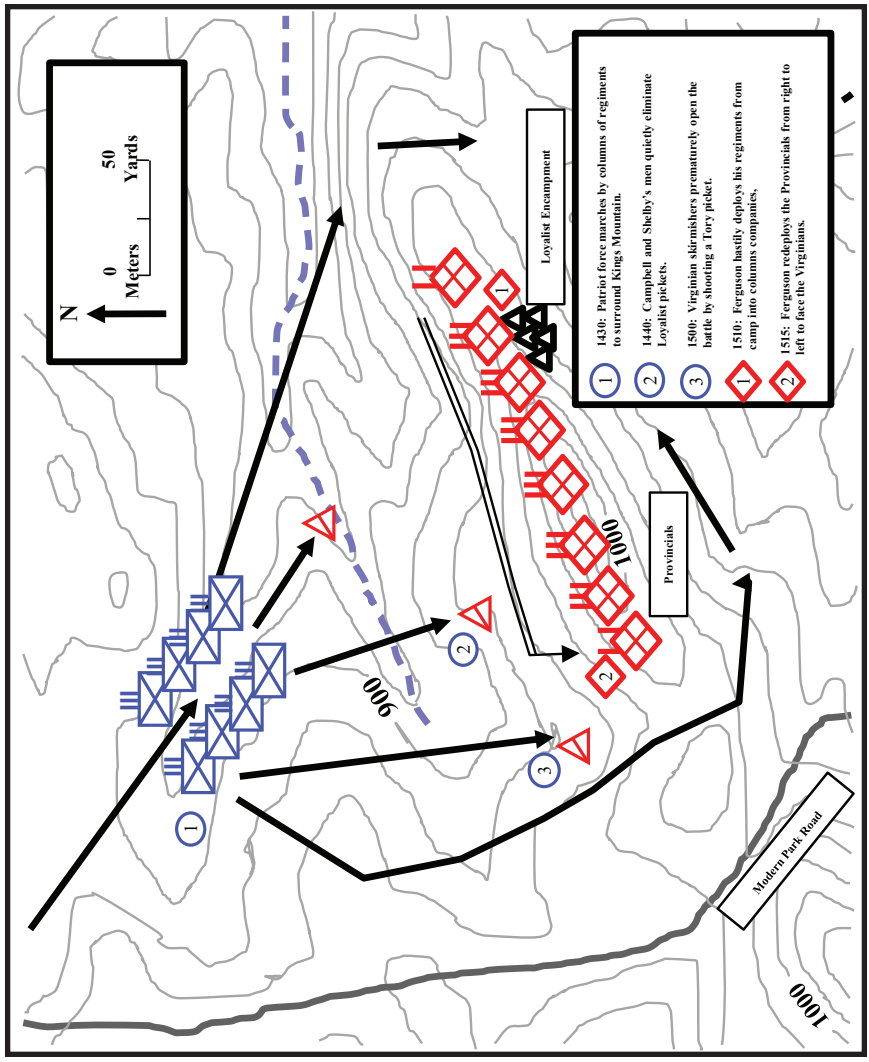

Figure 9. Movement to Contact. Graphic created by the author.

Directions: Stand 3 is at the approximate jumping off point for Maj. Joseph Winston's North Carolina militiamen in their assault on Kings Mountain. Beginning at the stand 2 location, walk to the right (north) on the trail to a bend to the northeast, where you will find a NPS descriptive marker entitled "Fighting in a Forest Primeval."

Orientation: This actions covered by this stand take place around 1445 on 7 October 1780. From this location, orient northwest back to the

t-intersection of the walking trail. This point gives a view of Winston's designated start point overlooking the Colonial Road, the roadbed of which is clearly visible running northeast to the opposite ridge. To Winston's right was Col. Benjamin Cleveland's regiment, to Winston's left was the battalion led by Maj. Joseph McDowell. For an alternate view of the steep terrain faced by the Whig riflemen, move on an azimuth of 220 degrees (southwest) from the Colonial Road sign towards the ridgeline along the right side of the draw. About 50 meters off the path is a metal tablet briefly describing Winston's missteps.[17]

Description: As surprise was critical to success, the Patriot divisions moved in silence, preceded with skilled scouts designated to quietly eliminate the Tory pickets. By 1440, the Patriot deployment was unfolding according to plan, with the critical exception of Maj. Joseph Winston's battalion.

Major Winston's detachment had an essential role in blocking Ferguson's direct route of retreat to Charlotte, which is still visible here today. As noted earlier, the vegetation present today was largely absent in 1780. Therefore, Winston's men marched below the topographical crest to avoid detection by the Loyalist pickets. To arrive at the blocking position unobserved, Winston's men had the furthest to move, marching about a kilometer to the west, before coming up their position from the southwest of this current position. Lacking a visual cue to the Kings Mountain ridge, Winston apparently marched his men onto a hilltop about 600 meters southwest from this position. Alerted by other Patriots, possibly from Campbell's command, Winston realized his error and double-timed his men to the northeast until they fell into their correct position across the road-just as the opening shots of the battle were fired.

Vignette

One of Winston's subordinate captains describes their near-farcical movement to the jumping off point:

> When they had marched in that order about a mile, Colonel Winston, by a steep hill, got so far separated from the other columns as to be out of sight or hearing of them; when some men rode in sight and directed him to dismount, and march up the hill which was immediately done with an expectation of meeting the enemy on the hill; but before his men had advanced two hundred paces they were again hailed…and directed to remount…and that the enemy was about a mile ahead. On which they ran with great precipitation down to their horses, mounting them and rode like fox hunters, as fast as their horses could

> run…without any person that had any knowledge of the woods to direct or guide them. They happened to fall in upon the left of the enemy, the place of their destination. At this very moments the firing began on the other parts of the line.[18]

Analysis

1. What are some methods that Major Winston could have used to avoid an embarrassing and potentially fatal error in reaching his attack point? How can such measures apply on the battlefield today?

2. When confronted with his error, Major Winston decisively reacted to correct the situation and accomplish his initial mission, the blocking detachment. What are some ways modern Army leaders can prepare themselves to react similarly on the battlefield?

Stand 4: Face the Hill!

Directions: Stand 4 is a short walk northward from the Colonial Road sign to the pair of Chronicle memorial markers, the location where Major William Chronicle was fatally wounded.

Orientation: It is now around 1500 on 7 October 1780. At this approximate location, Maj. William Chronicle's command formed part of the blocking element fixing Ferguson's corps in place while the remaining Patriot regiments moved to envelop the ridgeline. At the markers, orient the participants to the opposite ridgeline to the northwest, the approximate location of the Patriot dismount point. Then, point to the west to indicate the avenue of approach for the right wing column. Then, orient southwest towards Kings Mountain proper, for Chronicle's perspective of the enemy position. Lastly, point out a small stone paved trail leading up the ridgeline, which leads to a marker depicting where Lt. Col. Frederick Hambright was wounded.

Description: Before the battle, Major Chronicle was the major of the Lincoln County Regiment commanded by Col. William Graham. Chronicle was a skilled frontier fighter, having led his band of "South Fork Boys" during several skirmishes with Tories. Chronicle was intimately familiar with the terrain around Kings Mountain, having hunted there in quieter times, so served as a guide to the expedition. At the last minute before the battle, Colonel Graham relinquished command of the regiment, pleading a sick wife at home. Logically, command should have devolved on Lt. Col. Frederick Hambright, but Hambright instead deferred command to Chronicle; perhaps due to Hambright's poor command of English, more likely due to Chronicle's extensive combat experience.

The straight-line distance from dismount point to the jumping-off position was not far, but Chronicle's men faced a steep climb in closing with the enemy positions. Alerted by gunfire from Campbell's Virginians on the far side of the ridgeline, the Loyalist militia in this sector were fully alert and ready to fight. The first Loyalist volley cut down Chronicle in the act of leading the attack, so Lt. Col. Frederick Hambright took charge and continued the attack. The Tory militia in this sector were well-trained and aggressive, and Hambright's men were repulsed, several with serious bayonet wounds. The same rugged terrain disorganized the Tory counterattack, and the Patriot riflemen here were easily able to maneuver and fire just beyond the reach of the bayonets. Hambright was later seriously wounded, but the Whig militiamen in this area continued to fight on as individuals or buddy teams. The combatants remained locked together until the intermingled commands of Campbell, Shelby and Sevier gained the high ground to the southwest.

Unnerved and low on cartridges, the Tory defenders in this sector fell back to the campsite, allowing Chronicle's unwounded men to reach the top and take part in the final moments of the battle.

Vignettes

The death of Major Chronicle while leading his regiment:

> Nor were the other columns idle. Major Chronicle and Lieutenant Colonel Hambright led their little band of South Fork boys up the north-east end of the mountain, where the ascent was more abrupt then elsewhere, save where Campbell's men made their attack. As they reached the base of the ridge, with Chronicle some ten paces in advance of his men, he raised his military hat, crying out—"Face to the Hill!" He had scarcely uttered his command, when a ball struck him, and he fell…the men steadily pressed on, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Hambright…before they reached the crest of the mountain, the enemy charged with the bayonet—said to have been led by DePeyster—first firing off their guns.[19]

Sixteen year-old Patriot rifleman James Collins recounts his experiences during the fight:

> Each leader made a short speech in his own way to his men, desiring every coward to be off immediately; here I confess I would willingly have been excused, for my feelings were not the most pleasant—this might be attributed to my youth, not being quite 17 years of age—but I could not well swallow the appellation of coward…we were soon in motion, every man throwing four or five balls in his mouth to prevent thirst, also to be in readiness to reload quick. The shot of the enemy soon began to pass over us like hail; the first shock was quickly over…I was soon in a profuse sweat. My lot happened to be in the center, where the severest part of the battle was fought. We soon attempted to climb the hill, but were fiercely charged upon and forced to fall back to our first position…Their leader, Ferguson, came into full view, within rifle shot as if to encourage his men, who by this time were falling fast; he soon disappeared.[20]

Robert Henry was another teenaged private in Chronicle's regiment:

> I was preparing to fire when one of the British was advancing, I stepped back and was in the act of cocking my gun when his

> bayonet was running along the barrel of my gun, and gave me a thrust through my hand and into my thigh. My antagonist and I both fell. The Fork boys retreated and loaded their guns. I was then lying under the smoke and it appears that some of them were not more than a gun's length in front of the bayonets…when they discharged their rifles…The British then retreated in great haste, and were pursued by the Fork boys.
>
> William Caldwell saw my condition and pulled the bayonet out of my thigh, but it hung to my hand; he gave me a kick and it went out. With my well hand I picked up my gun and found her discharged…the load must have passed through his bladder and cut a main artery at his back as he bled profusely.[21]

The fighting at Kings Mountain epitomized the cruel, no-quarter nature of combat in the backcountry, in many ways a civil war fought within the larger fight for American independence. Neighbors, friends and family members from the Carolinas found themselves bitterly divided in their loyalties; at Kings Mountain many Loyalists made the ultimate sacrifice for their devotion to the Crown:

> When William Twitty…discovered his most intimate crony had been shot down by his side, he believed he knew from the powder-smoke, from behind which tree the fatal ball had sped; and watching his opportunity to avenge the death of his friend he had not long to wait, for soon he observed a head poking itself out from its shelter, when he [Twitty] fired and the Tory fell. After the battle, Twitty repaired to the tree and found one of his neighbors, a well-known Loyalist, with his brains blown out.[22]

The Loyalists, particularly the six month volunteers, were well trained in the battle tested British system of volley fire and bayonet charges. At Kings Mountain, Ferguson failed to adapt his tactics to the terrain and his enemy, as Captain Vance recounted:

> There we overhauled him, fought him two to one-hence their fire was double that of ours…Ferguson…finding himself beset and surrounded on all sides, ordered his regulars…to charge bayonets on Major Chronicle's South Fork Boys. The regulars, having discharged their muskets at a short distance with effect, in turn the Fork Boys discharged their rifles with fatal effect, and retreated, keeping before the points of the bayonets about 20 feet, until they loaded again, when they discharged

their rifles, each man dropping his man. This was treatment that British courage could not stand.[23]

Analysis

1. Before the battle, Lieutenant Colonel Hambright willingly deferred to Major Chronicle, possibly due to Chronicle's extensive combat record. What are some ways to handle a similar situation today?

2. Consider Hambright's perspective and position; how do you as a leader immediately assert command after the death of a popular and competent leader?

Stand 5: Tighten the Noose!

Directions: Remaining on the improved trail, Stand 5 is a short walk westwards from the Chronicle markers to a NPS descriptive marker "Tighten the Noose."

Orientation: It is around 1515 on 7 October 1780. This point is roughly where Col. Benjamin Cleveland led the Wilkes County North Carolina regiment through the creek bottom at the base of the hill to reach his designated attack position. Once at the marker, first orient the participants to the north for a perspective of the Patriot dismount point on the opposite ridge. From here orient west for a good view of the avenue of approach for the right wing column. Next, direct attention to the presence of the stream that runs in between the ridges, which is fed by an underground spring further to the west. Lastly, orient the student's attention uphill towards Kings Mountain proper, for Cleveland's perspective of the British position. To the left of Cleveland's position was Chronicle's battalion, to the right was the composite battalion of South Carolina and Georgia troops led by Col. James Williams.

Description: Colonel Cleveland was described as a "big man, often good natured, but reckless [and] hot tempered."[24] Before the war, Cleveland had earned a reputation as a skilled and successful Indian fighter. During the early part of the war, Cleveland took part in leading Whig militia in the suppression of Tory uprisings early in the war, often with great brutality. As Colonel Cleveland weighed more than 300 pounds, he led his men on horseback into combat. Cleveland's deployment in this area was considerably slowed by the swampy terrain along the small creek in this area. Taking advantage of the high ground to the west, the other right wing regiments were able to avoid the swampy ground and moved faster into position.

Before Cleveland's men finished negotiating the creek bottom, firing broke out to their right as Campbell's men prematurely began the engagement. Alerted by the fire, the Loyalist pickets atop the ridge spotted Cleveland's men and opened fire even as the Patriot riflemen reached dry ground and deployed into a loose line facing the hill. With the exception of the Loyal Provincials, the militiamen on both sides were clothed similarly in rude frontier garb, and the risk of fratricide was great, even more so when all were obscured in clouds of black power smoke. Both sides resorted to expedient identification markers: The Patriots tucked pieces of white paper in their hats, while the Loyalists did likewise with small pine tree branches.

Vignettes

Visibly frustrated with the slow approach march through the muddy creek, Colonel Cleveland kept his men motivated with a steady stream of encouraging words:

> My brave fellows, we have beaten the Tories, and can beat them again. They are all cowards: if they had the spirit of men, they would join with their fellow-citizens in supporting the independence of their country. When you are engaged, you are not to wait for the word of command from me…every man must consider himself an officer, and act from his own judgment. Fire as quick as you can and stand your ground as long as you can. When you can do no better, get behind trees, or retreat; but I beg you not to run quite off…perhaps we may have better luck in the second attempt than the first. If any of you are afraid, such shall have leave to retire, and they are requested immediately to take themselves off.[25]

The Overmountain Men were skilled and aggressive frontier fighters, used to fighting as individuals or in buddy teams in small skirmishes. In the midst of the chaos of large scale combat, the risk of fratricide was high, as Pvt. Charles Bowen vividly described:

> By some means declarant [Bowen] obtained information that Reece Bowen, his brother was killed and being much distressed…proceeded in search of his brother…declarant advanced without being sensible of his danger till within 15 or 20 paces of the enemy. Declarant slipped behind a tree, cocked his gun and shot the first man who hoisted the flag among the enemy and immediately turned his back to the tree to reload his gun, when Colonel Cleveland advanced, called on declarant for the Countersign; which declarant could not immediately recollect…Colonel Cleveland instantly leveled his rifle at declarant's breast and attempted to fire, but the gun snaped, declarant jumped at Cleveland, seized him by the collar took his tomahawk and would have sunk it in Cleveland's head if his arm had not been arrested by a soldier by the name of Buchanan and who knew the parties. Declarant immediately recollected the countersign, which was "Buford"…and Cleveland dropped his gun.[26]

Analysis

1. Considering the Patriot leaders had information about the "slow-go" terrain in this sector, what are some methods they could have used to better synchronize their operations?

2. What are some possible methods that Colonel Cleveland's soldiers could have used to more quickly negotiate the encumbering terrain?

3. What other possible measures were available to reduce the risk of fratricide? How might similar techniques apply on the modern battlefield?

4. Consider Colonel Cleveland's commander's guidance in the preceding vignette. How else could Cleveland could have worded his orders to ensure mission completion?

5. What advantages and disadvantages did the terrain give to the Loyalists? To the Whigs?

Stand 6: Shoot Tree to Tree

Directions: From the "Tighten the Noose" marker, continue to walk south along the trail to a NPS marker titled "Shoot Tree to Tree."

Orientation: It is around 1545 on 7 October 1780. At this location was a miscellaneous mix of Patriot militia units from Georgia and the Carolinas. To the left was Colonel Cleveland's North Carolina regiment, to the right past the small draw was Colonel Shelby's North Carolina troops. From this location, first direct the participant's attention along the trail on either side of the marker, which provides a good example of natural dead space. Next orient up the hill for another perspective on the steep terrain encountered by the Carolina Patriot militiamen. Lastly orient back to the northeast, towards the Colonial Road approach to highlight the probable firing point for Ferguson's late-arriving foraging party.

Description: Nominally in command of the *ad hoc* Georgia and South Carolina battalion was Col. James Williams from South Carolina, an officer with a clouded reputation. Colonel Williams was previously accused of inflating his role in the Patriot victory at Musgrove's Mill (fought in August 1780), and stealing supplies from Col. Thomas Sumter's partisan command. During the pursuit of Ferguson, Williams was accused by other South Carolina militia officers of trying to sidetrack the Patriot army to Ninety-Six to "get that Army in his own settlement as well as to get some of his property (and plunder the Tories) from thence."[27] Shut out from the council of colonels, Williams was relegated to a minor role, leading about 100 men into battle.

At this location, the steep terrain accentuated the natural tendency of the musket-armed Tories atop the hill to aim high; consequently, Williams' men suffered few casualties from musket balls. The same steep terrain and heavy musket fire did prevent Williams' men from advancing very far uphill, so the riflemen had to content themselves with forming an impenetrable part of the cordon. During the closing minutes of the battle, a Tory foraging detachment moved close enough to fire a single volley at the backs of Williams' men. Although eyewitness accounts vary wildly as to timing and location, Colonel Williams was most likely mortally wounded by this final burst of gunfire. Williams died the next day, thereby earning the dubious distinction as the highest ranking Patriot officer to die as a result of the battle.

Vignettes

Before the battle, a dispute between Colonel Williams and other South Carolina militia officers resulted in a command crisis in the Patriot ranks. This first vignette provides background details:

> Governor Nash [of North Carolina] had granted to Colonel Williams, a South Carolinian, the privilege of organizing a corps of mounted men within the North Province…he enlisted about 70…these North Carolinians who enrolled under Williams were men who shirked duty under their own officers; and besides the tempting offer of "beef, bread and potatoes," Colonel Williams had further promised…the privilege of plundering the Tories of South Carolina of "as many negroes and horses as they might choose to take." This little force… constituted the largest portion of Williams' command at Kings Mountain, and with them the colonel pushed forward some… on the second of October he found Sumter's command…in the forks of [the Catawba]. Williams marched into the camp… to read again his commission of brigadier, and with an imperious air, commanded the officers and men to submit to his authority. Colonel Hill frankly told him, in no gingerly language, that there was not an officer…who would…yield obedience to him; that commissioners had been sent to the Governor with proofs of the baseness of [Williams'] conduct, as they regarded it…Evidently fearing…that he might be subjected to worse treatment than a mere denunciation, Williams thought it prudent to beat a safe retreat, which he did, forming his camp some distance apart from the other.[28]

Whig riflemen Silas McBee's statement recorded the grim accuracy of Patriot riflemen:

> Shelby was on the southwest side of the mountain, and Sevier on the south. When Shelby was driven down the mountain…he rallied his troops and drove the enemy up again. Then Cleveland and Williams appeared on the northeast side, and gave one or two fires, when the flag was hoisted after which, even, some fired, and Sevier and the other officers had difficulty in getting the men to cease firing…during the fight some of the Tories at the West end of the summit were secured among some table or bench rocks. Whenever one popped up his head, a ball from some unerring rifle of

> the mountaineers pierced through. Upwards of twenty were found dead after the battle among the rocks, their heads being thus pierced with bullets.[29]

Pvt. Thomas Young was one of Williams' men from South Carolina:

> Ben Hollingsworth and I took right up the side of the mountain, and fought our way, from tree to tree up to the summit. I recollect I stood behind one tree, and fired until the bark was nearly all knocked off, and my eyes pretty well filled with it. One fellow shaved me pretty close, for his bullet took a piece out of my gun-stock. Before I was aware of it, I found myself apparently between my own regiment and the enemy, as I judged from seeing the paper which the Whigs [Patriots] wore in their hats, and the pine twigs the Tories [Loyalists] wore in theirs.[30]

Arthur Campbell describes how Williams' men, held in check by terrain and enemy fire, instead formed a support by fire position to assist the other Patriot regiments:

> It has been remarked why so small a number of the Americans were killed at King's Mountain, compared with the loss of the enemy. Our officers accounted for it in this way: The tories occupied much the least space of ground, and of course were more thickly planted than the extended circle of Americans around them, so that the fire of our men seldom failed doing execution; besides, when the Virginia regiment reached the summit of the hill, the enemy was crowded, making their retreat to the other end, without returning a shot; and when they were driven into a huddle by meeting the fire of Col. Williams' division, they received a heavy fire before our troops could be notified of the surrender.[31]

Analysis

1. What are some pros and cons to the decision to include Col. Williams as a commander?

2. How does the Army handle an unpopular leader today?

3. What are some of the challenges in maintaining 360 degree security in the middle of a firefight?

4. What were some of the factors affecting the effectiveness of fire on both sides? How do we ensure the effectiveness of our fires today?

Stand 7: Be Your Own Officer

Direction: Continue to walk until the trail makes sharp bend over a culvert which bridges the nearby stream. At this point is a trash receptacle and bench. Pause briefly to orient students towards the ridge before pointing out a small opening in the ground surrounded by dressed stones, which marks the source of the stream running northeast of the ridgeline. Before and after battle, the stream served as a vital water source. Continue to follow the paved path past a sharp bend to the next NPS marker, "Be Your Own Officer."

Orientation: The time is approximately 1500 on 7 October 1780. At this general location is where Col. Isaac Shelby formed his regiment for the attack on Ferguson's position. Face to the NPS marker, then orient the participants' attention towards the top of Kings Mountain before drawing attention to the relatively shallow terrain to the right, an area well suited for British bayonet tactics. To the left of this position, past the spring was Colonel Williams's battalion. To the right of this position were the North Carolina troops from Colonel Sevier's regiment, which were intermingled with some men from both Shelby's and Campbell's commands.

Description: This stand is an appropriate place to recognize Col. Isaac Shelby as the father of the Patriot victory at Kings Mountain. When Ferguson issued his ill-advised ultimatum at Gilbert Town, its intended recipient was Isaac Shelby. Shelby conceived of the initial idea to pursue Ferguson, and sold the idea to John Sevier and William Campbell. As the Overmountain Force gathered, Shelby pledged his personal fortune to repay the cost of ammunition and supplies. Shelby astutely defused a potential command crisis but nominating Campbell (as a disinterested outsider) as the nominal expedition commander. On the march, Shelby refused to quit despite the weather and fatigue: "I will not stop until night, if I follow Ferguson into Cornwallis' lines!" During the approach march, when Ferguson's men began firing at Shelby's column before it deployed into line of battle, Shelby compelled his men to hold their fire until in position. During the battle, Shelby's frontline leadership was critical in rallying and returning his men to the fight after the Provincial bayonet charges. In fact, Shelby was so close to the action that he later described how the left side of this head had been scorched by the muzzle blast of a poorly aimed Tory musket. Lastly, Shelby's commanding presence helped compel the vengeful Whig riflemen to grant quarter to the desperate Loyalists at the end of the battle.

Once Ferguson realized he faced a major attack, he shifted his best troops, the Royal Provincials, to the top of the ridgeline seen in this area.

Although not considered the equal of British Regulars, the Provincials were nonetheless skilled and experienced soldiers, most having fought in the northern campaigns since 1776.[32] The initial failure of the Patriots commanders to synchronize their attacks allowed Ferguson to exploit his command of interior lines. The Provincials proved their worth by driving in turn, Campbell's men, then Shelby's downhill with a bayonet charge. Shelby and his officers were initially at a great disadvantage, as the Provincials were hidden by smoke and "in most places we could not see them till we were within twenty yards of them." Furthermore, the Loyalists had been trained to hold their fire until the "termination of their pursuit; and having discharged their rifles, they retreated with great precision, reloading as they retraced their steps."[33]

Temporarily driven off the hillside, the Shelby and his officers rallied those men in the path of the charge, ordering them to engage the withdrawing enemy with aimed rifle fire from behind cover. After the Provincials withdrew, Col. Shelby, also mounted on horseback, rallied his men and send them to fire and maneuver up the hill. Shelby's regiment was repelled three times by the Tory infantry, but a fourth attempt, done in conjunction with Sevier's and Campbell's men, succeeded in driving the surviving Provincials from the high ground down the ridgeline to the left.

Vignettes

Loyalist Capt. Alexander Chesney describes his perspective of Shelby's advance:

> Kings Mountain from its height would have enabled us to oppose a superior force with advantage, had it not been covered with wood which sheltered the Americans…they were able to advance in three divisions under separate leaders to the crest of the hill in perfect safety until they took post and opened an irregular but destructive fire.[34]

Colonel Shelby's postwar recollections of the battle:

> We marched immediately to the assault. The attack was commenced by the two center columns [Campbell and Shelby's regiments], which attempted to ascend the eastern end of the mountain. The battle here became furious and bloody…In the course of the battle we were repeatedly repulsed by the enemy, and driven down the mountain. In this successions of repulses and attacks, and in giving succor to the points hardest pressed, much disorder took place in our flanks; the men of my column, of Campbell's column, and a great part of Se-

> vier's, were mingled together in the confusion of the battle. Towards the latter part of the action, the enemy made a fierce and gallant charge, from the eastern summit of the mountain, and drove us near to the foot of it. The retreat was so rapid that there was great danger of its becoming a rout…our men were soon rallied and turned back upon the enemy, who in a few minutes after we again came into close action with them, gave way. We gained the eastern summit of the mountain and drove those who had been opposed to us along the top of it, until they were forced down the western end.[35]

Provincial Capt. Abraham DePeyster survived the battle to record his perspective:

> Whether Campbell did or did not lead his immediate men, but supervised, is not clear, or whether Shelby commenced the movement, ascending the eastern end of the mountain to attack Ferguson's left. The firing soon became so heavy in this quarter that Ferguson brought over from his right, a portion of the Provincial regulars under DePeyster his second in command, and with these, supported by some of the Loyalist militia, who had previously whittled down the handles of their butcher knives so they could be inserted in the muzzles of their rifles and serve as bayonets, made a brisk charge, which pushed Shelby and Campbell…down the mountain.[36]

Analysis

1. What is your evaluation of Colonel Shelby's leadership actions? Are they sound decisions? Poor decisions? Why?

2. What are some ways the Patriots could have prepared for the Loyalist bayonet attacks?

3. Conversely, what ways could the Loyalists have taken to improve their attacks?

Stand 8: Charging Cold Steel

Directions: Continue to walk along the trail to the next NPS marker "Charging Cold Steel" which marks the approximate jumping off point for Col. John Sevier's Washington County regiment.

Orientation: At this location, face the marker before directing the student's attention uphill for a clear view of the Centennial marker, which marks the highest point of the Kings Mountain ridgeline. In front of the Centennial marker, one has a clear view of the shallow end of the ridge which slopes to the right into a saddle, the approximate position for Campbell's Virginia regiment. For an alternate view of the British position, move past the "Cold Steel" marker and take the side trail to the right towards the Hoover Monument. This marker was erected in 1930 to commemorate President Herbert Hoover's dedication of the battlefield as a National Park. At the Hoover monument, orient southeast towards the Centennial marker, a view which provides a good vantage point to discuss line of sight and ballistic differences between rifles and muskets. This location gives a good viewpoint northeast, down the avenue of approach used by the Patriot regiments for their approach march. The Hoover monument itself has no historical significance to the battle and is omitted from discussion.

Description: Here, the facilitator should draw attention to discrepancies in maps and statements concerning Sevier's exact location on the battlefield. Some accounts place Sevier's men on the east side of Ferguson's position, the opposite side of the ridge from this current location; while others describe Shelby's regiment intermingled with Sevier's in this general area. This guide follows the current NPS interpretation which places Shelby's regiment in this vicinity.

John Sevier was a contemporary of Isaac Shelby, with both born and raised in the Overmountain Wilds of western North Carolina. Slightly older than Shelby, John Sevier had grown into a natural frontier leader popularly known as "Chucky Jack" after his home on the Nolichucky River. Sevier's extensive military experience, beginning with his service as a captain of the Virginia Line during "Dunmore's War" and several fights with Cherokee raiders, made him a natural pick to command the county's militia regiment.

Colonel Sevier's regiment was formed up with the division marching west in parallel to the creek at the foot of Kings Mountain, with Shelby's regiment apparently in the trail position. Most of Sevier's men seem to have initially took up a support by fire position while Campbell's and

Shelby's men attacked uphill. However, a sizeable part of Sevier's command moved up to support Campbell, and several Nolichucky men, including the colonel's younger brother, Capt. Robert Sevier, were wounded in the fighting. Once Ferguson's men became sufficiently exhausted, Sevier's men "at length gained the summit of the hill, driving the enemy's flank upon his center."[37] At the end of the battle, Sevier took part in the collective effort to calm the enraged Whig riflemen and grant quarter to the surviving Tories.

Vignettes

Besides his younger brother, Colonel Sevier had a son fighting in the ranks. Young Joseph Sevier's reaction to the erroneous report of his father's death highlight the deep seated emotions present in the Whig ranks which contributed to the brutal end faced by so many Tories:

> Among those still engaged in this work of death was young Joseph Sevier, who had hear that his father, Colonel Sevier, had been killed in the action—a false report, originating, probably, from the fact of the Colonel's brother, Capt. Robert Sevier, having been fatally wounded; and the young soldier kept up firing upon the huddled Tories…with the tears chasing each other down his cheeks "The damned rascals have killed my father, and I'll keep loading and shooting till I kill every son of a bitch of them!" Colonel Sevier now riding up, his son discovered the mistake under which he had labored, and desisted.[38]

One of the few Tory militia eyewitness accounts of the battle came from Drury Mathis, a resident of Saluda, South Carolina:

> In the third charge which was made…Mathis was badly wounded and fell to the ground. The spot where he had fallen was half way down the mountain, where the balls… fell around him almost as thick as hail…as the mountaineers passed over him, he would play possum; but he could plainly observe their faces and eyes; and to him those bold, brave riflemen appeared like so many devils from the infernal region...as they darted like enraged lions up the mountain. He said they were the most powerful looking men ever beheld... with his feet down the declivity, he said he could not but observe that his Loyalist friends were very generally over-shooting the Americans.[39]

Analysis

1. Discrepancies in the accounts highlight the ever present "fog of war." What are some contributors to the fog of war on the battlefield, and some methods to minimize the impact?

2. Pvt. Joseph Sevier's emotional reaction to the reported death of his father highlight the potential of an illegal killing in the heat of battle. What are some ways Army leaders can mitigate this risk? How can Army leaders handle similar incidents in combat?

Stand 9: Drive the Enemy

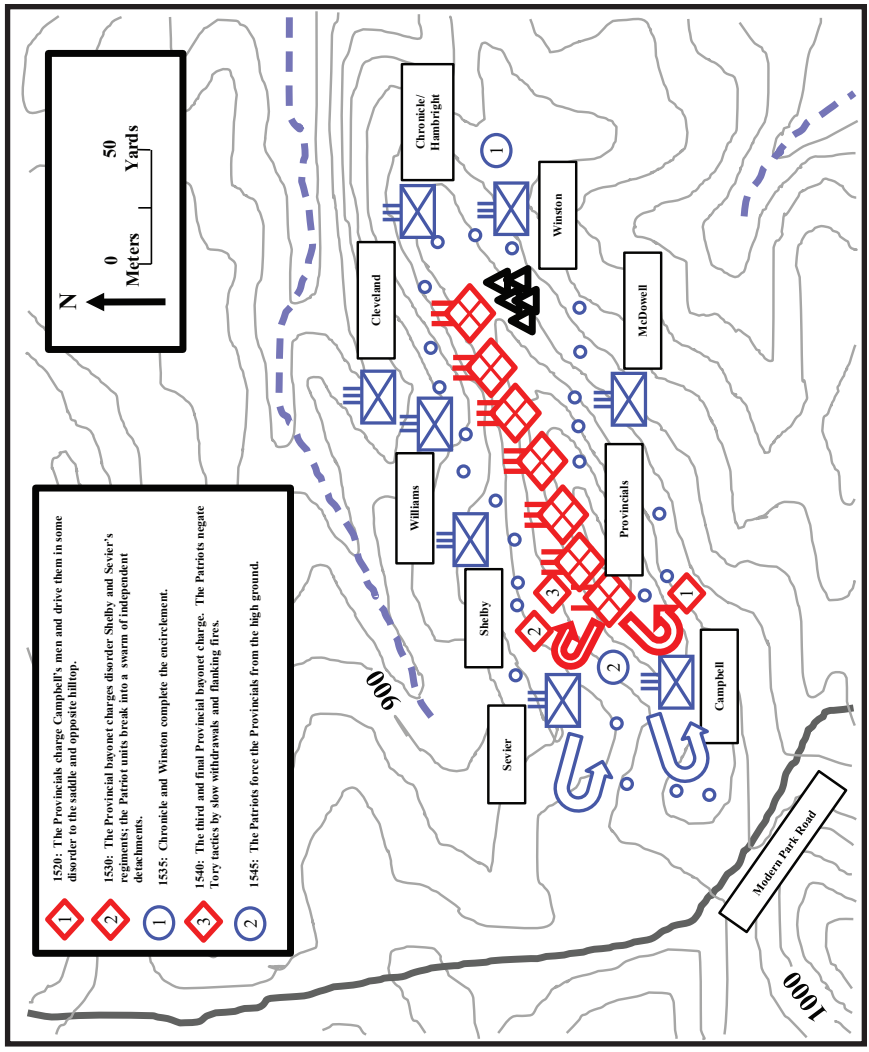

Figure 10. The Patriot Cordon. Graphic created by the author.

Directions: From the "Cold Steel" marker, move to the right and up the hill via the improved trail. Stop at the NPS marker "Drive the Enemy."

Orientation: First orient the participants' attention uphill towards the Centennial marker for a Patriot perspective of the high ground and the narrowness of the topographical crest. Then reorient to the NPS marker, and indicate Campbell's avenue of approach up the shallow draw to the left or west. To the right, past the saddle in front of your

location is a small ridge (now known as Brushy Ridge) which was the area where some of Campbell's men withdrew after the first Provincial bayonet charge.

Description: The time is approximately 1500 on 7 October 1780. Some of the first shots of the battle were fired when one of Campbell's scouts engaged a Tory picket somewhere down and to the left of this location. Although the cordon was far from complete when firing broke out, the Patriots had attained operational and tactical surprise over the Loyalist enemy. Still, the Loyalists officers reacted quickly and the well-drilled militiamen quickly formed into columns of companies arrayed along the ridgeline. Ferguson's shock troops, the Provincials, were shifted from the bivouac area to the far left of this position to the high ground to the front of this marker. Ferguson deployed his best troops to face the immediate threat from Whig riflemen creeping up the shallow slope to the left.

In arriving at this point, Campbell's men followed the natural avenue of approach in the draw to lap around the ridgeline and approach from the southwest. Notwithstanding his orders to synchronize the attack, Campbell ordered his men to begin the advance once shots were fired, thus losing the element of surprise. Taking advantage of his interior lines and the favorable terrain, Ferguson aggressively counterattacked Campbell's regiment, and several Virginians "obstinately stood until some of them were thrust through the body, and having nothing but their rifles by which to defend themselves were forced to retreat."[40] As Campbell's men were the first to face the Provincial bayonet attacks, the shock was great and those not killed or seriously wounded withdrew in much disorder. Some fled across the saddle to Brushy Ridge while others ran down the draw to the left rear of the marker. Mounted on horseback, Campbell and his officers were able to rally their men and a deadly back-and-forth battle ensued for control of the high ground in this area. Here, the casualties in the Virginia ranks were the highest of all the Patriot regiments to fight in the battle.[41]

Vignettes

Virginia Pvt. Joseph Starnes describes the opening shots of the battle:

> The left wing, Colonel Campbell of the Virginia Troops marched up in front. We surprised and took their picket guard without a noise, then a man named Philip Giever; a messmate of mine who stood next to me on the left side, shot a man who came out from the British Guard into the wood.

> This made the enemy's guard retreat to the main body—we advanced on them before they could form and gave them a fire and before we could load again the British formed and charged on us.[42]

1st Lieut. Alexander Chesney described the Loyalist reaction:

> So rapid was their attack that I was in the act of dismounting to report all was quiet and the pickets on alert when we heard the firing about a half mile off; I immediately paraded the men and posted the officers, during this short interval I received a wound which however did not prevent my doing duty; and on going towards my horse I found he had been killed by the first discharge.[43]

Capt. Alexander DePeyster immediately recognized the danger faced by the Loyalists:

> But before Shelby's men could gain their position, Colonel Campbell had thrown off his coat, and while leading his men to the attack, he exclaimed at the top of his voice, "Here they are, my brave boys; shout like hell, and fight like devils!" The woods immediately resounded with the shouts of the line, in which they were heartily joined, first by Shelby's corps, and then instantly caught up by the others along the two wings. When Captain DePeyster heard these almost deafening yells—the same in kind he too well remembered hearing from Shelby's men at Musgrove's Mill—he remarked to Ferguson: "These things are ominous—these are the damned yelling boys!"[44]

An anonymous soldier in Campbell's regiment left behind an account of the battle:

> Colonel Campbell ordered Colonel Williams and Colonel Cleveland to the left and Colonel Shelby for a reserve, and attacked on the right himself, making the first onset, but the action soon became general…Colonel Ferguson ordered a charge to be made on the Virginia regiment, which forced some of them to retreat a short distance, but they were rallied again, and the enemy fell so fast they were obliged to retire to the top of the mountain…Too much cannot be said in praise of our brave commander, who exerted himself in animating the men to victory. We advanced on the enemy and broke their lines, but they were rallied three times by Colonel Ferguson, but to no effect, our men pressing so close on them on every side.[45]

An anonymous provincial officer's account of the battle:

> In this disagreeable situation…we were attacked by 2500 rebels under the command of General Williams. Colonel Ferguson had under his command 800 militia, and our detachment, which at that time was reduced to 100 men. The action commenced about two o'clock in the afternoon, and was very severe for upwards of an hour, during which the rebels were charged and drove back several times, with considerable slaughter. When our detachment charged, for the first time, it fell to my lot to put a rebel captain to death, which I did most effectually, with one blow of my sword; the fellow was at least six feet high, but I had rather the advantage, as I was mounted on an elegant horse, and he on foot.[46]

Ens. Robert Campbell, a younger brother of Col. William Campbell, took command of a Virginia company when the captain was wounded early in the battle:

> The British beat to arms, and immediately formed on top of the mountain, behind a chain of rocks that appeared impregnable, and had their wagons drawn up on the flank across the end of the mountain, by which they made a strong breastwork. Colonel Shelby…observing…what a destructive fire was kept up from behind those rocks…ordered Robert Campbell, one of the officers of the Virginia Line, to move to the right with a small company to…dislodge them…discovering our men were repulsed on the other side of the mountain, he gave orders to…post themselves opposite to the rocks…These orders were punctually obeyed, and they kept up such a galling fire as to compel Ferguson to order a company of regulars to…cover his men that were posted behind the rocks.[47]

Analysis

1. Consider Colonel Campbell's actions at this point. What are the pros and cons of his decision to attack before the Patriot cordon was complete?

2. What of Ferguson's decision to stand and fight instead of trying to withdraw? What were the pros and cons of his decision? What were his options at this point?

3. Using Ensign Campbell as an example, discuss how we develop junior leaders to exercise disciplined initiative in combat.

Stand 10: Fix Bayonets!

Directions: From the "Drive the Enemy" marker, move up the hill towards the Centennial marker and pause at the "Americans in Redcoats" NPS marker.

Orientation: This location is roughly where the Provincials deployed for battle. First call attention to the narrowness of the ridgeline, then orient students to the shallower slope to the north (where Sevier and Shelby's men attacked). Then walk uphill to the base of the Centennial Marker. Here orient the participants back down to the trail to the southwest to discuss the deployment of the Provincial troops from Ferguson's perspective.

Description: The monument itself was placed here in 1880 to mark the centennial of the battle. The Kings Mountain Centennial Association was responsible for the monument, as well as the purchase of the 39.5 acres encompassing the ridgeline proper as a first step in permanently preserving the battlefield.

As soon as the alarm was given, Ferguson and his officers arrayed the loyalist militia battalions along this narrow ridgeline in columns of companies and regiments, ideally suited for bayonet attacks. As described in earlier stands, the Provincials spearheaded several bayonet charges from general vicinity of the monument. No exact details exist as to exactly how the Provincials conducted their "passage of lines" from the campsite, through the friendly militia, to this location. By all accounts, Ferguson's men were well trained, as evidenced by their movement without a noticeable disruption of the Loyalist formation. The first Provincial attack was temporarily successful, causing many enemy casualties, while driving Campbell's men off the hillside in disorder. Each subsequent Provincial bayonet charge diminished in effectiveness as casualties mounted in the increasingly fatigued Loyalist ranks. By the end of the third series of bayonet attacks, the Provincials had reached their culmination point, and were no longer capable of offensive action.

Vignettes

As the battle grew in intensity, the ineffectiveness of Ferguson's tactics soon becomes evident to all, as related by Colonel Shelby:

> Ferguson did all that an officer could do under the circumstances. His men too fought bravely. But his position, which he thought impregnable against any force…was really a disadvantage to him. The summit was bare, whilst the sides of the mountain were covered with trees. Ferguson's men were

> drawn up in close column on the summit and thus presented fair marks for the mountaineers, who approached them under cover of trees. As either column would approach the summit, Ferguson would order a charge with fixed bayonet, which was always unsuccessful, for the riflemen retreated before the charging column slowly, still firing as they retired.[48]

Alexander Chesney provided a Loyalist perspective of how the terrain favored the enemy:

> Kings Mountain from its height would have enabled us to oppose a superior force with advantage, had it not been covered with wood which sheltered the Americans, and enabled them to fight in their favorite manner; in fact after driving in our picquets they were able to advance in perfect safety until they took post and opened an irregular but destructive fire from behind trees and other cover: Colonel Cleaveland's was first perceived and repulsed by a charge made by Colonel Ferguson; Colonel Shelby's next and met a similar fate being driven down the hill; last the detachment under Colonel Campbell and by desire of Colonel Ferguson I presented a new front which opposed it with success; by this time the Americans who had been repulsed had regained their former stations and sheltered be-hind trees poured in an irregular destructive fire…the mountaniers flying whenever there was danger of being charged by the bayonet, and returning again so soon as the British detachment had faced about to repel another of their parties.[49]

Analysis

1. How do the ideas on how to use terrain change when occupying the high ground? If they do not change, why?

2. What are some ways we can prepare for a complex tactical movement today?

3. What are some ways to avoid an early culmination while still in combat?

Stand 11: Loyal Carolina Men!

Directions: Move downhill on the slope opposite the Centennial Marker to the NPS marker "Loyal Carolina Men."

Orientation: Facing downhill towards the US Monument, direct student's attention to the view down the ridgeline to both sides. Downslope to the left (north) was Colonel Williams' battalion, to the right was Maj. Joseph McDowell's battalion. Further down to the right of the US monument was the approximately location for the Tory campsite. During the battle, this area would have been filled with wagons and white canvas tents.

Description: If the sunlight is sufficiently bright to produce shade, point out how late afternoon shadowing would have enhanced the concealment of the Patriot force, allowing them to gain tactical surprise on the Loyalists. The perspective here also lends itself to a discussion, from the perspective of the Loyalists, about dead space, cover and concealment. Of interest in the human dimension, this area is where many Carolina men met in a battle that pitted neighbor against neighbor, and in some cases, family against family.

Around 1545, Ferguson realizes he is in desperate straits, as his closely packed men are falling in heaps of dead or wounded. The apparent failure of Ferguson's tactics left the unwounded Loyalists fatigued, demoralized, and low on cartridges. Below, the Whig riflemen sense they are winning and draw the cordon tighter around the ridgeline: "the moment the Britons turned their backs, the Americans shot them from behind every tree...and laid them prostate."[50]

Vignettes

Wounded in an earlier engagement, South Carolina militiamen Col. William Hill commanded the rear guard at Kings Mountain; his account of the battle is presumably based on eyewitness reports:

> And here let me remark that Colonel Ferguson was a brave military character it appeared that he was infatuated & brought his own ruin by choosing this spot of ground on which he had to fight under every disadvantage…the sides of the mountain being very Rocky and steep as well as a great number of fallen and standing trees so that the Americans could attack his camp on all quarters, and their shot went over the americans without effect…in the commencement of the action he ordered a charge on the Americans, but the ground was so rough…that they were not able to overtake the americans to injure them…

> when they had went a certain distance they had orders to re-treate to their camp. and then it was that the americans had every advantage required.[51]

Lieut. Alexander Chesney continues his account of the battle atop the ridgeline:

> Kings Mountain from its height would have enabled us to oppose a superior force with advantage had it not been covered with wood which sheltered the Americans and enabled them to fight in their favorite manner…after driving in our pickets, they were able to advance in…perfect safety until they took post and opened a regular but destructive fire from behind trees and other cover. Colonel Cleveland was first perceived and repulsed by a charge led by Colonel Ferguson…Colonel Shelby next…last by Colonel Campbell, and by desire of Colonel Ferguson I presented a different front which opposed it with success. By this time the Americans who had been repulsed regained their position, and sheltered by the trees poured in a destructive fire. In this manner, the engagement was maintained an hour; the mountaineers flying when in danger from a bayonet charge, and returned as soon as the British faced about to repel another of their party.[52]

Analysis

1. Analyze the terrain at this location using the military acronym OAKOC:

   a. Observation and Fields of Fire

   b. Avenues of Approach

   c. Key Terrain

   d. Obstacles

   e. Cover and Concealment

2. Liken the relationship of the Provincials to the militia, in modern terms, as that of an Embedded Training Team to its host unit. Think in terms of rules of engagement, trainers versus fighters, etc.

Stand 12: Ducks in a Coop

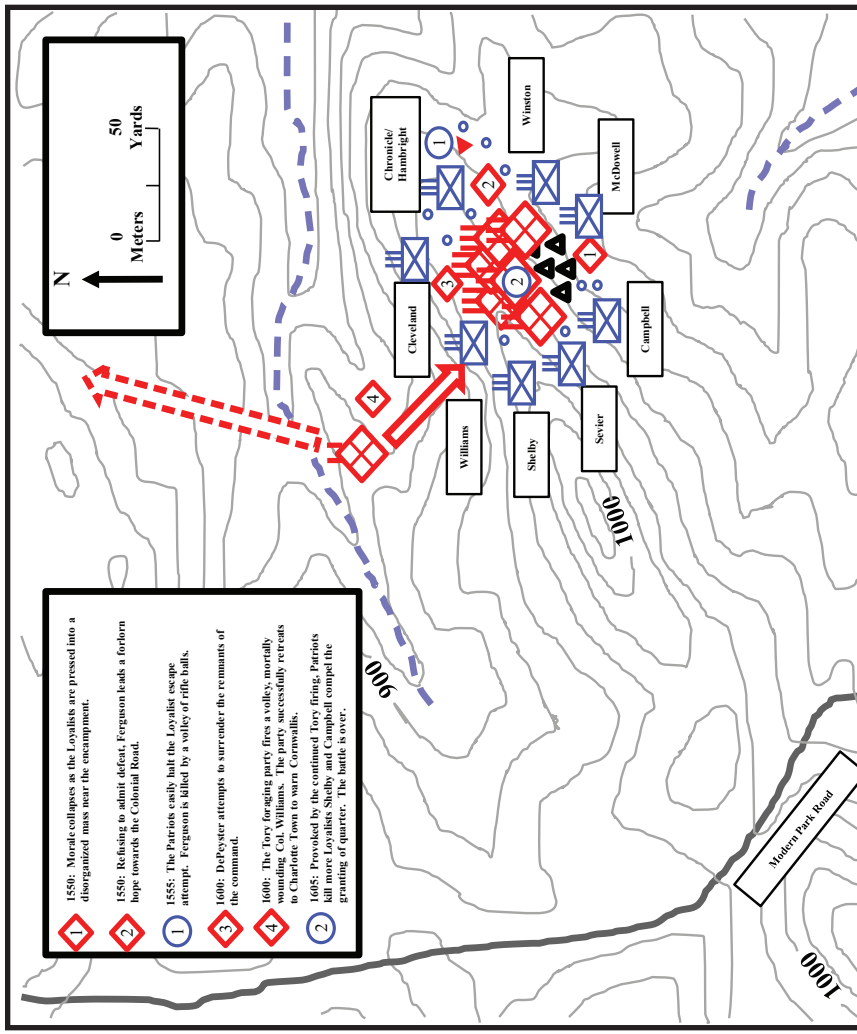

Figure 11. End of the Battle. Graphic created by the author.

Directions: Continue to move downhill towards the United States Marker and stop at the "Caught in a Crossfire" NPS marker.

Orientation: Facing downhill and looking to the right (southeast) of the trail reveals the beginnings of a shallow draw sloping down the ridge, which marks was the general location of the Tory encampment. Downslope to the right was McDowall and Winston's command, to the left, Williams', Cleveland's, and Chronicle's men.

Description: The white obelisk is the United States (US) marker, erected in 1909 by Congress to commemorate the Loyalist losses. By 1555 on the day of the battle, this was the site of the Loyalist's final stand. After pointing out the location, direct the students' attention back up the hill to show the vulnerability of the Loyalists as they were squeezed into tighter by the advance of the Campbell's and Shelby's men from the high ground. At the time of the battle, Ferguson's wagon train was formed in a hollow square in the same general area, although eyewitness accounts did not describe the Loyalists using the wagons as cover to continue the fight. Instead, most of the Tory militiamen piled into this area were thoroughly demoralized and incapable of resistance. The loss of so many officers, shortages of ammunition, and collapse of morale sapped the Loyalist units still in the fight. The obvious ineffectiveness of Ferguson's tactics, coupled with the increasing casualty count and ammunition shortages, foreshadowed a terrible end at the hands of a vengeful enemy. Several of the Loyalist men began waving white flags, which Ferguson quickly tore down. Ferguson ignored the pleas of several officers to surrender, and continued to ride the shrinking perimeter in an attempt to rally the defense. Sensing victory was near, the Patriot officers pressed their men on for the kill.

Although we don't know the exact strength of the Patriot force, extant records show the balance of forces at Kings Mountain as close to a 1:1 ratio—hardly overwhelming strength for an attacking force. The estimated Patriot strength that fought in the battle is around 910 men. With the detachment of the foraging party, estimated around 200 men, Ferguson's force atop the ridgeline probably numbered around 950 men. Accounts by surviving Loyalists inflated the numbers of Patriots actually engaged in the battle, probably in an attempt to deflect criticism of Ferguson's tactical blunders.[53]

Vignettes

Second in command, Capt. Abraham DePeyster, survived the battle and captivity to write a third person perspective of his argument with Ferguson over his tactics:

> Reference has been made to the fact that Ferguson's second in command, convinced from the first of the utter utility of resistance at the point selected, advised a surrender as soon as he became satisfied that Ferguson would not fall back upon the rapidly advancing relief. He [DePeyster] appears to have urged the only course which could have saved the little army, viz: a precipitate, by order retreat upon less exposed points…

> this advice was founded on what the event proved: that the British were about to be slaughtered to no purpose, like "ducks in a coop" without inflicting any commensurate loss.[54]

Lieut. Anthony Allaire blamed the poorly trained North Carolina militiamen for the collapse:

> About two o'clock in the afternoon 2500 rebels…attacked us. Major Ferguson had 800 men. The action continued an hour and five minutes; but their numbers enabled them to surround us. The North Carolina regiment seeing this, and numbers being out of ammunition, gave way, which naturally threw the rest of the militia into confusion. Our poor little detachment, which consisted of only 70 men…were all killed and wounded but 20 and those brave fellows were soon crowded as close as possible by the militia.[55]

From below, Pvt. James Collins witnessed the collapse of Loyalist resistance:

> We took the hill a third time; the enemy gave way; when we had gotten near the top, some of our leaders roared out, "Hurrah, my brave fellows! Advance! They are crying for quarter!" By this time the left and right had gained the top of the cliff; the enemy was completely hemmed in on all side, and no chance of escaping.[56]

The account of Loyalist Surgeon Uzal Johnston gave a more even handed account of the conduct of the Loyalist militia:

> They advanced up the hill pretty rapidly, as soon as they got to the brow of the hill the Amn. Vols. charged them with success… but were not able to pursue…The North Carolina Militia had twice repulsed a body that attacked their line, unfortunately their ammunition being now exhausted they were obliged to give way. Capt. DePeyster…charged the enemy again at the point of the hill and drove them a second time; the North Carolinians having quit their line it hove the others into confusion, and the enemy (whos numbers enabled them to completely surround us,) encouraged by the confusion of our militia rushed on.[57]

An anonymous diarist scribbled a chilling final entry in his diary, later found on a corpse, which illuminates the terrible end faced by the luckless Tory militiamen: "The cursed rebels came upon us killed and took every soul and so my dear friends I bid you farewell for I am started to the Warm Country."[58]

Analysis

1. Evaluate the three courses of action open to Major Ferguson:

   a. Defend to the end.

   b. Attempt a mass breakout.

   c. Surrender.

2. What are ways for commanders to sustain morale during combat with heavy losses?

3. As written, Captain DePeyster's account seems self-serving as it depicts himself in a good light in comparison to Ferguson. What are some reasons why modern leaders would do so? What are some actions leaders can take to counterbalance self-serving reports?

4. What are some lessons Army leaders can learn about the inaccuracies in Lieutenant Allaire's report? What are some ways Army leaders can verify the accuracy of reports?

5. What are some ways battlefield commanders can ensure units do not run out of ammunition during an engagement?

6. Considering the roughly 1:1 force ratios between Patriot and Loyalist forces, how could the Patriot commanders improved their odds of success in the attack?

Stand 13: Ferguson Falls

Directions: Move downhill past the US monument to the NPS "Ferguson Fell" marker, which marks the approximate point where Major Ferguson was mortally wounded.

Orientation: At this point, orient participants to the north edge of the ridgeline to view the Loyalist perspective of the steep terrain traversed by Cleveland's men. Then, orient to the southeast for a view of the draw which drops down to the Colonial Road, Ferguson's likely route of escape, which was blocked by Hambright's and McDowell's units. Lastly, direct attention up the hill towards the US monument. At the end of the battle, this high ground was occupied by the comingled Patriot riflemen from Campbell's, Shelby's, and Sevier's commands.

Description: The time is approximately 1605. A final, desperate charge by the surviving Provincials failed in a hail of close-range rifle balls. Colonel Shelby, at the lead of his regiment, narrowly misses death as a close-ranged Tory musket blast singed the hair from the left side of his face. With the final Provincial failure, organized Loyalist resistance collapsed and many Tories began waving white handkerchiefs in an act of surrender, while others, terrified of the prospect of a brutal death, continued to fight. Despite the white flags, many Patriot riflemen continued to fire into the Tory ranks, shouting "Give them Buford's play!" in a reference to the Waxhaws Massacre. Ferguson, remounted after having two previous horses shot down, yields to the inevitable only by leading the remaining mounted officers, supported by a dozen or so of infantry soldiers, in a charge towards the Patriot cordon blocking the draw to the southeast. Since Ferguson did not survive the battle, his last thoughts are unknown; whether he planned to abandon the hapless Loyalist militia to their fate, or was leading a "forlorn hope" attack to breach the cordon and allow a portion of his command might escape death or capture.

Patriot riflemen in the vicinity immediately recognized Ferguson in his distinctive checked duster, and within seconds Ferguson was riddled with rifle balls and left hanging lifeless from a stirrup.

Vignettes

Captain DePeyster's account of Ferguson's death:

> Then for the seventh time the Regulars (American Volunteers) were ordered to cooperate with the few mounted Volunteers which constituted Ferguson's little band of Cavalry; and by a desperate charge, to make a final attempt to wrest victory from defeat. In the very act of mounting, the majority of

> horsemen were picked off…but, nevertheless, the charge was executed, as even Southern writers admit, with great spirit and audacity. In this event of desperation, Ferguson was killed. At all events, his silver whistle, with which he was accustomed to give his orders was heard no more.[59]

Surgeon Johnson's version of the event:

> Colonel Ferguson gave the Word to charge again, he then rushd in amongst the Rebels with about half a dozen men, he was soon shot from his horse; Captain DePeyster then gave the word to form and charge, the cry throughout the militia line was, we are out of ammunition, this being our unhappy condition, and the militia (tho they stood and fought bravely while their ammunition lasted) were now getting in the utmost disorder, it was thought most expedient to send out a flag to save a few brave men that had survived the heat of action.[60]

Lieutenant Chesney's version contains one of the many irreconcilable discrepancies that crop up in accounts of the battle, that of Colonel Williams' death:

> Colonel Ferguson was at last recognized by his gallantry although wearing a hunting shirt and fell pierced by seven balls at the moment he had killed the American Colonel Williams with his left hand; (the right being useless) I had just rallied the troops a second time by Ferguson's orders when Captain DePeyster succeeded to the command but soon after gave up and sent out a flag of truce, but as the Americans resumed their fire afterwards ours was also renewed under the supposition that they would give no quarter; and a dreadful havoc took place until the flag was sent out a second time, then the work of destruction ceased.[61]

Private Collins' perspective:

> By this time, the right and left had gained the top of the cliff; the enemy was completely hemmed in on all sides, and no chance of escaping—besides, their leader had fallen… On examining the body of their great chief, it appeared that almost 50 rifles must have been leveled at him, at the same time; seven rifle balls had passed through his body, both his arms were broken, and his hat and clothing were literally shot to pieces.[62]

Analysis

1. Faced with a similar situation today, how can leaders control panic and disorder in the ranks?

2. Discuss ways we prepare junior leaders to operate independently when the higher commander is dead or incapacitated.

Stand 14: The Butcher's Bill

Direction: Follow the path downhill to the location of Ferguson's burial cairn and marker.

Orientation: This location marks the final burial spot for Maj. Patrick Ferguson, and Virginia Sal, one of two females to accompany the Loyalist corps.

Description: Major Ferguson's burial cairn provides a suitable location to reflect on the aftermath of the battle of Kings Mountain. With Ferguson's sudden death, command of the Loyalists devolved upon Captain DePeyster. He attempted to continue the fight, but as many the unwounded Tories were crying for quarter, DePeyster had little choice but to raise a white flag. Around this same time, Ferguson's foraging party returned close enough to the northwest portion of the cordon to fire a volley at the Patriots before withdrawing, leaving Col. James Williams mortally wounded. Provoked by the unexpected burst of gunfire, many of the aroused Patriot riflemen resume firing into the panicked enemy ranks. Possibly some of the rural men were ignorant of the meaning of the white flag, while others, seeking vengeance on the helpless enemy, ignored the clear meaning of the cry for quarter: "To the cry 'Buford's Play,' many of the Tory wounded were hurried into oblivion" before the Patriot officers compelled the granting of quarter. Tory casualties were overwhelmingly worse, somewhere between 247 and 375 dead, and perhaps 160 wounded, with the survivors taken prisoner. By comparison, the Patriots suffered 29 killed and 58 seriously wounded.[63]

Vignettes

Lieut. Joseph Hughes, of the Chester South Carolina regiment, was one of many Patriot men to candidly describe the shooting down of many Loyalists after Colonel Williams is mortally wounded by the Loyalist foraging party.

> He received seven shots from the Tories at King's Mountain. General Williams of South Carolina was kill'd after the British raised their flag to surrender by a fire from some Tories. Col. Campbell then ordered a fire upon the Tories and we killed near a hundred of them after the surrender of the militia and could hardly be restrained from killing the whole of them.[64]

Gen. Joseph Graham of North Carolina, although not present, recorded Patriot eyewitness accounts of the battle:

> The British officer, Capt. DePeyster, who took the command, ordered a white flag to be raised, in token of surrender, but the bearer was instantly shot down. He soon had another raised,

> and called out for quarter. Col. Shelby demanded, if they surrendered, why did they not throw down their arms? This was instantly done. But still the firing continued, until Shelby and Sevier went inside the lines, and ordered the men to cease. Some who kept it up, would call out 'give them Buford's play'—alluding to Col. Buford's defeat by Tarleton, where no quarter was given. A guard was placed over the prisoners, and all remained on the mountain during the night.[65]

Left holding the bag after Ferguson's death, Captain DePeyster faced one of the most difficult tasks faced by a commander, surrendering his command and later having to explain his actions to a board of inquiry:

> The left on seeing us broke, gave way, to all in a crowd on the hill and tho every officer used his endeavors to rally the men, as nothing now offered but to make a breach through the enemy; I am sorry to say was not able to get a man to follow them. The chief part being without ammunition…while the other officers were doing their best amongst the crowd to collect more to follow them…Major Ferguson was killed before he advanced 20 yards. Ensign MacGinnes…was also killed soon after the action commenced which rendered the militia he commanded almost useless. In this situation…finding it impossible to rally the militia, I though proper to surrender as the only means of saving the lives of some brave men still left…In justice to the officers and men, I must beg leave to acquaint your Lordships that they behaved with the greatest gallantry and attention.[66]

Capt. Alexander Chesney offered another perspective from the losing side:

> I had just rallied the (Provincial) troop a second time when Captain DePeyster succeeded to the command but soon after gave up and sent out a flag of truce, but as the Americans resumed their fire afterwards ours was also renewed under the supposition they would give no quarter; and a dreadful havoc took place until the flag was sent out a second time, then the work of destruction ceased; the Americans surrounded us with double lines and we grounded arms with the loss of one third our number.[67]

Lieut. Anthony Allaire of the Loyal Provincials, gives his version of the aftermath:

> We lost in this action, Maj. Ferguson, of the 71st Regiment, a man strongly attached to his King and country, well informed in the art of war, brave, humane, and an agreeable companion—in

> short he was universally esteemed in the army, and I have every reason to regret his unhappy fate. We lost 18 men killed on the spot—Captain Ryerson and 32 Sergeants and privates wounded, of Major Ferguson's detachment. Lieutenant M'Ginnis of Allen's regiment, Skinner's brigade, killed; taken prisoners, two captains, four lieutenants, three ensigns, one surgeon, and 54 sergeants and privates, including the wounded, wagoners, etc. The [Loyalist] militia killed, 100, including officers; wounded 90; taken prisoners about 600; our baggage all taken, of course.[68]

Loyalist Surgeon Uzal Johnson faced an overwhelming challenge in treating the injured:

> The engagement lasted an hour and five minutes, we were then reduced to the necessity of yielding to far superior numbers, as we had only 70 Amn. Vols. (50 of whom got killed and wounded) and 800 militiamen engaged, 225 militiamen were killed, and 72 wounded. How many of the enemy got kill'd is uncertain, not far inferior to ours if we judge from the number of their wounded which was equal to ours, I being employed to dress them in preference to their own surgeon enabled me to get the number.
>
> Sunday October 8th 1780. Eleven o'clock in the morning, our men were marched from this ground. I remained till evening dressing the wounded; Colonel Lacy with about 200 men remained behind, he gave paroles to the wounded militiamen that were not able to march, at eight o'clock in the evening we left Kings Hill and marched about eight miles.[69]

Even for the hardened Patriots, the battlefield presented a sanguinary scene, as Private Collins relates:

> After the fight was over, the situation of the poor Tories appeared to be really pitiable; the dead lay in heaps on all sides, while the groans of the wounded were heard in every direction. I could not help turning away from the scene before me, with horror… next morning…the scene became really distressing; the wives and children of the poor Tories came in, in great numbers. Their husbands, fathers, and brothers, lay dead in heaps, while others lay wounded or dying; a melancholy sight indeed. As regards the numbers that fell…I know our estimate, at the time, was something over 300. We proceeded to bury the dead, but it was badly done; they were thrown into convenient piles, and covered with

> old logs, the bark of old trees, and rocks; yet not so as to secure them from becoming a prey to the beasts of the forest.[70]

An intelligent, creative, personable, and brave man, Maj. Patrick Ferguson presided over one of the largest disasters suffered by the British during the Southern Campaign. Both Patriot and Loyalist recognized Ferguson's remarkable personal courage and determination. In a letter to home before his death, Ferguson candidly revealed a remarkable depth of character and honor often absent on the battlefields in South Carolina:

> I thank God more for this than for all his other blessings, that in every call of danger, or honor, I have felt myself collected and equal to the occasion…The length of our lives is not at our command, however much the manner of them may be. If our Creator enables us to act the part of men of honor, and to conduct ourselves with spirit, probity, and humanity, the change to another world, whether now, or 50 years hence, will not be for the worse.[71]

However, Ferguson's command decision to remain atop Kings Mountain not only doomed hundreds of loyal Americans to violent deaths, but irreparably destroyed the strategic center of gravity for the British campaign to pacify the Carolinas.

Analysis

1. Put yourself in the position of Captain DePeyster. What are your obligations under the Law of War and Code of Conduct?

2. Consider the same from the perspective of Colonel Shelby. How do you regain control of your men and safeguard the prisoners? What are the possible repercussions if you fail to do so?

3. What are your legal and moral obligations in caring for dead and wounded of both sides?

4. Critically consider Maj. Patrick Ferguson's leadership performance during the campaign. What were his strengths? What were his weaknesses?

5. Consider the same questions regarding Col. Isaac Shelby? Of the other Patriot commanders?

6. What lessons can we derive from the experiences of the Loyalist soldiers? What of the Patriots?

This marks the end of the battlefield terrain walk. From Ferguson's cairn, follow the paved trail south towards the visitor's center for post staff ride activities.

Notes

1. Much of the information for this section is summarized from Charles D. Collins' *Staff Ride Handbook and Atlas: Battle of White Bird Canyon 17 June 1877* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2014), 8-13.

2. Hugh F. Rankin, ed., "An Officer out of His Time: Correspondence of Major Patrick Ferguson, 1779-1780," in *Sources of American Independence: Selected Manuscripts from the William L. Clements Library, Volume 2*, Howard H. Peckham, ed., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 358-359. With minor exceptions, the editor has reproduced the vignettes as written.

3. Lyman Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes* (Cincinnati, OH: Peter G. Thomson, 1881), 169. Every account of the battle describes Ferguson's message as given orally to Phillips, a "distant relative of Colonel Isaac Shelby" whom Ferguson had taken prisoner." One wonders as to how accurately Phillips relayed the message to Shelby.

4. Katherine K. White, *The Kings Mountain Men* (Dayton, VA: Joseph K. Ruebush Company, 1924), 3.

5. Robert Henry, ed., *Narrative of the Battle of Kings Mountain* (Greensboro, NC: 1891), 27.

6. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 204. Some versions of Ferguson's proclamation say "pissed upon forever and ever by a set of mongrels."

7. Draper, 509-510.

8. Robert Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain: Eyewitness Accounts* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2007), 54-55. This passage is drawn from Robert Kerr's pension application statement.

9. Dunkerley, 137-138.

10. Alfred Jones, ed., "The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution and After," *The Ohio State University Bulletin*, Vol. 26, No. 4, October 1921: 16-17.

11. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 229.

12. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 79.

13. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 233. Lieutenant Colonel Hambright was the second in command to Major Chronicle. After Chronicle's death, Hambright took command and was seriously wounded in the battle.

14. Draper, 244-245.

15. Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-90, *Offense and Defense* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 31 August 2012), 4-6 to 4-24. The author identified the following: Mission Command, Exploit the Terrain, Security, Mass the Effects of Combat Power, and subtasks within the Intelligence and Protection domains.

16. John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 230. The quote is from Col. William Hill.

17. All azimuths used in this chapter are magnetic.

18. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 61.

19. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 257.

20. Ed Southern, ed., *Voices of the American Revolution in the Carolinas*, (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair Publisher, 2009), Kindle edition location 2200-2210.

21. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 48. Despite his relatively young age, Henry seen combat in skirmishes against Cherokee warriors, but Kings Mountain was his first major battle.

22. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 259.

23. Henry, *Narrative of the Battle of Kings Mountain*, 27-28.

24. Betty L. Waugh. "Cleveland, Benjamin" in *The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) Accessed online at https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/cleveland-benjamin, 25 February 2020.

25. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 18.

26. A.S. Salley, ed., *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution* (Columbia, SC: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1921), 20-22.

27. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 191-193.

28. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 64-65.

29. Dunkerley, 92.

30. *Description by Colonel Arthur Campbell of the Battle of Kings Mountain* (Chapel Hill, NC: University Library of the University of North Carolina), 134. Accessed on 30 November 2015, http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr15-0092.

31. Robert S. Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia, SC: University Of South Carolina Press, 1987), 149-50. The presence of the Provincials at Kings Mountain gave rise to the myth that British regulars fought in the battle. The Provincials wore British style redcoats but with distinct facings that identified their Provincial status. To the Americans, all Redcoats looked the same.

32. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 266.

33. Jones, "The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution and After," 17-18.

34. Dunkerley, excerpt from *Colonel Isaac Shelby's Pamphlet to the Public* was published in 1823, 77.

35. John Watts DePeyster, "The Affair at Kings Mountain," *The Magazine of American History*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (December, 1880): 420.

36. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 266.

37. Draper, 282.

38. Draper, 338.

39. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 21.

40. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 278.

41. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 85.

42. Jones, "The Journal of Alexander Chesney," 17.

43. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 247.

44. Anonymous, *Description of the Battle of Kings Mountain*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill digital archives: URL: http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr15-0093#p15-135.

45. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 128-129. This extract is from an anonymous account, generally understood to have been written by Lieutenant Allaire, which appeared in the *Rivington's Royal Gazette*, 24 February 1781 Allaire' account is flawed as he inflates the number of Patriots, understates the Loyalists, plus credits Williams as the overall commander.

46. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 537.

47. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 543. Reprint of Shelby's account, recorded by Martin Hardin in *American Review* December 1848.

48. Jones, "The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution and After," 17-18.

49. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 272.

50. Salley, *Colonel William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 23.

51. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 132.

52. J. David Dameron, *Kings Mountain: The Defeat of the Loyalist,* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 51. A good wire diagram with estimates for Ferguson's corps. Draper, 207-302 discusses the discrepancies in the casualty counts for the Loyalist force. As for the Patriot numbers, Dunkerley (p. 9 and endnotes) cites Bobby G. Moss' research in *Patriots at Kings Mountain* and estimates 910 Patriots riflemen actually engaged in the fighting. William Campbell's official report (William Campbell, et al., *Official Report, Battle of Kings Mountain* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Library [digital resource], 2004), np. Accessed on 30 November 2015 at http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr15-0119. Campbell's report gives a combat strength "nine hundred of the best men" and a total enemy loss (killed, wounded and captured) as 1105 men.

53. John W. DePeyster, "Kings Mountain: The Oriskany of the South," in *The Historical Magazine and Notes & Queries Concerning the Antiquities, History and Biography of America*, Vol. 5 (Second Series), No. 3 (March 1869): 195. DePeyster passed on letters and papers to his family, which were used to publish an account of the battle in 1869. Although the article smacks of ex post facto heaping of blame on Ferguson, it does highlight the tensions between Ferguson and his key subordinates.

54. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 123-124.

55. Southern, *Voices of the American Revolution in the Carolinas*, Kindle location 2210-2214.

56. Wade S. Kolb and Robert M. Weir, eds., *Captured at Kings Mountain: The Journal of Uzal Johnson, A Loyalist Surgeon* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 31.

57. Inscription on the National Park Service marker.

58. DePeyster, "Kings Mountain: The Oriskany of the South," 195.

59. Kolb and Weir, *Captured at Kings Mountain*, 31.

60. Jones, "The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution and After," 18.

61. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 34.

62. Dameron, *Kings Mountain*, 77.

63. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 52.
64. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 550.
65. DePeyster, "Kings Mountain: The Oriskany of the South," 195.
66. Jones, "The Journal of Alexander Chesney," 18.
67. Dunkerley, *The Battle of Kings Mountain*, 123-124.
68. Kolb and Weir, *Captured at Kings Mountain*, 81-82.
69. Dameron, *Kings Mountain*, 79.
70. Southern, *Voices of the American Revolution in the Carolinas*, Kindle location 2214, 2225-2232.
71. Dameron, *Kings Mountain*, 79.

Part IV

Integration

This chapter provides a suggested framework for conducting the integration phase. As outlined in the introduction, integration should occur as soon as possible to allow students to capture, synthesize, and articulate their observations and insights. To omit or rush this portion is to miss the entire point of the staff ride: *What did I learn and how do I apply what I learned today to improve myself and my profession?*[1] Before the start of the field phase event, the facilitator should ensure the training audience clearly understands the staff ride is a training event, and not just an interesting terrain walk. Here the facilitator should make every effort to have the unit commander clearly articulate training objectives and goals for the event. During the terrain walk, periodically remind students there will "be a test at the end" as a means of motivating active participation in the sharing of insights as they form. The facilitator should encourage note taking as a way of capturing fleeting thoughts and impressions for later sharing. One helpful technique is a recorder to take notes (or even record the event with a digital voice or video recorder) of the discussion points from each stand, and review the notes at the end.

In planning and preparing for the integration phase, the facilitator has to balance some competing factors. Ideally, the integration session is held in a location with minimal environmental and noise detractors. Sufficient time to conduct the integration is necessary, so the facilitator should coordinate in advance with the unit commander to ensure an adequate amount of time is blocked out on the training schedule. When possible, students should have some time for personal reflection and thought before the integration phase. Therefore, the optimum timing is to hold the integration session the day following the field study phase, however, few units will afford the staff ride leader the luxury of extra time, so the leader must prepare to conduct the integration phase immediately following the field study. The facilitator has to consider the physical needs of the students and facilitators. After a couple of hours walking the battlefield, the physical requirements of all participants (food, water, and restroom relief) will certainly impact the ability to perform critical thinking. The staff ride facilitator should organize the integration phase based on the unit, time available, training objectives, and goals of the unit commander. Address the commander's expectations for the integration event beforehand, as a formal event may require the coordination of the auditorium space and

audiovisual support. Conversely, an informal integration event can easily take place in conjunction with a post-staff ride meal. As a minimum, the location for the integration event should take place at a location different than the last stand, in a location and setting conductive to open discussion among all participants. The staff ride leader can employ a structured or unstructured format, but whatever method is used, the staff ride leader should facilitate the event and let the students do the majority of the talking. By doing so, the students ideally integrate their preliminary study with insights gained on the terrain walk to gain relevant insights into their current assignment as well as subsequent career. The integration phase does not include an after action review (AAR) of the staff ride. Although important, AAR comments fall outside the scope of the integration event, and should be done separately.

This section provides some possible techniques along with sample questions which can be used to cap off a good quality training event. The questions should help students link their experiences and observations to the commander's stated training objectives. At the beginning of the integration event, the facilitator should remind students of the goals and objectives of the training event. Then the facilitator should begin to pose open ended questions to help stimulate a robust question and comment session. Depending on the audience and motivation level, the facilitator may need to do little more than ask the question and let the conversation run its course. In some instances, the facilitator may have to ask focused follow up questions to "draw out" good insights from more reserved participants. One good method is to present three broad general questions.

1. What aspects of the campaign had you developed in the preliminary study phase that were either changed or strengthened after your study of the terrain?

This question gets to the heart of a staff ride, the study of the terrain in relation to the course of the battle. Some aspects of the discussion, could include: the vast distances of the operational maneuver leading to the battle; impact of the rugged upcountry on the operational maneuver; the effect of King's Mountain on Ferguson's bayonet tactics; the importance of the topographical crest in the defense. A good follow up question here is: *Did seeing the terrain alter your opinion of any of the leaders? If so, how?*

2. What aspects of warfare have changed since the battle of Kings Mountain? What have remained the same?

The changed aspects students initially discuss will generally revolve around technology: weapons, mechanization, motorization, communica-

tions, and support equipment. More subtle, but discoverable with a bit of encouragement from the facilitator, are the timeless aspects of warfare: the role of personalities; relationships; commander's intent and guidance; logistics; assertive leadership on the battlefield.

3. What insights can the modern military professional glean from the study of the Kings Mountain battle that are relevant today?

This question can easily open into a myriad of discussion threads, limited only by time and student interest. Here, the facilitator can help frame the discussion by the type of unit. For example, a logistics unit might find much insight in comparing and contrasting logistics systems of 1780 and present day. Although this staff ride is primarily geared towards tactical level analysis, it lends itself well to operational level considerations. Consequently, a potential operational level discussion framework is found in the elements of operational design:

a. End state and military conditions.

b. Center of gravity.

c. Decisive points and objectives.

d. Lines of operation.

e. Culmination point.

f. Operational reach, approach, and pause.

g. Simultaneous and sequential operations.

h. Tempo.

For the tactical level, the Army's Warfighting Functions (WFF) can serve as a good launching point for questions:

a. Movement and Maneuver.

b. Intelligence.

c. Fires.

d. Sustainment.

e. Protection.

f. Mission Command and Leadership.

The questions and focus areas are provided simply as an aid to stimulating a robust integration phase, not as a proscriptive list. This handbook provides examples of possible answers to the questions, but does not purport to provide "the right answer" to operational and tactical problems. In preparation for the event, the staff ride leader should pre-record answers

or thoughts to the questions to have some potential ideas to "kick-start" the discussion if necessary. Ideally, the students will engage in a spirited discussion that will require but minimal instructor input.

Notes

1. Matthew Cavanaugh, *The Historical Staff Ride, Version 2.0: Educational and Strategic Frameworks* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy, Unpublished paper, 2013), 4-6. Accessed online on 15 July 2016 at http://www.usma.edu/cfe/Literature/Forms/AllItems.aspx?View={E9A9D254-BC63-4D63-9AFF-A054AED394DB}&FilterField1=Author0&FilterValue1=Matthew%20Cavanaugh. Cavanaugh provides excellent pointers on how to ensure the staff ride is conducted with sufficient historical rigor.

Part V

Support

1. Information and Assistance

a. The Staff Ride Team, Combat Studies Institute (CSI), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, can provide assistance and advice on the planning and execution of a professional staff ride. Visit the CSI website to obtain additional information on staff ride assistance:

Address: Army University Press (Combat Studies Institute)
ATTN: ATZL-CSH
201 Sedgwick Avenue, Building 315
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027

Telephone: DSN: 552-2078
Commercial: (913) 684-2131

Website: http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Staff-Ride-Team-Offerings.

b. The US Army Center for Military History can also provide assistance and advice on planning and executing a staff ride. Contact information:

Address: US Army Center for Military History
ATTN: Field Programs and Historical Services Directorate, AAMH-FP
102 4th Avenue, Building 35
Fort McNair, D.C. 20319-5060

Telephone: Commercial (202) 685-4580

Website: https://history.army.mil/staffRides/index.html

c. The Kings Mountain National Military Park is located near Blacksburg, South Carolina, which is adjacent to the state line with North Carolina. Just to the southwest of the park is the major city of Spartanburg, South Carolina, which offers all necessary support and services. Kings Mountain National Military Park is under the administrative control of the National Park Service (NPS), and features a visitor's center with an animated terrain map, museum displays, bookstore and theater with seating sufficient for 110 students. Parking is adequate, and large enough to handle several tour buses. With advanced notice, the park staff has the ability to support

a staff ride with assistant instructors and a firing demonstration. The NPS visitor's center is the only location near the battlefield that offers latrine facilities and drinking water. The park is generally open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, and admission is free. For more information, contact the park staff at:

Address: Kings Mountain National Military Park
2625 Park Road
Blacksburg, SC 29702

Telephone: (864) 936-7921

Website: www.nps.gov/kimo

2. Logistics

a. **Meals and Services.** Although the park is in close proximity to I-85, there are no services immediately available at exit 2, the intersection of I-85 and State Route 216, the direct route to the battlefield. The closest services (gasoline and fast food restaurants) are located off exit 106 off I-85 in South Carolina. Both the Kings Mountain National Park, and adjacent Kings Mountain State Park have picnic shelters available with advanced coordination.

b. **Lodging.** The closest available commercial lodging is available at nearby Gaffney, South Carolina. The adjacent Kings Mountain State Park offers camping areas.

c. **Traveling.** Access to the park is gained by taking Interstate 85 (I-85) to North Carolina exit 2 for State Route 216. For groups traveling from out of area, the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport (GSP) is approximately an hour drive from the park. Bus or rental van transportation is essential for reaching the park, but not needed for the terrain walk.

3. Other Considerations

a. As with any other training event, direct coordination with the park staff, and a personal reconnaissance of the stands is essential to a successful event.

b. As there are no sources of water on the battlefield, every member of the group should carry a water container.

c. All members should wear hiking boots or shoes and long pants, and carry rain gear and insect repellent.

d. The ideal time for a visit is in October so as to best replicate the weather, light and vegetation conditions of the battle; otherwise the recommended time to visit is in late fall to early spring periods when the trees are not full of leaves and temperatures are milder.

Appendix A

Biographical Sketches of Key Participants

Assigning selected students to study of one of the key participants can accomplish several goals for the staff ride. Assigning a read-ahead assignment will (hopefully) ensure the student will research the character enough to avoid embarrassment on the day of the event. Ideally the student will perform an in-depth analysis of the historical character to be able to discuss why the character acted in a particular way, and how the actions impacted the outcome of the battle.

Role playing ideally fits within the adult learning pedagogical model; students will learn best when they form a personal interest in the subject. Study of the historical participants can create an intellectual and emotional connection, thus stimulating a student's interest in the past and fostering a career-long desire for additional self-study and reflection upon the profession of arms.

Role playing can also inject some levity into an otherwise serious and often grim subject, thus serving to "lighten the mood" and maintain participant interest and motivation.

All ranks are given as the day of the Kings Mountain battle on 7 October 1780.

Patriots

Col. William Campbell. Col. William Campbell was one of Washington County's leading citizens. Before the Revolution, Campbell had gained extensive experience leading militia units against Indians. After the outbreak of war in 1775, Campbell was commissioned captain in the 1st Virginia Regiment and served briefly in the Continental Army. After resigning his Continental commission, Campbell married a daughter of Patrick Henry, and was appointed as Washington County militia colonel. During the middle stages of the war, Campbell successfully commanded expeditions against both Tory and Indian threats. His extensive combat experience, and status as an impartial outsider, marked him as the ideal candidate for command of the overmountain expedition. Campbell died in 1781 of a heart attack while serving with Continental forces fighting Cornwallis near Yorktown, Virginia. In 1822, well after the war when Campbell lay moldering in the ground, John Sevier and Isaac Shelby publicly questioned Campbell's performance on the battlefield in a series of letters and pamphlets, accusing him of shirking during the height of the battle.

Relatives and members of Campbell's command wrote letters defending his actions at Kings Mountain. The counterarguments focused on a case of mistaken identity, as Campbell had exchanged his broken-down "black bald faced horse" for a bay horse from his servant.

Col. Benjamin Cleveland. Born in Prince William County Virginia in 1738, Cleveland earned a reputation as a hunter and Indian fighter comparable to Daniel Boone, and was known for his cruelty towards Tories. During the early stages of the war participated in several battles to secure the frontier from Indiana and Tory threats. Cleveland is widely regarded as the driving force behind the tribunal and hanging of several Loyalist prisoners after the Kings Mountain battle. In later years, Cleveland served as a justice of the peace, and was widely renowned for expanding to an extraordinary weight of 450 pounds. He died in October 1806.

Col. John Sevier. Born in 1745, Sevier settled in Washington County in North Carolina (now northeast Tennessee), where he grew up in a frontier family and served in a militia company under his father's command. Sevier was a leading member of his county leadership, and was a natural choice for a militia officer commission in 1774. During the early part of the Revolution, Sevier fought several frontier skirmishes with Indians and Loyalists, and earned a reputation as a skilled combat leader. After the war, Sevier became the first governor of Tennessee in 1803, and had a county and town named in his honor. Unfortunately, he did not leave behind personal papers or recorded accounts describing his part in the Kings Mountain battle.

Col. Isaac Shelby. Born in 1750 in Sullivan County, North Carolina (near modern Bristol, Tennessee), Shelby's career paralleled that of John Sevier. Shelby best deserves credit as the father of the victory at Kings Mountain. First, his efforts were crucial in forming the overmountain coalition, and his shrewd nomination of Campbell averted a potential leadership crisis among the Carolina regimental commanders. Finally, the battle and Patriot victory at Kings Mountain would arguably not have happened without Shelby's dogged refusal to halt during the pursuit. Shelby's success during the war led to his selection as the first governor of Kentucky after the war. His reputation was somewhat tarnished in old age due to his public criticism of Col. William Campbell.

Col. James Henderson Williams. Born in Virginia in 1740 and orphaned at an early age, Williams was raised by his brother in North Carolina. Williams later settled in the Ninety-Six area where he farmed, ran a mill, and sold merchandise. After the outbreak of the Revolution, Williams

served on the state's Council of Safety and Provincial Congress. Appointed captain in a militia regiment, Williams led militiamen in fights against Indian and Tory, and served with distinction at Musgrove's Mill in August 1780; after which he was promoted to brigadier general by the Patriot governor of South Carolina. Williams was accused of embellishing his role at Musgrove's Mill and for attempting to pilfer supplies from Thomas Sumter's partisan camp. At the time many believed the charges, and shortly thereafter Williams was accused of attempting to deceitfully co-opt the Patriot force into attacking attack Ninety-Six. As a result, Williams was excluded from the council of colonels before the battle, and reduced to command of an *ad hoc* battalion with units from South Carolina and Georgia counties. Williams was mortally wounded in the closing stages of the battle, and died the next day; thus earning him the dubious distinction as the highest ranking person to die as a result of the fight. Although outside of the scope of this work, modern scholarship has cast doubt on Draper's treatment of Williams, in particular calling out the objectivity and accuracy of Col. William Hill's account. See Patricia Forster's *Correspondence* in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 108, 2 (April 2007): 187-197, which presents a credible reinterpretation of the available evidence. Accessed online on 17 May 2016 at http://www.jstor.org/stable/27570893.

Lt. Col. Frederick Hambright. German born, he came to America at the age of 11 with his parents, and received a good education for the time. About 1755 moved from Lancaster County Pennsylvania to Virginia; by 1760 he was settled near the south fork of the Catawba River in South Carolina. Joined the South Fork militiamen and took part in skirmishes with Indians and Loyalists after the start of the Revolution. Appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the Lincoln County regiment, Hambright nevertheless deferred command of the regiment before Kings Mountain in favor of Maj. William Chronicle. When Chronicle was mortally wounded early in the battle, Hambright took command of the regiment until he was severely wounded in the thigh. Hambright was disfigured by the wounding, and resigned his commission soon thereafter. In later years, he bought land adjacent to the Kings Mountain battlefield, where he died in March 1817, and was buried in the nearby Shiloh Presbyterian Church graveyard.

Maj. William Chronicle. Chronicle was born in Gaston County, North Carolina about 1755. Organized the Tryon County militia in 1775, with his first military service in command of a militia company during the Snow Campaign. Fought Tories in Georgia, participated in the siege of Charleston, followed by battle at Ramsour's Mill on 20 June 1780 near Lincolnton, North Carolina. His particular group of militiamen were known as the

South Fork Boys from their home region of the Catawba River. Chronicle was appointed major of the Lincoln County Regiment when it was called up to oppose Ferguson's incursion. Shortly before the battle, Col. William Graham relinquished his command of the Lincoln County Regiment just before the battle, pleading a sick wife. Major Chronicle received command of the regiment when Lt. Col. Frederick Hambright declined the command. Major Chronicle was at the lead of his regiment in the opening stages of the battle where he died within moments of receiving an enemy musket ball to his chest. Chronicle was buried on the battlefield, along three other members of his command, and his gravesite is marked with two markers.

Maj. Joseph Winston. Born in 1746 in Virginia, Joseph Winston served in the militia at an early age and was wounded while fighting Indians. In the late 1760s relocated to Surrey County, North Carolina on the Dan River. In the early stages of the Revolution, served on the state's Committee of Safety and was elected second major of the Surrey County militia regiment. Led Whig volunteer fighters at the Battle of Moore's Creek in 1776, and subsequent expeditions to suppress Cherokee raids on the frontier. Commanded a contingent of the Surrey County regiment at Kings Mountain, and commanded the same regiment at Guilford Courthouse in March 1781. A post war planter, Winston served in the state and national legislatures, and for a time was the trustee of the newly formed University of North Carolina. Winston died in April 1815.

Maj. Joseph McDowell. Born in March 1756, Joseph McDowell's family lived in the vicinity of Quaker's Meadows, where in 1765 his father was given a large land grant. Elected major in the Burke County regiment commanded by his older brother Charles. Joseph McDowell took command of the Burke County battalion before Kings Mountain as Charles was considered "too old and slow" by the other South Carolina Whig commanders. After the fight at Kings Mountain, McDowell took part in the Wilmington Expedition and punitive actions against the Cherokees. Besides serving as militia major, McDowell served as county sheriff, corner and surveyor, as well as a term in the state legislature. He died in 1799 or 1801.

British and Loyalist

Lieut. Anthony Allaire. Like Captain DePeyster, Allaire was a native born Tory from New York who received a lieutenant's commission in the provincial American Volunteers before shipping to South Carolina. During the battle of Kings Mountain, Allaire led the Volunteers in the hottest part

of the fighting until the surviving unit members were swamped by the panic stricken Tory militiamen. Allaire not only survived the battle unwounded, but escaped from the Patriots while on the march into captivity. After the war he went into exile in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada where he died in 1838.

Capt. Alexander Chesney. Born in Ireland, Chesney's family settled in the Pacolet River valley of South Carolina. Joined the Patriot militia in April 1776 hoping to defuse accusations of disloyalty against his family. Fought in campaigns against the Creek and Cherokee Indians and formed part of the Patriot garrison at Augusta in 1770. After the British capture of Charleston in May 1780, Chesney defected and joined the Loyalist provincial forces in June 1780 with an appointment of lieutenant. Attached to Ferguson's command at Ninety-Six and promoted to captain in charge of a company of Provincials, which was subsequently wiped out in the battle of Kings Mountain. Chesney was taken prisoner after the battle, and managed to escape during the Patriot withdrawal into the mountains. After a period of hiding, Cheney raised a company of Tory militia and briefly commanded the jail guard at Ninety-Six. Chesney escaped death a second time at the hands of vengeful Whigs, when he accompanied Tarleton's Legion into battle at The Cowpens in January 1781. Chesney subsequently raised a troop of militia dragoons and was wounded in a skirmish with Patriot partisans. In July 1781 Chesney was attached to Lord Rawdon's force which relieved Ninety-Six, during which time he daringly carried a message from Rawdon to Charleston. Chesney afterwards raised several more Loyalist companies and led them during the siege of Charleston. Ill health forced his departure from American to Ireland in January 1782. He lived in Ireland until his death, serving for many years as a customs official as well as an advocate for exiled Loyalists seeking compensation from the Crown for their losses.

Capt. Abraham DePeyster. Born in New York City in 1753, son to a wealthy member of the New York gentry. Abraham received a captain's commission in the King's American Regiment in 1776, and saw a great deal of combat fighting against Continentals in the New England and Mid-Atlantic States. In 1779, a detachment of the King's Americans was attached to Clinton's expedition against Charleston, after which the unit remained as part of Cornwallis' field army. During Ferguson's field expedition, DePeyster served as the second in command, as in the pecking order of the British Army, a Provincial commission ranked higher in precedence that a militia officer commission. After Major Ferguson's death, Captain DePeyster had to surrender the remnants of the Loyalist corps on

the battlefield. DePeyster survived the aftermath and subsequently joined the mass exile of Loyalists to Canada after the war. DePeyster later served as the New Brunswick provincial treasurer before his death in 1798.

Maj. Patrick Ferguson. Born in Scotland in 1744 into an affluent family, Patrick Ferguson was the only regular soldier on either side to participate in the battle. After attending a military academy in London, "Pat" Ferguson was commissioned at 15 in the Royal North British Dragoons. During the Seven Years' War, Cornet Ferguson was honored for "prodigies of valor" in combat against the French. Afterwards, Ferguson served in Great Britain, where he devoted time in the organization of home militias while recovering from recurring bouts of sickness. From 1768-1773 he served as a captain in the 70th Regiment of Foot which fought against insurgents in the Caribbean. In his subsequent posting home, he designed and patented a rifle with a unique breech loading design. In 1777, Ferguson led a provisional rifle corps attached to Howe's army in the New England area, where he performed with distinction until his right arm was crippled by a rebel musket ball. After a year of recuperation, where Ferguson learned how to shoot and sword fight with his remaining hand, Ferguson was promoted to major in the 71st Regiment of Foot (the Highlanders). In December 1779, Henry Clinton appointed Ferguson with a temporary promotion to lieutenant colonel to raise the American Volunteers, a provisional battalion formed from New York and New Jersey Loyalists. After landing with Clinton's army near Charleston, Ferguson worked closely with Tarleton's Legion in detached operations; during one such operation he was injured by a "friendly fire" incident when a British solider accidentally pierced Ferguson's good arm with a bayonet. Before Clinton's departure from Charleston, he appointed Ferguson as the Inspector General of Militia (a posting which included a militia brigadier's commission) with a mandate to organize and train Loyalist militia. No one doubted Ferguson's intelligence or personal bravery under fire (his men nicknamed him the "Bulldog"), but Cornwallis was skeptical of Ferguson's chances for success, and other British officers openly doubted Ferguson's fitness for an independent command.

Surgeon Uzal Johnson. A native of New Jersey, Uzal Johnson was a practicing physician before the war. Johnson enlisted in the Loyal Americans and was shipped to the Carolinas as part of Ferguson's command. Johnson was the sole surviving surgeon present at Kings Mountain, where he spent the night and morning after the battle performing treatment of the wounded. Johnson survived the march of prisoners and eventually ended up in a Continental prison at Hillsborough, North Car-

olina where he was paroled in January 1781. Most importantly, Johnson left a detailed diary which provided details of the battle from the Loyalist viewpoint. After the war Johnson returned to his old home in New Jersey where, despite his Loyalist background, he successfully resumed his prewar practice of medicine.

Lt. Col. Daniel Plummer. Born in Pennsylvania, Plummer immigrated to the vicinity of Fair Forest Creek (a branch of the Tyger River, near modern Spartanburg, South Carolina) before 1775. Joined the Loyalist militia raised in 1775 and captured in the aftermath of the Snow Campaign. Probably released by the British when Charleston fell. Appointed major of the Fair Forest Tory Regiment raised in 1780, Plummer was promoted to colonel and commanded the regiment at Kings Mountain. Seriously wounded and left for dead on the battlefield, Plummer subsequently recovered and, after selling his property, went into exile in Spanish Florida.

Col. Ambrose Mills. Born in Derbyshire England in 1722, Mills first lived on the frontier of South Carolina before settling in Rutherford County, North Carolina. Mills apparently played a prominent part in suppressing the War of the Regulation Tax Revolt in the late 1760s, and was active in raising Loyalist militia during the Revolution. Captured at Kings Mountain, Mills was one of 32 Tories condemned by a court-martial at Biggerstaff's plantation and one of nine actually executed by hanging—thus becoming the senior Tory to die as a result of the battle. Mills was accused of inciting Cherokee raids against Patriot settlements but he was probably singled out for execution due to his prominence in the Tory community.

Appendix B

Order of Battle, Kings Mountain 17 October 1780

Ferguson's Corps—Loyalist Militia of the Carolinas (1075 men)

Maj. Patrick Ferguson, Inspector General of Militia†

Capt. Abraham DePeyster, Loyal American Volunteers—Second in Command

Loyal American Volunteers and Provincials (75 men)
Lieut. Anthony Allaire*

Little River Regiment (8 Companies—200 men)
Maj. Patrick Cunningham

Stephen's Creek Regiment (8 companies—200 men)
Col. John Cotton Sr.

Fair Forest Regiment (8 companies—200 men)
Lt. Col. Daniel Plummer*

Spartan Regiment (8 companies—200 men)
Col. Ambrose Mills

Dutch Fork Regiment (4 companies—100 men) Little River and Stephen's Creek Regiments

Long Cane Regiment (4 companies—100 men) Split between Fair Forest and Spartan Regiments

Patriot Expedition (910 men)

Col. William Campbell, Virginia Militia

Washington County (Virginia) Regiment (200 men)
Col. William Campbell

Sullivan County (North Carolina) Regiment (120 men)
Col. Isaac Shelby

Washington County (North Carolina) Regiment (120 men)
Col. John Sevier

Wilkes County (North Carolina) Regiment (110 men)
Col. Benjamin Cleveland

Lincoln County (North Carolina) Regiment (50 men)
Maj. William Chronicle†

Burke and Rutherford Counties (North Carolina) Regiment (90 men)
Maj. Joseph McDowell

Surrey County (North Carolina) Regiment (60 men)
Maj. Joseph Winston

Chester and York Counties (South Carolina) Regiment (160 men)
Col. James Williams†

*- Wounded in Battle

†- Killed in Battle

Appendix C

Chronology of Major Events

February-May 1780—Siege of Charleston.

12 May—Charleston surrenders.

29 May—Battle of Waxhaws and "Buford's Massacre" (British victory).

30 May—Surrender of Thicketty Fort to Patriot force.

16 August—Battle of Camden (British victory).

18 August—Battle of Musgrove's Mill (Patriot victory).

18 August—Fishing Creek (Patriot defeat).

7 September—Ferguson arrives in Gilbert Town, dispatches the Overmountain message.

23 September—Ferguson returns to Gilbert Town after pursuit of McDowell's Patriots.

25 September—Gathering of the Overmountain Men at Sycamore Shoals.

30 September—Overmountain Men rendezvous at Quaker Meadows.

1 October—Ferguson camps at Denard's Ford, issues second threat to Overmountain men. Ferguson receives solid intelligence about Overmountain expedition; requests reinforcements from Ninety-Six.

2 October—Ferguson departs Denard's Ford, follows a circuitous route to Tate's Plantation.

4 October—Overmountain Men cross Denard's Ford.

5 October—Ferguson departs Tate's Plantation via Cherokee Ford road to the east.

6 October—Ferguson deploys his command atop King's Mountain. The Overmountain men arrive at The Cowpens. Intelligence of Ferguson's location results in formation of a mounted pursuit column, which departs around 2100 on a forced march to overtake the Tory force.

7 October—(All times are approximate)

Overnight—Overmountain force marches at night in steady drizzle.

Daybreak—Expedition crosses the Broad River, Council of Colonels and Shelby imposes his will on the rest to continue pursuit.

0800—Intelligence from Solomon Beason regarding Ferguson's location.

0900—Intelligence from "chicken girl" about Tories at Kings Mountain.

1200—Capture of John Ponder with Ferguson dispatch to Cornwallis. Intelligence about Ferguson's "checked duster."

1500—Overmountain men reach dismount point and form for battle.

1500-1600—Battle of Kings Mountain; death of Maj. Patrick Ferguson.

8 October—Burial of dead overseen by rear guard of Virginia men. Patriot main body departs mid-morning, which includes Patriot wounded and Loyalist prisoners carrying off haul of captured muskets. Death of Col. James Williams.

14 October—Courts-martial and execution of nine Loyalist prisoners at Biggerstaff's Plantation. Cornwallis suspends his march into North Carolina.

15-16 October—The wounded Patriots are dispersed into hiding and the remaining Rebels and prisoners cross the Catawba around midnight on after a day-long forced march. The Overmountain expedition disbands.

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