

Battle of Bunker Hill

June 17, 1775

The American patriots were defeated at the Battle of Bunker Hill, but they proved they could hold their own against the superior British Army. The fierce fight confirmed that any reconciliation between England and her American colonies was no longer possible.

How it ended

British victory. The battle was a tactical victory for the British, but it was a sobering experience. The British sustained twice as many casualties as the Americans and lost many officers. After the engagement, the patriots retreated and returned to their lines outside the perimeter of Boston.

In context

By early 1775 tensions between Britain and her colonies had escalated. The colonists began to mobilize for war, while the British Army secured gunpowder and cannon in anticipation of an uprising. On April 19, it all came to a head in the Massachusetts towns of Lexington and Concord. After that historic engagement, the British retreated to their camp in Boston, and local militias prepared for future British attacks. Militiamen marched to defend Boston, some from as far away as Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and what is now the state of Vermont.

British Commander-in-Chief General Sir Thomas Gage was under pressure to quash the colonial rebellion. By June, he had reinforcements and was ready to implement a new strategy. The British Army planned to launch an attack against the Americans on the heights north and south of Boston. Details of the attack were leaked, however, and a detachment of 1,000 Massachusetts and Connecticut soldiers—more of an armed mob than a military unit—

gathered to defend a hill in Charlestown. Among the defenders were several enslaved and free African Americans as well. The violent clash of these forces on what is mistakenly known as “Bunker Hill” signaled that the colonial revolt would not be easily extinguished.

Source: American Battlefield Trust;
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/bunker-hill>



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