

# September 11, 1777

General George Washington fought the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. It was the largest and longest battle of the Revolutionary War, and the first time the American flag was carried into battle.

Washington commanded 12,000 troops drawn from Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland. His adversary, Sir William Howe, led a mixed British and Hessian force numbering 15,000. With accurate intelligence, guides provided by local Loyalists and a flanking attack by Lord Cornwallis, Howe drove the Continental Army from the field.

Two weeks later, Howe entered Philadelphia. The Continental Congress fled and its ragtag army regrouped near Valley Forge.

Were it not for Washington and his troops' staying power, our War of Independence might have all but ended on Brandywine's banks. But Betsy Ross' flag still flies because a generation of brave men and women willingly died to secure the freedom and independence it represents.

Now a debate rages over our war against terrorism. Today's sunshine patriots discuss strategies and tactics, means and ends, allies and enemies ... as if the nation states harboring the terrorists can be talked into surrendering.

Meanwhile, Philadelphia's Independence Hall remains sealed off with jersey walls and fences. Americans wait 75 minutes and submit to an airport-like security search to see the Liberty Bell. The irony cannot be lost on any of us.

And yet, September 11<sup>th</sup> proved a hollow victory for Lord Howe. Patience, courage, concentration of forces, support of our allies and, yes, battlefield casualties turned the tide. Four long hard years later, Washington defeated Cornwallis at Yorktown.

This September 11<sup>th</sup>, 225 years after the Battle of Brandywine and one year after al Qaeda's murderous attacks, let us pray for our heroes. But let us also recommit ourselves and our country to the defeat of our foes.

**Have you heard?**

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