

## Battle of Bunker Hill

Following the battles at Lexington and Concord the colonists formed a New England army to surround and contain the British forces occupying Boston. This has been referred to as the Siege of Boston.

The Charlestown peninsula and Dorchester Heights, commanding both the city of Boston and Boston harbor, lay abandoned.

Hoping to be “masters of these heights,” British troops planned to take the hills; acting quickly on this intelligence, the colonial militia beat the British to the Charlestown peninsula, captured Bunker Hill, and then seized the Dorchester hills.

They built an earthen fortress 160-foot long and 30-foot high atop the hill. British troops headed uphill, where they are frustrated by fences, pits, and tall grass. In dust and heat, the continental militia waited behind their walls.

They held fire until the British were in within 150 feet of the fortifications.

(Contrary to urban legend, there’s no evidence anyone ordered the men to hold their fire until they saw “the whites” of the enemies’ eyes. The writer Parson Weems seems to have invented this decades later.)

The Americans opened fire at about 50 yards, much too distant to see anyone’s eyes.



“Heavy and severe Fire” decimates the thick British ranks. Recoiling from the first attack, General Howe relies on “the Bravery of the King’s Troops”.

The British charged three times. No longer able to withstand the British attack, the colonial militia retreated.

In total, 140 colonists were dead and 271 wounded. Before dark, the British again commanded the Charleston peninsula, though 226 British lay dead and 828 wounded.

Despite renewed British control of the peninsula, colonial forces still trapped the British in Boston.

As supply issues and shortages plagued them, the British prepared for further military commitment to defeat the “poor and ignorant” colonists. The colonists assembled more soldiers.

Popularly known as ‘The Battle of Bunker Hill,’ the battle actually occurred on Breed’s Hill.

Bunker and Breed’s Hills, named after George Bunker and Ebenezer Breed, were mostly undeveloped with some farmhouses and pastures.

The Battle of Bunker Hill, also called the Battle of Breed’s Hill, (June 17, 1775), was the first major battle of the American Revolution, fought in Charlestown (now part of Boston) during the Siege of Boston.

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