



## Fort Washington

In one year, Gen. Greene was able to drive Gen. Cornwallis out of South Carolina and clear North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia of all British troops except for the cities of Charleston and Savannah. As part of that action near here on 14 Mar 1780, Lt. Col. William Washington's 3rd Regiment of Continental Light Dragoons (VA) led an attack on a British Post manned by 80 Hessian troops. Capt. Johan Ewald led the Hesse-Kassel Feld Jäger Korps, 2nd Company at the Post, later renamed Fort Washington following capture. Lord Cornwallis commented, "there could be no more formidable antagonist in a charge, at the head of his cavalry, than Colonel William Washington." He let the cavalry at the Battle of Cowpens, which routed the British, and Congress awarded a Silver Medal. The British used the German Hessian troops to build three Forts in the area to try to control access to Charleston and slow Greene's advance. Fort Washington was situated at the junction of Dorchester (Charleston Road), Ladson (Goose Creek Road), Trolley, and the approaches to the Ashley River. The other Forts were built at Ashley Hill near Bacon's Bridge and Monck's Corner. The Post was constructed of redoubts with wooden staves pointing outward and walls of piles of stone and dirt. Moats were dug around the outside to repel cavalry attacks with but a single fortified entrance. Capt. Ewald commented about the difficulties of building posts in South Carolina due to the 16-foot alligators, impassable woods full of wolves, and several species of venomous snakes.

During Washington's attack, the Hessian commander ordered fire on the flanks of Patriot cavalry approaching their post. His men managed to hit only one man, a sergeant of the 3rd Regiment of Continental Light Dragoons. The sergeant was so far in front of the rest that he was an easy target, getting shot in the abdomen. Capt. Ewald asked the dying sergeant why he had acted so rashly, and he replied: "Sir, Colonel Washington promised me that I would become an officer right away if I could discover whether the Jaegers were supported by infantry and had cannon with them, because if not, he would try to harass the Jaegers." The British surgeon told the sergeant that his wound was mortal. The sergeant replied, "Well then, I die for my country and for its just cause." Capt. Ewald gave the dying man a glass of wine, "which he drank with relish, and then died."

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