

## **Seige of Savannah   September 16 to October 18, 1779**

<b>Location :</b>	<b>Savannah, Georgia</b>
<b>Commanders:</b>	<b>American - Gen. Benjamin Lincoln</b> <b>British - Gen. Augustine Prevost</b>
<b>Casualties:</b>	<b>Americans - 948 killed</b> <b>British - 155 killed</b>

The British took Savannah, Georgia, on December 29, 1778, the first move in Britain's Southern Strategy. To protect Charleston, Gen. Benjamin Lincoln planned to retake Savannah. He was spurred to that plan when French Admiral Comte d'Estaing agreed to bring his French fleet with 4,000 men from the West Indies.

In Charleston, Lincoln ordered Lt. Col. Francis Marion, with 200 men, to be ready at a moment's notice, along with others to form a task force. Unfortunately, D'Estaing arrived before Lincoln and was too eager to engage and did not wait for Lincoln. He landed his men, and prematurely called for a surrender to the King of France. British Commander Prevost called for a 24-hour delay, thus giving him plenty of time to prepare for reinforcements and ammunition. Foolishly, d'Estaing permitted the delay, infuriating the Americans. Thus began a long siege with the Americans suffering huge losses, a bloodbath. At the height of the battle, Lt. Col. Marion led his men forward across the abatis and into a ditch in front of the redoubt. There they were sprayed with shot by Carolina loyalist riflemen. As Marion's troops climbed forward, their standard bearer was wounded and fell. He passed the blue flag with the crescent symbol to Sgt. Jasper, the same hero of Fort Sullivan, but Jasper, too, was cut down.

Finally, the Franco-American forces were forced to retreat. Lincoln and Governor Rutledge pleaded with d'Estaing to continue the siege, but he had had enough. Wounded twice, he boarded his ship and sailed back to France, blaming the Americans for the debacle.

### **Sources:**

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