

COLUMBIA GAMES' LIBERTY: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Scenario by Alan Marian

INVASION OF CANADA: 1775

Summary: Almost a full year before the rebellious colonies declared their independence from Great Britain, the Continental Congress authorized its newly established army to undertake a strategic offensive into foreign territory. British forces under General William and Admiral Richard Howe are besieged in Boston by American militia undergoing training into an army by George Washington. Canada is British-owned but thinly defended, and Americans hope to rally the French minority into overthrowing their new masters.

Ft. Ticonderoga is the American forward base, having been taken without a shot in April. Gen. Richard Montgomery plans to use the Champlain/St. John corridor for entry into the St. Lawrence River. Meanwhile, a thousand picked men from Washington's command move by land and sea up the Kennebec River to Ft. Western, under dynamic leader Col. Benedict Arnold. One of these two expeditions is expected to surprise the enemy and distract attention from the other. British Governor-General Carleton has few men but has time and Winter on his side.

Board Play is limited to all hexes north of, and including, the row Boston-Springfield-Albany-Ft. Niagara. That row is treated like the edge of the map.

Duration is 2 Game Turns followed by a Winter turn, followed by 1 Game Turn. This represents September-October through November-December 1775 in Game Turns, Winter which represents January-February 1776, then March-April 1776 in 1 Game Turn. (I assume two months for each Game Turn in the basic game covering March to December, with Winter being January-February). By agreement before starting play, a 2d Game Turn (May-June '76) can be played after the Winter Turn to allow for Carleton's full counter-offensive, but this is strictly optional.

Victory Conditions: Rule 11.1 is changed in that Victory is determined at the end of the final Game Turn which follows the Winter Turn (Rule 11.4). The campaign played out in deteriorating weather conditions, and American forces which survived the march and combat spent the Winter encamped outside Quebec although losing strength from disease. It was after the St. Lawrence ice broke up in Spring that British reinforcements arrived, allowing Carleton to sortie and counter-attack the invaders.

British start with 8 on-board Supply points which includes occupied Boston. Americans start with 5 on-board Supply points.

British win if they control 8 or more Supply Points which **must** include Quebec and either Montreal or Boston.

Americans win if the British control 5 or less Supply Points and do not control Quebec. Any other result is a Draw.

The burden of the offensive is on the Americans and they must move hard and fast to grab whatever they can in Canada before Winter. The British have just enough strength to defend their Colony but not if first turn losses are too high. The wild-card factor is Boston which is in a stalemate siege but both players could spend valuable action points to move those units against each other or to help Canada. The Spring reinforcement will be modest but maybe enough to turn the tide for Britain. A comparative handful of soldiers will once more decide the fate of Canada as it did sixteen years earlier in another war.

The Historical result was a British victory but the Americans came very close to capturing Quebec in a desperate snowstorm night assault by the combined forces. Carleton could only wait for Spring but when help arrived, he chased the ragged Americans out of Montreal, and might have taken Ticonderoga but for Arnold's naval victory at Valcour Island.

Setup: All units are at full strength unless otherwise designated.

British= Quebec: Carleton (2 cv)

St. Johns: Peters (1 cv)

Montreal: Cunningham (2 cv)

Ft. Oswego: Butler (1 cv)

Boston: Howe (3 cv); Grant (3 cv) (representing Percy); Naval unit Howe

In the Replacement Pool are Fraser (2 cv), Riedesel (3 cv), Philips (2 cv); Naval unit Hood

American= Ft. Ticonderoga: Gates (2 cv) (representing Montgomery)

Ft. Western: Arnold (2 cv); Morgan (1 cv)

Springfield: Washington (3 cv); Ward (2 cv)

Portsmouth: Putnam (2 cv)

Albany: Wooster (1 cv)

In the Replacement Pool are Clinton (2 cv), Stark (2 cv), Greene (3 cv)

Rules: All basic game rules apply unless otherwise indicated.

To simulate lack of sealift this early, and the winter freeze of the St. Lawrence River, Rule 6.1 is altered as follows. Any British units pulled from the Replacement Pool and going to Quebec must stay in the Atlantic box until the Game Turn after Winter Turn, when they are free to land or execute a Sea Attack (rule 8.4), This prohibition does not extend to the Boston garrison and its fleet, which are free to employ Naval moves. There is no prohibition on British units moving to and from the Atlantic box to locations on the American coast.

Rule 11.4 is amended to permit 1 cv of Americans to pass the Winter Turn in the town of Trois Rivieres. This permits a small American presence to remain near the two major Canadian cities until Spring, as did the remnant of the Montgomery-Arnold force. Since it is not a Supply town, no Supply card (Rule 3.3) can be played there.

Optional Rules (Page 5 of Rules) for American Militia "honorable shot" and for British/Hessian bayonet charge are **not** available. Neither of those tactics were employed this early in the conflict.

As with any scenario, feel free to experiment, tinker, and have fun!

Sources: Kenneth Roberts' Arundel; also Roberts as editor of Letters from Arnold's Expedition; Thomas Desjardins' Through a Howling Wilderness; Bruce Lancaster's narrative for American Heritage History of the American Revolution.