

Thank you, Greg. Good Morning ladies and gentlemen,

The Battle of the Waxhaw's, or Buford's Massacre as it later came to be known, is one of the most debated Revolutionary War battles by historians and seemingly even by those who were there. The events are so contested that it is impossible to know precisely what occurred or at least, in what order. This controversy has continued to today where a known Revolutionary War historian and writer would have us believe there was no massacre at all while others claim it was nothing more than brutal slaughter.

What is not debated is that the Rear Guard of Virginia Patriots under the command of Colonel Abraham Buford was attacked on this ground by British and loyalist forces under the leadership of Colonel Banastre Tarleton and the patriots were literally cut to pieces. There is no dispute that an unsuccessful surrender effort was made by Buford's men. Some of the wounds suffered by Colonel Buford's men are reported to have been inflicted after they lay dead yet some of the Patriots here that day make no mention in their pension applications of improper behavior by the British forces. Some of the loyalists say that the British never fired a single shot and the only ones fired was a single volley by the Patriots. Even the number of British involved in the battle is debated.

While it is impossible to give a fully accurate report of the exact events that took place on this ground on May 29th, 1780, I can tell you that 113 patriots were killed. According to the reports, most of them were hacked to death with sabers and bayonets. That, in itself, tells us a great deal. There were over 200 Patriots wounded with 150 of them so badly injured they could not be moved from the battlefield. Only 53 Patriots were taken prisoner. All this carnage and only 5 deaths with 14 wounded are reported by the British. To me, this seems to indicate the Patriots had been overwhelmed and in fact, took on a passive posture with surrender as the clear intent. That surrender was ignored or denied until almost all were either severely wounded or dead where we stand today.

Another reality we are confronted with is that the term, "Tarleton's Quarter" came from this battle. Repeated reports tell us that Patriots were cut down both during the act of surrendering and after. We also know that the Over-mountain men were formed when word of what happened here spread. After this battle . . . little quarter was given by either side for the remainder of the war. The Patriots would cry out, "Give them Tarleton's Quarter!" and "Remember the Waxhaw's!"

These Patriots, more than 80 of them, buried here, in this mass grave, are among our countries first veterans. These Patriot Veterans gave their lives for a cause that formed our nation. Through their sacrifice we became an independent people. This legacy is preserved for us by our veterans of today, several of whom are with us at this ceremony. By the commitment of these modern veterans we remain a free nation.

As we remember the ultimate sacrifice of these Americans who died on this ground where we stand, at the Battle of Waxhaw's 234 years ago and are buried here, please remember that this

is Memorial Day Weekend and we need to remember all of our veterans who died for our country while serving in the United States Military. We must join together as citizens of this nation regardless of race, sex, age, or background and recognize all of our fallen American heroes. We are here because they made a commitment. They took a stand. They stood the line. They fell so that we can stand free and make our own choices.

Honor their sacrifice by being the best American Citizen that you can be.

Thank you.