



Port Royal Island 1st	2/3/1779	GPS: 32.50017°N 80.74368°W	Confidence: 5
Port Royal Island 2nd	ca. 7/8-15/1779	Unknown	Confidence: 0

Directions: The Battle of Port Royal Island took place on US Highway 21 (Trask Parkway) about 160 yards north of Bogus Lane (Patriot position). The British position was in the swamp to the north. US Highway 21 is the main road to Beaufort from US Highway 17. US Highway 17 was the main road from Savannah to Charleston in 1779.

Port Royal 1st Action: To establish an initial British foothold in South Carolina, British Gen. Augustine Prévost sent a detachment from Savannah under the command of Maj. Valentine Gardiner to occupy Port Royal Island. His landing was on February 2 at DeVeaux's plantation. The British first marched north to the Port Royal Ferry to prevent American forces from getting onto the island, but learned that Patriots were already on the island. The British then marched south towards Beaufort to engage the Patriots. The next day, American Gen. William Moultrie marched north from Beaufort with 300 militia, many of whom were from Gen. Stephen Bull's Beaufort militia, to fight Gardiner. The battle took place at the Halfway House a few miles north of Beaufort, near the Halfway House at Gray's Hill. Gen. Moultrie made the statement that there were only nine Continental soldiers in his entire army in the Battle of Port Royal Island. This is one of the rare actions where the British had the cover of the trees and the Patriots were in the open field and where the militia did stand and fight instead of running from British regulars.

In the Battle of Port Royal, the American forces lost seven men. Charleston Artillery Capt. Thomas Heyward, Jr. (signer of the Declaration of Independence) was slightly wounded. The British had 40 killed and wounded and 7 men captured. American Lt. Edward Barnwell and a few mounted men managed to capture twenty-six British soldiers as they retreated back to the HMS *Vigilant*. However, the Americans could not control all of the prisoners due to Barnwell's lack of manpower. As a result, many escaped. British deserters stated that about 1/2 of the British were killed or wounded. The Americans, under Moultrie's command, defeated the British and drove them from Port Royal Island. This action denied the British their much-desired foothold in South Carolina, for the moment.²⁸

Port Royal 2nd Action: After the Battle of Stono Ferry in southern Charleston County, the British, commanded by British Gen. Augustine Prévost, left Edisto Island continuing to withdraw towards Savannah, Georgia, moving south by island hopping down the South Carolina coast, crossing the bays by boat. They arrived at St. Helena Island and split their force between St. Helena and Ladies Islands. Crossing the Beaufort River on 7/8/1779, they were able to occupy Beaufort without any resistance from the Americans.²⁹

The Americans watched the British from Sheldon Church and harassed them at Beaufort and on the sea islands. They made a brief attack in the Beaufort area in mid-July 1779. American Lt. Lewis Ogier attacked a group of Loyalists driving about 300 head of cattle to feed Prévost's army. He captured the cattle and drove the Loyalists into the river. There were no reported casualties on either side. The precise location of this action is unknown, but happened close to Beaufort. These incidents may have led to the burning of Sheldon Church by Loyalists in 1779.