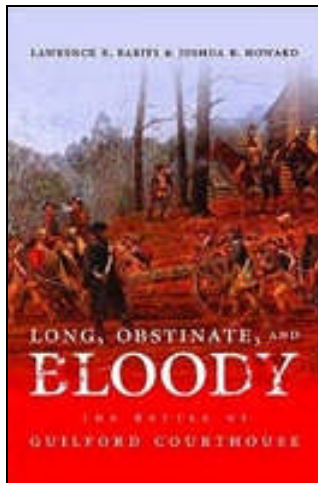


Book Review

Long, Obstinate, and Bloody: The Battle of Guilford Courthouse by **Lawrence E. Babits** and **Joshua B. Howard**



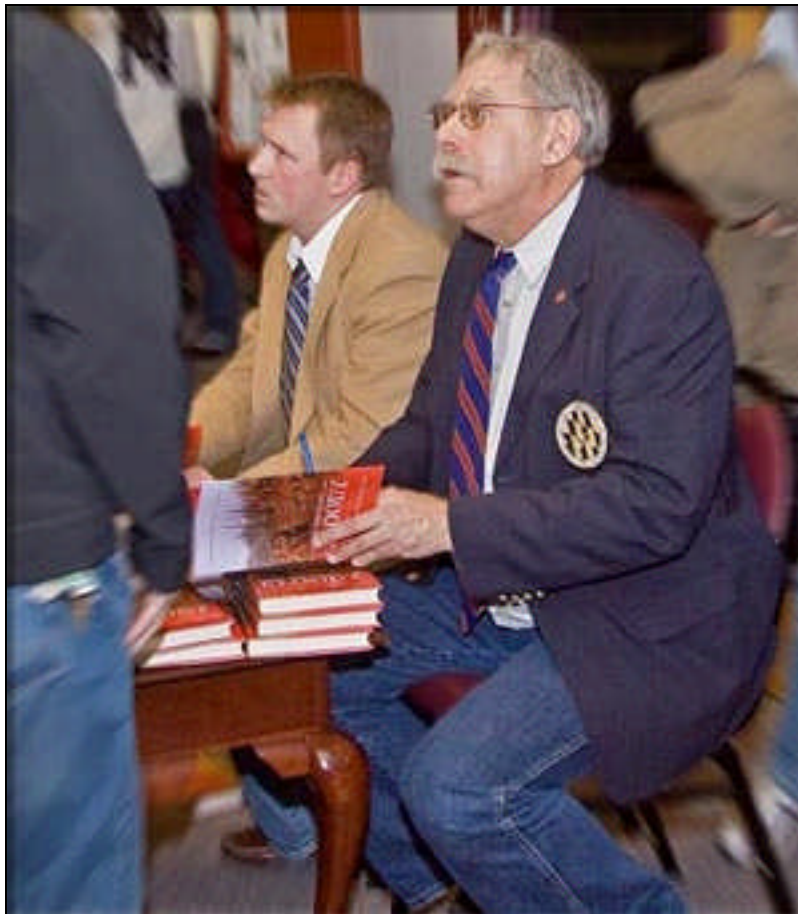
Larry Babits and Joshua Howard have joined their considerable investigative talents to “light up” the Battle of Guilford Courthouse which occurred on March 15th, 1781. “Light up” is a term often used by Babits and Joshua to indicate a heavy fire fight, where musket balls, cannon balls, grapeshot and buckshot sunder the very air with their passing. The phrase may also be construed as shedding light on a dark subject. In both instances, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody* succeeds in concentrating fire and light on an historical event.

The authors have debunked a great number of myths that have long been associated with the Battle of Guilford Courthouse: these include the notion that Banastre Tarleton lost two fingers early in the day in a skirmish near the New Garden Meeting House; that the North Carolina militia stationed at the “First Line” were ineffectual as they were reported to have turned and fled before they fired two shots; the content of a supposed conversation between Charles O’Hara and the Lord Charles Cornwallis, where O’Hara begged his Commander not to fire grapeshot into his own troops and thus break a concerted push by the American Patriots; and that Peter Francisco, the “Hercules of the Revolution” single-handedly killed 11 men with a 6 foot broadsword.

Babits and Howard took their source materials from both sides of the Atlantic and found it most instructive reading first-hand accounts by British Officers that were able to gauge the effectiveness of the Rebel militia units arrayed against the Crown forces. They also made heavy use of Revolutionary War Pension Records to locate specific units on various battle maps and to gain a sense of the ebb and flow of the conflict, including who was where, what happened, and

when the events occurred. When crossed against earlier accounts, they began to get a more accurate feel for the shape of the battle. The authors hasten to point out, however, that even this method of reconstruction leaves many questions unanswered.

While well-written and quite encyclopedic in its breadth, this not an easy read. The facts are presented in an orderly fashion, but there are so many of them that it is best to read this book in short intervals.



Joshua Howard and Larry Babits signing copies of their book, Long, Obstinate, and Bloody at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park's Visitor Center, March 14, 2009

Submitted by:
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