

My wife and I have survived the pandemic without so much as a case of the sniffles, and we have both received the COVID vaccine (Pfizer for her and Moderna for me). We both felt bad for two or three days after our second injections, which I understand is not unusual but also not universal. The pandemic forced the cancellation of a trip to Paris and a cruise down the Rhone River that we had planned for late August and early September of last year, and we have had no other opportunities to travel anywhere else during the pandemic.

I did, however, take a couple of day-long road trips in October to drive the Blue Ridge Parkway and see the fall foliage, and I recently took another day-long road trip to visit the Kings Mountain and Cowpens national battlefields that lie between Charlotte, NC and Spartanburg, SC.

The Battle of Kings Mountain occurred in October, 1780, and the Battle of Cowpens occurred three months later in January, 1781. The Americans defeated the British in both battles, and the American victories depleted the forces of Lord Cornwallis to such an extent that he was eventually forced to retreat to Virginia, where he was trapped and defeated at Yorktown by American forces under the command of George Washington. Seeing and walking the battlefields at Kings Mountain and Cowpens gave me a first-hand appreciation of how the battles unfolded and why the Americans won. American militia (essentially backwoodsmen armed with their own hunting rifles) played pivotal roles in both battles."

*- Recycled from Ham's Summer 2021 Class Notes*

[Editorial addition: Mel Gibson's movie, "The Patriot" (2000), is based on Cowpens].