TIMELINE
The American War of Independence as a Global War

European Theatre - Gibraltar - English Channel - Africa - Asia

1781, April 16: Battle of Porto Praya, Cape Verde Islands.

A French fleet under the Bailli de Suffren fought Royal Navy vessels under Commodore George Johnstone.

While the French fleet sustained more damage than the British, the battle was inconclusive. Johnstone tried to pursue the French, but was forced to call it off in order to repair the damage his ships had taken.

The French gained a strategic victory, since Suffren beat Johnstone to the Cape of Good Hope and reinforced the Dutch garrison there before continuing on his journey to the Ile de France (now Mauritius).
The European Theatre – Gibraltar - the English Channel

January

1781, January 7: A French force under Belgian Philippe de Rullecourt (* 1744) lands on the British island of Jersey in the English Channel. The assault fails and Rullecourt is killed.

1780, January 16: Admiral Rodney defeats Spanish fleet off Cape St Vincent

February

1782, February 5: A combined French and Spanish force captures the island of Minorca following a siege that had begun on 19 August 1781

March

April

1779, April 12: Spain enters into the Convention of Aranjuez with France

1781, April 16: Naval battle of Porto Praya, Cape Verde Islands

May

1779, May 1: A joint Franco-Dutch attempt led by Charles Christian, Prince of Nassau-Weilburg (1735-1788) to capture the island of Jersey in the English Channel fails.

June

1779, June 21: Spain declares war against Great Britain as an ally of France, not of the United States

1779, June 24: A combined Franco-Spanish force totaling as many as 33,000 soldiers and 30,000 sailors and Marines begins a 43-month long siege of Gibraltar which only ends on 7 February 1783.

July

August
1781, August 18: A combined Franco-Spanish force invades the island of Minorca in the Mediterranean and lays siege to Fort St. Philip

September

1782, September 13: A joint Franco-Spanish force of some 30,000 sailors on 18 Ships-of-the Line, 40 gun-boats and ten floating batteries and about 28,000 Spanish and 7,000 – 8,000 French land forces launch a massive attack on Gibraltar, which is defended by about 7,500 Crown forces. The attack failed.

For comparison: At Yorktown in October 1781, a French fleet of 24 Ships of the Line and supporting frigates with around 24,000 sailors and 5,200 men Line infantry doing duty as marines, supported around 9,150 Continental Army forces (incl. 3,300 Militia) and 9,250 French forces in their siege of around 8,100 Crown forces (incl. 840 naval personnel) under Lord Cornwallis. Cornwallis surrenders on 19 October.

October

November

December
Caribbean – West Indies – American Mainland
(excluding territory of the 13 United States in 1776)

West Indian Theatre of War

January

1781, January 7:  A Spanish force under Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid (1746-1786) captures Mobile and Biloxi from British

1782, January 11 – February 12: French forces capture of the British islands of Saint
Kitts, St. Martin, Nevis & Montserrat. The fortress on Brimstone Hill on St. Kitts surrenders on 12 February

1782, January 22: French occupy Dutch settlements of Demerara and Essequibo on the Guiana coast of South America, seized by British in early 1781. The operation is completed by 5 February 1782

1779, January: British capture French islands of St Martin and St. Barthelemy

February

1780, February 2/3: British forces capture the Dutch island of St. Eustatius

1780, February 4: British naval forces take Dutch islands of St. Maarten and Saba

1783, February 12: French forces capture Turks and Caicos Islands

1782, February 20: French forces capture island of Nevis

1782, February 22: French forces capture island of Monserrat

1779, February 24: French forces capture island of St. Martin

1779, February 28: French forces capture island of St. Barthelemy

March

1781, March 9: Spanish forces occupy island of Santa Rosa off Pensacola

1782, March 16: Spanish forces capture British Caribbean islands of Roatan, Providence Island and St. Andrew's Island

1781, March 18: Spanish forces under Gálvez lay siege to Pensacola

1781, March: Tupac Katari launches rebellion against Spanish in Bolivia

April

1782, April 12: Royal Navy squadron under Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney, 1st Baron Rodney defeats French squadron under François-Joseph Paul, marquis de Grasse Tilly, comte de Grasse in Battle of the Saints

1782, April 17 and 15 and 19 May: British and French forces engage in naval battles off Martinique

1780, April 29: Spanish forces surrender San Juan, Costa Rica to Lt. Horatio
More than 2,500 British soldiers and sailors died between April and December 1780, making the San Juan expedition the costliest British campaign in human lives of the war.

Bunker Hill: 226 killed, 828 wounded. Total: 1,054
Saratoga: 440 killed, 695 wounded. Total: 1,135 (about 6,200 are taken prisoners)
Monmonth: 304 killed, 770 wounded, Total: 1,074 (about 60 are taken prisoners)
Trenton: 22 killed, 83 wounded, Total: 105 (almost 900 are taken prisoners)
Princeton: 100 killed, 70 wounded. Total: 170
Cowpens: 110 killed, 229 wounded. Total: 339
Guilford Court House: 93 killed, 413 wounded, Total: 506
Yorktown: 309 killed, 326 wounded. Total: 635 (about 7,700 are taken prisoners)

1782, April 13 – August 23: The Battle of Black River for control of the Black River settlement, on the Caribbean coast of present-day Honduras.

1782, April 18: Joint Spanish-American fleet captures Nassau in the Bahamas. This was the third time the island changed hands, having been captured by an American force on 3/4 March 1776, and by a
Spanish force under Galvez on 6 May 1782

1782, April 19: French forces join Spanish forces outside Pensacola

May

1781, May 8: Spanish and French forces capture Pensacola

1781, May 10-12: French raid on St. Lucia

1781, May 26: Spanish and French forces capture Pensacola

June

1781, June 2: French capture island of Tobago

1779, June 16-18: French forces capture island of St. Vincent

July

1779, July 2-4: French under Admiral d’Estaing capture island of Grenada

August

September

1778, September 7: French forces under François Claude Amour, marquis de Bouillé capture the island of Dominica.

**Note:** a committed Royalist, Bouillé is the only person mentioned by name in the French national anthem *La Marseillaise* where he is vilified in the 5th stanza:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French original</th>
<th>English translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Français, en guerriers magnanimes, Portez ou retenez vos coups ! Épargnez ces tristes victimes, À regret s’armant contre nous. (bis) Mais ces despotes sanguinaires, Mais ces complices de Bouillé, Tous ces tigres qui, sans pitié, Déchirent le sein de leur mère!</td>
<td>Frenchmen, as magnanimous warriors, Bear or hold back your blows! Spare these sorry victims, Arming against us with regrets. <em>(repeat)</em> But these bloodthirsty despots, But these accomplices of Bouillé, All these tigers who, mercilessly, Rip their mother’s breast!</td>
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1778, September 14: British capture islands of St. Pierre-et-Miquelon off the coast of
Newfoundland

1779, September 15: Spanish forces take Cayo Cocina (also known as Saint George’s Caye) off the coast of present-day Belize

1779, September 21: Spanish forces under Bernardo de Galvez capture Baton Rouge

October

1777, October 1: Spain and Portugal sign Treaty of San Ildefonso ending their land dispute in Brazil

1779, October 16: British forces take San Fernando de Omoa on the Gulf of Honduras. They abandon the fort again in late November 1779

November

1776, November: Large Spanish force leaves to invade Ilha Santa Catarina, Brazil in a land dispute; since British are Portuguese allies, this could result in British war against Spain

1776, November 16: “Stars and Stripes” saluted by Johannes de Graaff, Dutch governor of St. Eustatius, St. Maarten and Saba as USS Andrea Doria enters harbor of St. Eustatius

1781, November 26: French forces under the marquis de Bouillé capture Dutch island of St. Eustatius/Statia

December

1778, December 13/14: British naval forces capture the island of St. Lucia. A French attempt on 18 December to retake the island fails

1778, December 13: French forces under the duc de Lauzun capture St. Louis in Senegal

1780, December 20: Britain declares war on the Netherlands, commencing the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War since 1652

1781, December: Admiral Suffren arrives in Dutch-owned Capetown before Commodore George Johnstone, preventing a British capture
1778, December 13: French forces under the duc de Lauzun capture St. Louis in Senegal.

Posts in Gambia are taken 1779 February 11.
India – Sri Lanka - Pacific

East Indian Theatre of War

January

1782, January 8: Trincomalee in Ceylon/Sri Lanka is captured by British forces under Admiral Sir Edward Hughes

February

1782, February 17/18: Naval battle of Sedras off the coast of Madras between French forces under the Bailli de Suffren and Royal Navy vessels under Admiral Hughes

1782, February 18: Tipu Sultan defeats British force at Battle of Annagudi
March

1779, March 19: British capture of French base at Mahe

1783, March – July: French participate in capture of Voloze and siege of Mangalore

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April

1782, April 12: Naval battle of Providien off the coast of Ceylon/Sri Lanka again pits Suffren against Hughes

1783, April 20: Marquis de Bussy leads French forces to assist Sultan Tipu at siege of Cuddalore

May

June

1783, June 20: British and French naval battle off Cuddalore

July

1781, July 1: British forces defeat Hyder Ali in Battle of Porto Novo

1781, July 4 and 21: Naval Battle of Saldanha off South Africa. Commodore George Johnstone takes six loaded Dutch East India Company vessels on their way to the Netherlands

1782, July 6: Naval battle of Negapatam off the coast of India again pits Suffren against Hughes

1780, July 10: Hyder Ali of Mysore declares war on Britain

August

1778, August 21 - October 19: successful British siege of Pondicherry


September

1780, September 10: Hyder Ali defeats British forces in Battle of Pollilur
1781, September 27: British forces defeat Hyder Ali in Battle of Sholinghur

October

1778, October 19: British capture Pondicherry from the French

1778, October 21 - November 11: successful British siege of the Dutch at Negapatam

November

December

1778, December 13: French forces under the duc de Lauzun capture St. Louis in Senegal

1781, December: Admiral Suffren arrives in Dutch-owned Capetown before Commodore George Johnstone, preventing a British capture.