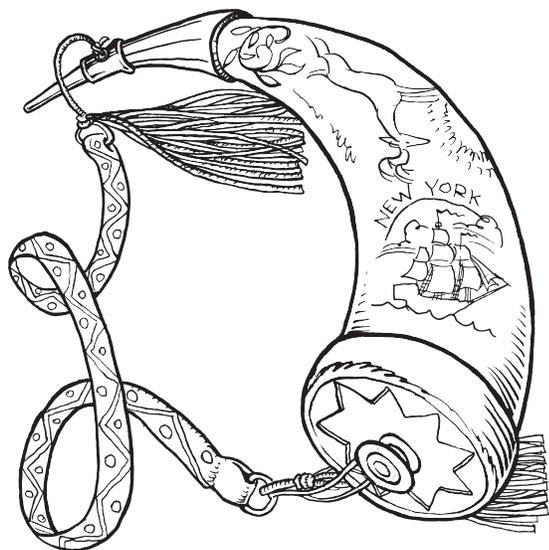


A SOLDIER'S LIFE

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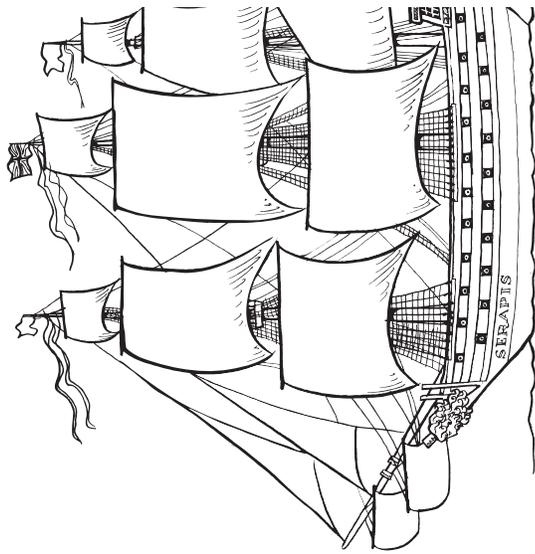


A SOLDIER'S LIFE

FAST FACTS

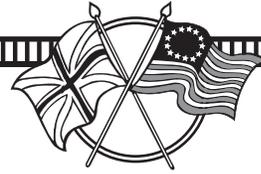
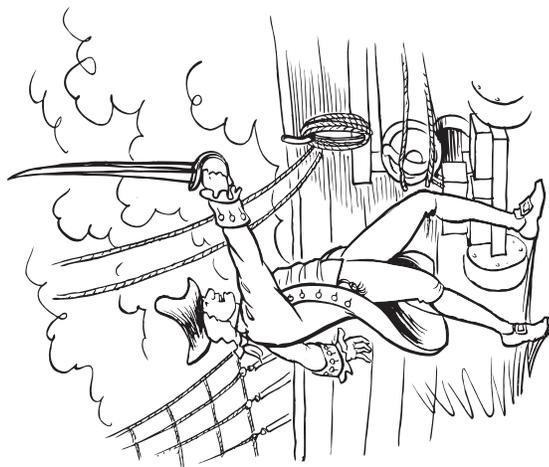
- The colonists called their army the Continental army. A private was paid about seven dollars a month; a sergeant received about eight dollars.
- All colonial men between the ages of 16 and 60 were ordered to serve one year in the Continental army.
- British soldiers wore bright red uniforms. Colonists nicknamed them "redcoats" and "lobsterbacks."
- In 1779, blue was made the official color of Continental army uniforms.
- Early in the war, the song "Yankee Doodle" was sung by the British. The verses made fun of New England militiamen, calling them "doodles," or fools. Later, when the Americans were victorious, they got back at the British by singing the "Yankee Doodle" melody with new, patriotic words.
- More than 2,000 Continental soldiers died from starvation and freezing temperatures during one winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.
- Colonial Minutemen were special units chosen from local militias. Minutemen were able to assemble quickly, as in a "minute's notice." They were chosen for their enthusiasm, reliability, and physical strength.

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BATTLES



BATTLES

FAST FACTS

- Communication was difficult during the American Revolution. It took almost six weeks for word of the Battle of Lexington and Concord to finally reach the southern colony of Georgia.
- At the Battle of Bunker Hill, enthusiastic colonists watched from their windows and rooftops, cheering on the Patriots.
- It was so hot at the Battle of Monmouth in New Jersey that almost 100 soldiers died from sunstroke.
- The Battle of Long Island in August 1776 was the largest in terms of the number of troops. The British employed about 20,000 soldiers to defeat about 10,000 Continental troops.
- The first combat submarine, a one-man unit called the *Turtle*, was introduced during the American Revolution. It was used in an unsuccessful attempt to attach bombs to the hulls of British warships.
- When an officer on either side surrendered, he offered his sword to the victor. The victorious officer might take the sword, or he might allow the defeated officer to keep it, showing respect for a valiant effort in battle.
- One legend says that after British general Charles Cornwallis surrendered at the Battle of Yorktown, his troops retreated playing a popular song of the time, "The World Turn'd Upside Down," on their drums and fifes.

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ABOUT BATTLES

Early Fighting

In 1775, Great Britain learned that some colonists were hiding large amounts of weapons and ammunition in the towns of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. British officials were furious. They planned to capture these stockpiles and punish anyone who got in their way. The Patriots managed to defend their stash against British advances, first at Lexington and Concord and later at Fort Ticonderoga. One month later, after the Battle of Bunker Hill, Great Britain realized that winning the war might be a lot tougher than they had first thought.

A Turning Point for the Americans

The British strategy was to crush the rebellion in the North first. Once New England was defeated, the British assumed resistance from the remaining colonies would crumble. By the end of 1777, British forces had captured both New York City and Philadelphia. When British troops marched into Philadelphia, the American Congress was forced to flee the city. Patriot spirits were never lower.

A major turning point occurred when Continental troops won a critical victory at the Battle of Saratoga in New York. General Washington's triumph convinced France to join the war on the side of the Patriots. The British strategy to completely crush all of New England had failed.

A British Strategy Change

The British military changed its strategy and focused on fighting in the South. The British troops captured the port cities of Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. In July 1780, the British army also crushed the Americans at the Battle of Camden in South Carolina. But the Americans would not give up. Washington put General Nathanael Greene in charge of the army in the South. Greene divided his troops into two small armies. One of the armies, led by General Daniel Morgan, defeated the British at the Battle of Cowpens in South Carolina.

Victory for the Americans

In 1781, the fighting centered in Virginia. British General Cornwallis marched his army north to Yorktown, Virginia. General Washington moved his army south from New York. He wanted to trap Cornwallis. Washington used the French army and navy to help him. There was nowhere for Cornwallis to retreat. On October 19, 1781, the British surrendered to the Americans at the Battle of Yorktown.

The Battle of Yorktown was the last major battle of the war, but fighting continued for two more years. Finally, on September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed and the war was officially over. The last British soldiers were withdrawn from New York City in November 1783.



ABOUT A SOLDIER'S LIFE

Colonial Militia

At the beginning of the war, the American colonies had no regular army or navy. Each colony had a militia, a group of citizen-soldiers who were ready to fight for their colony. They could be called up for a few days or a few months. The militiamen were called into action at the beginning of the war and continued to fight throughout the American Revolution.

Continental Army Formed

A regular army was established in 1775. When George Washington took over as commander, he doubted that part-time militias could defeat the powerful British army. Washington worked to build an army made up of disciplined soldiers who had enlisted for several years. It was hard to recruit soldiers for the newly-formed Continental army. Most citizens preferred to serve in local militias and help the army when a battle was near their homes.

Washington's Forces

Washington commanded as many as 15,000 soldiers at a time. Soldiers often went without pay, food, and proper uniforms. Many poorer soldiers stayed in the army because they had been promised free land after the war. Others stayed in because they believed in the Patriot cause and they trusted Washington's leadership.

About 5,000 blacks fought on the Patriot side. Many were slaves who were promised

freedom in exchange for military service. Women also became soldiers, but they had to disguise themselves as men to serve.

France became an ally for the Americans and sent money, soldiers, and ships to help defeat the British. The French ships battled British warships up and down the eastern coast. The Continental navy was established, and its 13 ships fought valiantly against the supreme British navy.

The British Side

By contrast, the British army was large and well-equipped. At its peak, the British forces in North America numbered 50,000. Loyalists in the colonies fought with the British. Many Native Americans, including the Iroquois and Seneca nations, joined the British side. They believed if the British won, they would keep the Americans off their lands. Thousands of black slaves fought for the British. The British gave them their freedom in return for their help. Soldiers from Germany called Hessians were paid by the British to fight.

Losses on Both Sides

Soldiers on both sides suffered losses. Military deaths numbered about 25,000 for the Americans. The British lost 10,000 soldiers. In the end, it was the small, rag-tag army of colonists who defeated the mighty British.