



TROOPS REVISIT THE PAST AT VALLEY FORGE NHP AS THEY LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE

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This summer, Valley Forge National Historical Park will provide tours for ten military units who are scheduled to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan. The troops come from Army National Guard and Army Reserve Units from across the United States. The units comprise company leaders who are stationed at Fort Dix for thirty days to receive Security Force (SECFOR) leadership training before the main mobilization training begins.

Capital Bryan Dunker, who is an instructor for the SECFOR leader training, discussed the reasons why the military chose to add the park as a key step in this training.

Captain Dunker explained that SECFOR missions, normally performed by Military Police, help to provide security for specific areas, critical sites and designated personnel. Recently, there has been a major push to train other branches of the military so that SECFOR missions can be performed by nearly anyone in the field. The troops carrying out these missions must be led by highly capable leaders. The 1777-78 Valley Forge encampment of the Continental Army is noted for examples of great leadership, and this special history makes the park a meaningful place for officers to learn about leadership concepts which are still effective to this day.

In 1778, General George Washington established a small band of soldiers which he used for security purposes and special missions. The Marechaussee, as they were called, was pieced together from different combat arms units. Marechaussee are mimicked today by the SECFOR units of the modern army. Like the Marechaussee, SECFOR units are pieced together from a wide variety of branches and combat units. Due to the diversity of the SECFOR units, it is essential that they be trained in standard SECFOR tactics.

One of the tasks faced by George Washington while at Valley Forge was the need for standardization in the training techniques of his troops. Washington's troops came to the encampment with varying levels and styles of military training, ranging from none at all to formal officer training in Europe, to combat experience. With the help of capable leaders, Washington's army was transformed into an effective and ultimately victorious fighting force.

Captain Dunker explained that company leaders, ranging in rank from squad leader to captain, come to Valley Forge as the final part of their SECFOR leader training to study examples of the tactics they will use to train their troops for SECFOR missions. After visiting the park, leaders return to Fort Dix to help with the standardization of training and operations for troops from different branches and different parts of the country in SECFOR tactics.

Throughout the centuries, an understanding of history has played a vital role in shaping the military leaders of their time. It is with great pleasure that Valley Forge National Historical Park contributes to the training of today's soldiers through education at a very meaningful place in the history of the army.

The staff at Valley Forge National Historical Park would like to wish all the men and women stationed at Fort Dix a safe tour of duty and a safe return. We extend our appreciation to all the troops who work to protect our country everyday.