

Delaware Water Gap

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



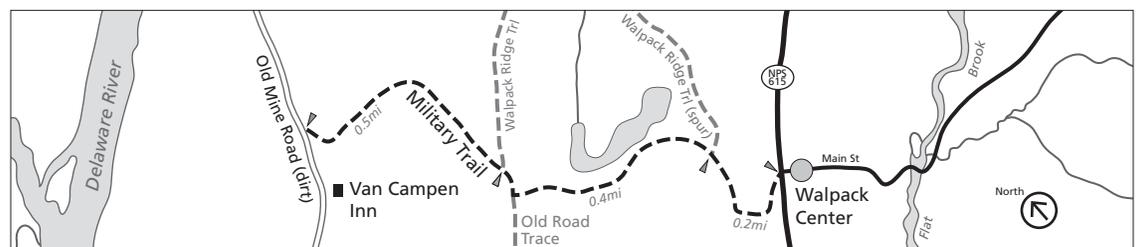
Delaware Water Gap
National Recreation Area

Military Trail



In the 1750s, this part of New Jersey was the frontier. As the number of Lenape natives and European settlers increased, tension between the two groups turned to war. At the beginning of the French and Indian War (Seven Years War), numerous forts were authorized in the Delaware River Valley. The Military Road evolved in 1756-57 to haul supplies 60 miles westward from Elizabeth, (then called Elizabeth Town) through today's sites of Newton and Walpack Center, to Fort Johns. The road was the idea of Captain Jonathan Hampton, a New-Jersey-born surveyor and landowner, who served as quartermaster and paymaster at Fort Johns here on Military Trail. Supplies were then distributed to other forts along the river. These "forts" were often little more than stone or wood farmhouses strengthened against attack and enclosed by a log palisade.

The Military Trail is a mile, climbing 200 feet up Walpack Mountain and descending the other side to Walpack Center. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water, and use insect repellent. During hunting season, wear bright orange for high visibility.



Stop 1 Van Campen Inn and Farm

Owned in turn by two early and prominent local families, Rosenkrans and Van Campen, this fine stone farmhouse was never an inn in the commercial sense. By law, certain houses along major roadways in isolated areas had to provide a rest-stop for travelers. In November of 1763, the house's stout walls even sheltered 150 settlers against the threat of Indian attack. During the American Revolution, the inn was officers' quarters as troops moved through the valley. Brig. Gen. Casimir Pulaski, a Polish count, wintered here in 1778 with his 250 cavalry, all outfitted in bright European fashion.

The inn once had farm outbuildings that stood across Old Mine Road. In the 1980s the National Park Service extensively restored the house's exterior. Archeological studies at about the same time have unearthed military buttons nearby. Walpack Historical Society opens Van Campen Inn on selected Sundays in summer. Call (973) 948-4903 for hours. The Inn is also open on Van Campen Day, held on a Sunday in October.

Walk north 200 yards, the river flats on the left. Stop at a wide path slanting down on the right.

Stop 2 Crossroads of War

This is the western terminus of Military Road, where it meets Old Mine Road, once known as "The King's Highway," or "The Great Road." This valley landscape is little changed from when it echoed to tramping of soldiers' feet through two crucial colonial wars: the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and the American Revolution (1775-1781.)

Van Campen Inn. They then continued south to join General Washington in the Battle of Trenton — perhaps marching over Military Trail and south through Kittatinny Valley east of here. In May of 1779, Colonels Van Cortlandt and Spencer led regiments past this crossroad and down Old Mine Road past Van Campen Inn to Decker Ferry in Flatbrookville, 4 miles south, to cross the Delaware.

In a December snowstorm in 1776, several regiments under General Horatio Gates marched south via Old Mine Road past this point and camped overnight on Shapanack Flats in front of

Walk up the Military Trail for 150 yards to a pair of gravestones on the left and an old orchard clearing on the right.

**Stop 3
Fort Johns (Headquarters)**

Discovered along the river near the Van Campen Inn in the 1950s, these gravestones were relocated here when the Hulls owned this land from about the 1840s until the 1920s.

In late 1755, New Jersey authorized four fortifications along the Delaware River, operated by 250 local militia, including Fort Reading at Philipsburg; the Fort Van Camp near Colonel Abraham Van Campen's residence about 13 miles south on Old Mine Road; Fort Walpack at Walpack Bend seven miles south; and Fort Johns here at Shapanack.

By 1757, the county reported six fortifications. In 1758, Captain Hampton dated a letter "Headquarters, on the Frontier of New Jersey, May 17" in which he mentions seven forts. Eventually,

more than a dozen "forts" and "ranging posts" existed in northwestern New Jersey. The largest fortification was Fort Johns near the west end of Military Road. A 50-yard walk through the clearing leads to the north edge of the knoll. The fort may have been built on slope around the home of John Rosencrans, then a captain in the local militia. According to the Captain Hampton's sketch, a 120-foot square palisade enclosed two log houses and a blockhouse as well as Rosenkrans' 57 x 26 foot dwelling. Certainly, the slope commands a view over the Shapanack Flats to the Delaware River, but archeological investigation has not proven that Fort Johns was exactly here.

Continue 150 yards farther, over a small rise.

**Stop 4
At Rest: Slave and Free**

A small path on the left climbs 60 yards to a flat area into the woods. A careful look reveals foot-high, uncarved stones propped up in the soil, a low berm of earth encircling the area, and traces of wire fence. This is the 1700s property of the Rosenkrans, Dutch immigrants who began farming here around 1730. They held land along Military Trail and down across the flats to the river. Captain John Rosenkrans and his brother, Harman, farmed the upland and the flats along the river. Harman built the early section of Van Campen Inn, which is named after his brother-in-law Issac, who bought the inn in 1754.

Holdings of this size (large homes and 700 to 1000 acres) required labor, and slaves supplied at least some of that labor. A 1773 tax record shows that

John Rosenkrans owned a slave. In an 1801 will, his neighbor and brother-in-law Isacc Van Campen listed eight slaves, whom he freed. This cemetery is probably that of slaves, and, later, of free citizens of African descent. In the 1890s, a white diarist noted the burial of an African American woman here. New Jersey abolished slavery entirely by 1846, and the 1860 census for Moses Hull's household shows "one black servant, age 21." Deep in the woods across the trail are the remains of a cabin that may have been home to a few slaves. Today, those foundations and these austere markers are the only and silent reminders that the labor of this valley, and its prosperity, were not shared equally.

Back at the Military Trail, turn left, and continue 250 yards to an unpaved road.

**Stop 5
Walpack Mountain**

This is the spine of Walpack Mountain, 240 feet above the Shapanack Flats by the river and 160 feet above the Walpack Valley on the other side. The unpaved road the Military Trail is the Walpack Ridge Trail, running north-south along the spine of Walpack Mountain. A spur trail branches from the

Military Trail approximately 0.4 miles further along the trail and joins the main Walpack Ridge Trail

Descend 100 yards to an evergreen grove on the right, where a low stone wall runs about 40 yards

**Stop 6
Mountain Farm**

A century ago, this was the outskirts of Walpack Center. Today, several clues tell of a mountain farmstead. The stone wall delineates a once graceful driveway to a farmhouse nestled in an evergreen grove. To the right of the wall and atop the ridge, barely visible from the trail, is the large field. Ahead on the right is the remnant of an orchard. Traces of a dairy barn remain in the woods along the left edge

of the trail. The Haulk family lived and farmed here until the 1960s when the land was purchased for the Tocks Island Dam project.

Continue 450 yards, passing the swamp on the left and then descend sharply towards the village of Walpack Center.

**Stop 7
Walpack Center**

With a steeply descending swing to the right then left, Military Trail approaches the village of Walpack Center. As the trail swings sharply to the right, a small path at the old gate posts leads to an abandoned cistern that supplied water to the village. The embankment at the end of the trail once sheltered Walpack's first "fire department," two ash cans on a hitch trailer. Artifacts found in the area date the land's original use by European settlers to the 1700s.

While the Military Trail ends at NPS 615, the original Military Road continued across the road through the village of Walpack Center, and on to Newton and Elizabeth, New Jersey. Walpack Center once stretched across and along Route 615, down Main Street, past the 1872 Methodist church, and across Flat Brook to a cemetery. Since its heyday, the village has endured the decline of rural villages prevalent throughout the country. The buildings now left in the village date from 1850 to 1950. The Walpack Historical Society maintains a small museum in the village. Call (973) 948-4903 for more information.