

*George Washington*

# Learning to be a Leader



**Boy Scouts of America  
Westmoreland Fayette Council  
“Washington’s First Battle”  
History Patch Program**



## George Washington -- Learning To Be A Leader



It is well known that George Washington became one of the most famous leaders of men. Where did that skill come from? Washington's early experiences here at Fort Necessity were instrumental in forming those leadership skills. He was a young man of twenty two on July 3, 1754 when he had to take on the role of leader at the battle of Fort Necessity. What Washington learned by being forced to surrender to the enemy in his first battle was crucial to his development later when he was an effective general during the Revolutionary War.

Boy Scout advancement requirements are designed to help Scouts gain experience and an understanding of the qualities of leadership. As you work through the activities to earn "Washington's First Battle" patch, keep in mind that skill in leadership develops through experience. Think about how the young George Washington learned lessons which he used throughout his lifetime as a general and as our first president.

## For Safety's Sake

- Walking surfaces may become slippery when wet.
- Stay on posted walks and hiking trails.
- Follow National Park Service regulations.
- Hike in groups of ten or less. Each group should have at least one adult for every ten scouts.
- It is highly recommended that all participants carry water, especially in the summer. Hats and sunscreen are also recommended.
- Scouts are encouraged to wear their official uniforms while participating in the program.



2. Leave the visitor's center and walk to the Braddock Road Trace. (See the hiking trail map.)  
Washington chose to follow most of the old Indian trail known as Nemaquin's Path.
  - A. Explain why it was so difficult to build a road and move an army through this area.  
Remember, it was a virgin forest in 1753 and the trees had an average diameter of 30-40 inches.
  
3. Visit the Reconstructed Fort - Complete the following. It would be a good idea to read the paragraphs about Washington's Military Lessons starting on page 17.
  - A. Pace the distance from the earthworks of the fort to the wooden benches. This is approximately 60 yards: the effective range of a musket. Visualize how far the tree line is to the actual earthworks of the fort. Is this tree line farther than the range of a musket shot? Now, explain what happened during the battle and why.

B. Describe the battle and some of the reasons Washington's soldiers were not able to prevail.

C. Walk on the paved path towards the tavern until you reach the tree line of the battle. Determine the edge of the Great Meadow at the time of the battle. (The National Park Service has done an elaborate pollen study to find out where the tree line actually was in 1754. They have done this so that the trees can be planted along that line in time for the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle at Fort Necessity). Notice where the French and Indian soldiers were. Explain how the battle style of the British was different from the French and Indians' style and what effect this had on the outcome of the battle.

## What George Washington Learned

4. Read the informational sections entitled “George Washington’s Mentors,” “George Washington and Politicians,” and “George Washington’s Military Lessons.” Answer these questions.
  - A. At Fort Necessity, George Washington was forced to surrender once he realized he was surrounded and had no avenue of retreat. As an older man and general of an army, what would he remember and always avoid?
  
  - B. What did Washington learn about army discipline from the battle at Fort Necessity? Give an example.
  
  - C. Choose and complete one of the four following math problems about supplying an army of 400 men which is on the move. Then explain what this information tells you about the responsibilities of an army general.



### Problem #1 – Daily Rations

A British soldier received (in theory) the following every day:

1 pound of meat (usually beef)

1 ½ pounds of flour or bread

1 Gill (4 ounces) of Rum

How many pounds of meat, how many pounds of flour and how many gallons of rum (hint → 128 oz = 1 gallon) would be required to feed 400 soldiers for one day?

- a. # Meat \_\_\_\_\_
- b. # Flour \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Gals. Of Rum \_\_\_\_\_

### Problem #2 – Making the Guns go Bang

Soldiers carried their musket ammunition in cartridge boxes. Each box could hold 18 rounds of ammunition. One round in rolled paper contained a 1 oz. lead musket ball and 160 grains of gunpowder. One pound of gunpowder filled 60 rounds of ammunition and powder was put into kegs of 10 pounds each. Musket balls were often made ahead of time or made by artificers on site.

Calculate the number of kegs of powder and number of musket balls needed to fill 400 soldier's cartridge boxes twice.

- a. Kegs of powder \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Musket balls \_\_\_\_\_

**Problem #3 – Housing for the soldiers**

The common soldiers' tent housed four soldiers. It weighed approximately 20 pounds.

Calculate → number of tents \_\_\_\_\_ needed for Washington's 400 soldiers. Who carried the tents if there were not enough wagons? \_\_\_\_\_

**Problem #4 – Transportation**

Washington used wagons, carts and packhorses to move his supplies. Working with just wagons you will calculate the number of vehicles needed and number of equines to pull them. The average wagon could haul 2 tons and be pulled by two horses. (Hint → 2,000 lbs. = 1 short ton)

Total weight of:

30 day food supply (flour & rum) = 18,375 lbs.

Gunpowder = 250 lbs.

Lead & iron shot = 945 lbs.

Swivel guns = 810 lbs.

Tents = 1000 lbs.

Grand Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Wagons \_\_\_\_\_ & Horses \_\_\_\_\_

5. George Washington, the Person –Answer these questions.
- A. In June 1754 in route to Fort Necessity, the commander, Joshua Frye, fell off his horse, broke his leg, and died. Therefore, Washington found himself suddenly in charge of the campaign. Washington’s inexperience was evident in this battle. Explain some ways in which he could NOT have won this battle.
- B. Explain two major things that Washington learned about taking care of soldiers from this experience at Fort Necessity when he was just twenty-two years old.

C. Explain what George Washington learned about political promises given to him and his soldiers.

D. George Washington's physical presence was part of his leadership style. Describe what he looked like and tell what his soldiers thought of him.

## **George Washington's Mentors**

George Washington's father died when he was only eleven. After that, his half brother, Lawrence Washington, who was fourteen years older, was the one he looked to as a father figure and mentor. Lawrence served briefly in the military and young Washington admired his experience. Lawrence was very fond of George and was the one who introduced him to Lord Fairfax. Lord Fairfax helped Washington secure his first surveying job, in 1747. Working as a surveyor in western Virginia Washington worked hard, saved money and bought land. In 1752, Lawrence died: Washington was just twenty years old. Washington's admiration for his brother's military career had had a great influence on him.

Washington was ambitious and ready for his own military career. He introduced himself to the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, Governor Dinwiddie. Dinwiddie asked Washington to lead a mission to meet with the French in the fall 1753. Dinwiddie chose Washington for positions because he was eager, he had spent time in the woods and was acquainted with American Indians. Washington was also strong and healthy. He was six feet three inches tall, lean and an excellent horseman. The mission took him to Fort Le Boeuf (now, Waterford, Pa). During this trip, he traveled with a guide, assistants, American Indians, an American Indian interpreter and a French interpreter. One of the American Indians was the Half King. The Half King's Indian name was Tanaghrisson. He had been sent to the region by the Iroquois Confederacy to keep all the Indians in the Ohio River Valley neutral – siding neither with the French nor the British.

Washington met with the French who gave him a letter for Governor Dinwiddie. Washington's trip lasted until January 16th, 1754 and the group experienced especially harsh weather. Washington fell off a raft while crossing the Allegheny River on Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> and survived a freezing and wet night. The Governor asked him to write a report, which was published and sent to Europe. Washington had made a name for himself.

In the spring of 1754 Washington continued his military career when the Governor sent him as the second in command on an expedition against the French. He hoped to work hard, study and gain experience under a skilled commander. The commander, Joshua Frye, fell off his horse, broke his leg, and died before he joined the troops. Therefore, Washington found himself suddenly in charge of the campaign. Things did not go well. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, after an eight hour battle, he was forced to surrender. That fall Dinwiddie wanted to demote Washington. Washington decided to resign rather than be demoted.

George Washington's next mentor was General Edward Braddock. Braddock had come from England with a huge army of 2,400 soldiers in 1755. Washington volunteered to go as Braddock's aide to capture the French fort, Fort Duquesne, located at the Forks of the Ohio (now Pittsburgh, Pa.). Braddock appreciated Washington's knowledge of the countryside and experience with the American Indians. Washington wanted to "attain a small degree of knowledge in the military art." Washington learned about military discipline from these trained British redcoats. He also learned that Braddock held the colonial troops in disdain. Braddock did not recognize

the value of the Indians as allies, or the threat they could be as enemies. Washington began to realize that he knew more than Braddock about some aspects of warfare. This was especially true when Braddock said, “These savages may, indeed, be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia but upon the king’s regular and disciplin’d troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.”

Braddock and his troops met the French and were engaged in the Battle of the Monongahela on July 9, 1755, (now Braddock, Pa.). Washington had four bullets shot through his coat and two horses shot from under him. Braddock had four horses shot from under him and was wounded. Washington was one of the few officers not wounded and led the retreat. Four days later, Braddock died. Washington’s hope that Braddock would help advance his military career died too. Washington never again looked to another as a mentor.

During the years 1756 – 1758, Washington became commander of all Virginia troops and tasked with protecting the Virginia frontier. In this capacity, he found that the military was often under funded by the politicians in government. He also learned about tactics, politics, discipline of troops, and how to appear and act like a leader.

Finally, on November 25, 1758, Washington with some Virginia troops joined General Forbes to capture Fort Duquesne. He realized he was not going to get the British military commission he had been seeking. He resigned from the military, married the rich widow Martha Custis, and began his career as a farmer and manager of their holdings.

When the First Continental Congress met in 1774 Washington attended the meetings in his military uniform. He was obviously willing and ready to resume his military career. The next year the congress commissioned him to take command of the Continental army. During the Revolutionary War, George Washington was himself a mentor to many young men including the Marquis de Lafayette, a French ally to America.



## **George Washington and Politicians**

In 1754 Governor Dinwiddie asked Washington and his Virginia troops to build a road through the forest so that men and supplies could reach the Forks of the Ohio. The colony hoped to oust the French and secure the region.

Washington expected wagons, horses and supplies to be waiting for him at Wills Creek (present day Cumberland, Maryland), but there were none. The army pressed on. Washington's men built 52 miles of road from Wills Creek to a place named Great Meadows. Road building was strenuous and difficult work. Three days after arriving there the road work was interrupted. The soldiers skirmished with the French under the command of Ensign Jumonville in a nearby glen. Then they returned to the Great Meadows to build Fort Necessity. When the French didn't come immediately to avenge Jumonville's death Washington ordered his troops to continue to build the new road. They were 13 miles away from the fort when they learned the French were on their way to attack. It took two days to march back to Fort Necessity. They expected to find promised wagon loads of flour for the soldiers, but were disappointed. There were none. This was a serious blow. At the beginning of the battle about one-quarter of the soldiers were too weak from hunger to fight.

John Carlyle was in charge of supplying Washington's army. In June he wrote Washington that he was trying to get him what he needs, but he had two problems. One, there wasn't enough money to get everything and two, the suppliers were deceiving him.

Washington begged for needed items throughout the Fort Necessity campaign. In the spring he wrote that many of the men were without shoes, socks, shirts or coats. Shortly after the battle he wrote that the soldiers were almost naked, nearly none of them had shoes, socks or hats. Although Carlyle promised to send clothing, either it didn't arrive or there wasn't enough.

Washington needed the American Indians to help him as scouts. He also wanted them to help as warriors. However, they expected to be paid for their scouting services with a wide variety of trade items. Washington wrote that he had to pay an Indian with one of his own shirts. He pleaded that 500-600 pounds of trade items be sent. It was hard for him to negotiate with the Indians without a good supply of these items. As a result, on the day of the battle Washington didn't have any Indian allies to help him fight the French.

## **George Washington's Military Lessons**

Washington learned some military lessons from his experience here at Fort Necessity. One was to approach every battle keeping in mind that he needed an escape route for his army. He never again wanted to be in the position of having to surrender with no other possibility.

Washington also learned to think ahead about all the possibilities for failure and difficulties so they could be avoided. Washington tried to only get into battles he thought he could win. He learned to listen to the advice of local people. At Fort Necessity, he had ignored the advice of the Indians who had said to not build a fort in a low lying and open location. He also learned to use local suppliers for equipment, clothing and food. He learned to use the resources close at hand.

Another important military lesson Washington learned was in the area of army discipline. The day of the battle at Fort Necessity, Washington's 400 men were quite dispirited. Moral was at an all time low due to various factors. One hundred men were from South Carolina and were somewhat professional. The other three hundred Virginia soldiers were basically very young men. Many of these soldiers had never handled a musket before as it was not common for everyone in the colonies to own firearms. For four months they had been promised food and clothing and new ammunition which had not come. They had been laboring hard to build a road in the forest in the damp and cold spring weather. Of these, one hundred were too sick to fight, thirty were killed, seventy were wounded and the last one hundred were so miserable

trying to fight in the rain that they just broke into the rum and got drunk. Much of this report came from the captain, Adam Stevens.

While fighting the French and Indian War on the Virginia frontier for 1756 to 1758 Washington was the commander of all the Virginia troops. He gained experience in many areas of military operations. Among the skills he learned is how to work more effectively with colonial and regional governments to get the men and supplies he needed. It was a skill he used often during the Revolutionary War.

During both his time on the frontier and the Revolutionary War, he did his best to keep his soldiers once they were recruited. He tried to keep them fed, clothed, armed and disciplined. Keeping moral high was very important to George Washington. The soldiers learned to trust him.

Washington's soldiers thought he looked like a general. He would always appear in a good looking uniform, ride tall on a good horse, and speak in a positive manner to the men in his command. The soldiers followed his lead because they could trust him to keep their best interests at heart, and because he appeared and acted like a man they could follow – a true leader.

## Further Readings

Additional information about George Washington is available in the bookstore of the visitor's center.

Alberts, Robert C., A Charming Field for an Encounter, National Park Service, 1975

Axelrod, Alan. Blooding at Great Meadows, Running Press Book Publisher, 2007.

Darlington, William M. Christopher Gist's Journals, Heritage Books, 2006.

Kent, Donald H., editor, George Washington's Journal for 1754, Eastern National, 2007.

Swartz, John C., George Washington, The Making of a Young Leader, Harbor Bend Publishing, Medina, Ohio, 1995.

## Stewardship

The legislation that created the National Park Service states that the Service is to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife there in’ and also “to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner... as to leave them unimpaired for ... future generations.”

- Be respectful of all wildlife.
- Do not pick flowers or disturb plants.
- Place all trash in the proper receptacles.

Stewardship means taking care of every plant, insect, live creature and the land that supports them. Even a single piece of trash or food can set off a chain of imbalance. One penny thrown into a creek can change the chemistry of the water. That can affect every microbe or fish or salamander in the creek. That, in turn, will change the food chain and the balance of the natural web. Do not ever think that one little piece of something that you drop doesn't make a difference. So, we ask you to stay on the trails; do not pick up anything; do not leave anything. Simply observe and appreciate this natural environment. It is amazing as it is. We want to leave it unimpaired for your children and their children.

The National Park Service policy mandates that interpretive programming be developed in accordance with disability accessibility guidelines. The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480) requires physical access to buildings and facilities. And Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112) requires program accessibility in all services provided with Federal dollars. Fort Necessity National Battlefield is accessible in all the areas required to complete this Boy Scout patch.

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