

Valley Forge Quick Facts

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Valley Forge National Historical Park

Valley Forge National Historical Park is the site of the 1777-1778 winter encampment of George Washington and the Continental Army. The park is significant for its historical context before, during, and after the American Revolution as well as for the preservation of 3,452 acres of natural beauty. Inside the park are 270 acres of non-federal lands, including inholdings, roads, and utilities.

- The army at the Valley Forge Encampment constructed over two miles of breastworks, 6 redans, and 5 redoubts. 25 bake ovens were built to supply the army daily with 10,000-12,000 loaves of bread.
- There were approximately 1,300 huts in the encampment along with other shelters and sheds for supplies and animals.
- Due to the almost total breakdown of supply services in February, Washington found it necessary to force the local population to supply the army in exchange for continental script.
- Integrated with New England, New York or New Jersey units or as part of the segregated Rhode Island troops, black soldiers made up about 8-10% and Native Americans made up about 2-3% of the Continental Army.
- There were between 250 to 300 women and children at the encampment.
- The army marched into the Valley Forge Encampment on December 19th, 1777 with close to 12,000 men. Roughly 10,000 were combat troops and the remaining 2,000 were support personnel.
- At the low point in February, there were 8,000-8,500 men on the rolls with approximately 6,500 fit for duty. Owing to the one-year enlistment of soldiers whose terms ended at differing times during the encampment, desertion rates, patrols and foraging expeditions, the numbers of troops was in constant flux during the encampment.
- When the army marched out on June 19th, 1778 they numbered 12,500 fully-equipped soldiers with an accompanying 2,500 men in logistical support. In anticipation of having to feed an additional 3,000 New Jersey militia units, the army requested rations for 18,000 troops in June. Researchers historically used the rations request to quote the number of troops around 20,000.
- Baron von Steuben, a former captain in the Prussian Army, arrived at Valley Forge on February 23, 1778 with letters of introduction from French officials and American Diplomats in Paris claiming his rank as a Lieutenant General. Four drill manuals were commonly in use at the time and Steuben created a single fully standardized infantry manual for the Continental Army.
- Valley Forge had the highest death total of the eight individual winter encampments for the army. Approximately 1,700 people died during the six month encampment. Most of the men who succumbed did so at field hospitals outside of the encampment grounds and were buried either around the field hospitals, or in local churchyards. There are a few burial trenches at the main encampment site.