

## VALLEY FORGE PRESIDENTS WEEKEND CELEBRATION

### Date

February 01, 2006

### Contact

Welcome Center, 610-783-1077

Visitors to Valley Forge this weekend will have a chance to meet two of the nation's best-known Founding Fathers. On Saturday, Benjamin Franklin will hold forth about his many contributions to the cause of the American Revolution. On Monday, visitors will have a chance to meet George Washington, learn what made him a brilliant military strategist, and sample Martha Washington's delicious birthday cake. Sunday, the 2nd Pennsylvania Regiment will present programs on soldier life.

Washington and Franklin had wildly opposite personalities, but, as visitors will see, their combination of military and diplomatic skills were the key to winning the Revolution.

It was here at Valley Forge in February, 1778, that the first public celebration of Washington's birthday took place, when a group of soldiers serenaded him with music outside Washington's Headquarters. At the same time, Benjamin Franklin was in Paris, negotiating the alliance with France that would give the Americans the backing needed to win the war. Franklin was also instrumental in sending military genius Baron Friedrich von Steuben to Valley Forge. He arrived in February, and Washington soon had him instructing the troops on precision military maneuvers. In June, when the Continental Army marched out of Valley Forge, it was a formidable fighting force with the French Navy to back it up.

Throughout the weekend, reenactors will demonstrate musket firing, campfire cooking and military drilling, and visitors will learn from the soldiers why Washington was so revered by the troops. They'll also have a chance to hear about the 5,000 African-American soldiers who fought in the Continental Army, and learn about Washington's stance on their inclusion.

This weekend also marks the 95th anniversary of the Boy Scout Pilgrimage to Valley Forge. Hundreds of Boy Scouts will converge here Friday and camp overnight. On Saturday, they will make a circuit to different stations throughout the park.

For details on program times and locations, log on to [www.nps.gov/vafo](http://www.nps.gov/vafo); for information on hotels, restaurants and other attractions in the region, log on to [www.valleyforge.org](http://www.valleyforge.org). For more information about Valley Forge National Historical Park, call 610-783-1077.