

Identity Article:

Continental Army Officers

You are an officer in the Continental army. You belong to a powerful class of well-educated gentlemen. Many officers have previous war experience defeating the French in the French and Indian War. You come from a background of comfort and privilege.

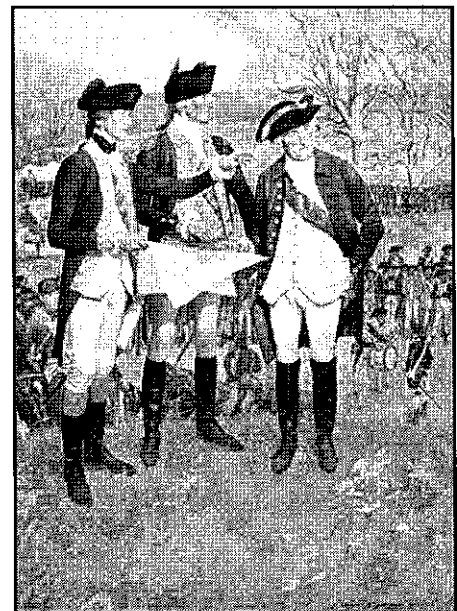
As a group the officers are not united. Men come from all over the states—from Massachusetts to South Carolina. Officers from different states are foreign to each other. They talk differently and have peculiar customs. Men tend to stick with those from their state and make up nicknames for those from other states. Officers are often squabbling and sometimes even fighting.

Uniforms are scarce. In fact, many officers can barely be distinguished from their soldiers. To denote their rank, officers wear a piece of colored cloth sewed onto their clothes or a ribbon attached to their hats.

Conditions in the camp are uncomfortable. You have a tent and regular meals, although the food is of a poorer quality than you are used to. Your soldiers are not so privileged. They are half starving.

Many do not have a tent or blanket to keep off the winter cold. Since soldiers are forced to live close together, disease spreads throughout the camps.

Many are upset at Congress. They have failed time and time again to give the army the supplies it needs. Congress has not fulfilled its promises of a regular salary, uniforms, and pensions for those in the army. Some talk of rebelling against the government.



Identity Article:

Continental Army Soldiers

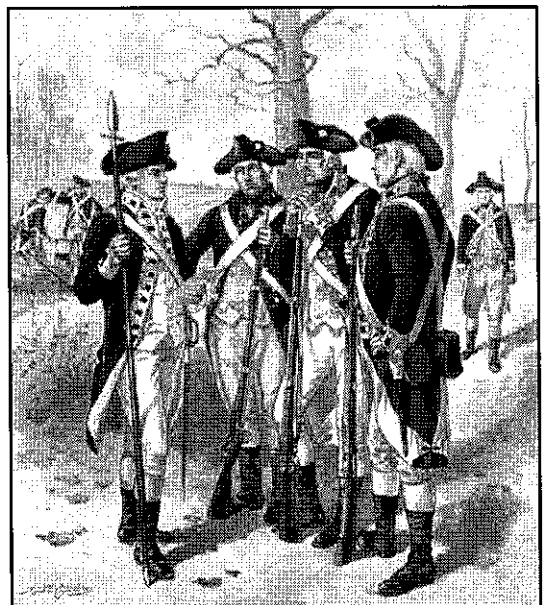
You are a soldier in the Continental army. Many of you enlisted because you believe in the Patriot cause. Others joined the army in search of honor or adventure. No one expected that the war would drag on for so long. You thought that you would be able to fight for a few months, defeat the enemy, and return back to your family.

Most of your fellow soldiers are very young, between 15 and 20 years old. Most soldiers are poor or middle class. For example, many were farmers, apprentices, and servants before the war. There are also some free black men and slaves serving as soldiers.

There are no uniforms for soldiers. You wear your own clothes and boots. In fact, those of you with boots intact are the lucky ones. Many go barefoot because their boots have fallen apart from all of the marching. Your weapon is your own hunting musket.

Conditions in the camps are miserable. Your food is sometimes rotten. Diseases like typhoid fever sweep through the camps. In the winter there are not enough tents or blankets to go around. To make matters worse many soldiers have not been paid for their labors. Some talk of mutiny.

To cheer each other up, soldiers read Thomas Paine's inspiring words around the campfire. "These are the times that try men's souls." You hope that the war will end soon. And if it does not, you hope that you can stay courageous, loyal, and strong.



Identity Article: Continental Army Spies

You are a spy for the Continental army. There is little glory in this job because very few know what you contribute to the war effort. But you do not seek glory and fame. You are a committed Patriot. "Give me liberty or give me death!"

Spies come from all walks of life. Some are poor farmers, servants, and slaves. These spies use their low positions to gather information undetected. Some women spies act as cooks and maids in the enemy's war camps. They are able to eavesdrop on important conversations.

Other spies are wealthy merchants pretending to be loyal to Britain. They gather information from British officers in their shops, taverns, and at exclusive social gatherings. In addition, spies overseas purchase supplies for the army while concealing that Congress is the buyer.

Gathering information is only half of the battle. You also must secretly send the information to the Continental army. You use techniques like invisible ink, ciphers, and codes to conceal your messages. Rather than meeting with agents in person, you often leave messages at dead drops (agreed upon spots where agents will collect them). You only know one or two of the people you are working with. This is to protect the spy ring if you are captured. Perhaps the most difficult part of being a spy is not knowing if the information you gather will reach General George Washington.

Both armies rely heavily on espionage. You must be careful whom you trust and watch out for double agents.

