

# Lesson Plan on the Militia of the American Revolutionary War

## **Introduction:**

In this activity, students will learn the basics about the militia of the American Revolutionary War.

## **Illinois Learning Standards Addressed:**

16.A.3a Describe how historians use models for organizing historical interpretation (e.g., biographies, political events, issues and conflicts).

16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.

16.A.3c Identify the differences between historical fact and interpretation.

16.C.3c (W) Describe the impact of technology (e.g., weaponry, transportation, printing press, microchips) in different parts of the world, 1500 – present.

16.A.4a Analyze and report historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships.

16.A.4b Compare competing historical interpretations of an event.

16.A.5a Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).

## **Objectives:**

Learn about some of the colonial militia of the American Revolutionary War.

## **In the classroom:**

Provide the students with copies of the attached worksheet.

## **At the library:**

Have the student's research to answer the questions on the worksheet.

## **Resources at the Pritzker Military Library:**

**(also available through interlibrary loan from your local library)**

Bodle, Wayne K. *The Valley Forge winter: civilians and soldiers in war*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

Call Number: E234 .B63 2002.

Cunliffe, Marcus. *Soldiers & civilians; the martial spirit in America, 1775-1865*.

Boston: Little, Brown, 1968. Call Number: E301.C86 1968.

## PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

610 NORTH FAIRBANKS COURT 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CHICAGO, IL 60611  
PHONE: 312.587.0234 FAX: 312.587.0536 WWW.PRITZKERMILITARYLIBRARY.ORG

- Galvin, John R., 1929-. *Minute men*. New York: Hawthorn, 1989.  
Call Number: E255.G35 1989.
- Greene, F. V. *The revolutionary war and the military policy of the United States*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1911. Call Number: E230 .G79
- Lancaster, Bruce, 1896-1963. *From Lexington to liberty: the story of the American Revolution*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955.  
Call Number: E208.L25 1955
- Leckie, Robert. *George Washington's war: the saga of the American Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992. Call Number: E208.L439 1992.
- McCullough, David G. *1776*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.  
Call Number: E208 .M396 2005
- Morton, Joseph C. *The American Revolution*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2003.  
Call Number: E208.M9 2003.
- Reid, Stuart. *Soldiers of the Revolutionary War*. Oxford, England: Osprey, 2002.  
Call Number: E208.R45 2002.
- Taaffe, Stephen R. *The Philadelphia campaign, 1777-1778*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. Call Number: E233.T33 2003.

## PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

610 NORTH FAIRBANKS COURT 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CHICAGO, IL 60611  
PHONE: 312.587.0234 FAX: 312.587.0536 WWW.PRITZKERMILITARYLIBRARY.ORG

## Armies, Militias, and Mercenaries in the American Revolutionary War

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following article. To break the code on the worksheet, you will need to take note of the words that are numbered. The first letter of the numbered word represents the letter in the message. After you have decoded the questions, answer them.

For example: for<sup>1</sup> 1=F example<sup>2</sup> 2=E

Colonists were divided over which side to support in the war; in some<sup>16</sup> areas, the struggle was a civil war. The Revolutionaries (also known as "Americans" or "Patriots") had the active support of about 40 to 45 percent of the colonial population. About 15 to 20 percent of the population<sup>7</sup> supported the British Crown during the war, and were known<sup>2</sup> as Loyalists (or Tories). Loyalists fielded perhaps 50,000 men during the war years<sup>10</sup> in<sup>25</sup> support of the British Empire. After<sup>17</sup> the war, some 70,000 Loyalists departed the United<sup>14</sup> States, most going to Canada, Great<sup>23</sup> Britain, or to British colonies in the Caribbean.

When the war began, the Americans did not have a regular army (also known as a "standing army"). Each colony had traditionally provided for its own<sup>6</sup> defenses through the use of local militia. Militiamen served for only a few weeks or months at a time, were reluctant to go very<sup>13</sup> far from home<sup>24</sup>, and were thus generally unavailable for extended operations. Militia lacked the training and discipline of regular soldiers, but were occasionally effective<sup>21</sup> against regular troops. American militia were sometimes adept at partisan warfare, and were particularly effective at suppressing Loyalist<sup>3</sup> activity when British<sup>18</sup> regulars were not in the area.

Seeking to coordinate military efforts, the Continental Congress established (on paper) a regular army—the Continental Army—in June<sup>1</sup> 1775, and appointed George Washington as commander-in-chief. The development<sup>20</sup> of the Continental Army was always a work in progress, and Washington reluctantly augmented the regular troops with militia throughout the war. Although as many as 250,000 men may have served as regulars or as militiamen for the Revolutionary<sup>8</sup> cause in the eight years of the war, there were never more<sup>4</sup> than 90,000 total men under arms for the Americans in any given year. Armies in North America were small by European standards of the era; the greatest number of men that Washington personally commanded in the field at any one time was fewer than 17,000.

Early in 1775, the<sup>15</sup> British Army consisted of about 36,000 men worldwide, but wartime recruitment steadily increased this number. Additionally, over the course of the war<sup>12</sup> the British hired about 30,000 German mercenaries, popularly known in the colonies as "Hessians" because many of them came from Hesse-Kassel. Germans would make up about one-third of the British troop strength in North America. By 1779, the number<sup>5</sup> of British and German troops stationed in North America was over 60,000, though these were spread from Canada<sup>19</sup> to Florida<sup>22</sup>.

### PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

610 NORTH FAIRBANKS COURT 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CHICAGO, IL 60611  
PHONE: 312.587.0234 FAX: 312.587.0536 WWW.PRITZKERMILITARYLIBRARY.ORG

Armies, Militias, and Mercenaries in the American Revolutionary War

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To help get you started, 11=X.

Q1. 12-24-17-15 25-16 15-24-21 5-17-4-21 15-24-17-15 12-17-16

23-25-13-21-5 15-6 4-21-4-18-21-8-16 6-22 15-24-21 4-25-3-25-15-25-17 6-22

15-24-21 17-4-21-8-25-19-17-5 19-6-3-6-5-2521-16 12-24-6 12-6-14-3-20 18-21

8-21-17-20-10 22-6-8 18-17-15-15-3-21 25-5 17 4-25-5-14-15-21'-16

5-6-15-25-19-21 ?

Q2. 12-24-6 8-6-20-21 12-25-15-24 12-25-3-3-25-17-4 20-17-12-21-16 15-6

12-17-8-5 15-24-21 4-25-3-25-15-25-17-16 17-15 3-21-11-25-5-23-15-6-5 17-5-20

19-6-5-19-6-8-20 15-24-17-15 15-24-21 18-8-25-15-25-16-24 12-21-8-21

19-6-4-25-5-23 22-8-6-4 18-6-16-15-6-5 ?

Q3. 12-24-21-8-21 17-5-20 12-24-21-5 25-5 13-25-8-23-25-5-25-17 20-25-20

19-6-8-5-12-17-3-3-25-16 16-14-8-8-21-5-20-21-8 15-6

12-17-16-24-25-5-23-15-6-5 ?

PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

610 NORTH FAIRBANKS COURT 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CHICAGO, IL 60611  
PHONE: 312.587.0234 FAX: 312.587.0536 WWW.PRITZKERMILITARYLIBRARY.ORG

Armies, Militias, and Mercenaries in the American Revolutionary War

A1. What is the name that was given to members of the militia of the American Colonies who would be ready for battle in a minute's notice? Minutemen

A2. Who rode with William Dawes to warn the militias at Lexington and Concord that the British were coming from Boston? Paul Revere

A3. Where and when in Virginia did Cornwallis surrender to Washington? Yorktown on October 19, 1781

Code Key:

17=A

18=B

19=C

20=D

21=E

22=F

23=G

24=H

25=I

1=J

2=K

3=L

4=M

5=N

6=O

7=P

26=Q

8=R

16=S

15=T

14=U

13=V

12=W

11=X

10=Y

9=Z

PRITZKER MILITARY LIBRARY

610 NORTH FAIRBANKS COURT 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CHICAGO, IL 60611  
PHONE: 312.587.0234 FAX: 312.587.0536 WWW.PRITZKERMILITARYLIBRARY.ORG