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- Declaring independence doesn't mean much if you can't defend it
- Great Britain had the world's greatest empire, a professional well-trained army, and the world's best navy
 - British were determined to regain the North American colonies
- However, colonies were decentralized & British had logistics & support problems
 - Wavering between coercion & conciliation inspires neither fear nor affection

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1776 campaign

- On July 2, 1776 the British landed an enormous force in New York City
- British defeated Washington's army and occupied New York, America's largest city
 - The Continental Army narrowly escaped (mostly due to British caution)



4



- In August 1776, Washington had 28,000 men under his command
- By December there were only 3,000 left – most had gone home
- As the army dwindled, Washington was desperate for a victory
 - “I think the game is pretty near up”

5

- While the British army settled into winter camps, Washington prepared a daring attack
 - He crossed the Delaware River the night of December 25th, and surprised a garrison of sleeping Hessians in Trenton the next day



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- A week later at Princeton he defeated three regiments of British redcoats
- Battles of Trenton and Princeton at the end of 1776 bolstered morale & saved the Revolution



9

Revolution Society



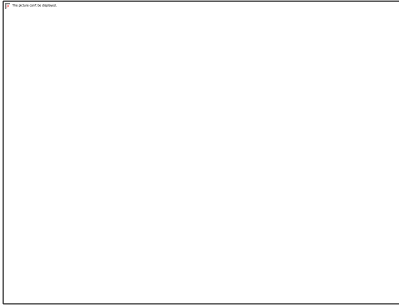
- Americans were divided into three groups: Patriots, Loyalists (Tories), and the indifferent (40/20/40)
 - The Patriots were the largest group, and they swayed the indifferent
 - In many places there was brutal fighting between Patriots and Loyalists, with atrocities committed by both sides
 - Tory militias were not strong enough to hold pacified areas
 - When the British army attacked it was like punching water; as soon as the fist was withdrawn the patriot militias took over again

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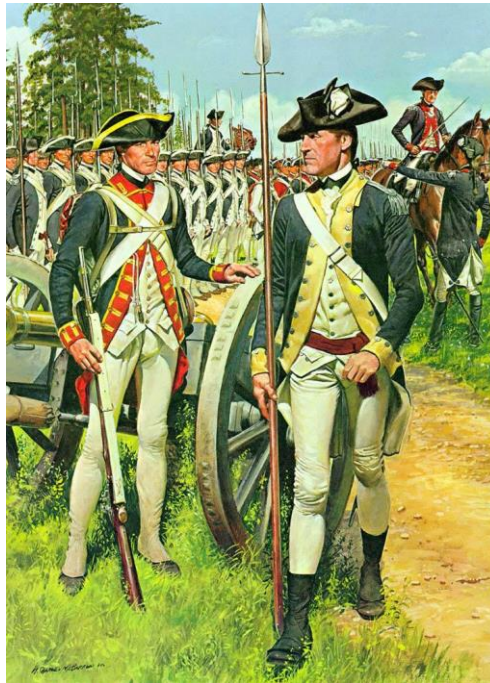
Militia vs. Continental Army

- War was the start of our “dual army” tradition
- Militia
 - Temporary soldiers
 - Only fought close to home
 - but might augment the Continental Army in a nearby battle
 - Preferred to ambush or fight hand-to-hand
 - Generally ineffective in a pitched battle, but good for keeping loyalists quiet

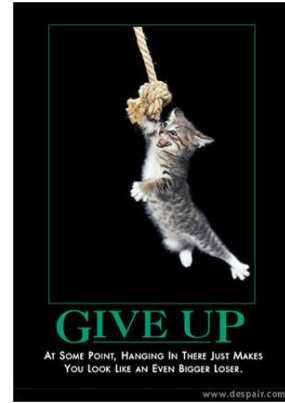


11

- Continental Army
 - Served longer terms of service (months not days)
 - Could be sent to any state
 - Most soldiers came from poor backgrounds
 - Many were former indentured servants or convicts; financial incentives reinforced ideological
 - Suffered terribly from lack of supplies and equipment
 - Congress had constant problems funding the war
 - One redcoat commented that you could track the Continental Army by the bloody footprints they left in the snow



12



- Washington realized he had to win a war of attrition
 - Wear down the British until they gave up
 - As long as the Continental Army existed the British could not claim victory
 - Ideology motivated Americans (better life for themselves & posterity); different from kingly quarrels in past
 - “No Foreign Slaves shall give us Laws, No British Tyrant Reign
 - Tis Independence made us Free and Freedom We’ll Maintain”

13

1777

- British plan to cut off New England from the colonies
 - Proposed by new commander of the northern British armies, General John Burgoyne
 - Three armies would march to Albany, New York – one each from north, south, and west

14

- Unfortunately for Burgoyne the commander of the southern army, William Howe, decided instead to march on the American capital at Philadelphia
 - He defeated and routed Washington's army and occupied the capital
 - After a failed counterattack at Germantown, Washington's army retreated to winter quarters at Valley Forge



15

Battle of Saratoga

- British army under Burgoyne was cut off in the wilderness of New York
 - The army approaching from the west was defeated at Oriskany



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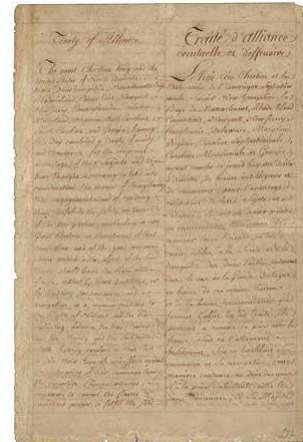
- In October 1777 his army was surrounded & forced to surrender



17

Alliance with France

- Battle of Saratoga convinced France that America might have a chance of winning
 - Why might France be interested in joining in?
 - France had been surreptitiously helping us since 1776, but now they allied with us & went to war with the British
- Franco-American Treaty
 - France recognized the United States
 - France agreed to stay in the war until independence was won
 - Neither side would sign a peace treaty without the consent of the other



18