24 Soldiers from Everywhere

Peace in Europe—well, that was almost true. Russia, Turkey, and Bavaria were waging minor wars. There was almost never total peace in 18th-century Europe.

These drilling soldiers are on a revolutionary recruiting poster. It took a foreigner, Baron von Steuben, to teach Americans to drill.

There was peace in Europe, and that was unusual. It was also a problem for European soldiers who knew no trade but fighting. So when the American Revolution began, many of Europe's soldiers knocked on Ben Franklin's door. Franklin was in France looking for help—financial help—for the American cause. He wasn't really looking for out-of-work soldiers, but he sent many of them to America anyway. When the European soldiers got to America, many of them wanted to be generals, or at least colonels. But American soldiers didn't want to fight under officers from other countries, especially those who couldn't even speak their language. That created some troubles.

Fighting together with men from other regions made many soldiers begin to think as Americans. General Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island spoke out against "local attachments." Greene said, "I feel the cause and not the place. I would as soon go to Virginia [to fight] as stay here [in New England]." This was a new way of thinking.

So no one quite trusted the Marquis de Lafayette (mar-KEE-duh-laf-fy-ET) when he first landed in America. A marquis (you can say MAR-kwis or mar-KEE) is a French nobleman, like an English lord. This marquis was very rich, and noble in the best sense of the word. He was 19 years old.

His father had died fighting the British. Lafayette wished to avenge his father, and he also believed in the liberty the Americans were fighting for. But in 1777, when he appeared in Philadelphia, he was taken for just another French soldier of fortune. "Thanks, but we don't need any more of your kind," was what he was politely told, in French, by James Lovell, who was chairman of the Continental Congress's committee of foreign applications.

The marquis would not be dismissed. He had bought a ship to

come to America; he had paid for the soldiers who came with him; he had even angered his king, who was not yet ready to take sides in this war. Lafayette wrote a letter to John Hancock, president of the Congress. He asked for two favors: "The first is to serve at my own expense. The second is to begin my service as a volunteer."

Now that was an unusual request. John Hancock paid attention, and so did George Washington. And that brings us to one of the nicest stories of the war: the lifelong friendship of Washington and Lafayette. They became like father and son, and neither was ever to be disappointed in the other.

Like a young knight, Lafayette wanted to prove himself in battle, and he did. He became a general on Washington's staff, and suffered with the army during winter encampments. He fought well and, when he was wounded, his bravery endeared him to his men. He contributed much of his personal fortune to the American cause. Later, when he had a son, he named him George Washington.

Lafayette was a noble man and a hero.

So was the Baron Friedrich von Steuben, even though he was a bit of an imposter. Von Steuben told Franklin that he had been a general on the staff of King Frederick the Great of Prussia.

That wasn't quite true. He was a captain in the Prussian army. Ben Franklin was not easily fooled; he saw through von Steuben right away. But he also saw that he was exactly what the army needed: a fine drillmaster. He thought von Steuben might be able to turn that untrained Continental army into a professional fighting force.

Franklin was right. Von Steuben had a happy personality, a lot of energy, professional knowledge of soldiering, and a roaring voice. He hollered at the American troops in a language that was a combination of German, English, and French with a few swear words thrown in. He made himself understood, and he did exactly what Franklin thought he would do. He turned a disorderly group of recruits into skilled soldiers. He trained them to fight as Europe's soldiers fought: with muskets and bayonets. He taught them to follow complicated orders and execute complicated maneuvers. He made them as good as the best British troops.

He was also smart enough to discover that there was something different about American soldiers. They were independent men who wouldn't take orders unless they understood the reason for them. In Europe, von Steuben said, soldiers did what they were

General Andrew Lewis, describing soldiers in Williamsburg in 1776, said, "It is observed that many of the Soldiers when posted as Sentries take the liberty of sitting down. This unjustifyable practice is strictly forbid."

The Marquis de Lafayette became known as "the soldier's friend." Although he returned to France and is buried there, his grave is covered with earth from Bunker Hill.

My Dear Heart

When Lafayette said he wanted to go to America to fight for freedom, French officials wouldn't let him. So he made secret plans, put a black wig over his red hair, and set sail from Spain. He couldn't even tell his wife, Adrienne, goodbye. This is what he wrote her from his ship, La Victoire.

My dear Heart: It is from far away that I am writing, and added to this cruel distance is the still worse uncertainty as to when I shall have news of you.... How will you have taken my going? Do you love me less? Have you forgiven me?... I shan't send you a diary of the voyage; days follow each other and are all alike; always sea and sky and the next day just the same.... As a defender of Liberty which I adore...coming to offer my services to this interesting republic, I am bringing nothing but my genuine good will.

told. In America, he said, soldiers wanted to know why an order was given; then they would do it.

Most of the soldiers who fought in the war were said to be Scotch-Irish. They, or their ancestors, had been poor farmers in Scotland who were lured to northern Ireland by English promises of cheap land. They'd been fooled. Life in northern Ireland was hard, so when they heard of the opportunities in America, a quarter of a million of them packed up, took their chances as indentured servants, and headed across the ocean. Because they had moved about, they quickly thought of themselves as Americans—not Scotsmen, or Irishmen, or Virginians, or Pennsylvanians. They were good soldiers.

Haym Salomon was not a soldier, but the help he gave the Revolution was as important as that given on any battlefield.

Salomon was Polish and a Jew. He had longed for religious freedom and liberty in his native country. But when Poland was invaded by Russia, Haym Salomon had to flee. When he came to America he felt at home.

Salomon was a shy man who spoke several languages and had a talent for the language of business. He had a reputation for integrity; people trusted him.

The British shouldn't have trusted him. When they captured New York, Salomon spied on them for the Patriot cause. He was captured, imprisoned, paroled, captured again, and imprisoned again. Finally, he fled to Philadelphia. Soon, in his quiet way, he won the confidence of the French

Haym Solomons,

BROKER to the Office of Finance, to the Conful General of France, and to the Treafurer of the French Army, at his Office in Front-ſtreet, between Market and Arch-ſtreet, BUYS and SELLS on Commiſſion

BANK Stock, Bills of Exchange on France, Spain, Holland, and other parts of Europe, the Weſt Indies, and inland bills, at the uſual commiſſion.——He Buys and Sells

Loan-Office Certificates, Continental and State Money, of this or any other ſtate, Paymaſter and Quartermaſter Generals Notes; thoſe and every other kind of paper tranſactions (bills of exchange excepted) he will charge his employers no more than ONE HALF PER CENT on his Commiſſion,

He procures Money on Loan

for a ſhort time, and gets Notes and Bills diſcounted.

Gentlemen, and others, reſiding in this ſtate, or any of the united ſtates, by ſending their orders to this Office, may depend on having their buſineſs tranſacted with as much fidelity and expedition, as if they were themſelves preſent.

He receives Tobacco, Sugars, Tea, and every other ſort of Goods to Sell on Commiſſion; for which purpoſe he has provided proper Stores.

He flatters himſelf, his aſſiduity, punctuality, and extenſive connections in his buſineſs, as a Broker, is well eſtabliſhed in various parts of Europe, and in the united ſtates in particular.

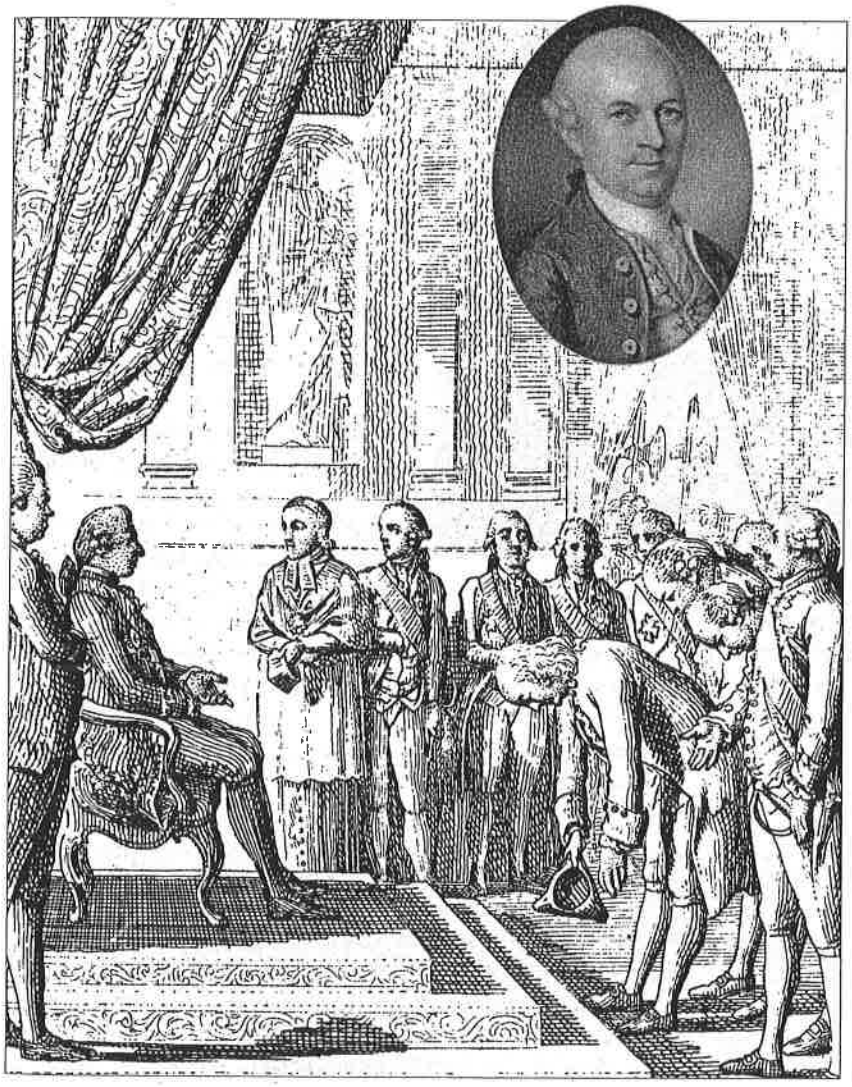
All perſons who ſhall pleaſe to favour him with their buſineſs, may depend upon his utmoſt exertion for their intereſt, and——

Part of the Money advanced, if required.

N. B. Paymaſter-General's Notes taken as Caſh for Bills of Exchange.

At the top of Haym Salomon's advertisement for his banking business are the words "Broker to the Office of Finance"—which meant that he lent money to the revolutionary government.

Robert Morris had the impossible task of finding the money to pay for the war. He did it—but died penniless himself.



Ambassador Franklin pays his respects to King Louis of France. He and his co-minister, Silas Deane *(inset)*, had to persuade France to help America.

who had come to the aid of America. The French made Salomon a general and their army paymaster.

Robert Morris trusted him, too. Morris, who was superintendent of finance for the Continental Congress, had the very difficult job of paying for the war. The colonies weren't much help. They raised very little money, and foreign countries didn't want to lend money to the Continental Congress. They doubted that the struggling new nation could beat mighty Britain, or pay its bills.

War and Peace Pipe

Normally, Thomas Jefferson didn't smoke. But he made an exception when he was with his Indian friends and they passed the pipe of peace. An Indian brother, a chief, wanted to know what this war was about. Jefferson, who was Virginia's governor, puffed on the pipe and then gave this explanation. What do you think of it?

Our forefathers were Englishmen, inhabitants of a little island beyond the great water, and, being distressed for land, they came and settled here. As long as we were young and weak, the English whom we had left behind, made us carry all our wealth to their country, to enrich them; and, not satisfied with this, they at length began to say we were their slaves, and should do whatever they ordered us. We were now grown up and felt ourselves strong; we knew we were free as they were, that we came here of our own accord and not at their biddance, and were determined to be free as long as we should exist. For this reason they made war on us.

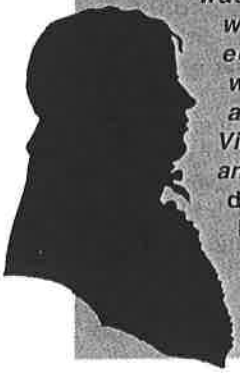
General Washington with a group including three French officers: Lafayette *(left)*, the Comte de Rochambeau *(second from right)*, and, behind Rochambeau, the Marquis de Chastellux.

So Morris turned to Haym Salomon. Banks lent money to Salomon because they trusted him, even when they wouldn't lend it to the Congress. In Morris's diary you can count 75 times that he went to Salomon for help. Members of the Continental Congress needed help, too. Morris was unable to pay their salaries. James Madison, James Monroe, and Baron von Steuben were among those Salomon helped.

But mostly he helped the struggling army. Sometimes he dipped into his own pocket. When he had no more money to give he turned to the Jewish community and to others. The Jews were few in number, but the ideals of the new nation spoke to them in a special way because they had often been persecuted in the Old World. When he died in 1785, at age 45, Haym Salomon was almost penniless; he had given his country everything he owned.

Jack Jouett's Ride

After Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he went home to Virginia, and, a few years later, was elected governor. That was during a difficult time when the British army invaded Virginia. The redcoats wanted to capture Jefferson and the members of the Virginia General Assembly—and they almost did. (Note: a dragoon *is a British soldier.* Monticello *is the name of Jefferson's house.)*



Jack
Jouett (JEW ett)

Hardly anyone has heard of the ride
Of big Jack Jouett through the countryside;
No poet told of his frantic flight
Through Virginia's forest in the dark of night.

The British were marching, they were heading west
Seeking one prize over all the rest:
It was the man who had made the King glower,
Virginia's governor—WANTED—for London's Tower.

Big Jack, feather in his cap, cut by briars, short of sleep,
Had rivers to cross and fences to leap,
Till he reined in his horse and came to a stop
At a house, Monticello, on a mountain top.

"Dragoons," he warned. "They're coming, they're real!"
The governor, at breakfast, finished his meal.
Then he mounted his horse and rode off and away,
A minute later—that's the truth, so they say—
The redcoats arrived; too late, and they knew it,
Thomas Jefferson was gone, with thanks to Jack Jouett.

25 Black Soldiers

A sketch of a black soldier by Baron von Closen, a German nobleman who fought in the American army against the British.

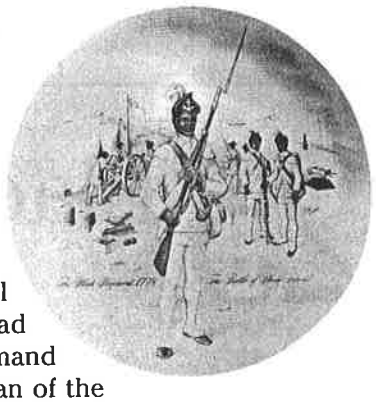
On November 17, 1775, Virginia's imperious royal governor, Lord Dunmore, proclaims "all indentured servants, Negroes, and others...free if they are able and willing to bear arms and join his Majesty's troops for the more speedily reducing this Colony to a proper sense of their Duty to his Majesty's Crown and Dignity."

White citizens are stunned. Dunmore has not only offered freedom to their slaves, he has said that anyone who doesn't rally to the king's banner is a traitor. His proclamation forces Virginians to choose sides: Rebel or king. In Norfolk, many choose the king.

It is not an easy decision for blacks or whites. The Rebels are fighting for the words of the Declaration of Independence. Do they really mean it? Is Dunmore's offer just a cynical way to get soldiers? No one—black or white—knows where this rebellion will finally lead. But Lord Dunmore's words are enough for some 300 black men, who assemble in a force the British call the Royal Ethiopian Regiment. They wear white sashes emblazoned with the slogan LIBERTY TO SLAVES, and they are trained by redcoat officers. Other blacks choose to fight with the Rebels.

Lord Dunmore, who has not freed his own 57 slaves, gathers a fleet on the Elizabeth River and takes his family aboard ship. He has seized 70 cannons and the printing press of Rebel publisher John Holt (why a printing press?).

Cynical means heartless, calculating, and with an eye only for results.



This commemorative plate shows soldiers of the black regiment who fought at the battle of Rhode Island in 1778.

Agitation is action, ferment, and sometimes rebellion.

In this 19th-century painting, Peter Salem, one of the black minutemen who fought at Bunker Hill, is shown at the lower right loading his gun. Salem is said to be the marksman who killed Britain's Major Pitcairn. Shortly after the battle, he was almost pushed out of the Continental Army when Congress decided to limit it to free men. Salem's owners gave him his freedom.

Williamsburg is the center of Rebel agitation. Troops gathered there head east, toward Norfolk, under the command of Colonel William Woodford, a veteran of the French and Indian War. Patrick Henry is the supposed commander of Virginia's Rebel forces, but he is a better speaker than soldier, and, to his dismay but others' relief, is left behind to guard Williamsburg.

On December 9, Woodford's troops fight the first land battle in the South, at Great Bridge (a swampy spot south of Norfolk). The battle lasts 30 minutes, but it proves that barely trained colonial citizen-soldiers can beat the proud, scarlet-jacketed British regulars. It also proves that black soldiers—the Royal Ethiopians fighting for the British and some free blacks siding with the Rebels—can fight as well as anyone. They "fought, bled and died like Englishmen," writes Virginia's Captain Richard Kidder Meade with admiration.

Mostly the British are outsmarted; they are deceived by the black servant of Thomas Marshall (father of future Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall), who, pretending to be a deserter, slips into the British lines and announces that the colonists have a force of only 300 men. Actually, Woodford commands at least three times that number.

The British attack at Great Bridge is suicidal. Straight into the Rebel fire. "Reserve fire until they are within 50 yards," the Virginia commander tells his men. At 50 yards, the sharpshooting Virginia riflemen are deadly accurate. Seventeen redcoats are killed, 49 wounded. Woodford reports to Williamsburg, "This was a second Bunker Hill affair, in miniature, with this difference, that we kept our post and had only one man wounded in the hand."

But Norfolk is now in trouble with both sides in this fray. Its loyalists have angered the Rebels and the defeat at Great Bridge has enraged Lord Dunmore. On New Year's Day, four British warships bombard the city, setting it on fire. Rebel "shirtmen" (landed gentry who wear long hunting shirts as uniforms) torch other buildings. In two days, most of the city's buildings and houses are in ashes.

26 Fighting a War

This British cartoon poked fun at American soldiers, but those shabby, makeshift uniforms and hungry looks were close to the truth.

If ever you write a book of history, you'll find the hardest part is deciding what to put in the book and what to leave out. That's a problem I'm having right now. It has to do with the Revolutionary War. If I write about all the battles, and all the things the Continental Congress was doing, and all the important people—well, that would take several books.

So, what to leave out? To begin with, descriptions of some battles. It's not that they were boring, or unimportant. There just isn't room to tell about them all. (Of course, you can read about them on your own.)

To be honest, it may be that I am skipping some of the war because it was so dreary and cold and discouraging. After Bunker Hill, Sullivan's Island, and Great Bridge, nothing seemed to go right for the Americans. Just thinking about it is painful. Poor General Washington—no one else would have put up with all the hardships. In wintertime his soldiers almost froze—some actually did—and many didn't have shoes, or enough food to eat, or proper guns to use.

An act of Congress read: "the pay of officers and privates [is] as follows:

Privates...$6 2/3 per month
Sergeants...$8 " "
Captains...$20." "

Now $6 was worth a whole lot more then than it is today, but it still wasn't much. Out of that pay the soldiers were "to find their own arms and clothes." Congress couldn't even pay for guns or

Enemies?

Sometimes being on opposing sides in a war divided fathers from sons and brothers from brothers; sometimes it hardly seemed to matter at all. Washington wrote to his brother about one incident between soldiers:

One day, at a part of the creek where it was practicable, the British sentinel asked the American, who was nearly opposite him, if he could give him a chew of tobacco: the latter, having in his pocket a piece of a thick twisted roll, sent it across the creek to the British sentinel, who after taking off his bite, sent it back again.

Two of the German soldiers who fought for the British. These were jägers (YAY-ghers), former foresters who were often used as scouts.

The British troops marched from Long Island into New York City and occupied it for the rest of the war.

uniforms. And those salaries hardly ever got paid. Congress seemed to spend its time talking and not doing much else. It just didn't have any money. Talk about frustration!

Most of the soldiers would have run off—deserted—if it hadn't been for their respect for General Washington. As it was, some did desert, and many others signed up for only three months. These were citizen-soldiers, not professionals like the Europeans. As soon as Washington got them trained, it was time for them to go home.

For all his cool under fire, Washington was said to have had a fierce temper. He must have had a hard time keeping it under control those first months after he took charge. Everything seemed to go wrong.

The British didn't just sit around and let the colonies rebel. They sent an army to put down the Revolution. One day in the summer of 1776, a New Yorker named Daniel McCurtin looked out his window and saw the wooden masts of hundreds of British ships. He described what he saw:

> *I...spied as I peeped out...something resembling a wood of pine trees ...the whole bay was full of shipping...I thought all London was afloat.*

Those ships were full of soldiers; the British were landing an army in New York.

General Washington had his army in New York, too. But his men were inexperienced, and the British were not. On Long Island (a part of New York), the Americans marched into a trap: they were outnumbered, they panicked, they did many things wrong. The war might have been over right then, soon after it began, but Washington knew when to retreat and save his men. And he had some luck.

The luck came in the form of fog, thick fog. The cool general decided to move his troops from Long Island, across the East River to Manhattan Island. He had more luck: Massachusetts fishermen were manning his boats. Their eyes were used to fog. Before the British

Total Surprise

General Howe, who commanded the redcoats on Long Island, was sarcastic about the Continentals' inexperienced tactics in preparing for battle:

Their [the Americans'] want of judgment had shone equally conspicuous during the whole of this affair. They had imagined... that we should land directly in front of their works, march up and attack them without further precaution in their strongest points. They had accordingly fortified those points with their utmost strength, and totally neglected the left flank....It was by marching round to this quarter that we had so totally surprised them on the 27th, so that the possibility of our taking that route seems never to have entered their imaginations.

The Americans on Long Island were trapped by British troops drawn up between them and their retreat across the East River. They had to fight their way back through the enemy. One rebel said later, "When we began the attack, General Washington...cried out, 'Good God, what brave fellows I must this day lose!'"

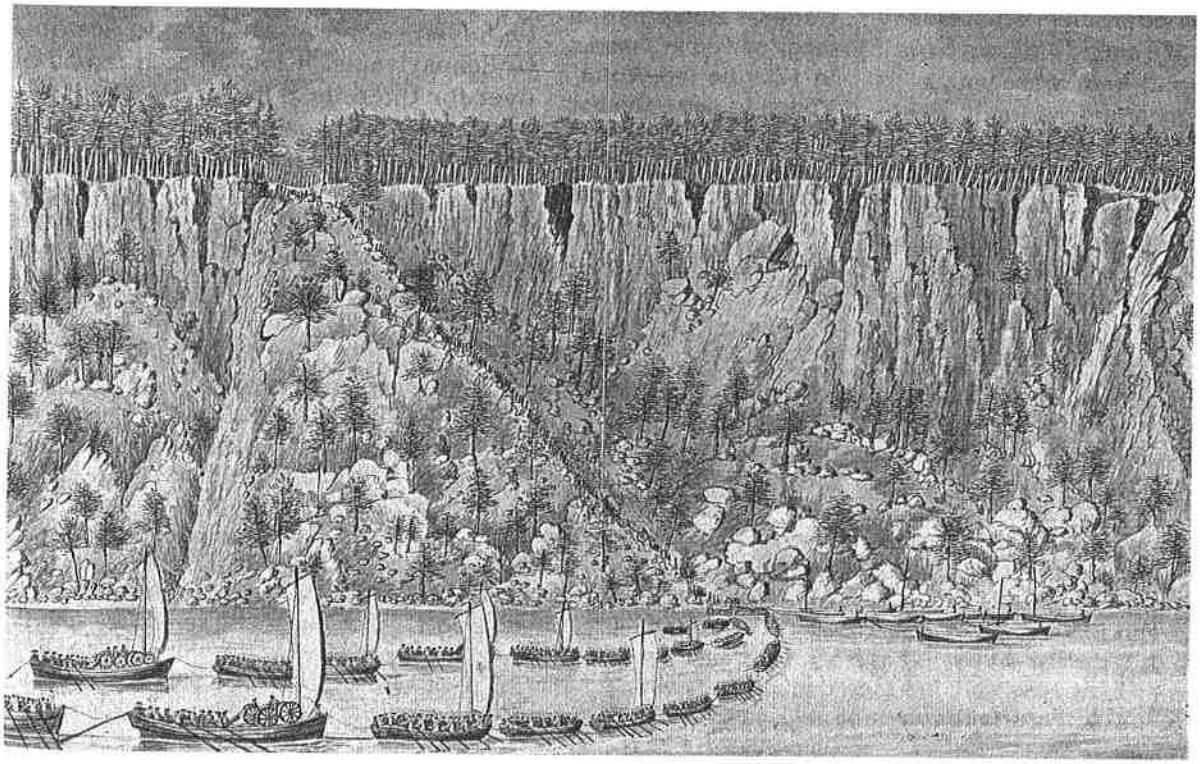
knew what had happened the Americans were across the river and saved to fight again.

Most of the soldiers the Americans fought were not even British. They were German—called "Hessians"—because many of them came from Hesse in Germany. Remember, Europe had been fighting wars for centuries. Large numbers of men in Europe spent their whole lives fighting. That was the only profession they knew, and they didn't much care who they were fighting for. Many didn't have a choice; they were forced to fight by their rulers. Some German princes made money by supplying soldiers to anyone who wanted to pay for them. The soldiers were called "mercenaries."

Thirty thousand German troops fought in America. Almost half never returned to Germany: some of them died, some chose to stay in the new country.

The Americans were furious that the British hired foreign soldiers. After all, most still thought of England as their mother country. Many Americans who were undecided about supporting the Revolution became Patriots when they saw the mercenaries.

As the British scaled the cliffs on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, "the rebels fled like scared rabbits," one Englishman said. They left "their artillery, stores, baggage and everything else behind them; their very pots boiling on the fire."

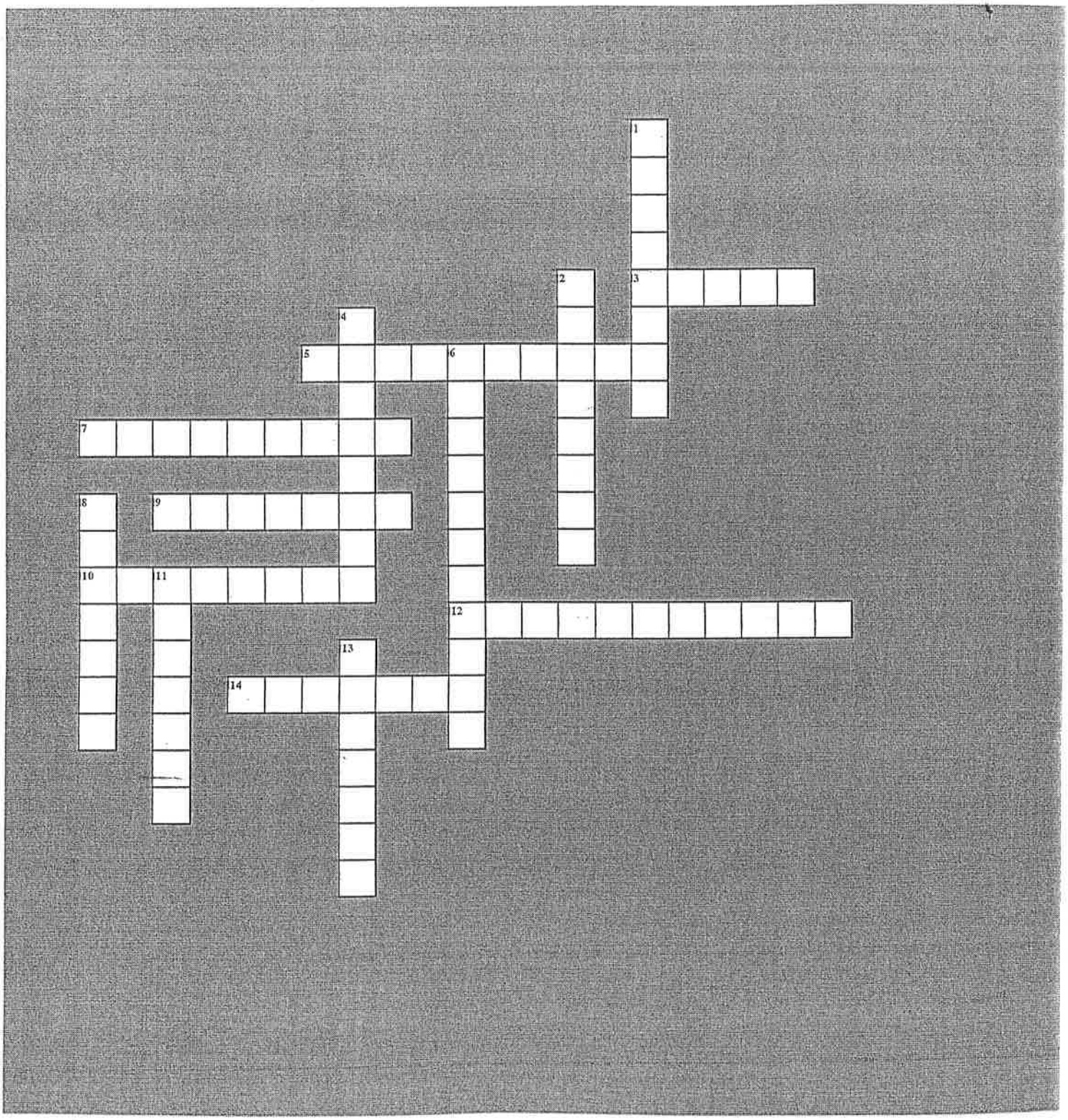


Name _____

Due: Friday, May 16
10pts.

Complete the crossword puzzle.

Soldiers from Everywhere, Black Soldiers, & Fighting A War



Across

3 Most of the soldiers who fought in the war were said to be Scotch-_____.

5 George _____ and Lafayette developed a lifelong friendship and became like father and son.

7 Marquis de _____ went to America in hopes of joining the American Army and serving at his own expense.

9 A _____ is a French nobleman, like an English lord.

10 While in Europe, Franklin sent many out-of-work _____ to America to help fight in the war.

12 Baron Friedrich von Steuben was a fine _____ and Ben Franklin thought he could turn the untrained Continental Army into a professional fighting force.

14 Haym _____ was not a soldier but he helped the cause by being the French paymaster and the superintendent of finance for the Continental Congress

Down

1 Most of the soldiers the Americans fought weren't even British. There were German -- called _____ because many came from Hesse, Germany

2 Many Americans who were undecided about supporting the Revolution became _____ when they saw the mercenaries

4 Continental Army: Privates paid $6 2/3 per month, Sergeants $8 per month and _____ $20 per month but those salaries hardly ever got paid.

6 Von Steuben discovered American soldiers were different. They were _____ men who wouldn't take orders unless they understood the reason for them.

8 Most of the soldiers would have run off -- deserted -- if it hadn't been for their _____ for General Washington

11 300 black slaves took up Lord Dunmore's offer and joined the British side hoping it would give them freedom. They wore white sashes with the slogan: _____ To Slaves.

13 On New Year's Day, four British warships bombard the city of _____ and within 2 days it is in ashes.