



During the winter of 1777–1778, the men in Washington’s army suffered from freezing cold and starvation — yet they refused to give up.

### 13.5 The Continental Army’s Motivation to Win

Continental soldiers had a special advantage over the British. They had a stronger motivation, or desire, to win.

Continental soldiers believed they were defending their rights described in the Declaration of Independence. They were trying to make a better future for themselves. To many Continentals, these were things worth dying for.

The men in Washington’s army showed their strong motivation during the winter of 1777–1778. The army was camped in the snow at a place called *Valley Forge*. The soldiers were tired and starving. They didn’t have warm clothing to protect them from the freezing cold. Many didn’t even have shoes. More than 2,500 men died that winter from cold and sickness. Yet the army refused to give up.

The British, on the other hand, had less motivation than the Continental soldiers. Most British soldiers were fighting because it was their job, not to defend their homes or their rights. Even the British government had problems other than the war to worry about. The British had colonies to protect in many parts of the world besides North America. They had to worry about possible enemies like France and Spain. And many people in Britain were unhappy about fighting an expensive war in North America.

Of course, not all Americans were motivated to fight the British. Loyalists still believed that independence was unwise. In addition, the British sometimes promised to free slaves who joined their side. As a result, some African Americans fought for the British to gain their freedom. As you know, many Native Americans also fought for the British to protect their lands.





The Continental Army relied upon surprise attacks against the British. George Washington crossed the Delaware River on Christmas Eve. He defeated the German mercenaries who were celebrating the holiday.

## 13.6 Different War Strategies

The British and the Continentals used different **strategies** to fight the Revolutionary War.

Britain had to fight an offensive war. They had to attack the Continentals and take control of the cities and countryside. In contrast, the Continentals could fight a defensive war. They didn't have to destroy the British army, only hold them off.

At first, the British tried to end the war by stopping the rebellion in Boston. They thought that most Patriots were there. But they soon discovered that thousands of other colonists were willing to fight for independence.

So the British changed strategies. They tried to show power by capturing important cities like New York. After losing New York, Washington moved his men into the countryside. From there, they used "hit and run" **tactics**. They made surprise attacks against small groups of British and then retreated.

Continentals also used **guerilla tactics** to frighten and discourage the British. For example, sharpshooters (riflemen) hid in the woods and shot down British soldiers, one by one.

By 1777, the British strategy was to destroy the Continental Army. They wanted to fight the army face to face, the way armies fought in Europe. They tried to force Washington's army into the open by capturing the important city of Philadelphia.

But Washington had a different strategy. He wanted to keep his army together until the British became discouraged. Rather than risk losing soldiers, he let the British have Philadelphia. Then he took his men to Valley Forge for the winter.

**strategies:** overall plans, such as for winning a war

**tactics:** specific ways of carrying out a plan, such as ways of fighting battles

**guerilla tactics:** tactics used by fighters outside of a regular army (guerillas), such as shooting at soldiers from hiding places in the woods



## 13.7 The Continental Army Gains Allies

Continental Army leaders knew that they needed **allies** to win the war. In 1776, Congress sent Benjamin Franklin to Paris, France, to seek help.

France helped the Patriots by supplying gunpowder (ammunition) and by lending Congress money. Some European soldiers also joined the Continental cause. A 19-year-old Frenchman, the Marquis de Lafayette, became a general in the Continental Army. Friedrich von Steuben, a German soldier, helped to train the Continental Army at Valley Forge.

In mid 1777, close to 9,000 British troops marched down from Canada. About 1,500 Vermont militiamen attacked them. Other Continental troops rushed to help. With his army trapped, the British commander surrendered at Saratoga, New York.

The Battle of Saratoga showed that the colonists could beat a British army. After that, France openly supported the Continental Army. Spain pledged support to France. In 1781, Spain captured a British fort at Pensacola, Florida. Now the Continental Army had powerful allies.

After their defeat at Saratoga, the British again changed strategies. For the next three years, they tried to win the war in the southern colonies. They thought that Loyalists there would help them.

In the summer of 1781, a large British army marched to the Virginia coast. British ships were bringing supplies from New York, but French warships cut them off. Meanwhile, Washington's army and thousands of French soldiers hurried down from the north.

The Continentals and the French trapped the British in the port of Yorktown. For more than a week, they pounded the British with cannon fire. Finally, the British surrendered.

The Battle of Yorktown was the last big battle of the war. With the help of their French allies, the Continentals had won an important victory.

**allies:** people or countries fighting on the same side against a common enemy

Following their defeat at Yorktown, the British troops surrendered to the Continental Army and their allies. The Battle of Yorktown in October 1781 was the last big battle of the war.





## 13.8 The Treaty of Paris: American Victory

After the Battle of Yorktown, Britain was ready to end the war. By this time, Britain was fighting Spain and France as well as America. Representatives from all these countries met in Paris

to work out peace agreements.

Meanwhile, the fighting continued. On the seas, the British navy wiped out American shipping. On land, the British still controlled the cities of New York, Charleston, and Savannah. To the west, small but terrible battles were fought in places like Ohio, Kentucky, and western New York. There, Continental soldiers fought against British soldiers, Loyalists, and Native Americans. Villages burned. Women and children on both sides were killed.

In September 1783, the war finally ended with a set of agreements called the *Treaty of Paris*. Britain agreed to recognize the United States as an independent nation. Britain also gave the United States a huge amount of land. It included all the territory that was east of the Mississippi River, south of Canada and the Great Lakes, and north of Florida. (Britain kept

Canada, and Florida was returned to Spain.) This vast area included land that the British had promised to Native Americans.

In the treaty, the United States promised to restore the rights and property of Loyalists. Unfortunately for the Loyalists, Americans did not keep this part of the agreement. Instead, thousands of Loyalists left the United States to live in Britain, Canada, and other places. African Americans who had fought for the British also escaped to other countries.

The Patriots had won the war. From now on, the former colonists would be known simply as Americans.



In 1783, the Revolutionary War was ended with the Treaty of Paris. This painting of the American representatives to the peace talks was never finished because British representatives refused to pose.



## 13.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you learned how Americans won the Revolutionary War. You compared the war with a game of tug-of-war between two unequal teams. As in the game, the smaller side won because of some special advantages.

The Continental Army and Navy were far weaker than those of the British. But unlike the British, Continentals were fighting close to home. They also had a stronger motivation to win. In addition, they could fight a defensive war. In contrast, the British had to try to control large amounts of territory and destroy the Continental Army.

When the Continentals won the Battle of Saratoga, powerful allies joined the American side. In the decisive Battle of Yorktown, French soldiers helped the Continentals defeat the British. The Treaty of Paris recognized American independence and gave a huge amount of land to the United States.

America had won its independence. But what kind of government would the new country have? Who would replace the king and Parliament? You will find out in the next chapter.

