Interesting presidential elections facts

FACTOID #16: In the 2000 Presidential Election, Texas gave Ralph Nader the 3rd highest popular vote count of any US state.

Encyclopedia > War for Independence

American Revolutionary War

Clockwise from top left: Battle of Bunker Hill, Death of Montgomery at Quebec, Battle of Cowpens, "Moonlight Battle"

Date 1775–1783

Location Eastern North America (present-day United States and Canada), Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Caribbean Sea

Result Treaty of Paris and the establishment of the United States of America

Territorial changes Britain recognizes independence of the United States, cedes East Florida, West Florida, and Minorca to Spain and Tobago to France

Combatants

American Revolutionaries
French Monarchy
Spanish Empire
Dutch Republic
Oneida and Tuscarora tribes
Polish volunteers
Prussian volunteers
Kingdom of Great Britain
Iroquois Confederacy
Hessian mercenaries
Loyalists

Commanders

George Washington
Nathanael Greene
Gilbert de La Fayette
Comte de Rochambeau
Bernardo de Gálvez
Tadeusz Kościuszko
Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben
Sir William Howe
Sir Henry Clinton
Lord Cornwallis
John Burgoyne
Johann Rall
Joseph Brant

(more commanders)

Campaigns and theaters


The American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), also known as the American War of Independence, was a war between the Kingdom of Great Britain and the thirteen "United Colonies" which expelled royal officials in 1775, set up the Second Continental Congress, formed an army, and declared their independence as a new nation, the United States of America, in 1776. The war was the culmination of the political American Revolution, whereby the colonists overthrew British rule. By 1778 major European powers had joined against Britain. American Indians fought for both British and American sides.

Throughout the war, the British were able to use their naval superiority to capture and occupy coastal cities, but control of the countryside (where 90% of the population lived) largely eluded them. After an American victory at Saratoga in 1777, France, with Spain and the Netherlands as its allies, entered the war against Britain. French involvement proved decisive, with a French naval victory in the Chesapeake leading to the surrender of a British army at Yorktown in 1781. The Treaty of Paris in 1783 ended the war and recognized the sovereignty of the United States over the territory bounded by what is now Canada to the North, Florida to the South, and the Mississippi River to the west.
Most At least 5,000 black soldiers fought for the Revolutionary cause. They were slaves promised freedom for serving. Another all-black unit came from the Continental Army in January 1776. Small all-black units were formed in the United States, particularly in the northern states.

Because of manpower shortages, Washington lifted the ban on black enlistment in the Continental Army. In November 1775, Lord Dunmore, the Royal Governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation promising freedom to all slaves owned by Patriots who deserted and fought for the British. Tens of thousands of slaves escaped to the British lines; fewer than 1,000 served under arms. Many of the rest served as orderlies, mechanics, laborers, servants, scouts and guides. More than half died in smallpox epidemics that swept the British forces and many were driven out of the British lines when food ran low. Despite Dunmore's promises, the majority were not given their freedom.

Because of manpower shortages, Washington lifted the ban on black enlistment in the Continental Army in January 1776. Small all-black units were formed in Rhode Island and Massachusetts; many were slaves promised freedom for serving. Another all-black unit came from Haiti with French forces. At least 5,000 black soldiers fought for the Revolutionary cause.

Most American Indians east of the Mississippi River were affected by the war, and many communities
Howe then laid British drove the Americans back to possibility of compromise. On the newly issued Manhattan defend the city, General Washington divided his 20,000 soldiers between Having withdrawn his army from Boston, General Howe now focused on capturing New York City. To New York and New Jersey measures towards America are freely adopted and countenanced by a majority of individuals of all The invasion cost the Americans their base of support in British public opinion, "So that the violent delay a full-scale British counteroffensive until the begun. The invasion of Canada ended as a disaster for the Americans, but Arnold's efforts in 1776 of Valcour Island Another attempt was made by the Americans to push back towards Quebec, but they failed at Trois-Quebec City until the spring of 1776, and then withdrew. The standoff continued throughout the fall and winter. In early March 1776, heavy cannons that the Patriots had captured at Fort Ticonderoga were placed on Dorchester Heights by General Henry Knox. Since the artillery now overlooked the British positions, Howe's situation was untenable, and the British evacuated the city on March 17, 1776, sailing to their naval base at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Washington then moved most of the Continental Army to fortify New York City.

Canada

Main article: Invasion of Canada (1775) During the long standoff at Boston, the Continental Congress sought a way to seize the initiative elsewhere. Congress had initially invited the French Canadians to join them as the fourteenth colony, but when that failed to happen, Congress authorized an invasion of Canada. The goal was to remove British rule from the primarily francophone province of Quebec (comprising present-day Quebec).

Two Canada-bound expeditions were undertaken. On September 16, 1775, Brigadier General Richard Montgomery marched north from Fort Ticonderoga with about 1,700 militiamen, capturing Montreal on November 13. General Guy Carleton, the governor of Canada, escaped to Quebec City. The second expedition, led by Colonel Benedict Arnold, was a logistical nightmare, with many men succumbing to smallpox. By the time Arnold reached Quebec City in early November, he had but 600 of his original 1,100 men. Montgomery's force joined Arnold's, and they attacked Quebec City on December 31, but were soundly defeated by Carleton. The remaining Americans held on outside Quebec City until the spring of 1776, and then withdrew.

Another attempt was made by the Americans to push back towards Quebec, but they failed at Trois-Rivières on June 8, 1776. Carleton then launched his own invasion and defeated Arnold at the Battle of Valcour Island in October. Arnold fell back to Fort Ticonderoga, where the invasion of Canada had begun. The invasion of Canada ended as a disaster for the Americans, but Arnold's efforts in 1776 delayed a full-scale British counteroffensive until the Saratoga campaign of 1777.

The invasion cost the Americans their base of support in British public opinion, "So that the violent measures towards America are freely adopted and countenanced by a majority of individuals of all ranks, professions, or occupations, in this country."

New York and New Jersey

Main article: New York and New Jersey campaigns Having withdrawn his army from Boston, General Howe now focused on capturing New York City. To defend the city, General Washington divided his 20,000 soldiers between Long Island and Manhattan. While British troops were assembling on Staten Island for the campaign, Washington had the newly issued Declaration of American Independence read to his men. No longer was there any possibility of compromise. On August 27, 1776, after landing about 22,000 men on Long Island, the British drove the Americans back to Brooklyn Heights, in the largest battle of the entire Revolution. Howe then laid siege to fortifications there, but Washington managed to evacuate his army to New York City.
On September 15, Howe landed about 12,000 men on lower Manhattan, quickly taking control of New York City. The Americans withdrew to Harlem Heights, where they skirmished the next day but held their ground. When Howe moved to encircle Washington's army in October, the Americans again fell back, and a battle at White Plains was fought on October 28. Once more Washington retreated, and Howe returned to Manhattan and captured Fort Washington in mid November, taking about 2,000 prisoners (with an additional 1,000 having been captured during the battle for Long Island). Thus began the infamous “prison ships” system the British maintained in New York for the remainder of the war, in which more American soldiers and sailors died of neglect than died in every battle of the entire war, combined.

General Lord Cornwallis continued to chase Washington's army through New Jersey, until the Americans withdrew across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania in early December. With the campaign at an apparent conclusion for the season, the British entered winter quarters. Although Howe had missed several opportunities to crush the diminishing American army, he had killed or captured over 5,000 Americans.

The outlook of the Continental Army was bleak. “These are the times that try men's souls,” wrote Thomas Paine, who was with the army on the retreat. The army had dwindled to fewer than 5,000 men fit for duty, and would be reduced to 1,400 after enlistments expired at the end of the year. Congress had abandoned Philadelphia in despair, although popular resistance to British occupation was growing in the countryside.

Washington decided to take the offensive, stealthily crossing the Delaware on Christmas night and capturing nearly 1,000 Hessians at the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776. Cornwallis marched to retake Trenton but was outmaneuvered by Washington, who successfully attacked the British rearguard at Princeton on January 3, 1777. Washington then entered winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey, having given a morale boost to the American cause. New Jersey militia continued to harass British and Hessian forces throughout the winter, forcing the British to retreat to their base in and around New York City.

At every stage the British strategy assumed a large base of Loyalist supporters who would rally to the King given some military support. In February 1777 Clinton took 2,000 men and a naval squadron to invade North Carolina, which he called off when he learned the Loyalists had been crushed at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. In June he tried to seize Charleston, South Carolina, the leading port in the South, hoping for a simultaneous rising in South Carolina. It seemed a cheap way of waging the war but it failed as the naval force was defeated by the forts and because no local Loyalists attacked the town from behind. The loyalists were too poorly organized to be effective, but as late as 1781 senior officials in London, misled by Loyalist exiles, placed their confidence in their rising.

Last Invasion into New Jersey - Battle of Springfield

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This section has been tagged since May 2007.

Washington had his General Headquarters in Springfield from June 7 to June 22, 1780.

On June 23, 1780, “The Battle of Springfield” was fought. The British advanced with infantry, cavalry and several field pieces. Washington had left the area leaving General Nathaniel Greene in the vicinity with Colonel Angell and his Rhode Islanders at the Rahway River vicinity. For more than 40 minutes Colonel Angell and his men fought five times their numbers to a standstill. The British slowly pushed the Militia back to the second bridge over Van Winkle’s Brook on Morris Avenue, just west of the present day Mountain Avenue. During the heat of the battle, Reverend James Caldwell, Chaplain of Colonel Elias Dayton’s Regiment, whose wife had been murdered 16 days before, passed out Watts Hymanals from the Presbyterian Church for use as wadding. His cry of “Give Them Watts, Boys”, has lived on and become a Motto of that conflict.

The British resorted to burning and looting. Only four houses remained after the Battle. Still standing are: the historic Cannon Ball House on Morris Avenue (headquarters of the Springfield Historical Society, it is open to the public by appointment), the Swain House on South Springfield Avenue and the Sayre House.

The British goal of reaching Morristown was thwarted and the Battle of Springfield marked the last invasion of the British into New Jersey and removed the danger of final defeat of the Continental forces.

Saratoga and Philadelphia

When the British began to plan operations for 1777, they had two main armies in North America: Carleton's army in Canada, and Howe's army in New York. In London, Lord George Germain approved campaigns for these armies which, because of miscommunication, poor planning, and rivalries between commanders, did not work in conjunction. Although Howe successfully captured Philadelphia, the northern army was lost in a disastrous surrender at Saratoga. Both Carleton and Howe resigned after the 1777 campaign.

SARATOGA CAMPAIGN

Main article: Saratoga campaign

The first of the 1777 campaigns was an expedition from Canada led by General John Burgoyne. The goal was to seize the Lake Champlain and Hudson River corridor, effectively isolating New England from the rest of the American colonies. Burgoyne's invasion had two components: he would lead about 10,000 men along Lake Champlain towards Albany, New York, while a second column of about 2,000 men, led by Barry St. Leger, would move down the Mohawk River valley and link up with
Burgoyne set off in June, and recaptured Fort Ticonderoga in early July. Thereafter, his march was slowed by Americans who knocked down trees in his path. A detachment was sent out to seize supplies but was decisively defeated by American militia in August, depriving Burgoyne of nearly 1,000 men.

Meanwhile, St. Leger—half of his force American Indians led by Joseph Brant—had laid siege to Fort Stanwix. American militiamen and their Indian allies marched to relieve the siege but were ambushed and scattered at the Battle of Oriskany. When a second relief expedition approached, this time led by Benedict Arnold, St. Leger broke off the siege and retreated to Canada.

Burgoyne's army was now reduced to about 6,000 men. Despite these setbacks, he determined to push on towards Albany—a fateful decision which would later produce much controversy. An American army of 8,000 men, commanded by the General Horatio Gates, had entrenched about 10 miles (16 km) south of Saratoga, New York. Burgoyne tried to outflank the Americans but was checked at the first battle of Saratoga in September. Burgoyne's situation was desperate, but he now hoped that help from Howe's army in New York City might be on the way. It was not; Howe had instead sailed away on an expedition to capture Philadelphia. American militiamen flocked to Gates's army, swelling his force to 11,000 by the beginning of October. After being badly beaten at the second battle of Saratoga, Burgoyne surrendered on October 17.

Saratoga was the turning point of the war. Revolutionary confidence and determination, suffering from Howe's successful occupation of Philadelphia, was renewed. More importantly, the victory encouraged France to enter the war against Britain. For the British, the war had now become much more complicated.

PHILADELPHIA CAMPAIGN

Main article: Philadelphia campaign

Meanwhile, having secured New York City in 1776, in 1777, General Howe concentrated on capturing Philadelphia, the seat of the Revolutionary government. He moved slowly, landing 15,000 troops in late August at the northern end of Chesapeake Bay. Washington positioned his 11,000 men between Howe and Philadelphia but was driven back at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. The Continental Congress once again abandoned Philadelphia, and on September 26, Howe finally outmaneuvered Washington and marched into the city unopposed. Washington unsuccessfully attacked the British encampment in nearby Germantown in early October and then retreated to watch and wait.

After repelling a British attack at White Marsh, Washington and his army encamped at Valley Forge in December 1777, about 20 miles (32 km) from Philadelphia, where they stayed for the next six months. Over the winter, 2,500 men (out of 10,000) died from disease and exposure. The next spring, however, the army emerged from Valley Forge in good order, thanks in part to a training program supervised by Baron von Steuben. Indeed, von Steuben introduced the most modern Prussian methods of organization and tactics.

General Clinton replacing Howe as British commander-in-chief, French entry into the war had changed British strategy, and Clinton abandoned Philadelphia in order to reinforce New York City, now vulnerable to French naval power. Washington shadowed Clinton on his withdrawal and forced the drawn battle at Monmouth on June 28, 1778, the last major battle in the north. Clinton's army went to New York City in July, just before a French fleet under Admiral d'Estaing arrived off the American coast. Washington's army returned to White Plains, New York, north of the city. Although both armies were back where they had been two years earlier, the nature of the war had now changed.

An international war, 1778–1783

In 1778, the rebellion in North America became an international war. After learning of the American victory at Saratoga, France signed the Treaty of Alliance with the United States on February 6, 1778. Spain entered the war as an ally of France in June 1779, a renewal of the Bourbon Family Compact. Unlike France, however, Spain initially refused to recognize the independence of the United States—Spain was not keen on encouraging similar anti-colonial rebellions in the Spanish Empire. The Netherlands also became a combatant in 1780. All three countries had quietly provided financial assistance to the Americans since the beginning of the war, hoping to dilute British power.

In London King George III gave up hope of subduing America by more armies. "It was a joke," he said, "to think of keeping Pennsylvania." There was no hope of ever recovering New England. But the King was determined "never to acknowledge the independence of the Americas and to punish their contumacy by the indefinite prolongation of a war which promised to be eternal." His plan was to keep the 30,000 men garrisoned in New York, Rhode Island, in Canada, and in Florida; other forces would attack the French and Spanish in the West Indies. To punish the Americans the King planned to destroy their coasting-trade, bombard their ports; sack and burn towns along the coast (like New London, Connecticut), and turn loose the Indians to attack civilians in frontier settlements. These operations, the King felt, would inspire the Loyalists; would splinter the Congress; and "would keep the rebels harassed, anxious, and poor, until the day when, by a natural and inevitable process, discontent and disappointment were converted into penitence and remorse" and they would beg to return to his authority. The plan meant destruction for the Loyalists and loyal Indians, and indefinite prolongation of a costly war, as well as the risk of disaster as the French and Spanish were assembling an armada to invade the British isles and seize London.

Widening of the naval war

Further information: Naval operations in the American Revolutionary War, France in the American Revolutionary War, Spain in the American Revolutionary War.
When the war began, the British had overwhelming naval superiority over the American colonists. The Royal Navy had over 100 ships of the line, although this fleet was old and in poor condition, a situation which would be blamed on Lord Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty. During the first three years of the war, the Royal Navy was primarily used to transport troops for land operations and to protect commercial shipping. The American colonists had no ships of the line, and relied extensively on privateering to harass British shipping. The Continental Congress authorized the creation of a small Continental Navy in October, 1775, which was primarily used for commerce raiding. John Paul Jones became the first great American naval hero, capturing HMS Drake on April 24, 1778, the first victory for any American military vessel in British waters. French entry into the war meant that British naval superiority was now contested. The Franco-American alliance began poorly, however, with failed operations at Rhode Island in 1778 and Savannah, Georgia, in 1779. Part of the problem was that France and the United States had different military priorities: France hoped to capture British possessions in the West Indies before helping to secure American independence. While French financial assistance to the American war effort was already of critical importance, French military aid to the Americans would not show positive results until the arrival in July 1780 of a large force of soldiers led by the Comte de Rochambeau.

Spain entered the war with the goal of recapturing Gibraltar and Minorca, which had been lost to the British in 1704. Gibraltar was besieged for more than three years, but the British garrison there was resupplied after Admiral Sir George Rodney's victory in the “Moonlight Battle” in January, 1780. Further Franco-Spanish efforts to capture Gibraltar were unsuccessful. On February 5, 1782, Spanish and French forces captured Minorca, which Spain retained after the war.

**West Indies and Gulf Coast**

Main article: West Indies and Gulf Coast campaigns

There was much action in the West Indies, with several islands changing hands, especially in the Lesser Antilles. Ultimately, at the Battle of the Saintes in April 1782, a victory by Rodney's fleet over the French Admiral de Grasse dashed the hopes of France and Spain to take Jamaica and other colonies from the British. On May 8, 1782, Count Bernardo de Gálvez, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, captured the British naval base at New Providence in the Bahamas. Nevertheless, except for the French retention of the small island of Tobago, sovereignty in the West Indies was returned to the status quo ante bellum in the 1783 peace treaty.

On the Gulf Coast, Gálvez seized three British Mississippi River outposts in 1779: Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez. Gálvez then captured Mobile in 1780 and forced the surrender of the British outpost at Pensacola in 1781. His actions led to Spain acquiring East and West Florida in the peace settlement.

**India and the Netherlands**

The Franco-British war spilled over into India in 1780, in the form of the Second Anglo-Mysore War. The two chief combatants were Tipu Sultan, ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore and a key French ally, and the British government of Madras. The Anglo-Mysore conflict was bloody but inconclusive and ended in a draw in 1784.

In 1780, the British struck against the United Provinces of the Netherlands in order to preempt Dutch involvement in the League of Armed Neutrality, a declaration of several European powers that they would conduct neutral trade during the war. Britain was not willing to allow the Netherlands to openly give aid to the American rebels. Agitation by Dutch radicals and a friendly attitude towards the United States by the Dutch government—both influenced by the American Revolution—also encouraged the British to attack. The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War lasted into 1784 and was disastrous to the Dutch mercantile economy.

**Southern theater**

Main article: Southern theater of the American Revolutionary War

During the first three years of the American Revolutionary War, the primary military encounters were in the north. After French entry into the war, the British turned their attention to the southern colonies, where they hoped to regain control by recruiting Loyalists. This southern strategy also had the advantage of keeping the Royal Navy closer to the Caribbean, where the British needed to defend their possessions against the French and Spanish. On December 29, 1778, an expeditionary corps from Clinton's army in New York captured Savannah, Georgia. An attempt by French and American forces to retake Savannah failed on October 9, 1779. Clinton then besieged Charleston, capturing it on May 12, 1780. With relatively few casualties, Clinton had seized the South's biggest city and seaport, paving the way for what seemed like certain conquest of the South.

The remnant of the southern Continental Army began to withdraw to North Carolina but were pursued by Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton, who defeated them at the Waxhaws on May 29, 1780. With these events, organized American military activity in the region collapsed, though the war was carried on by partisans such as Francis Marion. Cornwallis took over British operations, while Horatio Gates arrived to command the American effort. On August 16, 1780, Gates was defeated at the Battle of Camden, setting the stage for Cornwallis to invade North Carolina.

Cornwallis' victories quickly turned, however. One wing of his army was utterly defeated at the Battle of Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780, Tarleton was decisively defeated at the Battle of Cowpens on January 17, 1781, by American General Daniel Morgan.

General Nathanael Greene, Gates's replacement, proceeded to wear down the British in a series of battles, each of them tactically a victory for the British but giving no strategic advantage to the victors. Greene summed up his approach in a motto that would become famous: “We fight, get beat, rise, and...
States after the war for various reasons, many eventually becoming American citizens. No reliable
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these deaths were in battle; the other 17,000 deaths were from disease, including about 8,000 who
died while prisoners of war. The number of Revolutionaries seriously wounded or disabled by the war
has been estimated from 8,500 to 25,000. The total American military casualty figure was therefore as
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Northern and western Frontier
Further information: Western theater of the American Revolutionary War

West of the Appalachian Mountains and along the Canadian border, the American Revolutionary War was an “Indian Way.” Most American Indians supported the British. Like the Iroquois Confederacy, tribes such as the Cherokees and the Shawnees split into factions.

The British supplied their native allies with muskets and gunpowder and advised raids against civilian settlements, especially in New York, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. Joint Iroquois-Loyalist attacks in the Wyoming Valley and at Cherry Valley in 1778 provoked Washington to send the Sullivan Expedition into western New York during the summer of 1779. There was little fighting as Sullivan systematically destroyed the Indians’ winter food supplies, forcing them to flee permanently to British bases in Canada and the Niagara Falls area.

In the Ohio Country and the Illinois Country, the Virginia frontiersman George Rogers Clark attempted to neutralize British influence among the Ohio tribes by capturing the outposts of Kaskaskia and Vincennes in the summer of 1778. When General Henry Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit, retook Vincennes, Clark returned in a surprise march in February 1779 and captured Hamilton himself.

In 1782 came the Gnadenhütten massacre, when Pennsylvania militiamen killed about a hundred neutral Indians. In August 1782, in one of the last major encounters of the war, a force of 200 Kentucky militia was defeated at the Battle of Blue Licks.

Yorktown and the War’s end
The northern, southern, and naval theaters of the war converged in 1781 at Yorktown, Virginia. In early September, French naval forces defeated a British fleet [the first time they had been defeated] at the Battle of the Chesapeake, cutting off Cornwallis’s escape. Washington hurriedly moved American and French troops from New York, and a combined Franco-American force of 17,000 men commenced the siege of Yorktown in early October. Cornwallis’s position quickly became untenable, and he surrendered his army on October 19, 1781.

With the surrender at Yorktown King George lost control of Parliament to the peace party, and there were no further major military activities on land. The British had 30,000 garrison troops occupying New York City, Charleston, and Savannah. The war continued at sea between the British and the French fleets in the West Indies. [17]

In London as political support for the war plummeted after Yorktown, Prime Minister Lord North resigned in March 1782. In April 1782, the Commons voted to end the war in America. Preliminary peace articles were signed in Paris at the end of November 30, 1782; the formal end of the war did not occur until the Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783, and the United States Congress ratified the treaty on January 14, 1784. The last British troops left New York City on November 25, 1783.

Britain negotiated the Paris peace treaty without consulting her Indian allies and ceded all American Indian territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River to the United States. Full of resentment, Native Americans reluctantly confirmed these land cessions with the United States in a series of treaties, but the fighting would be renewed in conflicts along the frontier in the coming years, the largest being the Northwest Indian War.

Costs of the War
Casualties
The total loss of life resulting from the American Revolutionary War is unknown. As was typical in the wars of the era, disease claimed more lives than battle. Historian Joseph Ellis suggests that Washington’s decision to have his troops inoculated against the smallpox epidemic was one of his most important decisions. [18]

An estimated 25,000 American Revolutionaries died during active military service. About 8,000 of these deaths were in battle; the other 17,000 deaths were from disease, including about 8,000 who died while prisoners of war. The number of Revolutionaries seriously wounded or disabled by the war has been estimated from 8,500 to 25,000. The total American military casualty figure was therefore as high as 50,000. [19]

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Financial costs
The British spent about $80 million and ended with a national debt of £250 million, which it easily financed at about £9.5 million a year in interest. The French spent 1.3 billion livres (about £56 million). Their total national debt was £187 million, which they could not easily finance; over half the French national revenue went to debt service in the 1780s. The debt crisis became a major enabling factor of the French Revolution as the government was unable to raise taxes without public approval. The United States spent $37 million at the national level plus $114 million by the states. This was mostly covered by loans from France and the Netherlands, loans from Americans, and issuance of more and more paper money (which became "not worth a continental.") The U.S. finally solved its debt problem in the 1790s.

Historical assessment
The war of American independance is often misrepresented in history. It could really be summed up as a civil war fought on foreign soil, as opposing forces were comprised of both nations residents. That said, it is a war that America could not have survived without French assistance. In addition, Britain had significant military disadvantages. Distance was a major problem: most troops and supplies had to be shipped across the Atlantic Ocean. The British usually had logistical problems whenever they operated away from port cities, while the Americans had local sources of manpower and food and were more familiar with (and acclimated to) the territory. Additionally, ocean travel meant that British communications were always about two months out of date; by the time British generals in America received their orders from London, the military situation had usually changed.

Suppressing a rebellion in America also posed other problems. Since the colonies covered a large area and had not been united before the war, there was no central area of strategic importance. In Europe, the capture of a capital often meant the end of a war; in America, when the British seized cities such as New York and Philadelphia, the war continued unabated. Furthermore, the large size of the colonies meant that the British lacked the manpower to control them by force. Once any area had been occupied, troops had to be kept there or the Revolutionaries would regain control, and these troops were thus unavailable for further offensive operations. The British had sufficient troops to defeat the Americans on the battlefield but not enough to simultaneously occupy the colonies. This manpower shortage became critical after French and Spanish entry into the war, because British troops had to be dispersed in several theaters, where previously they had been concentrated in America.

The British also had the difficult task of fighting the war while simultaneously retaining the allegiance of Loyalists. Loyalist support was important, since the goal of the war was to keep the colonies in the British Empire, but this imposed numerous military limitations. Early in the war, the Howe brothers served as peace commissioners while simultaneously conducting the war effort, a dual role which may have limited their effectiveness. Additionally, the British could have recruited more slaves and American Indians to fight the war, but this would have alienated many Loyalists, even more so than the controversial hiring of German mercenaries. The need to retain Loyalist allegiance also meant that the British were unable to use the harsh methods of suppressing rebellion they employed in Ireland and Scotland. Even with these limitations, many potentially neutral colonists were nonetheless driven into the ranks of the Revolutionaries because of the war.

See also
- Battles of the American Revolutionary War
- Intelligence in the American Revolutionary War
- Prisoners in the American Revolutionary War
- List of British Forces in the American Revolutionary War
- List of Continental Forces in the American Revolutionary War

Notes
To avoid duplication, notes for sections with a link to a "Main article" will be found in the linked article.

4. ^ Boatsner, p. 264 says the largest force Washington commanded was "under 17,000"; Christopher Duffy (The Military Experience in the Age of Reason, 1715–1789 p. 17) estimates Washington's maximum was "only 13,000 troops". By comparison, Duffy notes that Frederick the Great usually commanded from 1,000 to 2,000 in battle.
7. ^ Revolutionary all-black units: Kaplan and Kaplan, pp. 64-69.
9. ^ Higginbotham p 75-77
12. ^ Higginbotham pp 188-98
14. ^ George Otto Trevelyan, George the Third and Charles Fox: The Concluding Part of the
References

- Higginbotham, p. 298, 306: Black, p. 29, 42.

Further reading

These are some of the standard works about the war in general which are not listed above; books about specific campaigns, battles, units, and individuals can be found in those articles.

- Fremont-Barnes, Gregory, and Robert A. Ryerson, eds. *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolutionary War*: A Political, Social, and Military History (ABC-CLIO, 2006) 5 volume paper and online editions; 1000 entries by 150 experts, covering all topics
- George Washington's Generals and Opponents: Their Exploits and Leadership (1994) scholarly studies of key generals on each side
- Men-at-Arms series: short (48pp), very well illustrated descriptions:
The American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), also known as the American War of Independence, was an 18th-century war between Great Britain and its Thirteen Colonies (allied with France) which declared independence as the United States of America. After 1765, growing philosophical and political differences strained the relationship between Great Britain and its colonies. Patriot protests against taxation without representation followed the Stamp Act and escalated into boycotts, which culminated in 1773. This entry about Independence War has been published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 (CC BY 3.0) licence, which permits unrestricted use and reproduction, provided the author or authors of the Independence War entry and the Encyclopedia of Law are in each case credited as the source of the Independence War entry. Please note this CC BY licence applies to some textual content of Independence War, and that some images and other textual or non-textual elements may be covered by special copyright arrangements. For guidance on citing Independence War (giving attribution as r.