



Revolutionary Times



Containing the Latest News from the Sons of the American Revolution

Young Patriots

The British established militias in the colonies after the French and Indian War to alleviate the need to garrison expensive regular soldiers in the colonies. All military aged males, aged 16 to 45, were required to serve in the militia and maintain the necessary arms and equipment for military service.

Although citizen militias played an important role in the conflict, the fledgling nation fielded a formal military force known as the Continental Army.

Most men who served in the Continental Army were between the ages of 15 and 30.

Over 230,000 soldiers served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, although no more than 48,000 at any one time. The largest number of troops gathered in a single place for battle was 13,000.

The Continental Army was mustered out of service by early 1784. Only a small token of 80 soldiers remained on active duty. The following year, the First American Infantry Regiment was created. It consisted of eight infantry companies and two artillery batteries. This unit was enlarged a decade later.

The army accepted volunteers as young as 16. A 15-year-old could join with a parent's permission. Some notable younger Patriots (age at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776):

Boys:

Andrew Jackson (age 9) - When he was 13 years old, the future 7th President of the United States served as a patriot courier.

Ebenezer Fox (age 12) ran away from home and was hired as a sailor on an American ship.

Joseph Plumb Martin (age 15) persuaded his grand-parents to let him join the army. He fought for the duration of the war.

James Armistead (age 15) was born a slave but worked as a spy under Marquis de Lafayette.

William Diamond (age 15) signed up as drummer in the Lexington and beat "to arms", bringing 70 militiamen against the approaching Red Coats.

Peter Salem, (age 16) was a Massachusetts slave who was freed in order to serve in the local militia, then the Army, and was named a hero in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

James Monroe was 18 and dropped out of college to join the Continental Army; he later became 5th President of the US.

Charles Pinckney (age 18) fought in the American Revolution and was captured. After regaining his freedom, Pinkney practiced law, served in the Continental Congress, signed the US Constitution, and became governor of South Carolina.

Marquis de Lafayette (age 18) traveled from France to America to join the Revolution. He was commissioned as a Major General at age 19.

Girls:

Deborah Sampson (age 15) disguised herself as a man so she could join the Massachusetts military. She kept her true identity hidden for two years.

Sybil Ludington (age 15) rode her horse for 40 miles to warn American soldiers of an impending British attack.

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

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