

Name _____



Valley Forge

By Cathy Pearl

The soldiers who fought against England had a very hard time in the war. They did not have enough clothes or food. They marched in bare feet. They were hungry a lot. One of the worst times was at Valley Forge.



Eleven - thousand soldiers went to Valley Forge a week before Christmas. It was 1777. The army had just lost two major battles. They would stay at Valley Forge until spring in 1778. While they were there, almost 2,500 men died. Some starved to death. Some were very sick.

Washington thought that Valley Forge was a good place to camp. He was right. British soldiers could not surprise the troops. They also could not get farther into Pennsylvania. The area had hills which were easy to defend.

The winter was not very cold. This made it worse. The rain made the roads very muddy. Wagons could not get to the camp. It was hard to get enough food to eat. Many horses also died. The soldiers complained that there was not enough meat to eat.

When the men arrived, they did not have a place to sleep. They had to stay in tents. They were very cold. In February 1778, the men finished huts to sleep in. A hut could fit 12 people. The huts had fireplaces to help keep the men warm.

The men did not have enough warm clothing or shoes. George Washington said that the army could be found by following a trail of blood. The soldiers' feet bled very badly because they had to march without shoes.

The weather was not the only problem. The soldiers in charge of getting supplies were not very good at their job. George Washington

put Nathanael Greene in charge. He was very smart. He helped to get more supplies to the men. Many farmers did not sell their food to Washington. They sold it to the British soldiers because they would pay in cash.

Clothing was a problem. The long marches ruined shoes. There weren't very many blankets. There weren't new clothes to give to the soldiers. Four thousand men could not fight because they didn't have enough clothes.

Sickness was also a problem. Men lived very close together. They got sick a lot. There were not good hospitals. Women came to the camp. They were relatives and wives of the soldiers. They helped take care of the men. They made clothes. They were nurses. The men lived with their help.

The soldiers practiced while they were at Valley Forge. They did many drills to improve their fighting skills. A man from Prussia came to help train the troops. When the army left Valley Forge, they were much better fighters.

While the American soldiers suffered, the British soldiers did not. They were in Philadelphia. That was only 20 miles from Valley Forge. Many of the patriots had left Philadelphia. The British had control of most of the city. They spent time gambling and throwing big parties. They did not care about the people dying 20 miles away.

The partying hurt the British soldiers. When winter ended, Washington had a better army. He was able to win some battles. This helped keep hope alive. The tough winter at Valley Forge helped the colonists win the war.

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Questions

- _____ 1. What year did the army arrive at Valley Forge?
- A. 1778
 - B. 1779
 - C. 1777

