

DISEASES

The army was ravaged by sickness and disease. Typhoid, jaundice, dysentery, and pneumonia killed about 2,500 men that winter at Valley Forge. Washington remembered his wife, Martha, describing how to inoculate against disease. He ordered his medics to create small wounds in healthy soldiers' arms. Pus from soldiers infected with smallpox was rubbed into the wounds, inoculating healthy soldiers against catching this killer disease.



DRESSED IN RAGS

Conditions for the men were hard. They lacked suitable clothes and their shoes had fallen apart from marching. They wrapped themselves in rags to keep warm. Wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters came to the camp and did what they could to help. They patched the soldiers' clothes, made shirts, and knit socks. The army's supply network broke down, and food and medical supplies failed to get through. The men resorted to eating "firecake"—a tasteless mixture of flour and water. Faced with these conditions, soldiers deserted. Washington's officers were worried there might even be a mutiny.



Baron von Steuben

READY FOR THE NEW FIGHTING SEASON

In February 1778, Baron Wilhelm von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge. He'd met Benjamin Franklin and had traveled from France to help the Patriot cause. Von Steuben had served with the Prussian army and was an expert in training soldiers. Day after day he drilled the Continental Army, and by June 1778 Washington's men were ready to move out from Valley Forge. The new fighting season was about to begin.



Washington riding with his friend, Major General Lafayette.



BARON STEUBEN DRILLING THE TROOPS