

# Militias, A Standing Army and the Whiskey Rebellion

William Lea, the King's grant owner of the site where Old St. Luke's sits today, faced the duties of each day as a blacksmith and farmer. However, Lea and his neighbors in 1794 had a another common concern of survival. Would today be free of a surprise attack by distressed Indians? In the wilderness around Fort Pitt, an Indian attack had to be met with courage and a musket, at one's own doorstep or from a nearby settlers' safety fortification.

It is not surprising that settlers in the thirteen colonies joined together to form a plan of defense against Indian raids. The cooperative plan was called a militia.

Then in 1775 came the another challenge, this time, the red coat soldiers of Gt. Britain. It was the awesome question of independence. After the first shots were fired between militiamen and the huge contingent of British soldiers, the militias melded into a Continental Army under the leadership of George Washington. Thus began eight difficult years of revolutionary war.

did not, out of fear that we would have a monarchy and loss of freedom. On August 6, 1787, the title 'The President of the United States' was coined, and among other duties, he would be commander in chief of the army, navy, and the militia of the several states, and he was to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. In peace time, militias were to be under state control. The Bill of Rights, ratified in 1791, has references to the military. The second and tenth Amendments speak of a regulated militia as vital for a free state, with the right of people to keep and bear arms, and to control the militia in their own state.

The first military venture led by Harmer against Indians in 1790 was a disaster. In 1791, Gov. Arthur St.Clair led a mixture of militia and regular army troops, called levies. The levy troops began their training at Pittsburgh. (A chaplain was authorized by Washington.) On November 4, after moving westward, St. Clair and the Indians were in combat. It was an utter defeat for St. Clair's force. Mad-Anthony Wayne was chosen to lead a new military strategy. On May 8, 1792, an Act for

At war's end in 1783, the mood should have been one of elation. Sadly, suspicion and jealousies abounded. Military questions abounded. What do we do with the Continental Army, and what military force should there be in peacetime? In what way could severance pay be given to the American soldiers: assess each new state; new taxes? What would happen if a new standing army revolted against the Continental Congress? Could a national standing army threaten the independence of American citizens? What does George Washington's urgent call for a standing army mean in our daily lives?

The unpaid Continental troops did revolt. First, 80 soldiers marched from Lancaster to Philadelphia, the capital city, demanding severance pay. They were not paid. The Congress fled to Princeton, N.J., where they approved Ft. Pitt and West Point to be primary military locations. Lt. Col. Josiah Harmer was told to form a new standing army. He marched his raw recruits to their base at Ft. Pitt, and at Ft. McIntosh (at Beaver, Pa.). It was a weak and disappointing start to forming the U. S. Army.

In 1786, Capt. Daniel Shay in Massachusetts led a debtors' protest to get severance pay. It showed Congress that rebellious soldiers and militias might steal federal ammunition, while the

military defense was passed, requiring militia duty for all white males age 18 to 45, and Washington had the authority to call out the troops. Wayne met at Pittsburgh to organize and rigidly train some 1100 recruits. However, Wayne called Pittsburgh a sinful "frontier Gomorrah," so he moved to Legionville (Ambridge, Pa.). He marched in October 1793 to Ft. Greenville, Ohio, and Ft. Recovery, where he waited out the winter. The militia was sent home. In February, 1794, the Mingo Creek Society (Finleyville, Pa.) was founded. The militia embraced the Society as a way to seek the opening of the Mississippi for trade, to protect settler's from further Indian raids, and to resist the federal excise tax on whiskey.

In April, 1794, Wayne attacked the Indians in the Maumee River Valley, where a tornado had hit the forest. The Battle of Fallen Timbers was a major victory for Wayne, who became "the father of the regular army." Washington suppressed the July 1794 Whiskey Rebellion in the Chartiers Valley by calling out 13,000 men, including the several states' militias.

References:

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nation had no federal troops to quell any rioters. Congress saw the need for a standing army, a navy - and a new Constitution. Citizens saw the need to retain the right to bear arms, individually and as the militia. Washington and Hamilton favored these moves, while Jefferson and Patrick Henry

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