

Mount Independence State Historic Site
Orwell, Vermont

Mount Independence Glossary

Introduction: During your field trip to the Mount Independence State Historic Site, you and your students might hear or read some of these words that were used during the American Revolution.

Abatis: An entrenchment of felled trees, with their branches sharpened to present a wall of pointed stakes to the enemy.

Adjutant: A staff officer who transmits orders, details and mounts guards. The Adjutant General is the principal staff officer of the army; he supervises the camp, and is the speaker for the Commanding General.

Aide-de-camp: Attendant of a general officer who receives and bears orders, &c.

Alarm post: Place of assembly in case of alarm.

Approaches: Trenches by which besiegers approach a fortified place.

Barricade: To block up, obstruct.

Bastion: A defensive work at one of the angles of a fortification, consisting of two faces and two flanks.

Bivouac: To camp around fires without the shelter of tents.

Brigade: Two or more regiments.

Company: Smallest functioning organization within a regiment.

Countersign: Password.

Dragoons: Cavalry members who sometimes serve on foot.

Effective: A soldier equipped for duty.

Fascines: Bound bundles of long branches and twigs used for fortifications.

Fatigue: Manual or menial work performed by military personnel.

Field officers: Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, and Major.

General Officers: All above the rank of Colonel.

Light Infantry: A select company trained in fast moving tactics.

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Magazine:	Chamber or storage space for storing arms, ammunition, and provisions.
Mortar:	A short-chambered gun with a large bore for firing shells.
Muster:	Parade of troops for inspection.
Necessaries:	Toilets.
Out-post:	A body of troops posted beyond the regular lines.
Parapet:	A barrier of earth to intercept the fire or an enemy.
Patrol:	Small guard whose duty it is to preserve order in the encampment.
Picket/piquet:	A small out-post guard.
Quartermaster:	The officer tasked with providing quarters, clothing and other supplies.
Ration:	Daily allowance of food.
Reconnoiter:	To survey, examine.
Redoubt:	A small fortification.
Relief:	One-third of a guard. Each third is on duty two hours and off four.
Skirmish:	A loose, smaller engagement between small detachments.
Star fort:	Fortification built in the shape of a star, within which is a parade ground surrounded by barracks.
Subaltern:	A commissioned officer below a captain.
Surgeon:	Army doctor.
Tattoo:	Drum beat at the end of the day that signals retiring.
Traverses:	Parapets of earth thrown up as a protection against ricochet shots.
Troop:	Company of cavalry.
Yankee:	Refers to soldiers from New England.