

What supplies did Continental soldiers receive?



When they signed up to join the army, Continental soldiers were promised that their basic needs would be met. Each man was to receive food rations that included salted meat, hard bread and dried food. Soldiers were also supposed to receive clothing, a musket, ammunition, a haversack (carrying bag), canteen and blanket. Because of supply shortages, most soldiers only received these things as they became available.

Most battles of the American Revolution were fought spring through fall. This was called the campaign season. During this time, each six-man group (called a mess) shared a tent. Shortages of canvas led to not having enough tents. This caused crowding, often with eight men to a tent. Some soldiers had to find somewhere else to sleep. Living so close together was miserable for the soldiers because it was crowded, sickness and lice spread easily, and there was little quiet and no privacy. Officers lived in nicer tents and had more room. Because soldiers often marched ahead of the supply wagons, they sometimes had to build brush shelters out of tree branches until their tents arrived. Once winter began, soldiers often built log cabins large enough for twelve men. Living conditions in the cabins were often just as unpleasant as in the tents.