

**THIS DAY IN HISTORY — *MAY 28, 1754:*
LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE
WASHINGTON BEGINS THE SEVEN YEARS
WAR**

On this day in 1754, a 22-year-old lieutenant colonel of the Virginia militia named George Washington successfully defeats a party of French and Indian scouts in southwest Pennsylvania as Virginia attempts to lay claim to the territory for its own settlers. The action snowballed into a world war and began the military career of the first American commander in chief.

The Ohio Valley had long been a contested territory among French Canadians, various Indian groups and the British colonies of Pennsylvania and Virginia. When the French began to establish fortifications along the river and refused Virginia's written demand that they depart, Virginia's governor, Robert Dinwiddie, dispatched Washington to complete and defend a Virginian fort at the forks of the Ohio.

Upon their arrival, Washington discovered that a scouting party led by the French ensign, Joseph Coulon de Jumonville was nearby. Fearing that Jumonville was planning an attack, Washington struck first, successfully ambushing the small party. In one of history's murkier moments, Jumonville was murdered by Washington's Indian ally, Tanaghrisson, while the monolingual Washington struggled to interrogate the French-speaking Canadian.

Jumonville's murder in captivity incited a strong French response, and Washington was unable to defend his makeshift "Fort Necessity" from French forces led by Jumonville's half-brother. Washington surrendered on July 4 and signed a French confession to Jumonville's assassination, which he could not read.

Benjamin Franklin had drafted his Albany Plan for Union earlier that month, in the hope that united colonies could better orchestrate their own defense and governance. Colonists voted down the proposal everywhere it was presented. After Washington displayed his incompetence on the Ohio, the British decided

it was time to save their colonies from themselves and dispatched two regiments of Redcoats under General Edward Braddock to America. Braddock too suffered a humiliating defeat at the forks of the Ohio; it took the British and their colonists seven years of world war to redeem themselves. The Seven Years War would go on to strip the French of their American empire and test the bonds of the British empire in America. - www.history.com

**THIS DAY IN HISTORY — *MAY 29, 1736:*
PATRICK HENRY WAS BORN.**

Patrick Henry was born at Studley in Hanover County, Virginia. Elected to the House of Burgesses in 1765, he became a leader in Virginia's opposition to the Stamp Act. In 1775, as sentiment for independence rose, Henry addressed the second revolutionary convention of Virginia while its members debated putting the colony into a state of defense. His speech galvanized Virginians to appoint a militia, with Henry as its chairman. Forever after, Americans have remembered Henry for his courageous patriotism.

As the movement for independence grew, Henry served as a delegate to both the first and second Continental Congresses and was largely responsible for the establishment of a colonial militia. He helped draft a constitution for the new state of Virginia and served as its first governor from 1776 to 1779, when Thomas Jefferson succeeded him. After serving again as governor from 1784 to 1786, Henry was elected to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, but he declined to attend. At the Virginia ratifying convention, he opposed the federal Constitution, believing it to be a threat to state sovereignty. Subsequently, Henry was among those most responsible for adding a bill of rights to the Constitution, and with the bill's passage he gave his support to the amended Constitution. Returning to a successful law practice, Henry, in failing health, declined several federal appointments. At George Washington's request, he ran successfully for the Virginia house of delegates in 1799, but died June 6, 1799 at Red Hill Plantation, Virginia before assuming the office.
- Patrick Henry National Memorial