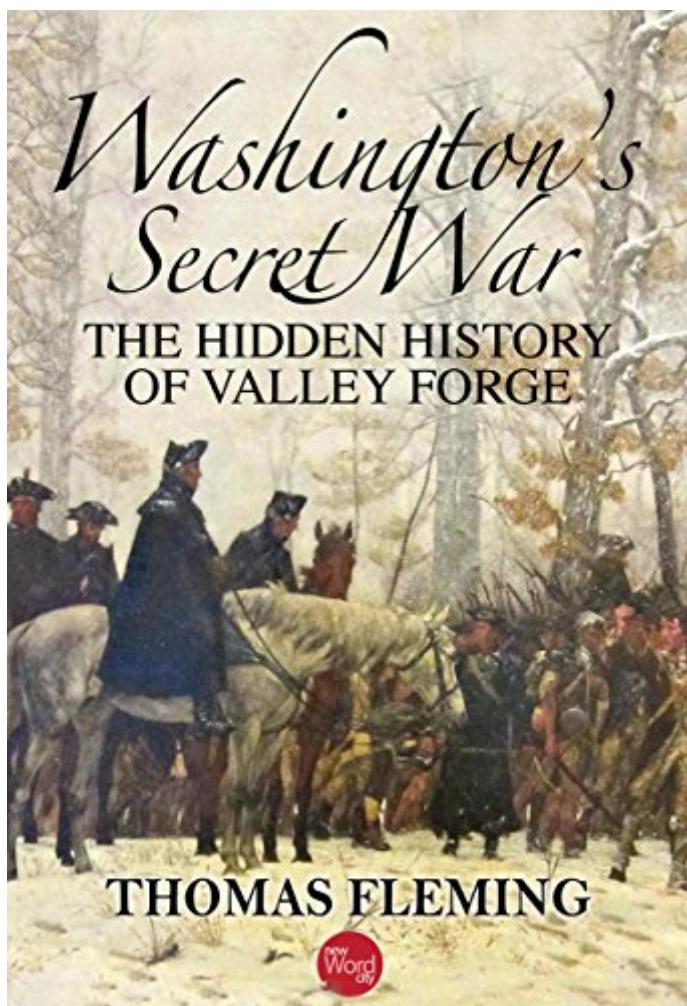


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Washington's Secret War: The Hidden History Of Valley Forge (The Thomas Fleming Library)



Synopsis

"A superb retelling of the story of Valley Forge and its aftermath, demonstrating that reality is far more compelling than myth." - Gordon S. Wood

The defining moments of the American Revolution did not occur on the battlefield or at the diplomatic table, writes New York Times bestselling author Thomas Fleming, but at Valley Forge. Fleming transports us to December 1777. While the British army lives in luxury in conquered Philadelphia, Washington's troops huddle in the barracks of Valley Forge, fending off starvation and disease even as threats of mutiny swirl through the regiments. Though his army stands on the edge of collapse, George Washington must wage a secondary war, this one against the slander of his reputation as a general and patriot. Washington strategizes not only against the British army but against General Horatio Gates, the victor in the Battle of Saratoga, who has attracted a coterie of ambitious generals devising ways to humiliate and embarrass Washington into resignation. Using diaries and letters, Fleming creates an unforgettable portrait of an embattled Washington. Far from the long-suffering stoic of historical myth, Washington responds to attacks from Gates and his allies with the skill of a master politician. He parries the thrusts of his covert enemies, and, as necessary, strikes back with ferocity and guile. While many histories portray Washington as a man who has transcended politics, Fleming's Washington is exceedingly complex, a man whose political maneuvering allowed him to retain his command even as he simultaneously struggled to prevent the Continental Army from dissolving into mutiny at Valley Forge. Written with his customary flair and eye for human detail and drama, Thomas Fleming's gripping narrative develops with the authority of a major historian and the skills of a master storyteller. Washington's Secret War is not only a revisionist view of the American ordeal at Valley Forge - it calls for a new assessment of the man too often simplified into an American legend. This is narrative history at its best and most vital.

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Fleming's "Washington's Secret War" is an excellent work of history that looks behind the scenes, beyond the battles, the starvation of Valley Forge", the stories we've all been told. The author gives us an eyes-wide-open view of the founding fathers at odds with each other and, most importantly, at odds with their commander-in-chief. Most Americans aren't aware of the crisis in confidence the Congress had in regard to George Washington's leadership of the Continental Army and, indeed, the strategy of meeting the British army in formal battles. There were even some proposing a war of partisan bands and guerrillas. I think Fleming does a good job of showing how George Washington's leadership was being questioned after the previous year's defeats and the loss of Philadelphia - the continental Capital. Add to this the victory at Saratoga which elevated (wrongly) the status of Gen. Horatio Gates, and the infant nation faced a real dilemma. There was a cabal trying to replace Washington with Gates and this had more support than most Americans now realize. There were officers within the army, most notably Thomas Conway and Thomas Mifflin, who disliked Washington and saw him as weak and ineffectual. There were members of Congress who would have joined with these men to replace Washington. In the meantime, Congress was almost completely incapable of helping Washington keep his army together. Congress had printed so much currency that it became worthless and difficulties arose in trying to purchase enough supplies to feed, cloth and keep the army in shoes, gunpowder and rum (more important than you'd expect!). The stories of men naked, shoeless and freezing are mostly true, at least initially. The fact of the matter is that the Continental Army was disintegrating due to desertions, disease and enlistments ending for large numbers of troops. What was amazing is that the author reveals how Washington became a masterful politician in order to keep the army together, prevent his authority from being

stripped and preventing the Congress from diverting from his strategy of meeting the British in face-to-face engagements and maintaining the initiative. This is a good book that shows the battles behind the curtain that could have easily derailed the revolution. A great read and great history. Five stars.

You no doubt learned the story in Grade School and in American History Classes but you didn't get the whole story. If our young Congress had one or two more delegates from the Whigs rather than Republicans our country would still be a colony of England, a great story of jealousy and greed that almost changed the course of history. The author goes into details not told before and makes you to keep reading until you finish the book. I'm just glad I read it on my Kindle to understand some of the old colony English words he used and if had a hard copy of the book you might of had a dictionary handy. All in all I loved the book.

One of the most fascinating books that I have read on the American Revolutionary War. Very well written, reading almost like a novel. This is not a book about battles that General Washington fought but one about political intrigue. I believe even people who enjoy reading about the American Revolutionary War battles but not into politics of that era will still find this book outstanding and very interesting. Book focuses on General Washington's relationship with the Continental Congress and the men who were determined to take Washington's place as leader of the army such as Generals Charles Lee and Gates. Also the politicians who wanted to remove General Washington and the ones who fought to keep him as General, especially Henry Laurens and Washington's aide John Laurens. Absolutely fascinating reading about a different kind of battle that Washington fought to keep being general and to provide supplies and food for his men. This book shows the brilliance of General Washington, as a politician and an army leader. Book shows how he was betrayed by men he called close friends. I couldn't put the book down! One note: some historians believe that there was no conspiracy to replace General Washington. This book tries to prove different in regards to letters and actions by various officers and politicians. Regardless of your belief in this conspiracy, you will find the facts presented fascinating and well worth the time to read as it covers all who tried to replace this General.

As soon as I began reading, I felt myself immersed within a world that must have, in its time, felt like it was unravelling. From the intrigue in the Congress and amongst the generals to the very vivid and unrelentingly painful account of Valley Forge, Fleming masterfully painted a harrowing picture of the

innumerable obstacles General Washington faced. Artfully presenting the historical account in a sympathetic, powerful, sometimes humorous manner, the author succeeds in showing us a world, a people, and a beleaguered yet determined general through very human eyes. It was a very enjoyable read.

Reading about what happened at Valley Forge gives me a more complete appreciation for the sacrifices and contributions of Washington and his men. It also resulted in a new found respect for the tenacity and patience and courage of Washington. This is a very well written book that is splendidly researched and paced.. I highly recommend it.

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