

Discovering the Military Legacy of Lewis & Clark

BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION 2003 - 2006



Volunteers from across the nation are re-enacting the entire Lewis & Clark expedition. As they travel across America, camping each night where the original expedition camped 200 years previously, the National Guard provides support in a number of ways.

- Pre-Exploration & Preparation
- Recruitment
- The Journey West
- Homeward Bound
- Indian Reservation
- Louisiana Purchase Boundary
- Numbers Correspond with Events Listed On Back of Map



National Guard soldiers conduct hands-on outreach programs in many schools nationwide. Above, Captain Mary Loos, Washington National Guard, takes the Lewis and Clark program to an elementary school. Teachers can sign up to receive a daily e-mail that provides a link to hear what the soldiers were doing exactly 200 years ago.



AMERICA'S NATIONAL GUARD

Serving Then & Now

The Lewis & Clark Expedition and the U.S. Military.

When most Americans think of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, they visualize the members as part of a grand adventure in frontier clothing. In reality, it was a tough and determined U.S. Army unit that started with 36 volunteer soldiers and several French boatmen. The soldiers included active duty Army soldiers like Captain Meriwether Lewis and enlisted troops from Fort Kaskaskia and Fort Massac in the Illinois Territory. Captain Clark and other recruits had prior military or militia experience. All were formally enlisted into the U.S. Army for the duration of the expedition. The official crew roster included two captains, three sergeants, one corporal, 30 privates, and a group of French boatmen. Clark's slave, York, and George Drouillard, their primary guide and interpreter, also served the entire expedition. The soldiers would later be joined by Toussaint Charbonneau, Sakagawea, and their infant son, Jean Baptiste. All endured back-breaking labor, physical sickness, and numerous natural hazards without complaint. The following is a chronology of significant events:

- 1** November 1794. Meriwether Lewis enlisted in the Virginia Volunteer Corps, a militia unit equivalent to today's National Guard. He served during the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 and became an officer in the regular Army in 1795.
- 2** November 1795. Ensign Meriwether Lewis was assigned to the Chosen Rifle Company of Elite Riflemen-Sharpshooters. The commander of that unit was Captain William Clark. They served together for six months, near present-day Beaver, Pennsylvania.
- 3** April 1801. Captain Meriwether Lewis became the personal secretary of President Thomas Jefferson. He had served 6 1/2 years in the U.S. Army at that point. Together they planned a westward expedition to discover a North-west Passage, a primary water route across the continent.
- 4** March 1803. Captain Lewis traveled to the military arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to order supplies and equipment for the westward expedition. He also supervised construction of a portable iron-frame boat that was 36 feet in length.
- 5** May-June 1803. Captain Lewis studied in Philadelphia under some of the greatest teachers of that day. He learned medicine, botany, anatomy, astronomy, cartography and celestial navigation.
- 6** July 1803. Captain Lewis arrived in Pittsburgh to supervise the construction of the 55-foot custom-made keelboat. He ended up waiting nearly six weeks before it was complete. During this time he bought his Newfoundland dog, Seaman, and purchased the first of two additional boats known as pirogues. On August 31st, 1803, he headed down the Ohio River with a small crew.
- 7** October 15, 1803. Captain Lewis met up with William Clark in Clarksville, Ohio. They spent two weeks signing up recruits across the river in Louisville, Kentucky, then continued down the Ohio River on October 26th.
- 8** November 11, 1803. The expedition reached Fort Massac, where Captain Lewis recruited some Army soldiers and hired George Drouillard, who was dispatched to find eight other soldiers who were supposed to meet them there. They continued down the Ohio River to the Mississippi River.
- 9** November 28, 1803. After reaching the Mississippi River and turning upstream against its mighty current, they realized they would need more men, so they signed up another dozen soldiers at Fort Kaskaskia in the Illinois Territory.
- 10** December 9, 1804. The soldiers began building their winter garrison, Camp DuBois, at the mouth of the Wood River, directly opposite the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Captain Lewis spent several months purchasing more provisions in Saint Louis, while Captain Clark trained the soldiers.
- 11** May 14, 1804. The expedition officially set out up the Missouri River with 36 soldiers, York, Drouillard, a group of French boatmen and a Newfoundland dog.
- 12** July 4, 1804. The expedition stopped to celebrate America's 28th birthday. They held a parade in full dress uniforms, fired their weapons, and were issued an extra ration of whiskey. They named two nearby creeks "Independence Creek" and "Fourth of July Creek," near present-day Kansas City, Missouri.
- 13** August 3, 1804. The expedition held its first official council with the Otoe and Missouri Indians. The soldiers stood in formation in full regimental dress uniforms while the captains addressed the Indian chiefs. This was the first of many such Indian councils they would participate in.
- 14** August 20, 1804. Sergeant Charles Floyd died, presumably from appendicitis. He was buried on a high bluff, under a cedar post with his name on it, with the full honors of war. After paying honor to their deceased comrade, they camped at the mouth of a nearby river and named it Floyd's River. This perpetuated the legacy of the first—and only—member to die on the expedition. Thus was the tradition started of naming every major river tributary for a member of the expedition.
- 15** August 22, 1804. The soldiers voted for Patrick Gass to become their newest sergeant, near present-day Elk Point, South Dakota.
- 16** September 25, 1804. The expedition's encounter with the Teton Sioux nearly turned into a battle, but they proceeded upriver without firing a shot.
- 17** November 2, 1804. The soldiers began building their winter garrison, Fort Mandan, several miles downstream from the Mandan Indian village, near present-day Bismark, North Dakota.
April 7, 1805. The keelboat headed downriver with seven soldiers and four Frenchmen known as The Return Party. It was filled with specimens and journals that would make their way to President Jefferson, including a live prairie dog, four magpies, and a sage hen.
April 8th, 1805. 28 soldiers, five civilians and a dog continued up the Missouri River in two pirogues and six dugout canoes. The civilians were George Drouillard, York, Toussaint Charbonneau, Sakagawea, and their infant child Jean Baptiste.
- 18** April 29, 1805. The soldiers had their first encounter with a grizzly bear. Captain Lewis and another soldier shot a bear, which turned on them and began chasing Captain Lewis. The other soldier reloaded while Captain Lewis ran for 70-80 yards at a full sprint, before a third shot brought the bear down.
- 19** June 13, 1805. They came to the Great Falls of the Missouri and began a grueling portage of 18 miles around the five sets of falls that would take nearly a month. They stored the two pirogues and moved the six canoes and remaining supplies overland.
- 20** July 13, 1805. After their iron-frame boat wouldn't float, they built two more canoes before finally setting out upriver again with a total of eight dugouts.
- 21** July 27, 1805. The expedition came to the Three Forks of the Missouri: The Gallatin, the Madison and the Jefferson. They continue to travel up the Jefferson.
- 22** August 17, 1805. Sakagawea recognized Chief Cameahwait as her brother during the council with the Lemhi Shoshone. This good fortune was paramount in securing horses to cross the Rocky Mountains.
- 23** September 11, 1805. The party set out with 43 horses over the Bitterroots with their Indian guide, Old Tobey.
- 24** September 20, 1805. The expedition reached the Nez Perce Indian village after dealing with snowstorms and near-starvation. The Indians fed them and helped them make new canoes. They set out downstream in five canoes on the Clearwater River on October 8, 1804.
- 25** October 15, 1805. The expedition encountered two sets of rapids on the Columbia River near present-day The Dalles, Oregon. Because there was no good way to portage the canoes, they removed the most valuable equipment and all non-swimming people carried it overland. The soldiers who could swim took the remaining heavy baggage in the canoes and shot both sets of incredibly dangerous rapids. Indians gathered to watch them perish, but they all got through unscathed.
- 26** November 7, 1805. After traveling nearly a month down the Clearwater, Snake and Columbia Rivers, the Pacific Ocean was finally in sight!
- 27** December 10, 1805. They set to work to build Fort Clatsop, near present-day Astoria, Oregon.
- 28** December 15, 1805 The soldiers had a special work detail on the Pacific Ocean: to recover salt from the salt water. It would be used to preserve meat for their overland journey home. January 6, 1806. Sakagawea insisted on making the journey from Fort Clatsop to this area to see a dead whale that had washed up on the beach.
- 29** March 23, 1806. The expedition departed Fort Clatsop and proceeded up the Columbia River, heading for home.
- 30** May 1806. They spent most of May with the Nez Perce and set out over the Rocky Mountains on June 15th with 65 horses.
- 31** June 30, 1805. They arrived at Travelers Rest and split into two major groups the next day. Captain Lewis would head overland to the Great Falls and journey up the Marias River. Captain Clark would head overland to find the Yellowstone River. They planned to meet later at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers.
- 32** July 25, 1806. Captain Clark carved his name and the date on Pompeys Pillar, then headed downriver with his party in two dugout canoes lashed together. Sergeant Pryor and three other soldiers continued taking the horses overland to Fort Mandan.
- 33** July 27, 1806. Captain Lewis and Private Reuben Fields killed two Blackfoot Indian teenagers who tried to steal their guns and horses. They headed back to the Missouri River on horseback as fast as possible.
- 34** July 27, 1806. Sergeant Pryor's horses had disappeared, presumably taken by the Crow Indians. His party walked back to Pompeys Pillar, killed two buffalo, made bull boats from their hides and headed downriver.
- 35** July 28, 1806. After riding hard for a day and a half, Captain Lewis and company got to the Missouri River just as Sergeant Ordway's crew was coming down the river! They set their horses free and all headed downriver.
- 36** August 4, 1806. Captain Clark arrived at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. Captain Lewis arrived on August 7th.
- 37** August 11, 1806. Private Pierre Cruzatte shot Captain Lewis in the buttocks in a "friendly fire" incident, thinking he was an elk. The wounds were painful, but not life-threatening.
- 38** September 23, 1806. The expedition arrived back at Camp Dubois.
- 39** September 25, 1806. The last recorded journal date of the expedition.
- 40** October 10, 1806. All soldiers were paid and discharged. Many continued to serve in the military, others went right back into the wilderness.