

Did any women or children fight in the Continental Army?

Boys often went to war with their fathers or older brothers. At age sixteen, boys could join the army. Younger boys might have played the drum, bugle, or fife for the soldiers.

Nathan Futrell was a drummer boy in the North Carolina Continental Militia when he was seven years old.

At ten, Israel Task left his Massachusetts farm to be a cook and carry messages during battles.

Women and girls took care of the wounded, cooked food, and washed and mended uniforms.

Some women were part of the fighting, too. They carried pitchers of water to cool down the cannons and give the men drinks. These women were called “Molly Pitchers” by the soldiers. When her husband was hurt, Mary Hays stopped carrying water and took over his job loading and firing a cannon. After the war, she was awarded a pension of forty dollars a year for her service.

Families sometimes went with their men and the army. The armies didn't fight in winter so General George Washington's wife, Martha, spent eight years in winter camp with her husband, returning to Mount Vernon, their Virginia home, each spring.

