

Welcome to the 48th DVF Encampment and Our 50th Anniversary Celebration

Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge

Compatriots and Friends,

It is with immense pride and heartfelt enthusiasm that we welcome you to the 48th Encampment of the Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge, held in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of our Society.

Founded in 1976, during our Nation's Bicentennial, our Society was established through the vision and dedication of our first Commander-in-Chief, Donald Cronan, who sought to give an enduring voice to the brave soldiers of Washington's Army who endured the hardships of Valley Forge in defense of liberty. His legacy continues to guide and inspire us, and his spirit is very much with us as we gather to mark this historic milestone.

For fifty years, our Society has remained steadfast in its mission to honor our patriot ancestors, preserve historical truth, promote education, and foster fellowship among their descendants. This Golden Anniversary is both a celebration of our shared past and a reaffirmation of the principles forged during the winter of 1777–1778.

Encampment Highlights

We will begin Encampment 2026 early Thursday morning by honoring our heroic ancestors with a DVF Washington Memorial Chapel and Memorial Service, followed by our traditional March-Out, commemorating the reinvigorated Continental Army's departure from Valley Forge on June 15, 1778. Please participate. No uniform required, and while the walk is not long, but please wear comfortable footwear.

Later that afternoon, we will tour the Paoli Battlefield, led by noted local historian Jim Christ, followed by an evening of celebration marking our DVF 50th Anniversary, featuring a special personal appearance by *Betsy Ross*, portrayed by Carol Spacht. The evening promises warmth, fellowship, memorable moments, and surprises!

On Friday morning, we will board a bus for historic Philadelphia, where we will enjoy a guided walking tour with a Revolutionary War soldier portrayed by Kyle Jenks, including a visit to the *Liberty Bell* and other iconic sites. Afterward, we will dine together at the renowned General Warren Inn, enjoying a three-course meal sure to be a fond memory for years to come. The day

concludes with a reception graciously hosted by the Valley Forge Park Alliance, providing another opportunity for fellowship and conversation.

Saturday morning begins with breakfast, followed by our annual Business Meeting. In the early afternoon, we will gather at Washington's Headquarters, where *General Peter Muhlenberg*, portrayed by retired Valley Forge Park Ranger William (Bill) J. Troppman will share its story and then lead us in honoring General Washington to his nearby statue to pay tribute to the "Father of our Country" and its conclusion, we move to the National Memorial Arch, where we will take a group photograph. An image that will become part of our Society's proud history.

We will then return to the hotel to prepare for our Annual Gala Dinner, beginning with an hour of fellowship before dinner and program. This year, we are honored to welcome Dr. Nancy K. Loane, who will present "*The Last Days of George Washington's Valley Forge*." Those familiar with her acclaimed book, *Following the Drum – The Women of Valley Forge*, know this presentation will be both enlightening and deeply engaging. Please plan to stay afterward for photographs and conversation as we conclude our celebration and carry these memories home.

As we come together in remembrance and camaraderie, may this Encampment strengthen our bonds, renew our purpose, and inspire us to carry forward the sacred trust entrusted to us by our founders and forebears.

We very much hope you will join us for this historic and joyful occasion.

"Encampment 2026 or BUST!"