

Primary Source:

“Soldiers at the siege of Yorktown” by Jean-Baptiste-Antoine DeVerger, 1781

- How did African Americans participate in the Revolutionary War?
- How did their actions reflect a desire to enjoy their natural rights?

- I can connect actions taken by African Americans during the Revolutionary War to an understanding of natural rights of equality and justice.
- I can summarize the main ideas of historical text.
- I can create an argument supported by evidence from primary sources.

Building Context

Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger was a French artist who fought in the American Revolution in a French regiment (the French had allied with the American patriots in 1778). De Verger kept an illustrated journal during the war and drew the following soldiers that were a part of the Patriot army during the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. From left to right: a Black soldier of the First Rhode Island Regiment, a New England militiaman, a frontier rifleman, and a French officer.

The First Rhode Island Regiment was an elite unit of all Black soldiers commanded by white officers. Most New England regiments were integrated. After the War of 1812, Black and white soldiers would not be integrated in military units again until 1948. You can learn more about the First Rhode Island Regiment by watching [this video](#).

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<https://www.loc.gov/item/2021669876>



Comprehension and Analysis Questions

1. What does this image reveal about the Patriot Army at Yorktown?

2. What evidence does this document provide about the role of African Americans in the Revolutionary War?

3. Does this document provide any evidence of an understanding of natural rights by the artist? Explain.