



Braddock Grave



Quietly it stands, a single marker, a reminder of a quest for empire that took place more than 200 years ago. The marker memorializes the final resting place of British Major General Edward Braddock, leader of an ill-fated expedition to the forks of the Ohio River to try to capture French-held Fort Duquesne.

After George Washington's defeat at Fort Necessity, his British force retreated to Williamsburg. The French used British retreat to their advantage, and soon French-inspired Indian attacks occurred throughout the frontier. Terrorized settlers streamed eastward.

General Braddock

After appeals from colonial governors, the British decided to take matters more seriously and sent Major General Braddock to North America with two regiments of infantry.

Braddock, a career soldier, had risen through the ranks, and after 45 years of military service he became commander-in-chief of all British forces in North America.



E. Braddock

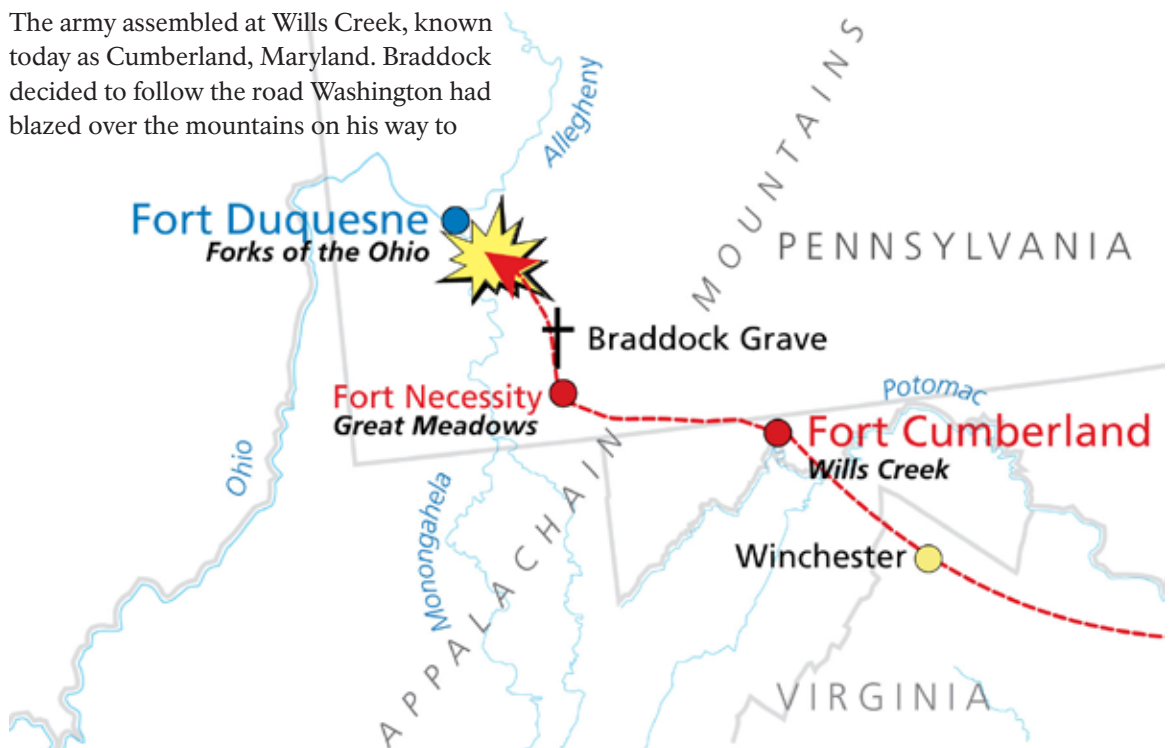
Braddock Road

The overall British plan for 1755 was to simultaneously attack many French forts in North America. Braddock would lead the expedition against Fort Duquesne personally. That spring, he disembarked his army at Alexandria, Virginia. After augmenting his force with colonial militia and a few Indians, Braddock had about 2,400 men. Among the men was George Washington, a volunteer aide to the general.

The army assembled at Wills Creek, known today as Cumberland, Maryland. Braddock decided to follow the road Washington had blazed over the mountains on his way to

Fort Necessity the previous year. Because the trail was inadequate for the army's large wagons and artillery, it was widened to 12 feet, but only at great effort and expenditure of time.

The force seemed to move at a snail's pace. Finally the army was split in two with Braddock moving ahead with the bulk of the men and a few pieces of artillery. The remainder would follow under the command of Colonel Dunbar.



Battle of the Monongahela

In early July, the advance group was approaching the forks of the Ohio. On July 9, a second crossing of the Monongahela River was made. From that point, it was a short march to Fort Duquesne.

Soon after the river crossing, the woods in front of the British column exploded with musket fire and the whooping of French soldiers and their Indian allies as they collided head-on with the British.

Advance British units fell back upon the main body, while rear units con-

tinued advancing, adding to the confusion. Disorganization and fear quickly seized the British. In the smoke of battle, fighting an unseen enemy, and with many British officers killed early on, discipline all but ended.

The battle lasted several hours. Finally, as Braddock was carried from the field severely wounded, the surviving British fled. British losses had been horrendous: more than 900 casualties out of the 1,400 men engaged.

The British were completely beaten by a force they could not see in a wilderness where they did not want to be. They now were trailed by what they must have imagined to be a horde of Indians who would kill them all if they stopped.



Sword believed to have been carried by Washington on the Braddock campaign.

The General is Buried

The British camped near here on July 13, and in the evening Braddock died. Washington officiated at the ceremony the next day, and the general was buried in the road his men had built. The army then marched, over the grave to obliterate any traces of it and continued to eastern Pennsylvania.

One can only imagine what went through the general's mind after the battle. He commanded



Re-enactment of burial service for General Braddock during the 250th anniversary commemoration.

what some considered an invincible army. They were not ambushed, but rather surprised, and discipline broke down. The rout was a disgrace. Doctors later reported that the general died more from anxiety than from his wounds.

Washington later wrote, "...thus died a man, whose good and bad qualities were intimately blended. He was brave even to a fault and in regular Service would have done honor to his profession. His attachments were warm, his enmities were strong, and having no disguise about him, both appeared in full forces."

After the French and Indian War ended, the Braddock Road remained a main road in this area. In 1804, some workmen discovered human remains in the road near where Braddock was supposed to have been buried. The remains were reinterred on a small knoll adjacent to the road. In 1913 the marker was placed where it is today, keeping its silent watch.

The National Park Service preserves special places saved by the American people so all may experience our heritage. While visiting Braddock Grave, please park in designated areas and remain on existing trails and outside of fenced areas..

For more information about the Braddock Campaign read:

"History of an Expedition" by Winthrop Sergeant,
"Braddock at the Monongahela" by Paul Kopperman,
"Guns at the Forks" by Walter O'Meara, or
"The Braddock Road Chronicles" by Andrew J. Wahl.