

obscure place." Did Jumonville hope to spy on Washington and report back to Contrecoeur about the English strength and then make contact, or possibly even attack as Washington had feared? On the other hand, if Jumonville was on a military patrol rather than a diplomatic mission, why did he, an experienced officer, allow himself to be completely surprised at breakfast?

Washington's actions have also been questioned by historians. If the French had in fact been merely diplomats, he was guilty of shooting down men who were only doing what Washington himself had done the previous year at Fort LeBouef. This skirmish was the first in Washington's career and he could not possibly help but be eager for success. He was also tired, having had little sleep in the previous 48 hours. Under these circumstances, his decision-making capability may have been hampered. It is possible only to speculate on the true answer. Nonetheless, dire consequences of both Jumonville's and Washington's actions at Jumonville Glen, as it is known today, soon followed.

Jumonville Glen, which has changed little with the passage of time, is part of Fort Necessity National Battlefield and is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is The National Pike, Farmington, PA 15437, is in immediate charge. The glen is 7½ miles from Fort Necessity. It may be reached by driving 4.9 miles west of the main park on U.S. 40, turning right on the Jumonville Road at Mount Summit and driving 2½ miles north.

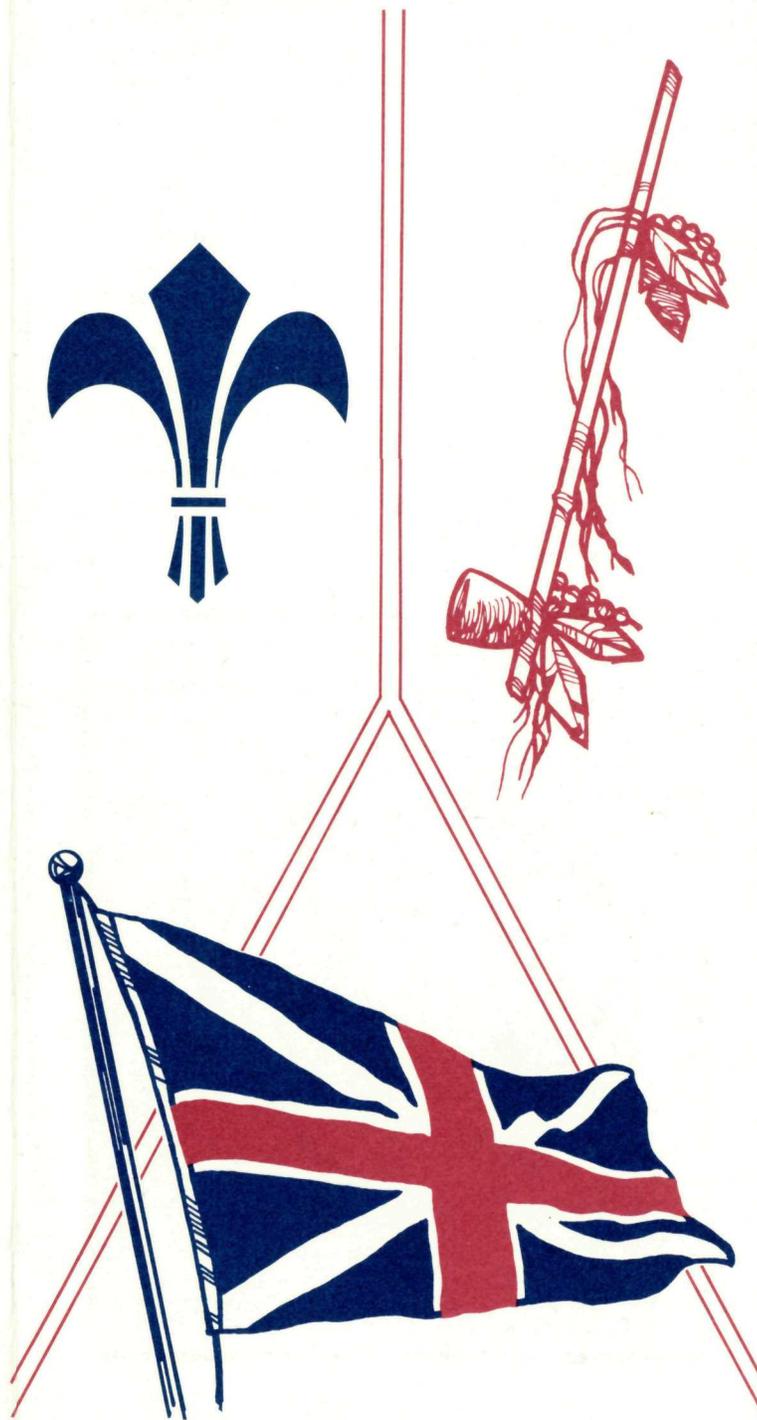


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JUMONVILLE GLEN



Fort Necessity National Battlefield
The National Pike
Farmington, PA 15437

On May 28, 1754, a small group of Virginians, under the command of 22-year-old George Washington, attacked a French patrol at what is now known as Jumonville Glen. Although only a few men became casualties, this 15-minute skirmish deep in the North American wilderness was the first in a series of major events that eventually plunged most of the western world into warfare. Horace Walpole, a contemporary British statesman, described the brief fight by saying, "A volley fired by a young Virginian in the backwoods of America set the world on fire."

THE THREAT

The founding of the Ohio Company of Virginia in 1749 marked a new beginning in colonial rivalry between England and France for control of North America. The company claimed 200,000 acres of land in the Ohio Valley west of the Allegheny Mountains which it planned to use for speculation and the fur trade. To secure its control, the company planned to build a series of forts, beginning at Wills Creek (Cumberland, Maryland). Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie of colonial Virginia, a leading stockholder in the Ohio Company, chose 22-year-old George Washington to lead the expedition. France reacted to the Virginians' threat by sending a contingent of 1,800 troops into the Ohio Valley in February 1754. France depended on the valley to link its Canadian colony with those in the lower Mississippi River Valley. She was determined that this important channel of communication should not be broken.

Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie described the French advance into the valley as an "invasion," and decided to send a warning message to be carried by Washington to the French at Fort LeBouef. When he arrived at the fort on November 25, 1753, Washington was informed by the commander that the French "... do not think (themselves) obliged to obey (your summons)." Washington then returned to Williamsburg, but not before inspecting French fortifications at LeBouef. Dinwiddie determined to use military force to drive the French from the Ohio Valley back into Canada. He requested money and troops from the Virginia legislature, as well as from other colonial assemblies, and began enlisting 300 militia to be commanded by Colonel Joshua Fry and Lt. Colonel Washington.

