

George Washington issues Farewell Orders to the Continental Army, 1783

On this day in history, November 2, 1783, George Washington issued his Farewell Orders to the Continental Army as he officially retired from the service. He concludes the orders with, "May ample justice be done them (the soldiers who fought) here, and may the choicest of Heaven's favors both here and hereafter attend those, who under the divine auspices have secured innumerable blessings for others: With these Wishes, and this benediction, the Commander in Chief is about to retire from service--The Curtain of separation will soon be drawn--and the Military Scene to him will be closed for ever."

In these orders, Washington thanks the soldiers for their service and sacrifice. He talks about how astonished he is that they actually won. He mentions God's intervention on their behalf. He also commends the soldiers for coming together from different backgrounds and cultures and working together to form a cohesive unit.

Washington assures the troops they will be paid by the Congress as the states pony up their share of the debt incurred during the war. He tells them the same virtues of bravery, economy and prudence they exhibited in the war will assist them in being successful in private life as they return home. Lastly, Washington says there is nothing he would not do if it was in his power to assist these men to be successes in life.