A statue of Thomas Jefferson stands in the rotunda of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., surrounded by his inspirational quotes.
The Mid-Atlantic colonies were economically prosperous, ethnically diverse, and strategically located. Not surprisingly, they played a prominent role in the Revolution. Fighting was fierce, with major battles taking place in and around New York City, Upstate New York, Philadelphia, and Virginia. Indeed, travelers will find the heart of the military story here.

But there’s more to the story than battles. Iconic names, places, and events appear throughout the Mid-Atlantic. For example, you can stand in the room where delegates declared independence, walk the shore where Washington’s troops crossed the icy Delaware River, and ponder the magnitude of the message sent by Washington when he resigned his commission in the Maryland State House in Annapolis. You’ll discover remnants of Dutch heritage in New Jersey and New York and learn about the struggles of Quakers, Moravians, Germans, Scots, and Irish in Pennsylvania. The diversity of sites reflects the capacity and independent character of this region.

Living-history programs at Yorktown, VA, bring the world of the common soldier to life.
Camp followers served with the American and British armies during the Revolution. They saw to various odd jobs, including laundry.
Delaware was part of Pennsylvania—called the “Lower Counties on the Delaware”—until the Revolution began, but it had been trying for some time before that to become its own province. After 1704, the two colonies had separate legislatures (one at Philadelphia and the other at New Castle), though they shared the same governor. In 1776, Delaware finally achieved independence by breaking away from England and Pennsylvania.

At the time, Delaware's capital was New Castle, and its population stood at 37,000. Swedish and Finnish immigrants had settled the region in 1638, and pockets of their descendants still lived there. Delaware, like many colonies, initially relied on indentured labor. But as demand increased, it adopted chattel slavery as the primary agricultural workforce. Tobacco was the leading cash crop.

The Delaware Regiment provided one of the war effort's greatest contributions, fighting in nearly every major battle. One of its officers, Capt. Robert Kirkwood, was widely regarded as one of the best commanders on the American side. Three men in particular—John Dickinson, Caesar Rodney, and Kirkwood—loomed large here, especially during the Revolution. Only one engagement unfolded on Delaware soil: The Battle of Cooch's Bridge on September 3, 1777, which took place in New Castle County.

The monument in front of the Delaware State House in Dover honors the Delaware Regiment’s long service in the war.
Delaware

Established in 1683, Dover became the state capital in 1777. It was a logical choice because of its central location and the ability to defend itself against British attack. Dover was also home to Caesar Rodney, a Founding Father who is best known for his midnight ride to Independence Hall in July 1776 to cast the decisive Delaware vote for independence.

Delaware Monument
A fitting tribute to the state’s major contribution to the war effort, the statue honors the Delaware Regiment, nicknamed the Blue Hen’s Chickens. Their uniforms were blue, and their fighting spirit was reminiscent of the gamecocks, or fighting birds, popular at the time. Delaware only contributed one regiment to the American war effort, but they earned a hard-fighting reputation. This monument to their service stands in front of Legislative Hall.

State Capitol Grounds, 1600 Penn St. • 302-739-9194 • regulations. delaware.gov

John Dickinson Plantation
Known as the Penman of the Revolution, John Dickinson represents the complex and challenging decisions faced by the Founding Fathers. Dickinson served in the Continental Congress, where he opposed independence in 1776, believing there was still a chance to compromise with Great Britain. Having
lost political support as a result, he left public service until returning to the Constitutional Convention. Dickinson helped craft the Constitution and signed it. Guided tours take in his boyhood home and sometime residence, known as Poplar Hall. There’s also a visitor center with exhibits and orientation videos, and self-guided tours of the grounds. John Dickinson Plantation is part of First State National Historical Park (www.nps.gov/frst), which preserves six sites associated with colonial history throughout Delaware.

340 Kitts Hummock Rd. (5 miles S of Dover) ◆ 302-739-3277 ◆ nps.gov/frst

Newark

The Newark area was first settled in 1694, though the town wasn’t established until 1758. The state’s only Revolutionary War battle took place here.

★ Cooch’s Bridge Battlefield
Also known as the Battle of Iron Hill, this was the first engagement of the Brandywine Campaign, fought on September 3, 1777. As Washington attempted to prevent the British capture of Philadelphia, American Light Infantry—troops specializing in skirmishing—faced off against German riflemen (Jaegers). The Americans were only intended to delay the enemy advance, and the Germans eventually drove them off.

A monument stands on S. Old Baltimore Pike, where it crosses the Christiana River. It is on private property but a small pulloff has parking. The nearby Pencader Heritage Museum has exhibits about the battle, and several plaques at another monument, within sight of the museum, discusses the battle.

Museum: 2029 Sunset Lake Rd. ◆ 302-584-4570 ◆ www.pencaderheritage.org

★ Hale-Byrnes House
On September 6, 1777, three days after the Battle of Cooch’s Bridge, Washington held a war council with Nathanael Greene, Henry Knox, the Marquis de Lafayette, and other Continental Army officers at this 18th-century house to plan the defense of Philadelphia. Five days later, the armies collided in the Battle of Brandywine. Located along the banks of White Clay Creek, the house is open for tours by contacting the site ahead of time.

606 Stanton-Christiana Rd. ◆ 302-998-3792 ◆ www.halebrynes.org

The Cooch’s Bridge Monument stands in the heart of Newark’s Cooch’s Bridge Battlefield.
Delaware’s largest community traces its roots to Swedish settlers in the 1600s, followed by the Dutch, before the area was ultimately taken over by the British. Wilmington was an important port and milling area. visitwilmingtonde.com

★ Washington Park
The Newark Academy, destroyed in a January 1780 British raid, stood on this site. You’ll find a monument to Washington and a marker with a map depicting the retreat across New Jersey.

Intersection of Broad St. & Washington Pl. ◆ NO FACILITIES

New Castle
Dutch settlers arrived in the New Castle area in 1651, and the English seized the territory in 1664. William Penn first set foot in North America on New Castle’s waterfront. While no battles took place here, the city served as the colony’s center of rebellion. Colonists aired their grievances with the British government on the village green, still in existence today, and it was on June 15, 1776, that the Delaware Assembly declared independence from Great Britain before the rest of the country. The town served as the state capital for a few months in 1777. It has many historic buildings and evokes the feel of the 18th century.

★ Amstel House
One of the few colonial buildings from New Castle’s days as a commercial and political center, the 1730s house is a revolutionary landmark. Gov. Nicholas Van Dyke resided here, and signers of the Declaration of Independence and other statesmen visited. Watercolors, a pair of mahogany chests of drawers, and silver tablespoons are some items seen on the guided tour that convey the Van Dyke family’s 18th-century life.

2 E. 4th St. ◆ 302-322-2794 ◆ newcastlehistory.org

RECOMMENDED READING
The Delaware Continentals by Christopher Ward
This well-respected book chronicles one of the most famous regiments of the war and their incredible history.

★ New Castle Court House Museum
This stately building, in the center of the historic downtown, served as the colony’s capitol building. It was also the meeting place for the state’s colonial assembly from 1732 to 1777. In the upper room, the Delaware Assembly voted on June 15, 1776, to separate from England and from
Pennsylvania, thus creating the State of Delaware. Guided tours primarily focus on Delaware's legislative assembly and court system, but you will enjoy the portraiture, period furniture, and artifacts as well. It’s part of the First State National Historical Park (www.nps.gov/frst), which preserves six sites associated with colonial history throughout Delaware.

211 Delaware St. ☏ 302-544-6363
◆ nps.gov/frst

★ Presbyterian Church & Meeting House
This historic church was established in 1657 (the current building dates from 1707). In July 1775, the minister preached on the town green to the militia in support of independence. Congregants were mostly patriots, including Thomas McKean, a Declaration of Independence signer. The meetinghouse was restored in the 1950s, and it remains an active church.

52 E. 2nd St. ☏ 302-328-3279
◆ www.newcastlepreschurch.org

**RECOMMENDED READING**
The American Revolution through British Eyes
*edited by James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes*
Two volumes of British contemporary documents look at the events of the war from a different perspective.