Frederick William von Steuben (c. 1790)

Abstract

Born in Prussian Magdeburg, Frederick William von Steuben (1730-94) joined the army and served as an officer in the Seven Years War (1756-63). After the war and his dismissal from service, Steuben was reduced to poverty and forced to seek non-military employment as a court official, a position he disliked. While in Paris in 1777, Steuben met Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), who was ambassador to France of the newly declared United States. Franklin provided Steuben with a letter of recommendation that made it possible for him to serve in the American revolutionary army under George Washington (1732-99). Drawing on his knowledge of the Prussian army, Steuben helped transform the American army into an effective force and won a number of victories against the British. In a letter dated 1779, Steuben praised the liberal ideals of the new American republic.

Source

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