

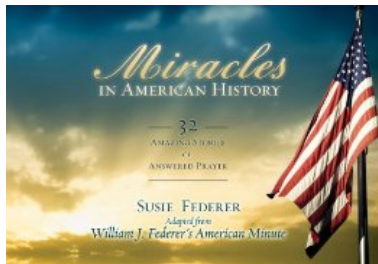
American Minute with Bill Federer Crossing the Delaware--Battle of Trenton "Independence confirmed by God Almighty in the victory of General Washington"

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Catherine the Great of Russia, who reigned 1762-1796, rebuffed **King George III's** requests and bribes to have **Russia** side with **Britain** during the **Revolutionary War** ... *continue reading* ...



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Instead, **Russia** continued **trading with the American colonies**, providing much needed supplies.



Other countries that helped supply Americans with arms, supplies, and personnel, both overtly and covertly, were France, the Netherlands, and Spain.

Courageous individuals, acting in their own private capacity, also came to help America from Ireland, Prussia, Bavaria, Poland-Lithuania, and Hungary.

Russia's Catherine the Great even attempted to negotiate a peace with **France** and **Britain** to bring an early end to the war in **America's favor**.

Catherine had earlier deposed her husband, **Tsar Peter III**, in a coup.

She then fought the **Russo-Turkish War** (1768-1774), against the **Muslim Ottoman Turkish Empire**.

Her General, **Alexei Grigoryevich Orlov** destroyed the **Ottoman navy** at the **Battle of Chesma**, July 5-7, 1770 - it was the worst defeat for **Ottoman navy** since the **Battle of Lepanto** in 1571.

The same time, 38,000 **Russians** defeated 80,000 **Muslim Tatar cavalry and infantry** at the **Battle of Larga**, July 7, 1770.

Two weeks later, **Russia** defeated another 175,000 **Turks** at the **Battle of Kagul**.

These defeats shocked the Ottoman Empire.

When **Sultan Mustfa III** (1717-1774), who had given himself the title **Cihangir "World Conqueror,"** heard the news he reportedly had a heart attack, from which he died.



Russian military leaders began talk of a campaign to emancipate oppressed Christians under Ottoman rule, and free **Constantinople**, which had been **the capital of the Christian world for nearly a thousand years**.

Their plans, though, were interrupted by the **French Revolution**.

America's first minister to the Russian Court of **Catherine the Great** was **Francis Dana**, a member of the **Continental Congress**, being assisted 1781-1783 by the young **John Quincy Adams** -- the future 6th US President.

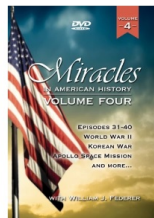
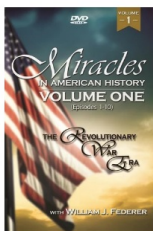
Back in America, during the Revolutionary War, British troops defeated the Continental Army at the **Battle of Brooklyn Heights**, August 27, 1776.

General Washington was forced to retreat.

The **Continental Army** was then driven out of New York, across New Jersey and into Pennsylvania.



The Retreat through the Jerseys, by Howard Pyle (1898)
Delaware Art Museum



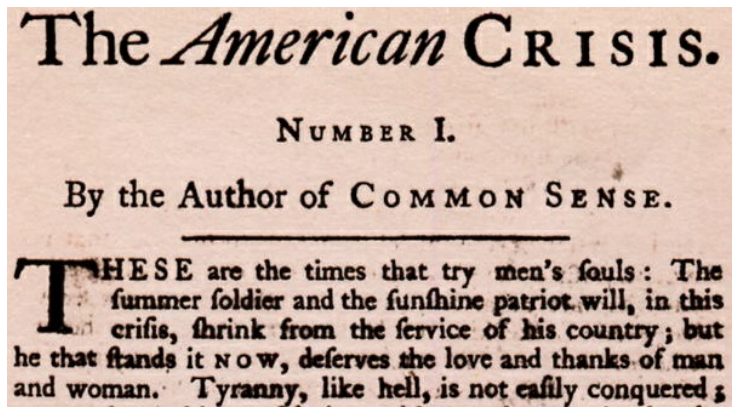
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In the following six months, despite Congress approving the Declaration of Independence, **the Continental Army's ranks dwindled** from a high of 20,000 down to **just 2,000** as of December of 1776.

Most of the remaining soldiers were planning on leaving at the end of year, as **they had only volunteered for a**

six-month enlistment, needing to get back home to care for their neglected farms, shops and families.

General Washington rallied his troops to stay by having **Thomas Paine's "The American Crisis"** read to them. It began:



"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country."

Philadelphia fell into a panic as fear set in that British troops would invade and occupy the city, which they did later the next year.

Congress' last instruction to **General Washington**, December 12, 1776, was:

"... until Congress shall otherwise order, **General Washington** shall be possessed of full power to order and direct all things relative to ... the operations of the war."

Washington proposed a daring military operation, but insisted his officers keep it under strictest secrecy, as the British were paying spies in gold for information.



Washington made the password for

his operation "**Victory or Death.**"

This reflected **Washington's General Orders**, which he had issued months before on July 2, 1776:

"The time is now near at hand which must probably determine whether **Americans** are to be freemen or slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own;

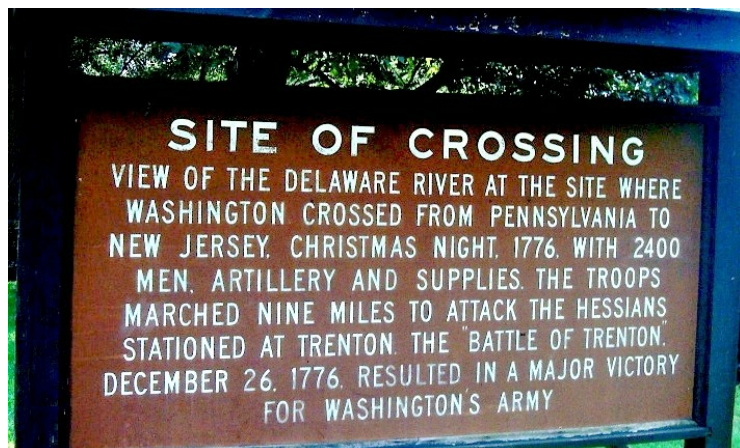
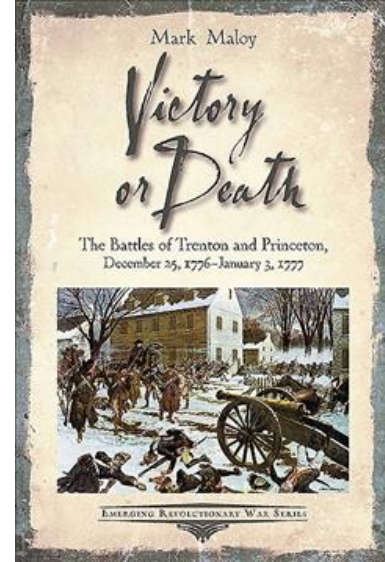
whether their houses and farms are to be pillaged and destroyed, and themselves consigned to a state of wretchedness from which no human efforts will deliver them.

The fate of unborn millions will now depend, **under God**, on the **courage and conduct of this army.**

Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us no choice but a brave resistance, or the most abject submission. We have, therefore to resolve to **conquer or die.**"

On **Christmas Day evening**, 1776, **Washington's troops** quietly crossed the dangerous, **ice-filled Delaware River** in a **freezing blizzard.**

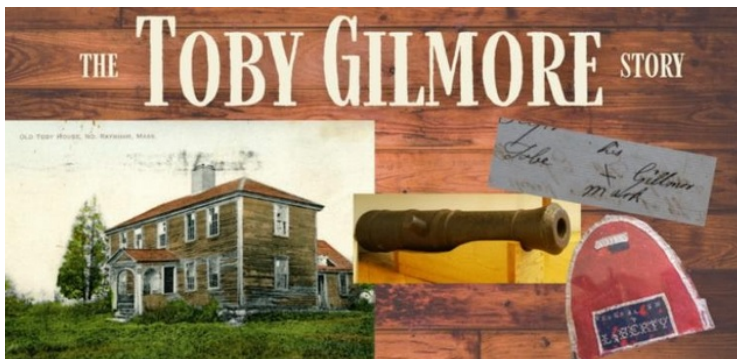
In the iconic painting of the **Delaware Crossing**, the **black soldier**



rowing next to **George Washington** is thought to be **his bodyguard, freed slave Toby Gilmore**.



After the War, **Toby Gilmore** was given a **cannon** in recognition of his **valuable service**, which,



according to tradition, he kept on his farm in Raynham, Massachusetts, and **publicly fired every Fourth of July**. Today it is in the Old Colony Historical Society Museum in Taunton, Massachusetts.

After crossing the Delaware, the army trudged through blinding snow in strict silence.

Two soldiers froze to death on the march.

Washington's army attacked the **German Hessian troops** stationed at **Trenton**, New Jersey, at daybreak, **DECEMBER 26, 1776**.

Though **King George III** was unsuccessful in getting **Russian troops**, he arranged to hire the feared

Hessian mercenaries.

One of Washington's aides-de-camp, the Irish Catholic Colonel John Fitzgerald, made note of his opinion that **Hessians** might be vulnerable on Christmas Day, as:

"They make a great deal of Christmas in Germany, and no doubt the Hessians will drink a great deal of beer and have a dance tonight."

Some historians disagree with this assessment of Hessian behavior.

Hessians were skilled in European warfare where enemies faced off opposite of each other in an open field.

They were not prepared for Americans firing from behind trees, walls, and fence posts.

American captain Alexander Hamilton maneuvered his six-pound cannons into position and fired them down King Street, tearing into the Hessian ranks.



Hessian colonel Johann Rall was shot.

Without him, the **Hessian troops** soon surrendered.

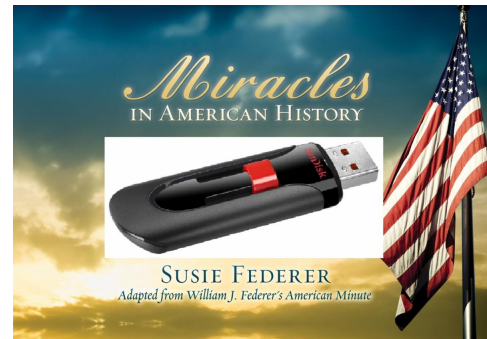
Americans captured nearly a thousand **Hessians** in just over an hour.

Of the Americans who were wounded were:

William Washington -- a cousin of General Washington; and the young Lieutenant **James Monroe** -- the future 5th U.S. President -- who was struck by a musket ball in

the arm and bleeding badly. Doctor John Riker clamped the artery and saved his life.

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Yale President Ezra Stiles stated in an Election Address to the Connecticut General Assembly, May 8, 1783:

"In our lowest and most dangerous estate, in 1776 and 1777, **we sustained ourselves** against the British Army of 60,000 troops commanded by ... the ablest generals Britain could procure throughout Europe, with a naval force of 22,000 seamen in above 80 men-of-war ...

... **Heaven inspired us** with resolution to cut the Gordian knot ... in the **glorious act of Independence** ... sealed and confirmed by **God Almighty** in the **victory of General Washington at Trenton** ...

Who does not see the **indubitable interposition** and energetic influence of **Divine Providence** in these great and illustrious events? ..."

Ezra Stiles continued:

"Who but a **Washington**, inspired by **Heaven**, could have struck out the great movement and maneuver of Princeton -- **that Christmas (Day) eve when Washington and his army crossed the Delaware?** ...



The United States are under peculiar obligations to become a **holy people unto the Lord our God.**"

President Calvin Coolidge stated, October 28, 1925:

"Military critics have described **Washington's campaign of Trenton and Princeton** as a **military exploit of unparalleled brilliancy.**"

Washington wrote August 20, 1778:

"**The Hand of Providence** has been so conspicuous in ... the course of the war that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks **faith**, and more wicked that has not gratitude to acknowledge his obligations;

but it will be **time enough for me to turn Preacher** when my present appointment ceases."



Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull wrote to **General George Washington**, August of 1776, in response to his plea for reinforcements:

"In this **day of calamity**, to trust altogether to the justice of our cause, without **our utmost exertion**, would be tempting **Providence** ...

March on! -- This shall be your warrant: **Play the man for God, and for the cities of our God.**

May the **Lord of Hosts**, the **God of the armies of Israel**, be **your Captain, your Leader, your Conductor, and Savior.**"

Earlier, **Governor Trumbull** told Washington, July 13, 1775:

"Be strong and very courageous. May the **God of the**

armies of Israel shower down the blessings of his **Divine Providence** on you, give you wisdom and fortitude, cover your head in the day of battle and danger."

Franklin D. Roosevelt stated January 20, 1941:

"America has been the New World in all tongues, and to all peoples,

not because this continent was a new-found land, but because all those who came here believed they could create upon this continent **a new life** -- a life that should be **new in freedom** ...

If the spirit of America were killed, even though the Nation's body and mind ... lived on, the America we know would have perished ..."

FDR continued:

"The destiny of America was proclaimed in **words of prophecy spoken by our first President** in his first Inaugural in 1789 ...

'The preservation of the **sacred fire of liberty** and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered ... deeply ... finally, staked on the experiment **intrusted to the hands of the American people ...**'"

Roosevelt ended:

"If you and I in this later day lose that **sacred fire** -- if we let it be smothered with doubt and fear - - then we shall reject the destiny which **Washington** strove so **valiantly and so triumphantly to establish** ...

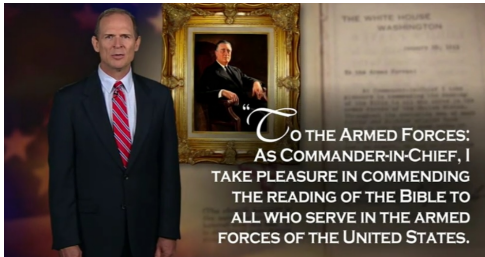


As Americans, we go forward, in the service of our country, by the will of God."

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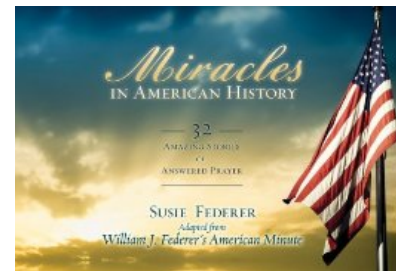
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