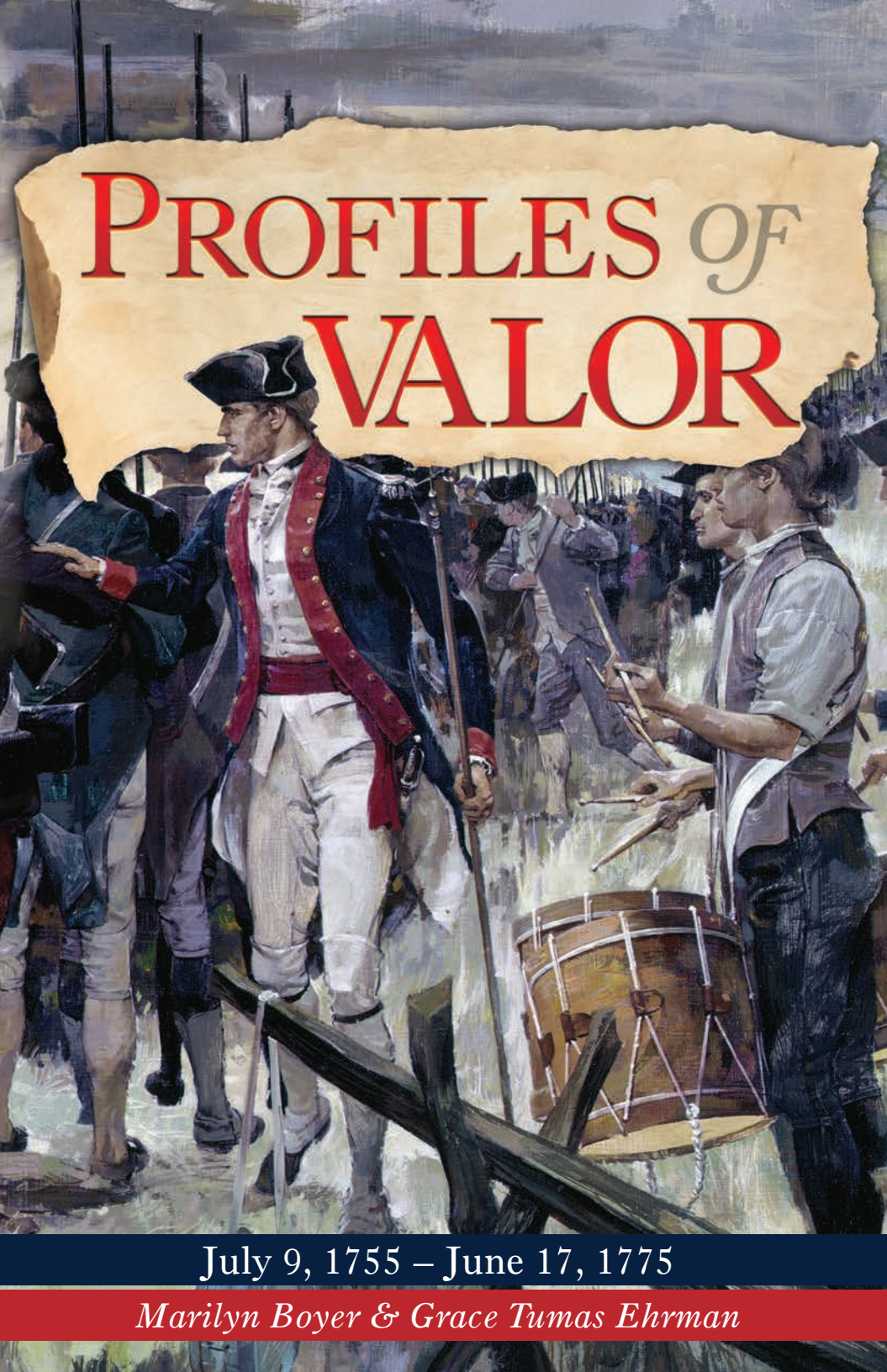
PROFILES OF VALOR
July 9, 1755 – June 17, 1775
Marilyn Boyer & Grace Tumas Ehrman

PROFILES OF VALOR

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Character Studies
from the
War of Independence

Marilyn Boyer &
Grace Tumas Ehrman

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Credits

Thanks to the following people for their investment in helping to preserve these inspiring stories from America's past. It is my prayer that their efforts will reap a bountiful harvest as these stories will serve to be an inspiration to those in whose hands America's future lies!

I wish to thank David Barton, who has been such an inspiration to me, personally, to become excited about learning about our godly heritage. God has gifted him for such a time as this in our country. He is the master of primary source documents! Tuesday night has traditionally been "Barton night" in our home as we gather to watch his presentations and invite friends in to learn with us! It is only as we get truth back into the public square that we can hope to preserve the heritage of freedom handed down to us.

Thanks to Grace Tumas Ehrman, for her role in crafting these stories in such a way that they are a delight to read! It's great when even the editors have to read the stories first to see what happens and then go back and edit!

Thanks to my dear friend Mary Ann Edman who is the world's most efficient multi-tasker, committed to producing quality that will be a tribute to our

Lord and Savior. Her creativity has been indispensable in producing the layout and graphic design for this book as well as editing the mistakes the rest of us overlooked!

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Thanks to my son, Rick, who, despite his incredibly busy life, has read these stories to his children at night, while editing each for accuracy of content to assure we are portraying these men and women in an worthy manner, giving honor where honor is due.

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Introduction

In doing my research for *For You They Signed,* a book about the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, I discovered so many compelling stories that were about people other than the signers of the Declaration of Independence during this time of our history, that I felt I must share more of their stories with you.

It is crucial to understand the mindset of the founders who laid the foundations of the freedoms we enjoy today. We must understand that of course not everyone was a Christian, but what is true is that our government was based upon principles found in the Bible. Christianity shaped the very foundations by which our country was established.

When you read the founders' writings, you do not have to guess what they based their beliefs on. Many Christians today feel that the founders were in rebellion to seek their independence. This is far from the truth. Just read what they wrote and let them tell you where they got their ideas. A famous quote by James Madison proclaims that the future and success of America is not in the Constitution but in the laws of God upon which the Constitution was founded.

Samuel Adams, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, specifically recommended a study of the Scriptures to better understand the basis of America's struggle against a tyrannical king:

> *The Rights of the Colonists as Christians ... may be best understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of the great Law Giver and Head of the Christian Church, which are to be found clearly written and promulgated in the New Testament.*[1]

The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, a key preacher during the Great Awakening, in his famous 1750 sermon, coined the phrase, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." This idea that they were not rebelling against God or resisting ordained government, but only tyranny, was reflected in the fact that this phrase was suggested to be used for the first national motto in America, in August 1776.

It must be understood that the War of Independence was an act of self-defense, not an offensive war. England attacked the colonists. England fired the first shot at the Boston Massacre in 1770, at the bombing of Boston and burning of Charlestown in 1774, and during the attacks on Williamsburg, Concord, and Lexington in 1775. The command to the Lexington Minutemen, "Don't fire unless fired upon!" was the standard set by the colonists. They did, however, believe in the right to self-defense.

This attitude is reflected in the appeal made by Stephen Hopkins (a signer of the Declaration) when he explained to the British:

> *We finally beg leave to assert that the first planters of these colonies were pious Christians—were faithful [British] subjects who, with a fortitude and perseverance little known and less considered, settled these wild countries by God's goodness and their own amazing labors [and] thereby added a most valuable dependence to the crown of Great Britain; were ever dutifully subservient to her interests; so taught their children that not one has been disaffected to this day but all have honestly obeyed every royal command and cheerfully submitted to every constitutional law; … have carefully avoided every offensive measure … have never been troublesome or expensive to the mother country; have kept due order and supported a regular government; have maintained peace and practiced Christianity; and in all conditions and in every relation have demeaned themselves as loyal, as dutiful, and as faithful subjects ought; and that no kingdom or state hath, or ever had, colonies more quiet, more obedient, or more profitable than these have ever been.*[2]

Their many appeals were met with disdain from King George, although there were men in Parliament that sided with the colonies.

Freedom is fragile. Vigilance must be constantly practiced to ensure that our freedoms are not confiscated from our very midst. The first sign of a society's decay is when their history is taken from them. We, of all nations, have a godly heritage, and we are responsible for uncovering it and teaching it to our children. Our freedom was bought at an enormous price by so many. It is my prayer that as you learn of our forgotten heritage, you will be inspired to pick up the torch and protect our fast-disappearing freedoms with your last ounce of courage. Learn from the lives of those who have gone before you and, inspired by their sacrifice, persevere with all boldness to leave a legacy of freedom to those who come behind us.

Marilyn Boyer

...every man living in or out of a state of civil society has a right peaceably and quietly to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

—Samuel Adams, The Rights of the Colonists

Humility

DEFINITION

Acknowledging that any good
I have achieved is a gift from God,
and my life is to be used as an
instrument in His hand

MEMORY VERSE

And whosoever shall exalt
himself shall be abased;
and he that shall humble himself
shall be exalted.
Matthew 23:12

Bulletproof Coat

Col. George Washington

Monongahela, Pennsylvania
July 9, 1755

That year the French Canadians crept closer to the American border, intent on seizing the rich lands in the Ohio River Valley. They began sending their Algonquin and Iroquois allies into Virginia to attack and burn frontier settlements. After scalping and taking prisoners, the tribes disappeared over the mountains to the safety of French Fort Duquesne on the Monongahela River. Virginia's Governor Robert Dinwiddie realized that the European conflict with France, the "Seven Years'

War," had turned into a small world war. During the past few years, the British and French traded the colonies back and forth, shifting borders with Canada and signing peace treaties that usually lasted only a short time. Now Dinwiddie had a battle for the Ohio Valley on his hands. Which country controlled the area depended on who arrived first, gained Native American allies, built forts, and began ferrying new settlers over the mountains.

Dinwiddie had instructions from the British government to prevent the French from establishing forts at all costs. Quickly, the governor organized two small expeditions, one led by British General Edward Braddock. A twenty-two-year-old colonel

Tribes fighting the colonists

The retreat of General Braddock

named George Washington commanded the other. Plunging into the Monongahela wilderness in Pennsylvania, French and British forces collided in a skirmish. During the confusion, a French officer, possibly an emissary, was killed. The French immediately called for revenge. As they dug in at their stronghold at Fort Duquesne, Braddock decided to march against them with thirteen hundred troops.

By this time, the colonists had dubbed the conflict on the frontier the French and Indian War, instead of the Seven Years' War in faraway Europe. It demonstrated their growing sense of national identity and their preoccupation with affairs on the home front. Braddock and his British Regulars and a number of "Continentals" or colonists set off to

confront the French. On the way, Washington took Braddock aside and tried to dissuade him from marching into a forest full of French and Native Americans as if he were on a parade ground, back in London.

Braddock snapped: "[They] may frighten Continental troops, but they can make no impression on the King's Regulars!"

The British looked down on the colonists as rough country bumpkins, while the colonists viewed their British officers as aristocratic snobs. A high percentage of British officers had bought their commissions, meaning that many of them had little practical military experience. The militiamen, on the other hand, had not received much army training. The frontiersmen dressed in rugged homespun clothes suitable for the terrain, while British officers struggled through tall grass, deep rivers and along narrow forest paths in white gaiters and long, tightly-buttoned crimson coats with a crescent-shaped brass gorget nestling at the throat. They disagreed over fighting techniques as well. General Braddock believed that his soldiers ought to advance in neat block ranks according to form, keeping in step and facing the enemy at all times. But Washington, leading a band of frontiersmen, knew better. Since the Native Americans fought darting from tree to tree, his men fought that way also. It was the only way to survive in the wilderness.

Portrait of Colonel George Washington

Washington's worst fears came true all too soon. Seven miles from Fort Duquesne, the enemies ambushed the party. They opened shattering gunfire from behind boulders, trees, and thickets. The British regulars wheeled as they were taught, stood shoulder to shoulder out in the open and went down like ninepins. Braddock fell with a shot through his

chest. Within minutes, eighty-five officers had been killed or wounded. Seven hundred fourteen soldiers lay dead on the ground or crawled away into the forest. That day, the tribes claimed, the white man's blood mixed with the streams of the forest.

Suddenly, an Algonquin chief caught sight of George Washington rallying his frontiersmen on horseback. Turning to one of his young men, the chief exclaimed: "Mark tall and daring warrior. He is not of the red coat tribe. He hath...wisdom, and his warriors fight as we do. See him alone—exposed. Quick, let your aim be certain so he dies."

Instantly the Algonquins silently leveled their rifles. Their black eyes squinted as they sighted along the barrel, aiming at the tall man's chest. Their muskets cracked, filling the woods with murky grey powder smoke. Bullets pinged through the air. Washington heard a buzz like a bee, and a bullet sliced through his coat. He rode on. Bullets splattered against tree trunks, horses whinnied and plunged. The Algonquian chief kept telling his men to fire at Washington. A second and then a third bullet pierced his uniform. Suddenly, his horse shuddered and sank to the ground. Washington rolled out from under the horse as it went down heavily. Jumping to his feet, he seized a rider-less horse as it dashed by. A fourth bullet ripped through his coat, but again it had not touched him. Another horse stumbled and fell. There was no time to think, no

time to act except by instinct. But at that moment, Washington felt that an "all-powerful dispensation of Providence" was protecting him "beyond all human probability or expectation."

Suddenly the Algonquian chief shouted: "Stop firing!"

Beside him, another muttered: "I had seventeen clear shots at him and after all could not bring him to the ground. This man was not born to be killed by a bullet."

Swinging tomahawks, they leaped upon the dead and wounded, carrying off scalps as trophies. They took no prisoners. Washington, the only officer left on horseback, managed to rally the scattered British and Continental soldiers and led them back across the Monongahela River to safety.

Fifteen years later, Washington and his family physician, Dr. James Craik, passed near the joining of the Kanawha and Ohio rivers. All at once, a group of Native Americans led by an ancient Algonquian chief approached them. Sitting down, the chief stared at Washington across the flames of a council fire. Speaking through an interpreter, the chief went back to that July day in 1755. He told Washington how his men, who never missed, had shot at the young colonel again and again.

"'Twas all in vain." His voice rose. "A Power, mightier far than we, gave him protection from bullets. He cannot die in battle. I am old and soon

shall be gathered to the Great Council of Fire of my fathers in the Land of Shades, but ere I go, there is something bids me speak in voice of Great Spirit. Listen! The Great Spirit protects this warrior Washington and will guide his path. He will become the chief of great nations and of many people, yet unborn. People will say of him, he like me, [is] Chief of a mighty nation!"

Several years after the battle, Samuel Davies, a "New Light" Presbyterian minister in Hanover, Virginia, spoke of Washington's escape. "I cannot but hope," he said, that "Providence has hitherto preserved him in so singular a manner for some important service to his country."

When Washington accepted command of the Continental Army during the Revolution, it became clear that he had been preserved for this purpose twenty years before. Washington never doubted that God had saved his life that day. He demonstrated humility by taking no credit for the bulletproof coat. But the influx of British troops to the colonies due to the French and Indian War would have a direct effect on America's future. Tensions surfaced between the British Regulars and the militiamen during the conflict. These tensions demonstrated how far the colonies and Great Britain had drifted apart. The British sent more troops to the colonies in order to strengthen them against Native American attacks over the next two decades, but this only served to

increase suspicion and tensions among the colonists who believed that the British were trying to turn the colonies into a military state.

When the Revolutionary War ended in 1783, George III learned that Washington had turned in his resignation rather than seize power as a king or dictator. Amazed at the humility that Washington demonstrated, King George exclaimed: "If he does that, he'll prove to be the greatest man in the world."

This nation, and the other nations of Europe, may thereby learn, with more certainty, the grounds of a dissension that possibly may, sooner or later, have consequences interesting to them all.

—Benjamin Franklin, Preface to the English Edition of the Report of the Committee of Correspondence

Questions

1. What is the definition of humility? How did Colonel Washington's life reflect humility?
2. How do we know God protected George Washington's life?
3. Tell the account of Washington's "bulletproof" coat.
4. What was the conclusion the Algonquin chief drew concerning George Washington?
5. To what did George Washington attribute the preservation of his life during the ambush near Fort Duquesne?
6. How many times did one Native American claim to have shot at Washington?
7. What did Samuel Davies say of Washington?
8. King George's pronouncement of Washington's character perhaps speaks conclusively of his humility. What did King George say?
9. God has a special purpose for your life. Your life is in God's hand, just as Washington's was. To whom should you attribute any good you may accomplish?