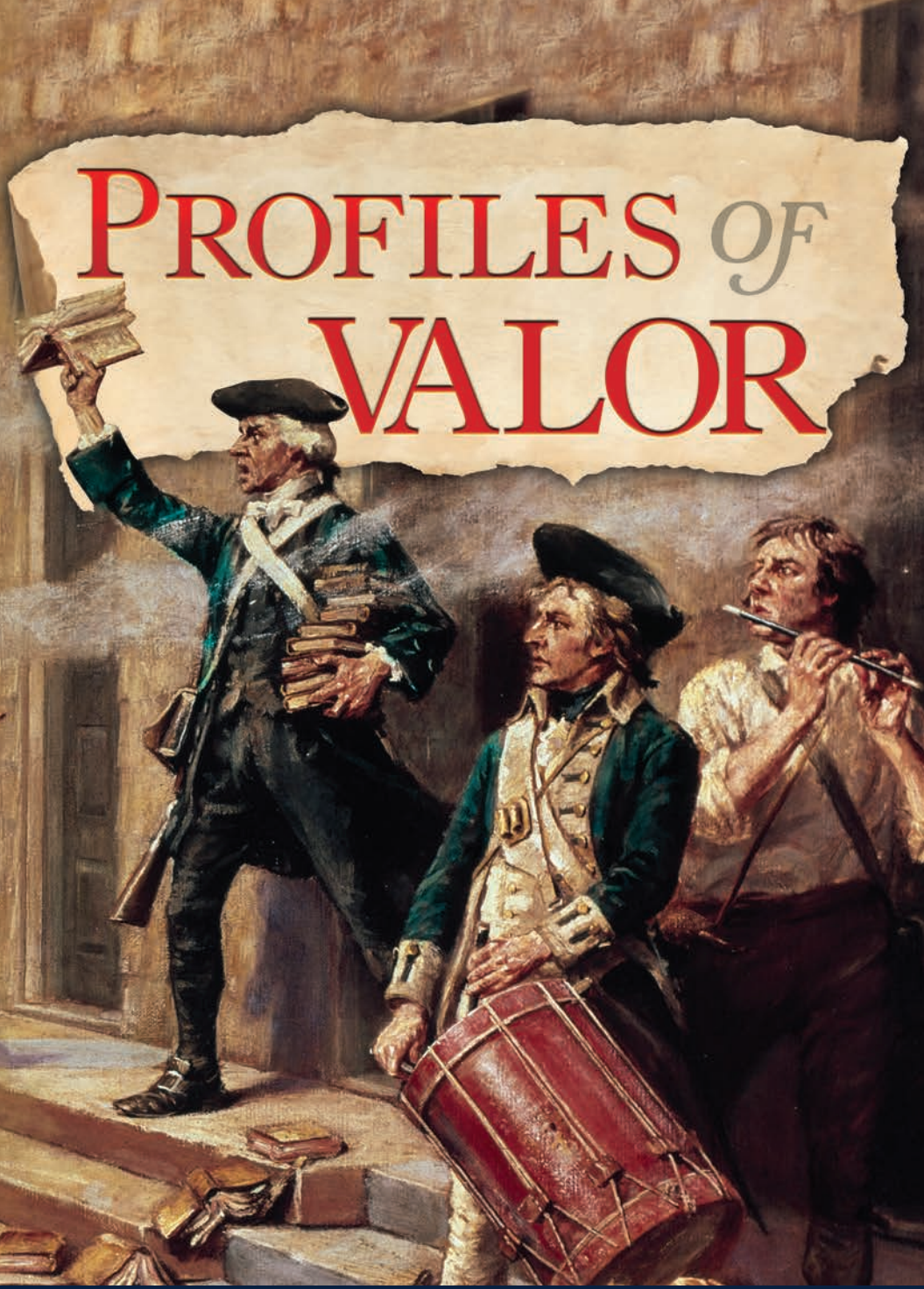
PROFILES OF VALOR



December 1777 – October 1780

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 DVDs 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!

Thanks to Judy Saunders, my long-time friend and prayer warrior, for her faithful work in the tedious editing process. God has gifted her with a precise eye for detail. She sees things I just don't notice. Thanks, my friend!

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

Throughout the struggle for independence, the Founding Fathers acknowledged God moving on their behalf. Some of those occasions are referenced in the stories included in this book.

The colonists were fighting for freedom against the most powerful, well-trained, and well-financed country in the world. They acknowledged many times that the Hand of Providence worked on their behalf. It was customary for Congress to appoint days of fasting and prayer in giving thanks to God for His direct intervention. Even a British general was known to comment that it seemed an invisible hand was working on behalf of the colonists.

John Adams declared, "The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were … the general principles of Christianity."[1]

Issac Potts, a Quaker man, happened upon George Washington kneeling in the snow crying out in anguish to God for protection and provision for his army. Potts, who had previously thought that a man could not be both a Christian and a soldier, was greatly moved by the intensity and sincerity of the prayer.

George Washington in his inaugural address commented, "No people can be bound to

acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand, which conducts in the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. … Every step, by which they have been advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency... ."[2]

In this book you will learn about real-life examples of bravery, compassion, loyalty, alertness, boldness, and incredible persistence. God accomplishes His purposes through men and women who seek to be useful and who lay aside their own comfort to accomplish great tasks.

How great a heritage we have forgotten! My hope is that this book will arm you with truth to share with others as you do your part to defend that freedom today.

Marilyn Boyer

Commitment

DEFINITION

Devoting myself to act upon my promises

MEMORY VERSE

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Psalm 37:5

Frenchman's War

Marquis de Lafayette

France
August 8, 1775

The young man's green eyes glowed with excitement as he listened. Outside, the warm summer air poured in from the green lawns of the chateau at Auvergne. As Prince William Henry, the Duke of Gloucester, spoke about the American Revolution in clipped, British tones, the tall, red-haired, nineteen-year-old Marquis de Lafayette felt a fresh wind blowing from across the sea. He could see the tattered little Continental army, led by Washington, struggling for freedom against a world superpower. His

The Marquis de Lafayette

sympathy overwhelmed him. One of the richest men in France, the Marquis did not fit in at the court of Louis XVI. He felt awkward in his elegant dragoon uniform. He never knew what to say. Unable to stay at his chateau with his beloved, eighteen-year-old wife, Adrianne, while a war for independence raged,

Lafayette decided to set out at once for America. "At the first news of this quarrel," he exclaimed, "my heart was enrolled in it."

He knew that Louis XVI, distantly related to Adrianne, would disapprove of his adventure. Secretly, he whispered his plan to his friend the Comte de Broglie and the Baron Johan de Kalb. Meeting with Silas Deane, an American agent in Paris in December 1776, the three men received written agreements that they would become major generals as soon as they stepped on American soil. Louis XVI flatly forbade the Marquis de Lafayette to leave France. In April, Lafayette slipped past the king's guards and boarded a ship in the Bordeaux harbor. When the news of his escape arrived in Paris, the British ambassador threatened war unless the king seized Lafayette's ship and brought him back. Louis immediately sent men with *letters de cachet* to arrest the Marquis. Placed in custody, Lafayette climbed into a disguise and fled to his ship with seven other French officers. When they put out to sea, two British cruisers set off after them. Lafayette and his men quickly put distance between them, watching the Royal Navy grow smaller until they disappeared. After a weary voyage of almost two months, the Marquis landed on the coast off Georgetown, South Carolina.

When he reached Philadelphia, Congress met him with cold silence. Tired of "French glory seekers,"

Congress refused to give Lafayette a major generalship. Eagerly, the Marquis offered to serve without pay. As the weeks passed with no result, the Frenchman almost packed up and started for home. Then one day, a letter from Benjamin Franklin in Paris landed on Washington's desk. Franklin described how people loved the Marquis de Lafayette in France, and begged Washington to take the young man on as an aide-de-camp.

Washington agreed. The two men met for dinner at the Philadelphia City Tavern on July 31, 1777. Together, they discussed the situation. At this point, Washington had only about 11,000 Continental soldiers. They had few supplies, poor equipment, and faced harassment from British troops. Gladly accepting the post on Washington's staff, Lafayette soon became Washington's information officer, gathering intelligence for the army. Lafayette set out on a successful mission to negotiate an alliance with the Oneida Nation against the British. When he appeared again at Valley Forge, he came up against the "Conway Cabal," a group of high-ranking officers that tried to turn Congress against Washington and strip him of his title as Commander-in-Chief. When members of the cabal approached Lafayette for his support, he turned them down, declaring his unwavering commitment to Washington as a friend and a leader. Washington, in turn, appreciated Lafayette's abilities as a sober strategist and a commander.

Washington and Lafayette at Valley Forge

Before long, Washington began to treat the Marquis like his own son.

Lafayette saw his first action in the colonies at the Battle of Monmouth in June 1777. In the autumn, he fell with a wounded leg while trying to rally the Third Pennsylvania Brigade at Brandywine on September 11. The Marquis refused to let a doctor touch him until he had organized the troops into an orderly retreat. Due to his unwavering commitment to the cause, Washington recommended his promotion to Major General. Over the next few months, the Frenchman assisted Major General Nathanael Greene on his campaign through New Jersey.

On June 19, 1778, the British evacuated Philadelphia and set off across New Jersey with Washington's

generals in hot pursuit. Catching up with the British forces, Washington ordered "Light Horse Harry" Lee to attack and strike them in the rear. After the first assault, Washington would throw in the rest of the army to defeat Cornwallis' troopers. By the time Washington and Lafayette caught up to Lee, they found him tumbling back in full retreat. Riding into the middle of the combat, Washington stopped the retreat, organized the ranks, and turned the men back to face the enemy. The second attack succeeded. The British fell back, but the setting sun

Lafayette rallies the troops at Brandywine

streaked woods and fields. Faced with approaching darkness, Washington could not gain a decisive victory. He placed the men in position, planning to attack again at first light. During the night, the British stealthily slipped away and retreated into New York.

Meanwhile, Lafayette worked tirelessly as a peacemaker, patching up Franco-American relations in the Continental Army. When a riot broke out between the French fleet under Admiral d'Estaing and the Americans, Lafayette hastened to smooth things over. Seriously concerned about the strength of the alliance, Lafayette asked for permission to return to France to lobby for more money and troops, departing in 1779.

"Serving America is to my heart an inexpressible happiness," the Marquis wrote, sailing joyfully back to the colonies on the *Hermione* in May, 1780. With him came 6,000 fresh troops commanded by General Jean-Baptiste de Rochambeau. Lafayette privately explained to Rochambeau that they could only achieve military success if the French and Americans maintained a harmonious relationship. With these fresh troops behind them, Washington and Rochambeau began plotting the final campaign to assure independence.

In July 1781, Lord Cornwallis, retreating from the Carolinas, received orders to divide his troops, sending some of them to New York and setting the others to establishing a defensive position in

Signing the Treaty of Paris which ended the war

Virginia. Moving cautiously down the Yorktown Peninsula, Cornwallis soon faced the Chesapeake Bay. Washington, still camped at West Point, feared that Cornwallis intended to stage an attack on Philadelphia from the peninsula. He sent word to Lafayette to pull 2,000 troops together. By advancing on the peninsula and stringing his men out along the coast, Lafayette hoped to keep Cornwallis bottled up at Yorktown until Washington and Rochambeau could arrive. The Marquis had already spent over half of his own fortune to feed, clothe, and equip the Continental soldiers. Now, he borrowed heavily from Baltimore merchants in order to provide his men with necessary food, shoes, and clothing.

Lafayette also knew that he had reinforcements coming from the French colonies in the Caribbean. On August 30, Admiral Francois-Joseph-Paul, the Comte de Grasse, sailed into the blue waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The lily flags of six French frigates and twenty-eight battleships, filled with 15,000 sailors and 3,100 marines, streamed against the horizon.

Lafayette visits Washington at Mount Vernon in 1784

Soon Lafayette faced the British with 5,500 regular French troops and 3,000 militiamen. Cornwallis had 8,800 British, Loyalist, and Hessian troops inside the fortifications. When Washington arrived in September, Lafayette's men laid siege to Yorktown on October 6th. Keeping up a steady watch offshore, the French fleet prevented Cornwallis from breaking

through Lafayette's encircling lines and escaping by sea. De Grasse's ships also kept Cornwallis from sending for help or receiving reinforcements from Howe in New York. Cut off from supplies, Cornwallis finally surrendered on October 19th, rather than let his men starve to death.

Lafayette, trim and upright in his French uniform, watched as the British signed the Treaty of Paris that signaled the end of the war. After almost four continuous years in America, Lafayette prepared to sail home to his wife, Adrianne, on December 23, 1781. From his estate at Mount Vernon, Washington admitted his high regard for his young staff officer. "I owe it to your friendship and to my affectionate regard for you, my dear Marquis, not to let you leave this country without carrying with you … new expressions of the high sense I entertain of your military conduct and other important services in the course of the last campaign, although the latter are too well known to need the testimony of my approbation." From aboard ship, the Marquis replied wistfully: "Adieu, my dear General; I know your heart so well that I am sure that no distance can alter your attachment to me. With the same candour I assure that my love, respect and my gratitude for you, are above expression; that, at the moment of leaving you, I felt more than ever the strength of those friendly ties that forever bind me to you."

Three years later, the Marquis and Adrianne

spent eleven blissful days with Washington at Mount Vernon in August 1784. Washington and Lafayette would never see each other again. Dark clouds loomed on the horizon. Within a few years, Washington reluctantly left Mount Vernon to shoulder his duties as President of the United States. Lafayette headed into the turbulent days of the French Revolution as a freedom fighter, an advocate of freedom of speech and religion, and a champion for freed slaves in the French colonies. During the French Revolution, Lafayette sent the keys of the Bastille Prison to President Washington as an expression of liberty. Later, he faced prison and destitution, but he never regretted fighting for freedom.

The Marquis de Lafayette demonstrated his commitment to freedom and the American colonies by devoting his life and his fortune to their welfare. "How have I loved liberty?" Lafayette exclaimed. "With the enthusiasm of religion, with the rapture of love, with the conviction of geometry: that is how I have always loved liberty."

He devoted himself, his life, his fortune, his hereditary honors, his towering ambition, his splendid hopes, all to the cause of liberty. He came to another hemisphere to defend her. He became one of the most effective champions of our Independence; but, that once achieved, he returned to his own country, and thenceforward took no part in the controversies which have divided us.

—John Quincy Adams,
in an eulogy of the Marquis de Lafayette

Questions

1. What did Lafayette say was his attitude the moment he heard of the conflict of the colonists?
2. Who was Lafayette?
3. What difficulties did Lafayette encounter in being able to leave France to assist America?
4. How did Congress first greet Lafayette?
5. What changed their mind?
6. Tell of Washington's first meeting with Lafayette. How did he come to treat Lafayette?
7. Where did Lafayette see his first action in battle? What display of bravery and commitment did he demonstrate at this battle?
8. How did Lafayette work as a peacemaker?
9. What did Lafayette proclaim about serving America?
10. Tell of Lafayette's involvement in the Battle of Yorktown.
11. Tell of the special relationship shared between Washington and Lafayette.
12. What did Lafayette say which demonstrated his commitment to America and to freedom?

May the friends of America rejoice! May her enemies be humbled and her censors silenced at the news of her noble exertions in continuance of those principles which have placed her so high in the annals of history and among the nations of the earth.

—Marquis de Lafayette,
in a letter to John Jay, 30 May 1787

13. What things are there in your life to which you could demonstrate commitment? What plans can you make to put this into practice?