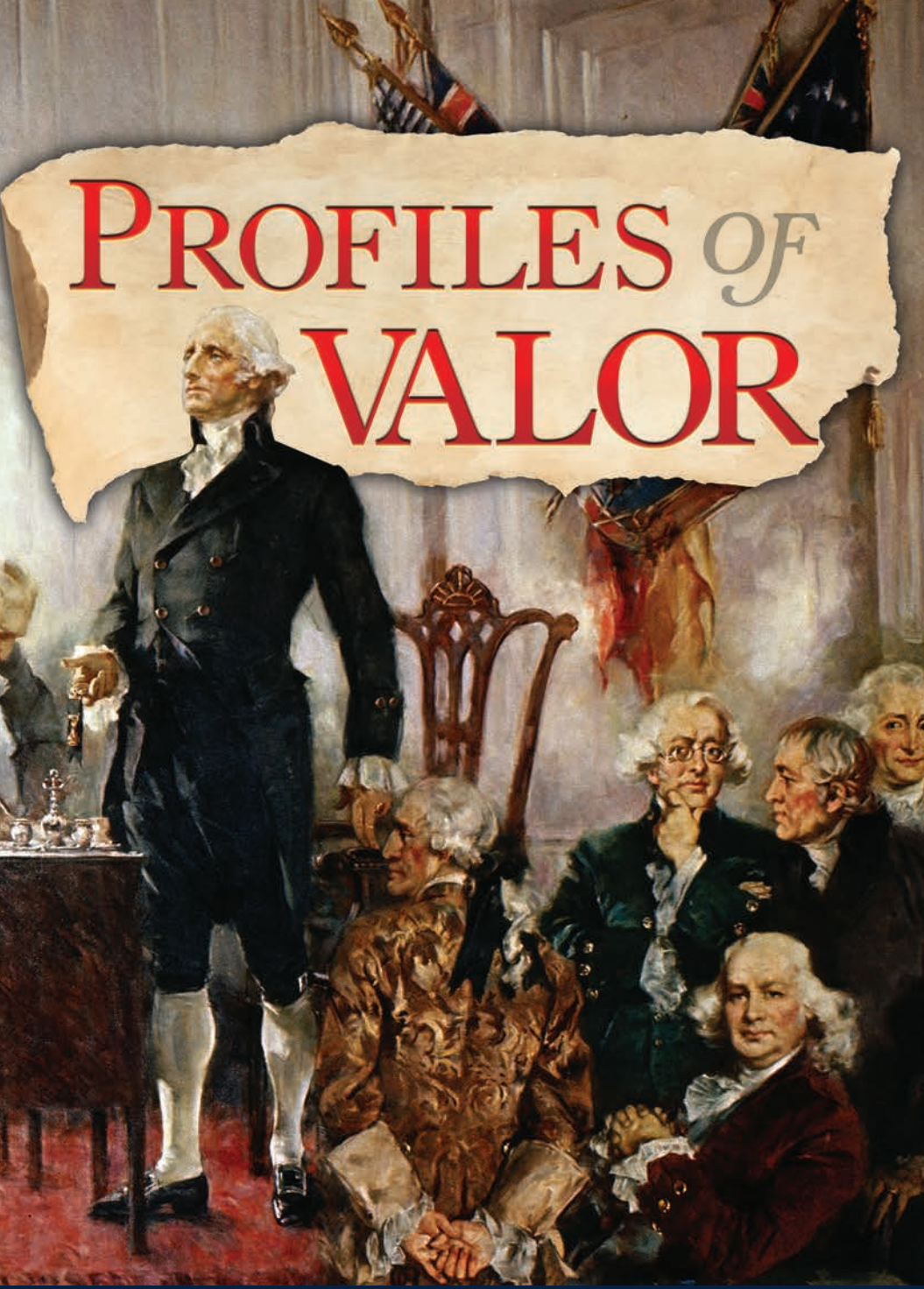
PROFILES *of* VALOR



January 1781 – February 1832

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

The founding era of our country is crucial to understand since the foundations of our Christian heritage were laid during this time, and today most of us do not know enough about this to defend the fact that we were once a Christian nation. This does not mean that everyone living then was a Christian but that Christian principles formed the basis of our government and influenced the policies society implemented. It was Christianity that shaped the foundations on which our country was established. Even non-Christians or deists, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, held a high regard for biblical standards.

Confusion reigned in the Continental Congress while trying to agree on whether to use the Articles of Confederation or write a new Constitution to govern our country. Benjamin Franklin spoke up to acknowledge that God governs in the affairs of men. He reminded the men that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain. He then called the delegates to prayer to seek direction from God.

Thomas Jefferson established the Bible as the main textbook in Washington, D.C. schools while president of the United States. Inscribed on the Jefferson Memorial are Jefferson's affirming

words, "God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the Gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever." He believed the Bible to be of great benefit to those who read it and applied its teaching to their lives. He contributed from his own funds to have copies of the words of Jesus printed and distributed to Native American tribes.

Alexis de Tocqueville, in 1831, was sent to America by Louis Phillipe of France to discover what made America great, in hopes to help his strife-torn nation. His conclusion after 18 months of study and observation was this: "I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers—and it was not there. … In her fertile fields and boundless forests—and it was not there … in her rich mines and her vast world commerce—and it was not there … in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution—and it was not there. It was not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is so good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great."[1] What he observed was

a desire on the part of imperfect people inspired by the spiritual revival of the Great Awakening to acknowledge God and to seek to follow Him daily with their lives. May the example set by these patriots serve as impetus to us today to lay aside selfish pursuits and live lives wholly dedicated to the Lord. I pray that God will use each of you to make a positive difference in your sphere of influence as each of these patriots did in their day.

Marilyn Boyer

Cautiousness

DEFINITION

Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing a task

MEMORY VERSE

In all thy ways acknowledge him,
and he shall direct thy paths.
Proverbs 3:6

Double Agent

James Armistead

Yorktown, Virginia
1781

He could smell smoke from British campfires as he strolled through the camp. Horses whinnied softly and groups of chatting Redcoats clustered around the gun carriages. Thirty-three-year-old James Armistead glanced sharply around him as he walked close by General Charles Cornwallis' headquarters. His tattered, earth-colored slave clothes and his story gave him a passport to this British camp. Posing as a slave escaping from the

American patriots, the young Black man had easily found work as an orderly and guide.

James Armistead Lafayette

Richmond, Virginia, lay in chaos and ashes after the British torched it. Looters prowled the streets, breaking into houses and stealing property. The Virginia Legislature piled into carriages and leaped onto horseback, and galloped out of the city. Benedict Arnold's turncoats lurked everywhere. They looked like patriots, but they bled British colors. By 1781, the focus of the war had switched to the south, where colonists fought for their lives in the mountains, swamps, farmlands, and cities of Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina.

The young aristocratic French general, Marquis de Lafayette, decided to throw in his men with the

American cause against British General Charles Cornwallis. In order to do this, he began recruiting spies from all walks of life and sending them undercover behind British lines. One of these, a slave named James Armistead, obtained permission from his master to assist the patriots and volunteered as a spy. Unlike many spies who simply located information and carried it back to their side, Armistead assumed the dangerous role of a double agent.

First, he infiltrated the British service as an orderly in Benedict Arnold's camp. Arnold commanded one of the two British armies in the Richmond area. Cornwallis headed the other. Hundreds of escaped slaves came over to the Redcoats during the course of the war in return for their promised freedom. Assuming the role of an escaped slave, no one noticed anything unusual about Armistead. The spy ambled through the British lines, his quick dark eyes noting the number of cannons and the troop positions. He did not write anything down just then. His razor-sharp mind recorded the information and filed it away until he could record it. Going about his business as an orderly near Cornwallis' camp, he often came near groups of soldiers on duty. He listened when they spoke about the war. He wanted to know how they felt about it. Did they think they were winning? Or did they secretly fear the Americans? He put his finger on the pulse of the British Army's morale and counted its heartbeat.

He totaled up the average number of soldiers on the move.

Armistead moved as cautiously as a cat. In the officers' quarters, lit by candlelight, he moved among the tables, bowing his head deferentially like an obedient servant. Generals sipped tea from fine bone china teacups. They put their heads together to discuss plans, objectives, and attacks. They spoke freely, argued, boasted. They looked right through him. Armistead could have smiled to himself. Nobody paid attention to an escaped slave unless they wanted to march with a guide through dense thickets without fear of a colonist shooting them in the back from behind a tree.

During the day, Armistead served as a guide, piloting British troops safely through the countryside. But at night, he turned into something entirely different. Like a wolf, he slipped out of the officers' tent. Once, he bumped into another Black servant. Whispering in his ear, James Armistead disappeared into the darkness. The other Black man slipped through British lines that night to pass the information on to General Lafayette. Able to read and write, Armistead usually wrote his reports down just before he smuggled them out through other American spies. Satisfied with Armistead's loyalty, Arnold and Cornwallis used him as a spy. While he tapped their resources for information, he also fed them disinformation: inaccurate data that never

found its way back to its source. He found it risky but easy to fool Cornwallis. With American help,

The Marquis de Lafayette with James Armistead

Armistead forged a large order for new colonial recruits. Then Armistead appeared at Cornwallis' headquarters with a dirty piece of paper he claimed he had found crumpled in the road. Cornwallis,

reading the request for additional troops, believed that the Americans outnumbered him. None of the other spies that Lafayette sent behind British lines could tell him anything until he began receiving Armistead's precise information on August 31, 1781. This news enabled Lafayette to spring an attack on British forces, trapping them at Hampton.

One day, as he travelled unobtrusively through the countryside between the American lines and British headquarters, Armistead saw signs of massive numbers of troops on the move. The British navy began landing ten thousand British soldiers in the vicinity of Yorktown. Armistead knew that this meant that the British had a major operation in the wings. Quickly, he passed on his detailed information to Lafayette, who in turn, relayed it to Washington. Washington could not believe his luck. Washington knew if he moved quickly, he could trap the British in Yorktown—the place Cornwallis had planned as his center for operations. Because Armistead moved fast and provided accurate data, Washington quickly laid siege to Yorktown and prevented the crucial ten thousand reinforcements from reaching their goal. With Rochambeau's French fleet blocking escape routes by sea and the Continental Army blockading the British from outside, the siege of Yorktown proved to be the last major battle of the war. When the exhausted British finally surrendered on October 19, 1781, General

Lafayette acknowledged that Armistead's work as a double agent had proved instrumental in securing the American victory.

Cornwallis did not appear at the official surrender. But as he later visited with Lafayette in the Frenchman's headquarters, the British general looked up with shock to see Armistead, whom he had thought of as his personal spy, wearing the buff-and-blue uniform of the Continental Army.

Following the war, James Armistead returned to his master. Under the Slave Act of 1783, he did not qualify to receive freedom because he had served as a spy, not a soldier. Two years later, when General Lafayette visited Armistead in Virginia, he was outraged to learn that Armistead was still a slave. The General immediately wrote a strong letter of recommendation to the Virginia Legislature. Armistead received his freedom in 1787. Demonstrating his gratitude and admiration for the man who had helped make this possible, the ex-slave changed his name to James Armistead Lafayette.

James Armistead demonstrated cautiousness in performing his mission in such a way as to not reveal his true allegiance, thereby greatly aiding the American cause of liberty!

This is to certify that the [James Armstead] has done essential services to me while I had the honour to command in this State. His Intelligence from the ennemy's [sic] camp were industriously collected and most faithfully delivered.

—Marquis de Lafayettee,
in a letter describing James Armstead's service as a spy

Questions

1. Give examples of how James Armistead practiced cautiousness.
2. Tell how Armistead put his own interests below that of his country.
3. How did doing his job well give him greater opportunity?
4. What "small jobs" do you have now? Remember, learning to do well in little things brings greater opportunities later.
5. Think of a time you were cautious in accomplishing a task.
6. How did Layfayette reward Armistead for his cautious and devoted service to his country?
7. Despite his work during the war, James Armistead returned to slavery after serving in a war meant to bring freedom to other Americans. How would that make you feel if you were James Armistead?