French & Indian War (1756–1763)

Braddock’s Field Issue: Statue of Col. George Washington (1930) • 2¢ • Scott 688

The issue marks the 175th anniversary of the Battle of Braddock’s field battle, July 9, 1755; also known as Braddock’s Defeat or the Battle of Monongahela. Newly arrived British general Edward Braddock ignored the advice not only of the Virginia officers assigned to his staff, such as George Washington, but that of the members of his own senior command. So convinced was Braddock of his troops’ invincibility that he had them pause before covering the last leg of the journey and take the time change to full dress uniform, including white piping and brass buttons. Assuming that the French would likely have fled at their advance or else be preparing to surrender, the soldiers advanced cheerfully as the drummers played the Grenadier’s March. They were almost annihilated by a party of around 300 Indians and perhaps thirty French soldiers, before fleeing back across the Monongahela River to safety. Shot in the lung, Braddock died during the retreat.

Washington Bicentennial: George Washington in the Uniform of a British Colonial Colonel (1940) • 1½¢ • Scott 706

The original oil painting by Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) is the only authenticated pre-Revolution portrait of George Washington. It was painted at Mount Vernon in 1772 and shows Washington in his uniform as a colonel of the Virginia Regiment, which he wore during the French and Indian War. A full color version of the portrait can be seen at http://marthawashington.us/archive/fullsize/gw-by-charles-willson-peale_637081de11.jpg.

Fort Duquesne Bicentennial: Occupation of Fort Duquesne (1958) • 4c • Scott 1123

Following two failed efforts by the British to capture Fort Duquesne (one by George Washington in 1754 and the disastrous attempt by Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock in 1755), a large force under the command of Brig. Gen. John Forbes and including Washington’s 2,000-man contingent of Virginia militiamen headed out in late summer 1758, laboriously constructing a new road as they went instead of using the existing Braddock Road. While the ill Forbes vacillated about delaying an offensive until spring, Washington gathered information that the fort was now undermanned and poorly supplied, and ordered an advance. On November 23, as the British troops approached, the French realistically chose to withdraw under cover of night, setting fire to the fort and the munitions they couldn’t carry before they left. It was the Virginia Colonel of Militia who had the honor of personally raising the British flag over the ruined fort. Some of the British troops remained to begin construction on a new fort to be named Fort Pitt, the site of present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Revolutionary War (1775–1781)

Military Leaders

George Washington (1860) • 90¢ • Scott 39

The earliest stamp to show General George Washington (1732–1799) in American military uniform is one of the rarest and most valuable of the Washington portrait stamps. The portrait is taken from the large painting by John Trumbull titled George Washington Resigning His Commission (1824), which now hangs in the Capitol Rotunda. The complete scene shows Washington resigning his commission as commander in chief of the Continental Army on December 23, 1783 before members of the Continental Congress.

George Washington (1932) • 6¢ • Scott 711

An affordable alternative is the red orange reprint issued in 1932 as part of the Washington Bicentennial issue.

Army Issue: Washington, Nathanael Greene & Mt. Vernon (1936) • 1¢ • Scott 785

Nathanael Greene (1742–1796) was Washington’s most trusted general during the Revolutionary War, and the only officer other than Washington to serve throughout the conflict with the rank general. Although born into a family of Quakers, Greene was fascinated by the study of military science. Even as a young man he had a reputation as dependable, efficient, and possessed of an uncommon amount of common sense. Following the battles at Lexington and Concord, Greene was made commander of the Rhode Island forces with the rank of Major-General. His subsequent meeting with Washington in July 1775 was the beginning of a lifelong friendship between the two men. (His wife, Catharine, would become a close friend of Martha Washington as well.) Desperate for supplies in the winter of December 1777 when the Continental Army was quartered at Valley Forge, Washington appointed Green Quartermaster-General with a special condition allowing him to keep his active duty rank as well. Greene was returned to active duty when the treachery of Benedict Arnold was uncovered and placed in command of West Point, successfully denying that prize to the British. After the ignominious defeat of General Horatio Gates by British forces at Camden, South Carolina on August 16, 1780, the Continental Congress asked Washington to appoint a replacement capable of stopping the British advance. Washington immediately placed Greene in command of the Southern Campaign. Greene was able to keep General Cornwallis in pursuit until the over-extended and exhausted British army was forced to withdraw from North Carolina. In the meantime, Greene’s forces maintained some of the highest morale of all the American troops. His indomitable will is reflected in a letter he wrote at about this time, describing his tactics against the British: “We fight, get beat, rise, and fight again.” He said of his overall strategy: “There are few Generals that have run oftener, or more lustily than I have done... But I have taken...
care not to run too far and commonly have run as fast forward as backward, to convince our enemy that we were like a crab, that could run either way.”

After his engagement with Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse, in which the British claimed the technical victory, the British statesman Charles James Fox acidly remarked that, “Another such victory would destroy the British Army.” Cornwallis himself said of the American commander: “Greene is as dangerous as Washington. I never feel secure when encamped in his neighborhood. He is vigilant, enterprising, and full of resources.”

Following the Peace Treaty of 1783, Greene surrendered his military commission, first paying his soldiers’ back wages out of the money given him by a grateful South Carolina, and in 1785 moved his family from Rhode Island to a plantation named “Mulberry Grove” on the Savannah River, a gift from the State of Georgia. He loved his new home, boasting to friends up north of raising strawberries “which measure three inches around,” but tragically collapsed while touring a friend’s rice fields and died of sunstroke and heat exhaustion June 19, 1786. The entire nation mourned his passing. The Marquis de Lafayette wrote that “in the very name of Greene are remembered all the virtues and talents which illustrate the patriot, the statesman, and the military leader.” General Anthony Wayne said, “He was a great soldier, greater as a citizen, immaculate as a friend.” Thomas Jefferson described Greene as, “Second to no one in enterprise, in resource, in sound judgment, promptitude of decision, and every other military talent.”

**Von Steuben Issue: General Von Steuben (1930)**  
2¢ • Scott 689

Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben (1730–1794) was born in the fortress town of Magdeburg in Prussia. His grandfather, Augustine Steuben, a minister in the German Reformed Church, had invented the family’s claim that they were members of an old noble family, Steuben, and inserted the “von” into his name. This claim to nobility allowed his Friedrich, William Augustine von Steuben, to become an officer in the Prussian Army (considered the greatest modern army in the world) and a Knight of the Order Pour de Mérite. It also gave Frederick William his own entrée into the Prussian Army as an officer (1746–63), where he eventually became an aide-de-camp to Frederick the Great. His title of Baron seems to have been granted by the Prince of Hollenzollern-Hechingen for whom he served as Grand Marshall 1764–1777. All this led, indirectly, to his commission as Major General in the Continental Army (1778–84), where he attempted to bring consistency and order to military drilling and maneuvers.

The Baron first met with the Continental Congress in February 1778, where he presented them with a letter of recommendation from Benjamin Franklin who was serving as one of the American Commissioners to the French court and whose letter introduced von Steuben as “His Excellency, Lieutenant General von Steuben, Apostle of Frederick the Great.” This was a complicated mistranslation. Von Steuben, who had only been a captain, had served in Prussian army as Deputy to the Quartermaster General; in French this became “Lieutenant General Quarters Maitre”; and in Franklin’s letter it became simply “Lieutenant General.”

In his own letter to Congress von Steuben wrote: “The object of my greatest ambition is to render your country all the service in my power, and to deserve the title of a citizen of America by fighting for the cause of liberty.”

Congress instructed von Steuben to report to General Washington at Valley Forge. He arrived at the camp on February 23, 1778 and made a favorable impression on the Commander in Chief, who appointed him temporary Inspector General. After inspecting the camp and the men, von Steuben set to work to write down a consistent set of drills and maneuvers that would be used by all units in the Continental Army. Because he did not speak English, von Steuben wrote the drills in French, his French secretary translated them into English, and John Laurens and Alexander Hamilton (Washington’s aides-de-camp) turned the text into military language. Von Steuben set a precedent by working personally with the troops, demonstrating the moves as well as barking out the commands, impressing the soldiers by his willingness to drill them himself and by his multi-lingual command of profanity. His insistence on strict record keeping and routine inspections of provisions and other supplies is estimated to have saved the Continental Army better than $600,000 throughout the course of the war.

The following winter, the now officially commissioned General von Steuben turned his set of drills into a manual of regulations. It was illustrated by Captain Pierre Charles L’Enfant (the man who drew the plans for Washington, DC). The Regulation for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States was approved by Congress in March, 1779. It was printed in Philadelphia and distributed to the thirteen states for use with their militia as well as with the Continental Army units. Popularly known as the “Blue Book,” it was used by the United States Army until 1814.

General von Steuben served with the Continental Army for the remainder of the war, and commanded the three divisions in the Continental Army at Yorktown in 1781. Following the Peace Treaty of 1783, he helped demobilize the army, and resigned in 1784.

Von Steuben became a U.S. citizen (one of the few foreign officers who chose to do so) and ultimately retired to his land holdings in New York State. He died on his farm in the Mohawk Valley, on November 28, 1794. A bronze plaque near his grave reads simply: “Indispensable to the Achievement of American Independence.”

**Pulaski Issue: General Casimir Pulaski (1931)**  
2¢ • Scott 690

Casimir Pulaski (1745–1779), son of Count Joseph Pulaski, was born in Warsaw, Poland. Banished from his homeland by Russia, he traveled to Paris where he met Benjamin Franklin. Pulaski volunteered his services to the new nation, and Franklin in turn wrote directly to George Washington, describing Pulaski as “an officer renowned throughout Europe for the courage and bravery he displayed in defense of his country’s freedom.”

Pulaski arrived in Philadelphia in 1777 and, to Washington’s delight, proved to be a brilliant military tactician. Following the
Thaddeus Kosciusko (1746–1817) was born in Siechnowica, in the eastern territories of the Kingdom of Poland. He was studying engineering in Paris at the start of the American Revolution but in 1776 left France to join the struggle for freedom in the American colonies. He joined Washington’s army as a Colonel of Engineers, the first of the foreign officers to receive a military commission from the Continental Congress.

Deeply moved by the Declaration of Independence, his strongest wish was to meet its author, Thomas Jefferson. The two men shared the same political philosophy and eventually became close friends.

Kosciusko organized the successful blockade on Charleston and developed the battles that made the crucial difference in the victory at Saratoga. In 1778 he was appointed chief engineer at West Point, New York, where he created the fortification on the Hudson River that would become known as the “American Gibraltar” because of its unpenetrable battlements. For the next two years he worked on the West Point fortifications, taking time while there to plant a garden that is still tended by Army cadets.

At the end of the war, Congress made him an American citizen, promoted him to the rank of brigadier general, and awarded him $15,000 plus 500 acres of land in Ohio. He chose to return to Poland in 1784, where he helped organize the Polish Army for his homeland’s ongoing struggle with Russia and Prussia and later took part in the adoption of Poland’s new constitution. Badly wounded in an engagement in 1794 and taken prisoner by the Russians, Kosciusko was paroled by the Czar Paul I after two years on condition that he never return to Poland.

He returned to the United States in 1797 and renewed his acquaintance with Jefferson. In his will, which he drafted with Jefferson’s help, Kosciusko left his money and property for freeing and educating American slaves. Jefferson was to serve as his executor. Sadly, Kosciusko’s intentions were never carried out.

The Polish exile returned to France less than a year after his arrival in the United States, but his correspondence with Jefferson continued until Kosciusko’s death in 1817. He had moved to Solothurn, Switzerland in 1816 and was killed in a riding accident. Kosciusko’s body was brought home to Poland and laid to rest in the royal crypt at Wawel Castle in Krakow. A mound made of earth taken from every battle-field in Poland and reaching 150 feet high was raised in his honor in the outskirts of the city. In 1828 the Corps of Cadets at West Point erected a monument to Kosciusko at West Point in his honor. Often called the “Father of West Point” as well as the “Father of American Artillery,” Jefferson wrote of Kosciusko, “He is as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known.”

**Kosciusko Issue: General Tadeusz Kosciusko (1933) 5¢ • Scott 734**

The Father of the American Navy, who once declared: “I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast for I intend to go in harm’s way,” helped to establish the traditions of courage and professionalism that mark the modern day U.S. Navy.

**John Barry**

Irish-born Commodore John Barry (1745–1803) not only shares the honor of being called the Father of the American Navy, but in the eyes of his contemporaries was more deserving of the title than his more famous naval colleague.

After having gone to sea as a cabin boy he achieved his first command at age 21, the schooner Barbadoes, out of Philadelphia. “Big John” (he stood 6’4”) was a popular and successful ship master and steadily rose in the quality of ships given to him to command. His last pre-Revolutionary War vessel was the Black Prince, aboard which he set the record for the fastest single day of sailing in the eighteenth century: 237 miles by dead reckoning in 24 hours. After the start of the war, this same ship was purchased by the Congress and renamed Alfred. It was on this renamed ship that Lieutenant John Paul Jones first raised the American flag.

With the start of the war between the American Colonies and Great Britain, Barry was given the responsibility of outfitting the first Continental Navy ships from Philadelphia. The newly commissioned Captain Barry was the first to capture a British war vessel on the high seas. While his new ship, the Effingham, was still under construction in Philadelphia, it had to be destroyed to keep it from falling into British hands, so Barry fought on land with the marines at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton. His favorite ship, the frigate Alliance, was the only regularly commissioned Continental Navy ship still afloat at the end of the war. The final naval battle of the Revolutionary War was between the Alliance and the British frigate Sybil on March 10, 1783, in which the Alliance, carrying 72,000 Spanish silver dollars for the Continental Congress and under Barry’s command, triumphed after a ferocious fight.

Following the war the Continental Navy was dissolved, only to be revived under Washington’s presidency as a permanent force. In 1794 Secretary of War Henry Knox wrote to Barry informing him that he had been appointed senior captain of the new Federal Navy, a post in which Barry continued to serve until his death on September 14, 1803.
**Lafayette Bicentenary (1957) • 3¢ • Scott 1097**

The engraving for the stamp design is based on an oil painting, Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Gilbert du Motier, marquis de Lafayette, by French court artist Joseph Désiré Court in 1834, the year of Lafayette's death. It depicts the French and American hero in the uniform of a lieutenant general in the French army as he would have appeared in 1792. The original work now hangs in the Musée national du Château et des Trianons Versailles.

**American Bicentennial: 200th Anniversary of Arrival of Lafayette in America (1977) 13¢ • Scott 1716**

Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roche-Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834) lost his father before he was two years old, and his mother and grandfather the year he turned twelve. At the age of fourteen he entered the Royal Army and at age sixteen married Marie Adrienne Françoise de Noailles, a relative of the King of France. The American struggle for independence was both romantic and exciting to the wealthy young nobleman, and against the express wishes of the King Louis XVI, Lafayette and several other French officers hired a ship to take them to America to volunteer to serve without pay for the new cause. They arrived near Charleston, South Carolina on June 13, 1777. Although he was only nineteen years old, his standing as a member of one of the oldest families in France was an impressive credential. Congress commissioned him a Major General and sent him to George Washington to be a member of his staff. Fortunately, the two men developed a warm relationship that lasted for the rest of Washington's life. Wounded during the Battle of Brandywine, Lafayette recovered in time to go into winter quarters with Washington and the Continental Army at Valley Forge. Throughout the war Lafayette would continue to serve where he was needed, without complaint and with great success. His idealism was made of sterner stuff than that of the "summer soldier and sunshine patriot" scorned by Thomas Paine in The Crisis (December 23, 1776).

In 1778 he received permission from Congress to return home to France for a while, where he lobbied tirelessly at the court on America's behalf. In a letter written to Washington June 12, 1779 he was able to report success in securing financial aid:

> It gave me much trouble, and I so much insisted upon it, that the director of finances looks upon me as his evil genius. France has incurred great expenses lately. The Spaniards will not easily give their dollars. However, Dr. Franklin has got some money to pay the bills of Congress, and I hope I shall determine the government to greater sacrifices. Serving American is to my heart an inexpressible happiness.

**American is to my heart an inexpressible happiness.**
He also pushed the French government to send supplies and troops and spent large sums of his own money to buy supplies for the American army. Finally, in 1780, King Louis XVI authorized the dispatch of French troops and arms under the command of the Count de Rochambeau, initially with the expectation that Lafayette would command a joint American division. However, Rochambeau’s orders contained the explicit instruction “That the general, to whom his Majesty intrusts the command of his troops, should always and in all cases be under the command of General Washington.”

With the invaluable support of the French army and navy, Lord Cornwallis and the British army were trapped in Yorktown and compelled to surrender on October 17, 1781. In December 1781 the young marquis finally returned to his home and family in France.

Lafayette returned on a private visit to America in 1784 at Washington’s personal invitation:

[Come with Madame la Fayette and view me in my domestic walks. I have often told you, and repeat it again, that no man could receive you in them with more friendship and affection than I should do; in which I am sure Mrs. Washington would cordially join me. We write in respectful compliments to your Lady, and best wishes for your little flock. With every sentiment of esteem, Admiration and Love, I am etc.]

And in 1824 Congress unanimously resolved that President Monroe should extend a formal invitation to Lafayette (he had renounced the title of “Marquis” in 1790) to make a grand tour of the new nation. Accompanied by his oldest son, George Washington Lafayette, the Revolutionary War hero visited all of the new nation. Accompanied by Ball’s son, the Count de Rochambeau, initially with the expectation that Lafayette would command a joint American division. However, Rochambeau’s orders contained the explicit instruction “That the general, to whom his Majesty intrusts the command of his troops, should always and in all cases be under the command of General Washington.”

With the invaluable support of the French army and navy, Lord Cornwallis and the British army were trapped in Yorktown and compelled to surrender on October 17, 1781. In December 1781 the young marquis finally returned to his home and family in France.

Lafayette returned on a private visit to America in 1784 at Washington’s personal invitation:

[Come with Madame la Fayette and view me in my domestic walks. I have often told you, and repeat it again, that no man could receive you in them with more friendship and affection than I should do; in which I am sure Mrs. Washington would cordially join me. We write in respectful compliments to your Lady, and best wishes for your little flock. With every sentiment of esteem, Admiration and Love, I am etc.]

And in 1824 Congress unanimously resolved that President Monroe should extend a formal invitation to Lafayette (he had renounced the title of “Marquis” in 1790) to make a grand tour of the new nation. Accompanied by his oldest son, George Washington Lafayette, the Revolutionary War hero visited all twenty-four states over a fourteen-month period stay, during which he was lionized and cheered at every stop. Congress granted him (along with his descendants in perpetuity) honorary U.S. citizenship, the first person to be so honored. He continued to support a representative government in his own county until his death.

Bernardo de Gálvez Issue (1980) • 15¢ • Scott 1826

Bernardo Vicente Apolinario de Gálvez (1746–1786) was a Spanish colonial administrator and Captain General of Louisiana during the American Revolutionary War. Although Spain did not openly ally itself with the new nation in the early years, it was willing to provide covert aid funneled through its colonial holdings in the south, including Louisiana. Gálvez, however, had already been supplying arms to Americans on his own initiative. He corresponded directly with Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and Charles Henry Lee, and in 1777 he sent $70,000 worth of arms to add the cannon captured at Fort Ticonderoga to the artillery of the Continental Army. He was commissioned colonel and assigned the daunting task of transporting the captured cannons and mortars to Boston in the dead of winter. Unfazed, Knox used ox sleds to drag the sixty pieces of artillery plus ammunition across 300 miles of snow and ice to the city and placed them on Dorchester Heights above Boston, in position to bombard the occupying British troops. Faced with this daunting array, General Howe withdrew his forces for Halifax on March 17, 1776.

Knox continued to organize the placement and transport of American artillery and munitions throughout the war, including the creation of a national arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts that produced and repaired arms for the army. Washington wrote to Congress in May 1777: “General Knox... has deservedly acquired the character of one of the most valuable officers in the service, and... combating almost innumerable difficulties in the department he fills has placed the artillery upon a footing that does him the greatest honor.”

When the British army was finally forced into a siege situation at Yorktown, the American artillery was placed in a commanding position by Knox, and after the surrender of Cornwallis on
October 19, 1781, he was promoted to major-general and placed in command of West Point until 1783.

Knox was elected Secretary of War by the Congress of the Confederation in 1785, and in 1789 he was appointed Secretary of War in President Washington's new cabinet; the country's first official Secretary of War. A large man at 300 pounds, his energy never seemed to flag. While in office he prepared a plan for a national militia, worked to establish a regular Navy, initiated the building of a chain of coastal fortifications, and supervised Indian policy. By December 1794, however, he was ready to rejoin civilian life. He wrote to Washington: "After having served my country nearly twenty years, the greatest portion of which under your immediate auspices, it is with extreme reluctance, that I find myself constrained to withdraw from so honorable a station. But the natural and powerful claims of a numerous family will no longer permit me to neglect their essential interest. In whatever situation I shall be, I shall recollect your confidence and kindness with all the power and purity of affection, of which a grateful heart is susceptible."

Postmaster General Timothy Pickering was appointed the successor to Knox as Secretary of War.

Knox died unexpectedly in 1806. He was buried in Thomaston, Maine. The stamp portrait is based on an 1873 oil painting by James Harvey Young, which in turn was based on a ca. 1805 portrait from life by Gilbert Stuart.

**Soldiers & Other War Heroes**

**Nathan Hale** (1925) * ½¢ • Scott 551

Captain Nathan Hale (1755–1776) was born in Coventry, Connecticut and educated at Yale University. Hired as a public school teacher in 1774, the following year Hale resigned his teaching position and joined the Seventh Connecticut Regiment. By 1776 the Continental Army was in desperate need of accurate information about British activities in New York City, and Washington asked for a volunteer to secure the needed intelligence. Sometime in mid-September Hale volunteered to go behind enemy lines disguised as an unemployed Dutch schoolmaster. The exact details of his activities in New York are unknown, but he was preparing to return to the Continental Army on September 21, when he was captured and the notes and drawings he had made were discovered hidden in his clothes. He freely admitted that he was a Patriot soldier and was condemned to die without benefit of trial. He was hanged as a spy the next morning on the orders of General William Howe, and his body left on display as a warning. One witness to his execution reported Hale's last words as "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." He had turned twenty-one just three months earlier.

The stamp portrait is based on a 1914 statue by sculptor Bela Lyon Pratt.

**Battle of Monmouth: Molly Pitcher Overprint**

(1928) * 2¢ • Scott 646

Born Mary Ludwig near Trenton, New Jersey in 1754, in 1777 she chose to accompany her first husband, John Hays, when he joined the American army. There she acted as a nurse, cook, and washwoman as needed. She became a heroine during the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778 when she carried water for the men and to help cool the cannons, thus earning her nickname of "Molly Pitcher." When her husband collapsed from his wounds, she is reported to have taken over firing his cannon, holding her position throughout the remainder of the battle. This act earned her an honorary sergeant's commission from General Greene. A popular Revolutionary War jingle immortalized her action:

```
Moll Pitcher she stood by her gun
And rammed the charges home, sir;
And thus on Monmouth bloody field
A sergeant did become, sir.
```

After the war, and following the death of her second husband, George McCauley, in 1822 Mary was given an annuity by the Pennsylvania Legislature for her "services during the Revolutionary war" rather than the usual veteran's widow pension, indicating that she had indeed seen action. The annuity amounted to an initial sum of forty dollars and an annual stipend in the same amount for the rest of her life. She died in 1832 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and was buried with military honors.

**Liberty Issue: Patrick Henry** (1955) • $1 • Scott 1052

Patrick Henry (1736–1799) was a fiery patriot whose passionate orations seemed to distill the revolutionary fervor sweeping the country into language everyone could understand. A self-taught lawyer, he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765. It was while he was serving in the House of Burgesses that Henry made a speech denouncing the new Stamp Act imposed by Great Britain. Declaming that only the colony had the right to decide what should be taxed and for how much, he threatened, "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third..." before being shouted down by cries of "Treason!"

During the First Continental Congress, held in Philadelphia in September 1774, he told the assembled delegates: "The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American." But it was the following year at the Virginia Convention of March 1775, during the debate as to whether or not Virginia should raise an armed militia or wait in patience a little longer to hear what King George and Parliament proposed, that he uttered the explosive words that blazed their way onto the pages of American history:

```
The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave.... If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable and let it come! I repeat, sir, let it come.... Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace, but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!
```
Elected governor of Virginia in 1776, he was re-elected for two more terms, succeeded by Thomas Jefferson, then re-elected again in 1784, serving another two terms. After the war Washington offered him the position of Secretary of State, but Henry declined. When John Adams took office he also offered Henry a prestigious appointment, envoy to France, but again Henry refused. In failing health, he retired to his beloved Red Hill plantation where he continued to practice law until his death at the age of sixty-three.

**Contributors to the Cause: Sybil Ludington (1975) • 8¢ • Scott 1559**

Sybil Ludington (1761–1839) is one of the few heroines of the Revolutionary War who is remembered by name — although the modern spelling of it does not appear on any official documents. Her tombstone reads “Sibbell,” her family spelled her name “Sebil” (among other variations), while she herself signed her name “Sebal.” Whatever the correct spelling, the “female Paul Revere” (who actually rode about twice as far as the Massachusetts patriot) was the daughter of Colonel Henry Ludington, commander of the 7th Regiment of the Dutchess County (NY) Militia. On April 25, 1777, Col. Ludington received word that British troops were burning buildings in Dansbury, Connecticut as they searched for rebel supply caches. His men were scattered throughout the county, busy with spring planting. Sixteen-year-old Sybil volunteered (or was volunteered by her father) to sound the muster alert to the different farms. She set out at 9 p.m. on a dark, rainy night riding a south to north loop passing through Carmel, Mahopac, Kent Cliffs, Farmers Mills, and Stormville, before returning home around dawn, having ridden forty miles spreading the word to the militia. Unfortunately, Col. Ludington’s 400 men arrived too late to stop the British from burning Danbury, although they did harry them as they left the area. Nevertheless, George Washington (whose aide Col. Ludington had once been), stopped by the family’s home to thank the teenager personally.

Sybil continued to serve the militia throughout the war as a messenger. When the hostilities were over, she married a lawyer, Edmond Ogden, and later lived in Unadilla, New York until her death at the age of seventy-eight. Her hometown of Fredericksburg, New York was named Ludingtonville in her honor, and a heroic statue of her by sculptor Anna Wyatt Huntingdon stands on the shore of Lake Gleneida, near Carmel, New York.

**Contributors to the Cause: Peter Francisco (1975) • 10¢ • Scott 1560**

Salem Poor was born a slave sometime in the late 1740s, but was able to purchase his freedom from his owner, John Poor, for twenty-seven pounds (a year’s salary for a working man) in 1769. In 1771 he married a freedwoman named Nancy, by whom he had a son. In May 1775 he enlisted in the Continental Army mustering with the minutemen at Concord. Although Salem continued to serve with the Continental Army until 1780 — at Saratoga, White Plains, Monmouth, and Valley Forge — it was his actions at Bunker Hill that preserved the name of one of the few names of the perhaps 5,000 African-Americans who served in the Continental Army. A petition signed by fourteen officers, including Colonels Prescott and Brewer, was sent to the General Court of Massachusetts commending Poor’s bravery. Of the several thousand men who fought the British at Bunker Hill, he was the only one so recognized. Unfortunately, the details of his actions are no longer known — although he has been credited by some sources with killing British Lt.-Col. Abercrombie during the battle. The petition reads:

*The subscribers beg leave, to report to your Honorable House — which we do in justice to the character of so brave a man — that under our own observation, we declare that a negro man called Salem Poor, of Colonel Frye’s regiment, Captain Ames’ company, in the late Battle at Charlestown, behaved like an experienced officer, as well as an excellent soldier. To set forth the particulars of his conduct would be tedious; we would only beg leave to say that in the Person of this said negro centers a brave and gallant soldier. The reward due to so great and distinguished a character, we submit to the Congress.*

Nothing is known of his life after his service record concludes, except its sad ending. Impoverished, Salem Poor passed away in a Boston almshouse in 1802.

**Contributors to the Cause: Peter Francisco (1975) • 18¢ • Scott 1562**

Many heroes of the American Revolution were well-known in their lifetimes, but forgotten as time rolled on and battles became distant memories. One such was a young man named Peter Francisco (ca.1760–1831). His life was the stuff of Hollywood film making. Found abandoned on a dock at City Point (now Hopewell), Virginia, the 5-year-old boy was dressed in the remains of rich clothing, including silver buckles on his shoes with the initials “P.F.” He spoke no English but a mix of what sounded like Spanish, Portuguese, and French — and could only repeat his name, “Pedro Francisco.” Taken on as an indentured servant by Judge Anthony Winston, an uncle of Patrick Henry, he grew into a young giant, standing 6’6” (in an era when the average height was around 5’6”) and weighing 260 pounds.

He joined the Continental Army in 1776 at age sixteen, enlisting as a private in the 10th Virginia Regiment and from there he passed into legend for his bravery and feats of strength, despite receiving numerous wounds during the course of battle. One of the most dramatic stories is depicted on the U.S. postage stamp; it occurred August 16, 1780 during the Battle of Camden, South Carolina. As the Continental army fell back, Peter spotted an artillery piece abandoned when the horse pulling it was killed. According to reports, he hoisted the 1,100-cannon onto his back and managed to carry it to the army lines. Not surprisingly, he was known by a variety of nicknames, including “Giant of Virginia” and “Hercules of the Revolution.” His tombstone reads simply “A Soldier of Revolutionary Fame.”
Battles & Engagements
(chronological order)

**Lexington & Concord (April 19, 1775)**

Lexington-Concord Issue: Washington at Cambridge (1925) • 1¢ • Scott 617

The 1925 three-stamp Lexington-Concord issue released to mark the 150th anniversary of the battles has as its first design “Washington at Cambridge,” from a photoglyphic chart in possession of the Cambridge Public Library. It represents Washington taking command of the Continental army, an event that did not actually take place until after the Battles at Breed’s and Bunker Hills in June. The design depicts Washington and a small group of Massachusetts Militia facing off against General Gage and a troop of British regulars.

Lexington-Concord Issue: “Birth of Liberty” (1925) • 2¢ • Scott 618

Lexington-Concord Battle: “Birth of Liberty” (1975) • 10¢ • Scott 1563

Both of these issues feature the oil painting Birth of Liberty, by Henry Sandham, which hangs in the Lexington Town Hall. This painting symbolizes the two battles that touched off the Revolutionary War.

Lexington-Concord Issue: “The Minute Man” (1925) • 5¢ • Scott 619

The subject of the stamp design was taken from a photograph of The Minute Man statue by Daniel Chester, erected at Concord, Massachusetts in 1875. Although Chester made sketches of descendants of Isaac Davis, believed to have been the first militiaman killed, the final portrait was intended to reflect a typical minuteman, one hand holding a musket, the other resting on a plow handle. The name came from the requirement that one-third of the members of each Massachusetts militia regiment were “to be ready at a minute’s warning with a fortnight’s provision, and ammunition and arms.” Although only a few other colonial legislatures created minutemen of their own, this ideal of a citizen-soldier, ready to fight for his liberty at a moment’s notice, has become enshrined in the American consciousness.

**Fort Ticonderoga (May 10, 1775)**

Fort Ticonderoga Issue (1955) • 3¢ • Scott 1071

Issued for the bicentenary of the fort’s capture, the stamp design includes a map of Fort Ticonderoga and a portrait of Ethan Allen (1738–1789) standing in front of the captured artillery.

**Bunker (Breed’s) Hill (June 16, 1775)**

Liberty Issue: Bunker Hill Monument (1959) • 2½¢ • Scott 1034

The Bunker Hill Monument depicted on the stamps is a 221-foot granite obelisk erected in 1842 on Breed’s Hill where the majority of the fighting actually took place. The cornerstone was laid by the Marquis de Lafayette. It replaced an 18-foot wooden pillar with a guilt urn that was erected in 1794 by the King Solomon’s Lodge of Masons to honor fellow mason and ardent patriot, Dr. Joseph Warren, who had joined the militia on Breed’s Hill as a volunteer, although he had been commissioned a general. He was one of the last to leave the battlefield and was killed by British musket fire. On June 18, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John:

> Dearest Friend, The Day: perhaps the decisive Day is come upon which the fate of America depends, my bursting Heart must find vent at my pen. I have just heard that our dear Friend Dr. Warren is no more but fell gloriously fighting for his country...”

At the foot of the obelisk stands a statue of Col. William Prescott, who was supposed to have cautioned his poorly provisioned men, “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes.” Also issued as a coil stamp in 1959 (Scott 1057).

**John Trumbull Issue: Detail from “The Battle of Bunker’s Hill” (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1361**

Detail from The Battle of Bunker’s Hill by John Trumbull (1756–1843). The stamp shows Lt. Thomas Grosvenor and his attendant Peter Salem. Peter Salem (ca. 1750–1816) was born a slave but given his freedom in exchange for enlisting in the Massachusetts militia. He also fought at Concord, Saratoga, and Stony Point, staying in the army until the end of the war. He is credited with killing British Major John Pitcairn during the fighting at Breed’s Hill; the musket he is said to have used is on display at the Bunker Hill Museum. The painting (along with seven others depicting scenes from the American Revolution) were given to Yale, Trumbull’s alma mater, after his death. The Battle of Bunker’s Hill can be seen in its entirety at http://ecatalogue.art.yale.edu/detail.htm?objectId=41.

Trumbull wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1789 about his desire to record the important historic moments of the Revolution, saying in part: “…some superiority also arose from my having borne personally a humble part in the great events I was to describe. No one lives with me possessing this advantage, and no one can come after me to divide the honor of truth and authenticity, however easily I may hereafter be exceeded in elegance.”

Bunker Hill Battle (1975) • 10¢ • Scott 1564

Another detail from The Battle of Bunker’s Hill by John Trumbull is shown on the stamp commemorating the 200th anniversary of the battle. It depicts British Major John Small protecting the dying Joseph Warren from being bayoneted by a British soldier. Trumbull had a truer view of the event he painted than most — he had been a colonel in the Continental Army and served as an aide to George Washington. His goal was to capture the most important moments of the Revolution. He studied under Benjamin West in London beginning the summer of 1780 but was arrested as a spy in November (whether or not it was true is unknown) and only after the intercession of artists West and Copley was he released, on condition he leave England. Trumbull returned to West’s studio following the war, and The Battle of Bunker’s Hill was completed there in 1786.
Battery – Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery

large Hessian force. The unit still exists as the Alexander Hamilton
of the Continental Army from Chatterton’s Hill, holding back a
retreat. The battle is considered the oldest unit in the United States.

Quickly became a skilled and popular commander. At the Battle
of White Plains, Hamilton's artillery battery covered the retreat
quickly became a skilled and popular commander. At the Battle
of White Plains, Hamilton's artillery battery covered the retreat
of the British army. The battery was under the command of Captain
Hamilton, who was recommended for the rank of "Captain of the Provincial Company of Artillery," and
later promoted to the rank of major. He was a self-taught scholar, and
in the fall of 1772 he was given the opportunity
to receive a formal education in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Three
years later, in 1775, he entered King’s College (now Columbia
University) in New York and received his bachelor of arts degree
one year later. A fervent and articulate supporter of the patriot
cause, that same year he joined the New York Artillery, studying
artillery and military tactics on his own. He was recommended for
the rank of "Captain of the Provincial Company of Artillery," and
quickly became a skilled and popular commander. At the Battle
of White Plains, Hamilton's artillery battery covered the retreat
of the Continental Army from Chatterton's Hill, holding back a
large Hessian force. The unit still exists as the Alexander Hamilton
Battery – Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 5th Field Artillery

and is considered the oldest unit in the U.S. Regular Army. Continually praised for his courage and leadership, Hamilton
eventually served as Washington’s aide.

The stamp design shows an artillery crew, consisting of four
men dressed in Continental uniform, actively manning their
cannon. Shown below are representations of the Betsy Ross and
"Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” flags. The artist, Edmund F.
Ward, was a prominent illustrator for the Saturday Evening Post
and similar magazines who had once shared a studio with his
friend Normal Rockwell. Born in White Plains in 1892, Ward was
a lifelong resident of that city and had already painted a mural
for the town's Federal Building when he was chosen to create the
stamp design.

Alexander Hamilton Bicentennial (1957)

3¢ • Scott 1086

Following the war, the young lawyer helped to frame the
U.S. Constitution and served as the new country's first Secretary
of the Treasury. A believer in a strong national government, he
was the major author of The Federalist (1787), a classic work
on government that is still studied today. Although they often
disagreed, Hamilton backed Thomas Jefferson for president
against his opponent Aaron Burr, whom he described as "a man
of irregular and unsuitable ambition ... who ought not to be trusted
with reins of government," and then opposed Burr's candidacy for
governor of New York. As a result he was challenged to a duel by
Burr in 1804 and fatally shot. Abhorring the practice of dueling
but believing it was necessary to accept the challenge for his own
political career, Hamilton had not planned to fire his own pistol,
although it discharged accidentally when it hit the ground. He was
forty-nine years old.

The stamp features a bust portrait of Hamilton and an
engraving of the original Federal Hall in New York City. Described
by the National Park Service as "The Birthplace of American
Government," the Federal Hall was built on the city of the original
New York City town hall and designed by architect Pierre L'Enfant
as the nation's first capitol. This was where George Washington
took the oath of office as President. It also housed the first
Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Executive Branch offices.
Torn down and remodeled after the Greek Parthenon in 1842, the
building briefly saw duty as a Customs House and then served as
U.S. Sub-Treasury building until 1920. Today, it is open to all as a
national museum.

Battle of Trenton (December 26, 1776)

Prominent Americans Issue: Thomas Paine (1968
untagged, 1973 tagged) • 40¢ • Scott 1292

On Christmas Day Washington had his officers read aloud to
the soldiers portions of an inspirational article that had appeared
in the Philadelphia-based Pennsylvania Magazine on December
23rd. "The Crisis," by Thomas Paine, 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 their country; but he that stands by it now,
deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny,
like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation*
with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.

English by birth, Thomas Paine (1737–1809) had emigrated to America in 1774 with the help of Benjamin Franklin. He would go on to write thirteen “Crisis” articles between December 23, 1776 and April 19, 1783; they would eventually be collected and preserved as The American Crisis. He solidified his position as a fiery and eloquent propagandist for the rebel cause with a short pamphlet, Common Sense, published January 10, 1776, in which he observed:

Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil, in its worst state an intolerable one.... I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature, which no art can overturn, viz., that the more simple any thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered.

An equally important political work was written on behalf of the French Revolution: the Rights of Man was published in two parts in 1791 and 1792. His third major work, The Age of Reason (1794–95), argued that the government should be based on the natural equality of all men in the eyes of God and was enormously popular among British intellectuals. However, his attack on formal religion practices and his acerbic tongue won him many enemies.

The stamp issue celebrating Washington's victory over Cornwallis is based on the Charles Willson Peale painting George Washington at Princeton (1779). The stamp depicts Washington with his hand resting on a cannon barrel, captured battle flags at his feet; behind him can be seen Nassau Hall, Hessian prisoners, and a blue battle flag with a circle of thirteen stars. Although the composition is a product of artistic license, Peale was in fact a participant in the battle as the commander of a company of Philadelphia militia. In all, Peale painted seven major portraits of Washington (many of which he reproduced with minor variations). Known as an artist who did not "idealize" his sitters, Peale's portrayals are thought to be much closer representations of Washington's actual appearance than the better known (today) Gilbert Stuart portraits. The painting was enormously popular, and that same year Peale was able to report:

I have on hand a number of portraits of Gen. Washington. One the ambassador had for the Court of France, another is done for the Spanish Court, one other has been sent to the island of Cuba, and sundry others, which I have on hand are for private gentlemen.

The original is owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia and is on display in the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol.

Nassau Hall was built in 1754 as the primary building of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). Taken over by the British in November 1776, it suffered some cannon ball damage during the battle, but was restored and later used to seat the Continental Congress from June–November 1783. It was there that Washington and the Congress received formal notice of the signing of the Peace Treaty with Great Britain.

**Battle of Oriskany (August 6, 1777)**

**American Bicentennial: Battle of Oriskany (1977) • 13¢ • Scott 1722**

The stamp is based on the painting, Herkimer at the Battle of Oriskany (c.1901), by artist and magazine illustrator Frederick C. Yohn. The artist got one major detail wrong: it was Herkimer’s right leg, not his left, that was hit by musket fire. Nicholas Herkimer (1728–1777) died without issue; his large and rather grand farm house in Little Falls, New York was restored in the 1960s and is now a state historical site.

**Bennington (August 16, 1777)**

**Vermont Sesquicentennial: Green Mountain Boy (1927) • 2¢ • Scott 643**

The Green Mountain Boys originated as a group of Bennington, Vermont men — under the leadership of Ethan Allen, his brother Ira, his cousin Seth Warner, and Remember Baker — who banded together as an unauthorized militia, determined to protect their land rights against encroachment from the state of New York. By 1772 they were being called the Green Mountain Boys. These local militia members formed the basis of the Vermont militia that was placed under the command of Col. Seth Warner as a part of the Continental Army in 1775.
Historic Flag Series: Bennington, 1777 (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1348

According to tradition, this was the flag that flew over the garrison at Bennington, Vermont when it was attacked by Burgoyne's forces. Supposedly it was designed and sewn by Col. Stark's wife Molly. Unfortunately for tradition, researchers have determined that both the cotton fabric and the thread used to sew it are from an item woven on an early nineteenth-century power loom. Another claim is that it was ordered made by Nathaniel Fillmore, a veteran of the Battle of Bennington and the grandfather of U.S. President Millard Fillmore, for his son Septa Fillmore, who was a colonel in the New York/Vermont militia. The flag, which is housed in the Bennington Museum, is said to have been flown at the Battle of Plattsburg (Lake Champlain) in 1814, one of the important battles of the War of 1812. However, there is no historic record of this flag before it was placed on display in the Chicago Public Library in the late nineteenth century, only oral family tradition. Some scholars believe it was created either in 1824 for the visit of General Lafayette or in 1826 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It was donated to the Bennington Museum in 1926.

Interestingly, the Bennington Museum does have the remnants of a genuine battle flag from the Revolutionary War. The green silk flag with its irregular pattern of thirteen stars on a blue background is known as the Green Mountain Boys flag. While there are some counter-theories as to which unit actually possessed the flag, in this case tradition still holds firmly to the Green Mountain Boys.

Second Battle of Saratoga (October 7, 1777)

Burgoyne Campaign Issue: The Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga (1927) • 2¢ • Scott 644

The Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga by John Trumbull. The rather tranquil scene shows the British commander Gen. John Burgoyne offering his sword in surrender to the American commander Gen. Horatio Gates, who graciously refuses to accept it. Sketches for the painting were begun in 1791, but the completed work wasn't displayed until January 1822. It now hangs in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, DC. Trumbull later painted a smaller version, which he donated to Yale University. It is the 12x18-foot oil painting from the Capitol Rotunda that appears in the form of a cropped engraving on the stamp. Around the stamp's frame are the names of the major battles of Burgoyne's campaign: Bennington, Oriskany, Fort Stanwix, and Saratoga.

American Bicentennial Issue: Surrender at Saratoga (1977) • 25¢ • Scott 1728

Full-color detail of The Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga by John Trumbull focusing on the central figures of Generals Burgoyne and Gates, and their respective attendants: Major General Phillips and Colonel Morgan of the Virginia Riflemen. Not to be seen anywhere in the painting is the real American hero of both major battles of the engagement, Benedict Arnold. Feeling that his military accomplishments had been slighted and that he personally had been betrayed by the politicians in Washington, Arnold had turned traitor in 1779; the hero's name had become synonymous with the word "turncoat."

Definitive: The Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga (1994) • $1 • Scott 2590

An expanded version of the engraving of The Surrender of General Burgoyne by John Trumbull was used as the focal point for the $1 definitive stamp issued in 1994.

Fort Sackville Surrender (February 25, 1779)

George Rogers Clark Issue: Surrender of Fort Sackville to Clark (1929) • 2¢ • Scott 651

George Rogers Clark (1752–1818) continued to lead military actions until the war's end. Because he had assumed personal responsibility for many of the expenses associated with these campaigns during the Revolutionary War, when neither Congress nor the state of Virginia would reimburse him, he became the victim of creditors, eventually losing all but the small piece of land he retired to in Clarksville, Indiana in 1803. He suffered a series of strokes, the first of which required the amputation of one leg, and he died at his sister Lucy's home at Locust Grove, Kentucky, at the age of sixty-eight. In his funeral eulogy, Judge John Rowan said of Clark, "The mighty oak of the forest has fallen, and now the scrub oaks may sprout all around... The father of the western country is no more."

The stamp design is based on the 1923 painting The Fall of Fort Sackville by Frederick C. Yohn, commissioned by Youth's Companion magazine and the Indiana Historical Commission. A reproduction of the painting appeared on the cover of the October 11, 1923 issue of the magazine. The original painting is now on display at the Indiana Historical Bureau in Indianapolis.

Sullivan Expedition (July–September 1779)


Major General John Sullivan (1740–1795) was a New Hampshire lawyer and a delegate to the First Continental Congress as well as an active military officer in the Revolutionary War. Following his scorched earth campaign against the Iroquois Confederacy in 1779 he resigned his commission for reasons of poor health. He was variously a member of Congress, attorney-general of New Hampshire, governor of that commonwealth, and finally a U.S. judge until his death in Durham, New Hampshire at the age of fifty-five.

Wartime Events

Valley Forge (December 1777–June 1778)

Valley Forge Issue: Washington at Prayer (1928) • 2¢ • Scott 645

The story of George Washington kneeling in prayer in the snow at Valley Forge first appeared in the 1816 edition of largely fanciful and often wildly inaccurate Life of George Washington, with Curious Anecdotes by Rev. Mason L. Weems, part-time parson and full-time traveling book salesman. According to Weems, the
event was witnessed by a Quaker named Isaac Potts, one of whose
descendants relayed the story to a man who, as an 80-year-old,
passed the story on to Weems. Washington was a reserved man
who was very private about his devotions and his religious beliefs,
so while there is no reason to doubt that he prayed at Valley Forge,
it seems less likely that he would do so out in the open when
anyone could watch his devotions.

The stamp design is based on an 1889 engraving by John C.
McRae (now in the Library of Congress) after an 1866 painting
made by the well-known patriotic artist Henry Brueckner.

American Bicentennial: Washington Reviewing His
Troops (1976) • 31¢ • Scott 1689

The souvenir sheet with its pane of five stamps shows a detail
from the 1883 painting by William T. Trego originally titled The
March to Valley Forge, December 16, 1777 and now more popularly
known as Washington Reviews His Troops at Valley Forge. One
of the last of the great “history painters,” Trego titled his iconic
composition after a passage in Washington Irving’s Life of George
Washington (5 vols., 1856–59):

Sad and dreary was the march to Valley Forge,
uncheered by the recollection of any recent triumph. . .
Hungry and cold were the poor fellows who had so long been
keeping the field . . . provisions were scant, clothing was worn
out, and so badly were they off for shoes, that the footsteps of
many might be tracked in blood.

The painting is owned by the American Revolution
Center and will be housed with its collection of artifacts
in the new Museum of the American Revolution, to
be built near Independence Hall, Philadelphia (http://
americanrevolutioncenter.org).

The stamp details show (left to right): (a) Two Officers; (b)
Washington; (c) Officer, black horse; (d) Officer, white horse; (e)
Three soldiers.

Christmas Issue: Washington at Valley Forge (1977)
13¢ • Scott 1729

The Christmas issue for 1977 used as its central design a detail
from modern artist Arnold Friberg’s popular painting The Prayer
at Valley Forge (1976). The original shows Washington kneeling
in the snow beside his white horse, a composition Friberg first
attempted at age twelve. The artist later wrote:

[To]insure accuracy in trees and landscape, I made a
pilgrimage to Valley Forge, in the dead of winter . . . in the
snows of February, it was deserted . . . silent, lonely, and cold.
Through the medium of paint, [I tried] to recall the pain,
the cold of that cruel winter of 1777–1778. I sought to pay
tribute to the tall and heavy-burdened man who alone held
our struggling nation together.

The original painting has been on display at the Mt. Vernon
Estate, but will be moved to an as-yet unknown location following

Battle of Yorktown (September 28–October 19, 1781)

Yorktown Issue: Surrender of Cornwallis (1931)
2¢ • Scott 703

The bicolor stamp design celebrating the 150th anniversary
of the surrender of Cornwallis to Yorktown features vignette
portraits of the Count de Rochambeau, General Washington, and
the Count de Grasse.

American Bicentennial: The Surrender of Lord
Cornwallis at Yorktown (1976) • 13¢ • Scott 1686

The souvenir sheets shows the center detail of The Surrender
of Lord Cornwallis (1819–20) by John Trumbull. The central
figure, mounted on a white horse, is Gen. Benjamin Lincoln,
who is extending his hand to receive Cornwallis’s sword being
surrendered by Brig. Gen. Charles O’Hara. The pane of five
stamps depict (left to right): (a) Two British Officers; (b) Gen.
Benjamin Lincoln; (c) George Washington (mounted on a brown
horse); (d) John Trumbull, Col. Cobb, von Steuben, Lafayette,
Thomas Nelson; and (e) Alexander Hamilton, John Laurens,
Walter Stewart.

American Bicentennial: Map — Battle of Yorktown
(1981) • 18¢ • Scott 1937

This map on stamp design shows the field positions of the
various land and naval forces during the siege at Yorktown and
demonstrates in simple graphics how neatly Cornwallis had been
boxed in.

American Bicentennial: Map — Battle of Virginia
Capes (1981) • 18¢ • Scott 1938

In August 1781 Admiral François Joseph Paul, comte de
Grasse, sent word to Washington that he was on his way from
the West Indies with a large French fleet and would be available
to aid the American army until he was forced to leave for safer
waters during the fall hurricane season. He arrived at the mouth
of the Chesapeake Bay on August 28 with twenty-four warships
and 3,000 soldiers that would be put ashore to join forces with
the Marquis de Lafayette. When British Admiral Thomas Graves
arrived on September 5 to reinforce Cornwallis, it was to find the
French fleet in possession of the bay. Admiral de Grasse promptly
sailed out into more open waters to form a battle line. The ensuing
fight lasted two hours and was a near draw in terms of losses,
although it was a clear strategic victory for the French. During
the next few days the two fleets continued in a standoff along the
Virginia Capes, which allowed Admiral Jacques-Melchior Saint-
Laurent, comte de Barras to slip in behind and sail his smaller
French fleet into the bay to resupply General Rochambeau with
guns and munitions. On September 10 Graves headed back to
New York, abandoning Cornwallis to his fate and leaving the
Chesapeake Bay in control of the French fleet.

Peace of 1783 (1933) • 3¢ • Scott 727

On April 18, 1783 George Washington issued a General
Order to the Army that contained the long awaited Proclamation
of Peace, although the final Treaty of Paris was not signed until
publicly owned historic site in the United States purchased by the State of New York in 1850, was the first known as the “Order of the Purple Heart.” Hasbrouck House, the military award he called the Badge of Military Merit, now he was headquartered in Newburgh in 1782 that he established in residence from April 1, 1782 to August 19, 1783. It was while Hasbrouck House in Newburgh, New York where he remained which was damaged by fire, can be completed. Copies of the currently being stored off site until repairs to the Armory, Museum in Philadelphia (see www.firsttroop.com), but is. The original Revolutionary War flag is housed in the Troop’s collection.

The Commander in Chief far from endeavouring to stifle the feelings of joy in his own bosom, offers his most cordial Congratulations on the occasion to all the Officers of every denomination, to all the Troops of the United States in General, and in particular to those gallant and persevering men who had resolved to defend the rights of their invaded country so long as the war should continue. For these are the men who ought to be considered as the pride and boast of the American Army; And, who, crowned with well earned laurels, may soon withdraw from the field of Glory, to the more tranquil walks of civil life.

The stamp design shows Washington’s headquarters at the Hashbrouck House in Newburgh, New York where he remained in residence from April 1, 1782 to August 19, 1783. It was while he was headquartered in Newburgh in 1782 that he established the military award he called the Badge of Military Merit, now known as the "Order of the Purple Heart." Hasbrouck House, purchased by the State of New York in 1850, was the first publicly owned historic site in the United States.

**Flags of the Revolutionary War**

**Historic Flag Series: Philadelphia Light Horse, 1775 (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1353**

The flag was created for a mounted troop formed by a small group of Philadelphia businessmen and gentlemen on November 17, 1774. The elaborate, hand painted design originally included a small Union Jack in the upper left, but the canton was later painted over in blue and silver stripes. It was presented to the troop by Captain Abraham Markoe in 1775. The Light Horse escorted George Washington when he left Philadelphia in June 1775 to take command of the Continental Army in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and served in various major campaigns and engagements throughout the war. Known today as The First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry, it is considered America’s oldest continuously serving mounted unit. Replaced after the Revolutionary War by a Federal Eagle standard, the Philadelphia Light Horse standard continued to be carried on special ceremonial occasions such as the Troop’s anniversary and the nation’s centennial celebrations. The original Revolutionary War flag is housed in the Troop Museum in Philadelphia (see www.firsttroop.com), but is currently being stored off site until repairs to the Armory, which was damaged by fire, can be completed. Copies of the original Colors have been carried since the retirement of the original and are also in the Troop’s collection.

**Historic Flag Series: Washington’s Cruisers (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1347**

This is the flag flown from a small squadron of ships outfitted by George Washington in the fall of 1775 at his own expense and before the Continental Navy was formed. Their goal was to keep British ships from resupplying troops in Boston. The design is a variation of the New England Pine Tree flag, common since the 1600s, and seems to have been the suggestion of Colonel Joseph Reed, George Washington’s aide and military secretary at the time. On October 20, 1775, Reed wrote to Col. John Glover, a captain in Washington’s fleet of schooners and the leader of the “Marblehead Men” Regiment that would later ferry Washington’s men across the Delaware River for their December 26 meeting with the Hessian soldiers at Trenton, New Jersey. Within the body of the letter is this well-known paragraph:

> We have accounts that the small squadron which sailed some time ago is bombarding Fulmouth and Portsmouth Our vessels must be careful how they fall in with them. Please to fix upon some particular colour for a flag, and a signal by which our vessels may know one another. What do you think of a flag with a white ground, a tree in the middle, the motto “Appeal to Heaven?” This is the flag of our floating batteries.

When the Continental Congress commissioned navy ships a short time later, it is likely that many of these continued to fly the familiar pine tree flag.

The traditional image of the Washington Cruisers Flag with its branched pine tree is shown on the stamp issued in 1968. None of the original flags have survived and there are no contemporary descriptions that describe them in exact detail. Nevertheless, a letter from British Admiral Hugh Palliser, written January 6, 1776, describes a captured American naval flag from the Washington that matches in general description that proposed by Col. Reed:

> Captain Meadows has brought the American vessel’s Colours, it is a white field with a green Pine Tree in the middle, the motto, Appeal to Heaven.

The earliest known American flag to incorporate the pine tree symbol that is still in existence dates from the late 1600s and is known as the Southold Flag. The pine tree depicted is not the branched version seen in modern images of the flag, but a simple green triangle over an equally simple block for a trunk. It may or may not be the most common pine tree design from New England, but it is the only actual design known.

**Historical Flag Series: First Navy Jack, 1775 (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1354**

According to the U.S. Navy’s Naval History & Heritage Command, the “belief that ships of the Continental Navy flew a jack consisting of alternating red and white stripes, having the image of a rattlesnake stretched out across it, with the motto..."
Don’t Tread on Me … rests on no firm base of historical evidence.” What is documented is that Commodore Esek Hopkins (1718–1802), the Commander in Chief of the Continental Navy, used as his personal standard a flag presented to the Continental Congress in 1775 by Col. Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina. The Gadsden Flag depicted a coiled rattlesnake, ready to strike, on a yellow field with the words “Don’t Tread on Me.”

The rattlesnake and “Don’t Tread on Me” inscription was a popular motif throughout the colonies during the Revolutionary War. An October 9, 1779 letter from Benjamin Franklin and John Adams describes some American flags, noting: “For example, the vessels of war of the State of Massachusetts Bay have sometimes a pine tree; and those of South Carolina a rattlesnake, in the middle of the 13 stripes.” The image of the striped rattlesnake flag in association with Hopkins (along with the New England pine tree flag) first appeared in an August 1776 British engraving made by Thomas Hart of London. This fanciful engraving bears no relation to either the actual appearance of Hopkins (who is portrayed as a man in his twenties rather than his actual age of fifty-eight) or the placement of flags on any ship under his command. The legend was perpetuated by George Henry Preble in 1880 in his classic book, History of the Flag of the United States, which includes an illustration of the flag along with the text, “the striped jack may have been a flag of thirteen stripes, with a rattlesnake undulating upon it.” However, Commodore Hopkins himself referred to the Navy jack used by the fleet in January 1776 as “the strip’d jack” and later mentions using a “striped flag” as a signal. Nevertheless, the “Don’t Tread on Me” flag seen in the Hart engraving has become enshrined among the stories of the American Revolution.

Historic Flag Series: Grand Union (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1352

The Grand Union Flag has thirteen alternating red and white stripes and the British Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner (the canton). The design was intended to show that the united colonies still maintained an allegiance to Great Britain, while asserting their rights to be treated as equals. It was first hoisted on Prospect Hill near Washington’s Cambridge headquarters on January 2, 1776. Washington wrote in a letter dated January 4, “on the 2d … we hoisted the union flag in compliment to the United Colonies. But, behold! it was received at Boston as a token of the deep impression the [King’s] speech had made up on us, and as a signal of submission.” Other contemporary accounts report the same impression by the British; not surprisingly, as the need to be conciliatory faded, the flag lost its popularity and it was not seen in regular use after 1777.

Betsy Ross Issue (1952) • 3¢ • Scott 1004

The story of Elizabeth (Betsy) Griscom Ross (1752–1836) and the first Stars and Stripes is based on family reminiscences and a very small amount of factual historical information. According to the family’s story, as brought to public notice in 1870 by her grandson William Canby, George Washington (who attended the same church as Betsy and her late husband John), Robert Morris (another member of Christ Church), and George Ross (John’s uncle), visited Mrs. Ross in her home above the family upholstery business in May 1776 and asked her if she could make a flag from a sketch they had. (Upholsterers did more than create and hand sew furniture covers, they also provided wall hangings, draperies, and flags for their customers.) The story continues that the rough sketch provided by the men included a six-pointed star, which Betsy corrected to a more easily cut five-point star (see “5-Pointed Star in One Snip” at www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagstar.html for instructions).

Beyond the 1870 affidavits presented by William Canby from Betsy’s daughter Rachel Fletcher, granddaughter Sophia B. Hildebrant, and niece Margaret Donaldson Boggs, however, the only other historical information comes from the minutes of the State Navy Board of Pennsylvania for May 29, 1777, which makes note of “An order on William Webb to Elizabeth Ross for fourteen pounds twelve shillings, and two pence, for making ship’s colours, &c, put into Richards store.”

Whether she did indeed create the nation’s first flag or whether it was lesser ship’s flags, or even both, what is known is that Betsy Ross was a patriotic woman who ran their Philadelphia business alone after her husband’s death in a munities explosion. Her second husband, sea captain Joseph Ashburn, died in March 1782 while a prisoner of war in Old Mill Prison, England. Her third husband, whom she outlived, was John Claypoole, a family friend and sailor who had been imprisoned with her second husband and who she married in May 1783. During this period of national strife and personal loss, she raised a family and supported them by her skills as a seamstress and a businesswoman. She knew George Washington personally and she is on record as having made military flags for the young republic. Perhaps the bottom line is that legends don’t have to be literally true to be important. Sometimes they tell the story we need to hear.

Historic Flag Series: First Stars and Stripes (1968) • 6¢ • Scott 1350

Also known as the Betsy Ross Flag, the thirteen stripes with thirteen stars in a circle on a blue field is a familiar icon in American history. First depicted in 1892 in a 9x12-foot painting by Charles H. Weisgerbert, who based his portrait of Betsy Ross on a photographs and life sittings of her daughters and other female relatives. She is shown displaying the finished flag with its thirteen stripes and circle of thirteen stars on a blue field to Washington, Morris and Ross. This image became part of the public consciousness in 1895 when millions of small reprints of the painting were sold for small sums to pay for the restoration of Betsy Ross’s house. The iconic details were repeated in a 1908 painting by E. Percy Moran titled The Birth of Old Glory, which was widely reprinted in 1917.

Historical Flag Series: Rhode Island(1968) 6¢ • Scott 1349

Although tradition holds that Rhode Islanders fought with other minutemen outside Boston (1775), and at the Battles of Trenton (1776) and Brandywine Creek (1777), the actual Rhode Island regiments were not formed until 1781. Certainly, by the Siege at Yorktown, Rhode Islanders were carrying the familiar Hope flag with its canton of thirteen stars and a ship’s anchor below a banner that read: “HOPE.” The anchor and motto had been used as a symbol of Rhode Island since 1647 and both appear...
Lawrence Perry's flagship, the USS Revenge, was disabled; he took her to the tomb. Of completeness and because it is the least expensive U.S. stamp available to collectors that features a portrait of the Hero of Lake Erie, was kept in New York harbor by the British blockade for most of the war. Decatur was able to break free of the port briefly on January 15, 1815 only to be wounded when his ship was captured by a superior British force the next day. Following the war he was placed in command of the U.S. Mediterranean Squadron and oversaw the final peace treaty with the powers controlling the Barbary Coast: Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. In 1816 he was appointed to the Board of Navy Commissioners, a post he held until his death in a duel with Commodore James Barron, who accused him of maliciously damaging his Navy career. While Decatur was often known to be tactless in his dealings with people, there is no evidence that he ever set out to harm Barron, and indeed Decatur was a well-liked man personally. On March 24, 1820 both the Senate and the House of Representatives adjourned to allow members to attend his funeral. Following his death, a eulogy in the National Intelligencer newspaper of Washington, DC, said, in part:

Mourn, Columbia! For one of the brightest stars is set — a son "without fear and without reproach," in the freshness of his fame, in the prime of his usefulness has descended into the tomb.

His friend Washington Irving said of him: "A gallanter fellow never stepped a quarter deck. God bless him."

It was at a dinner party in November 1816 celebrating his appointment as a Navy Commissioner that Decatur offered a toast that, in abbreviated form, was to become a famous avowal of patriotism: "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."

Captain Thomas Macdonough

Thomas Macdonough Jr. (1783–1825) was the son of a physician and Revolutionary war hero Dr. Thomas McDonough. For reasons unknown, Thomas Jr. changed the spelling of his last name before entering the U.S. Navy as a midshipman in February 1800 at the age of sixteen. He was part of the daring crew that, under the command of Stephen Decatur, boarded and burned the captured USS Philadelphia in Tripoli harbor in 1803. Following the war with Tripoli, in 1805 or 1806 Macdonough was promoted to lieutenant and assigned to the USS Enterprise. But by October 1806 he was transferred to Middletown, Connecticut to work under Captain Isaac Hull supervising the construction of naval gunboats. This was followed by a period patrolling the Mediterranean and a two-year leave of absence, before he requested a return to duty at the start of War of 1812. Following his great victory on Lake Champlain Commodore Macdonough
continued to serve in the Navy. He was in command of the USS Constitution, on patrol in the Mediterranean, in the fall of 1825 when he received word that his wife, Lucy Ann, had died. He himself was suffering from last stages of tuberculosis and the news hastened his own death. On November 10, 1825, Commodore Thomas Macdonough, the hero of Lake Champlain, died at the age of forty-one.

**Battle of New Orleans (January 18, 1815)**

**Battle of New Orleans: General Jackson (1865) • 5c • Scott 1261**

Andrew Jackson (1767–1845) was born on the frontier, where he received a spotty education but used his natural ability and determination to become an outstanding lawyer. He was the first man elected from Tennessee to the U.S. House of Representatives. When the War of 1812 began, his leadership abilities made him a natural to head up militia forces in his home state. He earned his nickname, “Old Hickory” in the early years of the War of 1812 when the War Department, having first ordered Jackson to take a 1,500-man force of Tennessee militia first to Natchez and then to New Orleans, decided that there was no real British threat on the horizon and summarily dismissed Jackson’s troops in March 1813 without compensation or provision for their return home. An outraged Jackson took it on himself to see the men safely home, shouldering the expense himself and sharing all their privations, even to refusing to ride when his horse could be used to carry the wounded or ill. Comparing his strength and toughness to that of the hickory tree, his admiring troops gave him the name he would carry into the pages of history. The Hero of New Orleans would ultimately become the seventh President of the United States (1829–1837).

**America’s Ship of State**

**U.S. Frigate Constitution (1947) • 3c • Scott 951**

Ordered built by President George Washington as part of the Naval Armament Act of March 27, 1794 that called for six new Navy frigates, the 44-gun USS Constitution was built in Boston and launched October 21, 1797. She served in two lesser wars: the Quasi War with France (1798–1801) and the Barbary Wars (1801–1805), winning all of her engagements. At the beginning of the War of 1812 the Constitution was one of twenty-two commissioned U.S. warships, as opposed to more than eighty British warships stationed off the eastern coast of North America. Although America’s successes against the Royal Navy were great morale builders for the new country and equally great embarrassments for Great Britain, historians agree that the better trained and better armed British Naval fleet was not materially damaged by these actions.

Although “Old Ironsides” never had to fire another round in combat after her February 1815 engagement with the HMS Cyane and HMS Levant, she continued to amass victories at sea with a cumulative record of thirty-three wins and no losses to an enemy. The Constitution continued to serve the U.S. Navy until she was finally taken out of service in 1855, after which time she served as a training ship until 1897 when she was returned permanently to the Charlestown (MA) Navy Yard.

The stamp design features a Naval architect’s drawing of the Frigate Constitution and was issued to mark the 150th anniversary of her launching.

**The War of 1812: USS Constitution (2012) Forever • Scott 4703**

In eighty-four years of patrolling the world’s oceans, “Old Ironsides” was never defeated, never had an enemy set foot on her deck. From her role as the U.S. squadron flagship during the war with the Barbary States (the 1805 peace treaty was drawn up in her captain’s cabin) to her final international voyage in 1931–1934, the grand old ship was a source of pride to American civilians and military alike. Her greatest feats occurred during the War of 1812, during which she defeated or captured the British ships Guerriere, Java, Pictou, Lord Nelson, Susannah, Cyane, and Levant.

On August 9, 2012 on the 200th anniversary of her fight with the HMS Guerriere, the Constitution set sail under her own power for only the second time since 1881. On August 18, 2012 the U.S. Postal Service released a new War of 1812 commemorative stamp featuring the USS Constitution.

**Frigate USS Constitution (1985) • 6c • Scott U609**

Constructed of 2,000 trees shipped in from Maine to Georgia, and incorporating copper bolts and spikes provided by Paul Revere, the frigate was on her way to becoming a national icon from the day her keel was laid on November 1, 1794. “Old Ironsides” received her nickname following her August 19, 1812 encounter with the 49-gun frigate HMS Guerriere. When the enemy’s shot failed to pierce the 25-inch thick, triple-layered oak hull of the American vessel, one of the sailors is said to have yelled out, “Huzzaah, her sides are made of iron! See where the shot fell out!” The cheering sailors took up the name, and “Old Ironsides” she has been ever after.

**Frigate USS Constitution (1988) • 8.4c (nonprofit) • Scott U612**

The USS Constitution is the world’s oldest commissioned warship. Permanently berthed in Charlestown, Massachusetts, she is a national monument, open to visitors year-round. On September 14, 1830, the Boston Daily Advertiser reported that the Secretary of the Navy had recommended that the old ship be scrapped, adding:

> Such a national object of interest, so endeared to our national pride as Old Ironsides is, should never by any act of our government cease to belong to the Navy, so long as our country is to be found upon the map of nations.

In a fit of inspiration, 21-year-old Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. wrote a poem he titled “Old Ironsides.” It appeared in the Advertiser two days later, on September 16, 1830. From its stirring opening words:

> Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!  
> Long has it waved on high,  
> And many an eye has danced to see  
> That banner in the sky....
to its dramatic conclusion:

Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

Holmes’ poem was a call to action that resonated with the public heart and was reprinted across the nation, ultimately forcing the Secretary of the Navy to rethink his plan and ensuring that the venerable warship would be rebuilt and continue to serve her country.##

To be continued with Volume II.

Research and text by Bonny Farmer, Associate Editor of The American Philatelist.