

Message from the desk of President Kenneth Gorton

Today is April 20th, Patriots Day. As compatriots we reflect on the battles on Lexington Green and the march to Concord that became known as the start of the American Revolution. Americans demonstrated their true hope and determination for a cause they believed in. Over the next several years, this faith would be tested at the invasion of Canada, Valcour Island, and then battles on the homeland.

America today is confronted with challenges that may seem overwhelming, so let us take a lesson from George Washington who responded to an even greater crisis. Things were not going well for the Continental Army – losses at Brooklyn, Manhattan, White Plains, Harlem Heights, and Fort Lee reduced the American forces from 10,000 to 3,000. On Dec 11, 1776, Washington and his troops fled into Pennsylvania – cold, hungry and poorly armed; the Continental Congress abandoned Philadelphia, fearing the British would seize the city; and, enlistments were set to expire on Jan 1, 1777. Thomas Pain clearly defined the condition as “these are the times that try men’s souls.” By all standards, this would be the end of a revolution.

However, our first commander-in-chief would become immortal in history as he retained **hope** because he and his followers believed in their cause. He also realized that he must become **innovative** in his military tactics, and so on Christmas night he led his troops back across the Delaware and landed north of Trenton, which was occupied by 1,500 German mercenary troops under British command. His plan was for a surprise attack at dawn, defeat them, and capture their food and ammunition. The snow caused delays, yet he remained **determined** to succeed. His motto for the operation was “Victory or Death.” After marching all night, this band of soldiers defeated the Hessians in less than an hour. A week later, a second surprise victory at the Battle of Princeton forced the British to retreat to New York. America was now on the road to establish itself as a nation.

So, on this Patriots Day, let us be encouraged by the faith of former compatriots and exhibit General Washington’s example of hope, innovation and determination. Challenges and crisis. Step aside, for we are conquerors.