

Washington's Farewell To His Officers: After Victory In The Revolution

Stuart Murray

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"Perhaps His Excellency's (George Washington's) was indeed a charmed and divinely protected life, as many of his soldiers believed" During the French and Indian war he had been shot at point blank and missed and during the revolution several times Redcoats had the chance to put a rifle ball through him at close range but for various reasons chose not to.

As Samuel Shaw penned, "I cannot too heartily coincide with the orator ... who so delicately describes him "as a person who appears to be raised by Heaven to show how high humanity can soar?." Murray uses a writer's touch to make history come alive. His opening chapter of Washington's triumphal victory entrance into New York City with its attendant "flag pole gag" initiated by the departing British, sets up this remarkably readable history of the war for colonial independence from England.

The three cannon rounds that signaled Washington that all was ready for his entrance into New York City almost never came because the American flag could not be raised. The setting is the Fraunces Tavern Long Room at the end of November and first part of December of 1783. A good deal of history had played out in Fraunces Tavern, with its nine large rooms for elegant parties, five bedrooms with fireplaces and a spacious cozy ale room at street level. The British commandeered the Tavern for its use during the war. The Sons of Liberty used the tavern meeting rooms to resolve to fight the tea tax. Now, George Washington, before he went to Philadelphia to resign his command, met with his generals for one last farewell, at least the ones that hung on during the year long negotiations in Paris with the British. Murray artfully tells the history of the Revolution with each general's contribution as he embraces Washington one last time. The passion and synergy is electric. "To them and all the men in the Long Room, memories of the war, once so fearsome and awesome and astounding, were fading. Nothing had prepared them for that, either. When they left this room today, the Revolution would be finished. It would live only in memories..."

Murray is the author of twenty books in the historical fiction and nonfiction genres. He has been an author, editor and journalist for more than twenty-five years.

Washington's Farewell To His Officers should be a supplement to school and academic American history texts, as well as a fine addition to public library history collections.

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