



## **THE CRISIS: SUMMER SOLDIERS AND SUNSHINE PATRIOTS.**

*The following is a speech given at the invitation of the Dr. Enemund Meullion Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution on November 15, 2025 by James A. (Jay) Bolen, Jr.*

“Historian H.W. Brands, who holds the Jack S. Blanton, Sr. chair in History at the University of Texas, Austin, wrote and had published in 2021 his book, ‘Our First Civil War: Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution’.

The Boston Globe commented on the book: “Brand places the battle between the Patriots and the often-ignored Loyalists at the center of the story. The result is a view of the Revolution as a fight of one American against another.”

Brands reminds us that “William Franklin did not join his father in rebellion but remained loyal to the Crown. So did Thomas Hutchinson, a royal governor and friend

of the Franklins". So did Joseph Galloway who had been one of the early challengers to the Crown.

That Native Americans, Free African Americans, as well as slaves were forced to take sides as civil war broke out around them.

That wealthy as well as poor people, merchants as well as farmers believed the Crown had given them their language, their laws, their courts, local elected as well as appointed representation in a legislative process – did not see any need to cause mayhem. They remained loyal to the crown.

That Indian tribes still located on the western frontiers of New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia – were promised by the Crown that there would be no more western expansion of these colonies – and sided with the Crown.

It all made economic sense to them. And as they saw it, there was no need for them to have the expense of their own army, as they were already protected by the British army – then considered as the greatest army in the world.

Many Caucasian settlers on the western borders of the colonies were so few in number and isolated from the well-settled eastern parts of the Colonies, and so geographically spread out, they had no interest in what was going on - assuming they ever heard about it at all. The few who may have heard about the conflict in 1776, may or may not have sided with either side.

So, Brands made a case made for the Loyalists.

What the Loyalists either missed or felt of no importance was freedom:

To assemble,

For self-government to elect to office local men not appointed by the Crown,

To choose a legislative body here and not one over a thousand miles away in London,

To worship in an Anglican church not supported by their tax dollars; to worship in some other church of another Christian faith, or not be compelled to attend any church by the Crown,

To write and publish without government authorization, and without a tax,

To not be forced to house soldiers in their home.

Those who so believed considered themselves – “Patriots” and risked their lives and fortunes.

The leaders of these Patriots risked death by hanging, deemed “Traitors” by the long-established government created by the early settlers of the 13 Colonies.

So, those who deemed themselves “Patriots” risked all, fought, died, suffered through defeats, saw some who said they were Patriots give up and go home, Saw others they thought were Patriots became spies for the British army, and fought against them.

Those who fought for Freedom in 1776 faced hunger, starvation, lack of pay, wives back home without a husband, children at home without a father, farm animals being cared for by women and children, and crops to be planted and then harvested by women and children.

If that wasn't enough!

The Battle of Long Island had been fought by Patriots and lost in August 1776, requiring a miracle, aka Act of God, to get General Washington's little army in secret, in the dark of night, safely across the East River. Otherwise, they surely would have been defeated and captured the next day had they stayed.

New York City was abandoned by the Patriots in 1776; too much rejoicing by the vast majority of the inhabitants who were Loyalists, pro-British.

And in 1776, the Patriot's army commander at Fort Mifflin (a Fort named after George Washington himself), Colonel Robert Magaw, refused a direct Order from General Washington to abandon the Fort and bring his troops to unite with those

of General Washington, because there were no Patriot troops available to come to their aid, the British army of 11, 000 would soon surround the Fort, and the 3,000 Patriot troops inside. Refusing to obey Washington, by November 16, 1776 the British and Hessian troops surrounded the Fort and after heavy fighting Magas surrendered, and 2,900 Patriot soldiers were marched by the British into the holds of their prison ships where many died of starvation and disease.

It was clearly by the end of November 1776 a “Crisis” for those deemed Patriots.

Their dream of the right of the individual with essential freedoms was more important than the Crown – was about to fade away.

Their dream to govern themselves & NOT require a King, it would now seem, remain that, just a dream.

It was at that time Thomas Paine wrote his article on December 23, 1776, hurried to have copies made in Philadelphia before the British army came and confiscated the press, and sent riders carrying copies to as many parts of the colonies they could get to.

What Paine wrote, and what was read were these ringing words:

“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 everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. ...”

Those words stiffened the effort of the Patriots, kept their dream alive while they continued to fight.

With renewed courage, the Battle of Trenton, NJ was fought and won days later, on December 26, 1776. Against the advice of his Generals, in terrible winter weather, snow and sleet, with a traitor tipping off the Hessian commander of the date of the

Patriot's attack, with ice in the river preventing two of the Patriot's pincer attack from taking place, with many of the Patriot's cannons never making it across, General Washington and his little army crossed the Delaware River, surprised the Hessian army, caused them to flee, and won against all odds. A happenstance? Luck? An act of God?

The horror and Honor of survival at Valley Forge lay ahead in December 1777.

The victory at the Battle of Monmouth, NJ was to come June 28, 1778.

And, still later the miraculous combination of events that led to victory and Freedom at Yorktown October 19, 1781.

So, the Patriot's won after all!

But freedom once obtained never lasts - unless there are people who care about it and continuously advocate for the principles on which Freedom is obtained.

Today is still a time that tries the soul of every American, for too many have never heard or read about those Patriots who sacrificed their lives and their homes for the dream.

Too many today have never heard or read about the founding principles of our Country. Or, if they heard those principles the Patriots fought for, they have no clue where they came from – or the sacrifices made.

In a few more weeks from today, 2026 begins on January 1.

2026 is the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Nation: 1776-2026.

July 4, 1776 is the date our Declaration of independence was signed.

What can be done in 2026 to remind the citizens of our Nation about those Patriots? Their sacrifices? And, those Principles of Freedom?

The local Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution is one of the local organizations whose purpose is to do that very thing – educate and remind.

That is a huge task for any one organization. You'll need help in 2026.

You might want to work through the Rapides Parish School Board, and the Boards of every parochial and private school in our parish to each give their teachers opportunities January through May 2026, and September through December 2026 to teach and remind of those sacrifices and principles fought for 250 years ago.

Teachers in our parish's schools, whether public, parochial, or private have only so many hours a day to teach.

Within that limited time each day, teachers have a lot to cover to meet certain State standards and increasing preparation of students to pass mandated tests.

With those challenges, teachers charged with teaching history have to find time to get to the bare dates of the American Revolutionary War. What time if any is left over to address educating students about our founding history? About the ancestors who fought and died to achieve a dream? and about the founding principles of our country?

Unless they have help in 2026, even the best teachers with a love of history won't get time to cover more than the dates.

The Summer Soldier and the Sunshine Patriot aren't going to help you.

But you are not alone.

You can enlist for your 2026 efforts other organizations who espouse American patriotism, and principles.

One such organization are our parish's Scout Troops.

Scouts can appear with you in uniform with flag, and, if necessary, speakers.

A Scout learns in the beginning of his journey to become honor bound to do his duty to God and his Country, always. And on the path to earn the rank of Eagle, the Scout has to achieve a required number of merit badges, among which are Citizenship in the Nation.

Those Scouts, current and former, who achieved the rank of Eagle can be of assistance to your efforts.

2026 is the year for all of us to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Nation.,

You will play a large role bringing that celebration about.

As Thomas Paine stated: “He that stands by our Country now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman”.

Thank you for what you do.

We wish you success.

James A. (Jay), Bolen, Jr.

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