

# Blackjack's Super Squad

With GEN Washington on the Delaware.

by Col Jack Matthews, USMC(Ret)

**W**e've all seen pictures of Washington's crossing of the Delaware River. Here's a glimpse of what the ideal "super squad" might have looked like accompanying GEN George Washington (D in painting) in making that historic crossing.

## Squad Leader

*BG Daniel Morgan (N).* Morgan was the product of Welsh immigrants. He grew up with an awkward speech, coarse manners, and wore homespun clothes. His frontier experience enabled him to ultimately become the premier soldier in the history of the American military. He was the epitome of a real leader and gunfighter, being extremely proficient in the long rifle, scalping knife,

## 1st Fire Team

*COL John Stark (K).* A carbon copy of Morgan, Stark had an intuitive feel for the battlefield. He was a captain in Rogers Rangers and was with GEN Jeffrey Amherst at the capture of Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga. After Lexington and Concord, he was one of the heroes at Bunker Hill. He led his New Hampshire militiamen onto the battlefield at Breed's Hill and did not fire until he saw the whites of the enemy's eyes. Stark played an integral role at the battle of Trenton and was the genius behind the battle of Bennington. Aggressive, he was a defiant leader who loved his troops, and they loved him. He was his own man in every respect. After the war, he returned to his farm knowing full

***Washington had gambled it all by crossing the Delaware River for the second time and would have lost it all except for Hand and his riflemen's delaying actions.***

and tomahawk. He possessed an intuitive sense of the battlefield. A liberty risk who loved his whiskey and the ladies, Morgan was constantly in trouble with the law for brawling in local taverns. In one altercation he was supposed to have been given 500 lashes for striking a British officer. He received only 499 as he kept count. He carried the scars on his back throughout the Revolution. He had absolute respect from his troops because he loved them, and they knew it. He was aggressive, courageous, and extremely loyal to the cause and GEN Washington. He was a hero of the battles of Quebec, Saratoga, and Cowpens. After the war, he retired to his home, "The Saratoga," in Winchester, VA.

well what he had done for his country and that was reward enough. He is famous for his volunteer toast, "Live free or die. Death is not the worst of all evils."

*LTC George Rogers Clark (G).* Clark's exploits on the American frontier are legendary. Throughout the frontier's 10 most dangerous years, Clark was the one defender to whom all turned during a crisis. With unbelievable physical prowess and demanding of his troops, Clark, like Morgan and Stark, possessed the warrior's intuitive sense of the battlefield. A minimalist when it came to the necessities of war, he went logistics light all the time. His successful frontier campaign of 1778 gave much weight to American postwar

claims to the west. He had a keen sense of how deception facilitated the mission and could be ruthless, if need be. In one instance, he had six Indians tomahawked in full view of the British at Fort Sackville and didn't blink an eye in the process. Clark was totally loyal to his country and GEN Washington. Certain men are made for war and George Rogers Clark was one of those men.

*COL Edward Hand (L).* The stuff of which the core of the Continental Army was made, Hand was Irish-born and a doctor turned gunfighter. He and his Pennsylvania riflemen were the real heroes of the second battle of Trenton and thereby saved Washington's Army and the Revolution. Washington had gambled it all by crossing the Delaware River for the second time and would have lost it all except for Hand and his riflemen's delaying actions. Hand stayed the course throughout the war and fought in just about every engagement (post-Bunker Hill) with GEN Washington. He was there at the end at Yorktown. He accompanied Washington and Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau to take the British surrender at Redoubt #10. A tough troop leader, he led a bunch of tough, whiskey-drinking Pennsylvania riflemen. He is probably the least known member of the super squad, but believe me, he belongs in the boat.

*COL John Glover (I).* Outspoken, defiant, and opinionated, Glover was a little disrespectful but a no-nonsense, extremely loyal individual. His Marblehead Regiment saved Washington's Army by evacuating it from Brooklyn Heights to Manhattan. Later, he and his 10 companies of fishermen and sailors were the heroes at Pelham Bay—one of the most critical contests in the War for American Independence. For the difficult crossing of the Delaware River at Christmas 1776, Washington looked to none other than Glover and his Marblehead gang. They were the heroes of the crossing and the battle of Trenton. He definitely belongs in the boat. In fact, he would probably take charge of the super squad while embarked. Glover would be the boat officer for the crossing even with ADM Halsey on board.

## 2d Fire Team

*MG Andrew Jackson (F).* A product of Scotch-Irish immigrants, Jackson was wounded in the American Revolution as a teenager. When he grew up he would lead a bunch of rough guys in a very rough way. The leadership he displayed at Rodriquez Canal during the battle of New Orleans is sufficient alone for him to be in the boat. He was a rugged individualist who loved the troops. At his inauguration he invited his frontiersmen from Kentucky and Tennessee to the White House, and they tore it up. The real leader of the "little guy" or the common man, he would be quite at home with the five gents previously mentioned.

*LTG Ulysses S. Grant (E).* Grant was a tough, no-nonsense leader who understood what it took to win. He was not interested in headlines, only results. Grant could handle the "awful arithmetic" because he knew that saving the Union was at stake. Aggressive and tenacious, he enjoyed his whiskey, but it never got in the way. He was a prolific writer—both a soldier and a scholar. He recognized people who deserved to be recognized—a truly great quality. Grant would be quite at home in being just another guy in the boat; he certainly deserved a prominent boat space.

*MG William Tecumseh Sherman (J).* A loyal lieutenant of LTG Grant, Sherman knew what it took to defeat the South. When Grant ordered him to create havoc and destroy all resources that would be beneficial to the enemy, Sherman became an active proponent of total war. He was aggressive and ruthless when he needed to be. He was a little crazy, but he overcame that character flaw and remained focused on saving the Nation. While Commander, Army of the West, and later as Commander of the Army when Grant was President, Sherman's loyalty to Grant remained impeccable. His key attributes were his loyalty and pragmatic approach to warfighting. He and Grant practiced maneuver warfare long before the term entered the military's lexicon.

*LTG Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson (C).* Jackson is the only member of the Confederate Army in the boat, but I couldn't keep him off the team. A tough, no-nonsense gunfighter, he was a brilliant tactician who had the ultimate respect of his troops. A loyal lieutenant of GEN Robert E. Lee, he understood intent probably better than any other man in the Confederate Army or in the American military, for that matter. Ruthless when he needed to be,

Jackson didn't have a culminating point when engaged in combat. His greatest attribute was his aggressiveness. His valley campaign and his end run at Chancellorsville are legendary and still studied today. He practiced the principles of the New Testament in his daily life, but he fought by the rules of the Old Testament.

## 3d Fire Team

*COL Joshua Chamberlain (A).* A teacher turned gunfighter, Chamberlain had an intuitive sense of the battlefield. He was a quiet leader who led by persuasion. His actions at Little Round Top helped earn him a place on the squad and in the boat. His staying power—his ability to hang in there throughout the war or for the long haul in various battles—makes his reputation. Seriously wounded at Petersburg, he recovered in time to accept the surrender of the Confederate Army at Appomattox. Grant thought so much of Chamberlain that he allowed him to take the surrender on the field, 9 April 1865.

*ADM William "Bull" Halsey, Jr. (M).* ADM Halsey is my ideal Navy man. He was a tough, no-nonsense sailor who remained focused on the



Col Matthews' super squad.

enemy in World War II. He was big enough to leave his ego on the boat when he met GEN Douglas MacArthur. Halsey was handpicked by ADM Chester A. Nimitz for important positions throughout the Pacific. Halsey was at sea aboard his flagship, USS *Enterprise* (CV 6), when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. When he saw the destruction, he

Nicaragua to the islands in the Pacific to the Chosin Reservoir, Puller loved his troops, and they loved him. He was probably a difficult subordinate for one who did not know his business, but Puller was loyal to his Marine Corps and the country. He had been known to like his whiskey, as well. After World War II he was farmed out and away from

Washington would probably have his fellow Virginian sit right next to him for a variety of reasons.

GEN George S. Patton (B). Patton was a soldier-scholar, somewhat like Grant. A real student of military history and biography, Patton had an acute sense of what his opponent would or would not do. In addition, he had an intuitive sense of the battlefield and how to fight. Flamboyant and politically incorrect, Patton was his own man, but had his priorities right with respect to warfighting. He's in the boat because he's a winner, and like I was taught early on, we all need to stick with the winners.

## A decorated Marine with five Navy Crosses earned while fighting from the jungles of Nicaragua to the islands in the Pacific to the Chosin Reservoir, Puller loved his troops, and they loved him.

allegedly said, "When I'm finished the only language they will speak in hell will be Japanese." A real team player and friend of the Marines, he definitely belongs on the squad and in the boat.

LtGen Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller (H). As is often said, Puller was "a Marine's Marine." A decorated Marine with five Navy Crosses earned while fighting from the jungles of

the flagpole because there was little need for his talents in peacetime. However, when North Korean forces attacked across the 38th parallel in June 1950 and when President Harry S Truman looked for a Roman legion, the first person Headquarters Marine Corps called was then-Col Chesty Puller. Is there anyone out there who thinks he doesn't belong on the team and in the boat?

USMC

>Col Matthews recently retired from the faculty of the Marine Corps University (MCU) where he had served as a civilian faculty member from 1992-2005.

>>Editor's Note: The painting was commissioned by the Command and Staff College Class of 2005. It was painted by Charlie Grow, Curator of Art History, History Division, MCU.

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