

## #4 Let Down

Panic. They had panicked.

Not only was George Washington shocked over his own miraculous preservation after General Braddock's defeat, but he was also disappointed in the British regular soldiers who fought alongside him. Washington couldn't have felt more let down had his fellow soldiers committed treason.

"We were attacked by a party of French and Indians, whose number, I am persuaded, did not exceed three hundred men; while ours consisted of about one thousand three hundred well-armed troops, chiefly regular soldiers, who were struck with such a panic that they behaved with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive," Washington related to his mother shortly after the battle.

The failure and flight of the regular British fighters was a sight he would never forget. "In short, the dastardly behavior of those they call regulars exposed all others...they ran, as sheep pursued by dogs, and it was impossible to rally them," he wrote.

The warfare Washington had witnessed was far from the traditional forms of fighting practiced by regular British soldiers and their American militia. Braddock's European-style firing lines were no match for the French and Indians' tactics of shooting from behind trees.

In his letter to his mother, Washington explained his role in the battle: When General Braddock fell mortally wounded on the field, Washington had stepped up to direct the retreat. "I was the only person then left to distribute the General's orders, which I was scarcely able to do, as I was not half recovered from a violent illness, that had confined me to my bed and a wagon for about ten days," he wrote, noting only thirty in Virginia's regiment survived.

Washington's statement revealed that he questioned his own leadership abilities. Could he have done more? But he was angrier at the behavior of his fellow Englishmen. He may not have been sure which was more revealing, the failure of the British regulars to fight or the successful surprise tactics of the enemy. Both were lessons he would not forget.

Although Washington was discouraged, others were encouraged. News of his bravery spread throughout the colonies and to England as well. The Reverend Samuel Davies spoke about Washington in a sermon he gave a month after Braddock's defeat. "As a remarkable instance of this, I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country," Davies proclaimed prophetically.

Like many great sermons of the era, Davies' message was published and distributed in a pamphlet in America and in England. Through Davies, many heard of the miraculous preservation of young Washington. George Washington may have been down when he wrote his mother that day in 1755, but he was not out. His life had purpose. He had hope.

Psalms 35:1, "**Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.**"

PRAYER

Dear Lord please grant me courage to persevere when I am down. Please be my Strength when I am weak, and fight against those who contend with me.

Taken from "The Revolutionary War Battlefields and Blessings" by JANE HAMPTON COOK