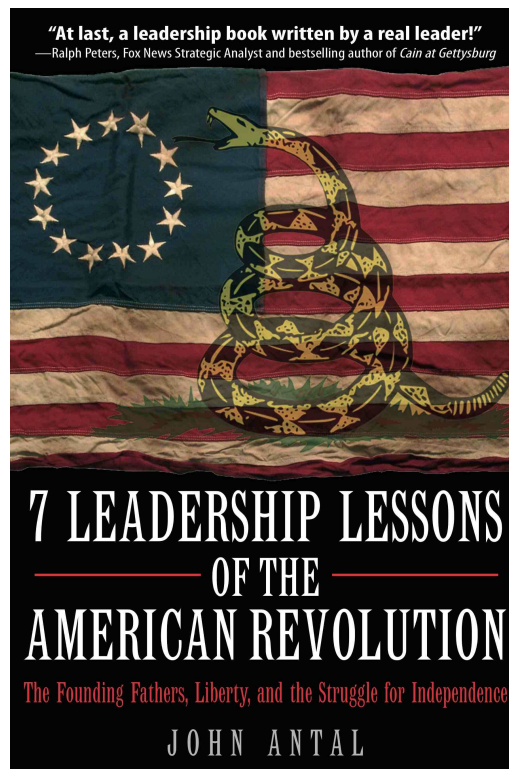




## 7 Questions for author John Antal

Concerning his New Book:

### ***7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution: The Founding Fathers, Liberty and the Struggle for Independence***



**Armchair General:** Your previous books have been war novels (*Proud Legions*; *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway*) or books that put readers into tactical military situations and ask them to find solutions to the problems those situations present (*Infantry Combat: the Rifle Platoon: An Interactive Exercise in Small-Unit Tactics and Leadership*, et al), much like the interactive section of *Armchair General* magazine does. This new book, *7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution*, is something of a departure from your previous works. It deals with political situations as well as military ones and examines a different historical era than you normally write about. What led you to write it?

**John Antal:** First, Gerald, thank you very much for this interview and the opportunity to discuss my new book with your readers.

You asked a very good question. From my perspective, all of my previous books have involved leadership, described leadership or portrayed leaders in action -- especially my interactive books, histories and novels. With this in mind, *7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution: The Founding Fathers, Liberty and the Struggle for Independence*, is merely an evolution.

What impelled me to write this book is my passion for teaching people how to become more effective leaders. Today, I am very involved in teaching, coaching and mentoring leaders. From the time I entered West Point, throughout my thirty years in uniform in our Army, and later as a leader in business and in my community, I have learned the value of leadership. We need leaders today. We don't have enough of them. We need effective leaders in every sector of our society, and if our Republic is to endure, we need to generate more leaders every day. In this new book, I wanted to go back to our roots, study the Founding Fathers, and learn from them. My goal is to raise the reader's leadership awareness by telling stories of ordinary people in extraordinary situations.

**ACG:** The American Revolution brought forth a number of remarkable men. How did you select the ones you focus on in the book?



American infantry in the Continental Army during the War for Independence.

**John Antal:** Remarkable indeed, yet flesh and blood human beings who had failings and strengths, fears, hopes and dreams much like we do today. To select seven stories of leadership from so many amazing leaders was difficult. I did a ton of research, and wrote several chapters on other leaders that did not make it into the book (but maybe a sequel?). From the best I selected the seven dramatic leadership moments in the book. Most people have heard of George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, but some of

**the stories are about lesser-known leaders -- Samuel Adams, Henry Knox and Daniel Morgan. I want the reader to walk with these leaders and see their challenges and how they came to face them. I want the reader to imagine what it must have been like to be at the Second Continental Congress, trying to convince delegates to vote in favor of independence from Great Britain and sign the Declaration of Independence; or, to feel what it might have been like to be a Soldier in the Continental Army during that cold, miserable Christmas night in 1776, when Washington and his small band of troops crossed the icy Delaware River to launch a desperate surprise attack on the Hessians.**

**The leadership required to accomplish these things and to secure our Independence was extraordinary, but many of the people who stepped forward to attain the “Glorious Cause” were people who were not necessarily considered extraordinary at the time. One of the things that grabbed me is how young and inexperienced many of these leaders were and how varied their backgrounds; yet they succeeded when more reasonable and experienced people might have given up. The struggle was unbelievably hard, but they persevered and were unreasonable for the cause of Liberty.**

**ACG:** In your foreword, you define leadership as: "Leadership is a sacred trust and the art of influence. It is the ability to motivate, inspire and impel people to accomplish a mission." How did you arrive at that definition?

**John Antal:** In my life-long study of leadership, I have struggled to come up with a definition of leadership that expresses what I think is the essence of what it is to lead. This definition is the result of that effort, a long period of thought, trial, error and experience. I learned the value of the truism “first define, then see and act.” If you want to be an effective leader, you must have a clear definition that expresses what leadership is and have a personal definition of leadership in your heart and your mind. Get any group of leaders together and ask them to write down their definition of leadership and you will be surprised at the results. Many will struggle to define leadership. If this book does nothing more than to encourage people to do this simple exercise – think and write down your own definition of leadership -- then I will consider the book a huge success.

**To me, this definition defines leadership succinctly. Leadership is the art of influence. It is not a science. To lead effectively, you should strive to impel – not compel -- people to work together to achieve a clearly defined goal or mission. This definition emphasizes that the leader take positive action to motivate and inspire people to act.**

ACG: At one point, you write, "All of us have a leadership quotient ... The level of your leadership is the level you will rise to in life and the level at which you will be able to do the most good for yourself, family, community, state, nation, and the world." What are some of your thoughts on how the average Joe or Jane can exercise some of the leadership lessons from this book in daily life?

**John Antal: All of us can raise our leadership ability. My first day at West Point was about leadership, every day of my life in the U.S. Army was about leading and learning to be a better leader, and every hour I am in a leadership position in business is a leadership laboratory where I am constantly learning.**

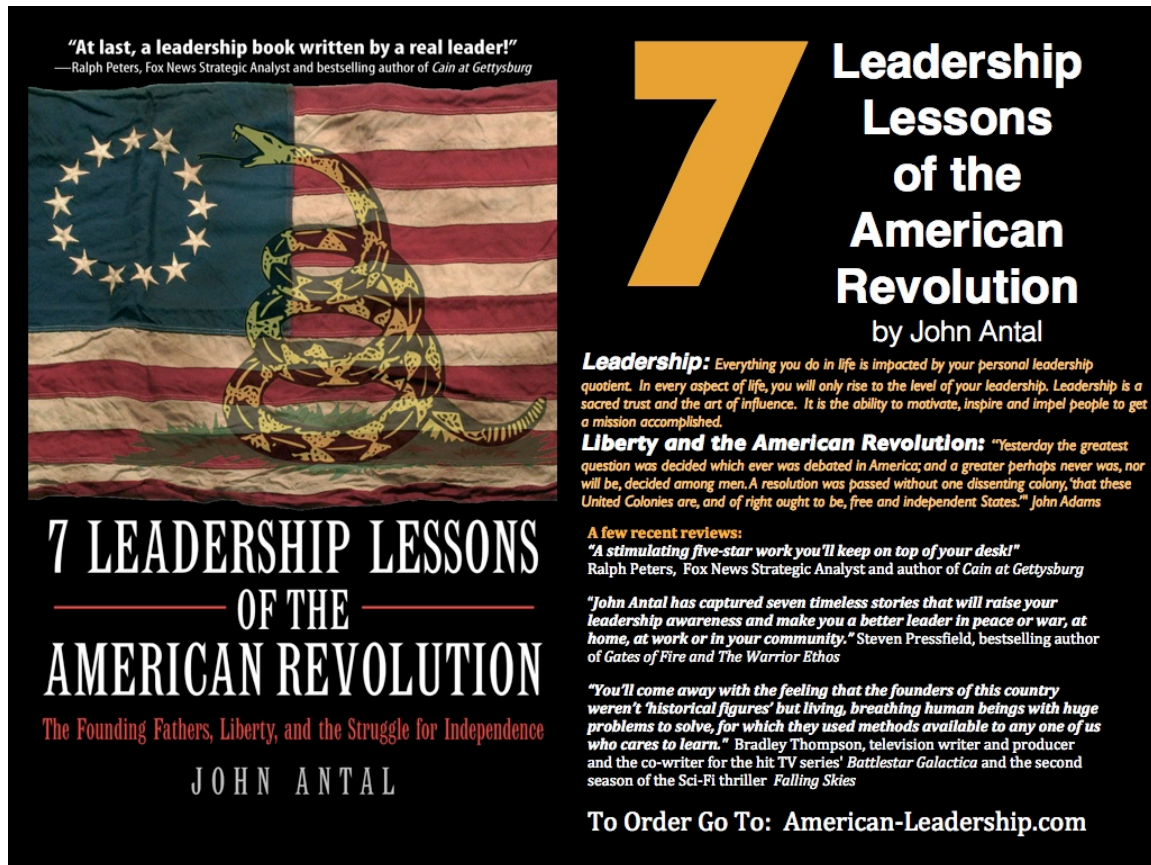


**Henry Knox was a Colonel in the Continental Army at age 25 and his leadership was crucial to Washington's victory at Boston in 1775, Trenton in 1776 and throughout the American Revolutionary War. The story of Henry Knox is one of the extraordinary stories of leadership in John Antal's new book: *7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution*.**

**But it is not enough. I read every leadership book that I can get my hands on and this helps me to raise my own leadership awareness, see the gaps in my leadership, and take corrective action. I strongly believe that everything you do in life when two or more people are involved requires leadership. You will rise to the level of your leadership skills. If you don't study leadership and find ways to raise your leadership skills, you will set your leadership plateau, and that's as much influence as you will have.**

**Anyone who wants to be a better leader should study leadership. Life is too short, and our experiences too narrow, to learn all there is to know in the art of influence from direct experience. Reading *7 Leadership Lessons***

will provide “case studies” that can add to anyone’s virtual experience to expand your leadership knowledge.



**“At last, a leadership book written by a real leader!”**  
—Ralph Peters, Fox News Strategic Analyst and bestselling author of *Cain at Gettysburg*

# 7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution

by John Antal

**Leadership:** *Everything you do in life is impacted by your personal leadership quotient. In every aspect of life, you will only rise to the level of your leadership. Leadership is a sacred trust and the art of influence. It is the ability to motivate, inspire and impel people to get a mission accomplished.*

**Liberty and the American Revolution:** *“Yesterday the greatest question was decided which ever was debated in America; and a greater perhaps never was, nor will be, decided among men. A resolution was passed without one dissenting colony, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.” John Adams*

**A few recent reviews:**  
*“A stimulating five-star work you’ll keep on top of your desk!”*  
Ralph Peters, Fox News Strategic Analyst and author of *Cain at Gettysburg*

*“John Antal has captured seven timeless stories that will raise your leadership awareness and make you a better leader in peace or war, at home, at work or in your community.”* Steven Pressfield, bestselling author of *Gates of Fire* and *The Warrior Ethos*

*“You’ll come away with the feeling that the founders of this country weren’t ‘historical figures’ but living, breathing human beings with huge problems to solve, for which they used methods available to any one of us who cares to learn.”* Bradley Thompson, television writer and producer and the co-writer for the hit TV series’ *Battlestar Galactica* and the second season of the Sci-Fi thriller *Falling Skies*

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ACG: Each of your chapters ends with a summary of the leadership qualities exemplified in that chapter's events, including passion, the ability to influence others, determination, and numerous other qualities. If you had to name the three most essential leadership qualities, what would they be?

**John Antal: Without a doubt the most important quality of leadership is courage. You must have courage to step up and impel people to follow you. You must have courage to risk your reputation, livelihood and possibly your life, to lead a team of people to accomplish any goal. The second most important quality is selflessness. When you are responsible for people’s lives, or their time – and time is the stuff of life -- you hold a sacred trust to lead them for a common goal, not your selfish interests. Squander their time and you squander their lives. Last, the third quality is humility. Effective leaders don’t shine, they reflect. If you must be the brightest light in the room, you do not recognize that a leader is only as**

**good as the people on the team. If you want to be an effective leader, you must know and act differently. It's about them, not about you.**

ACG: Your closing chapter is titled, "Exceptionalism, Liberty and Leadership." In it you ask, "What is American Exceptionalism?" Would you briefly answer your own question for us?

**John Antal: The United States of America is a nation born of an idea. That idea is Liberty. We are not one ethnic group, nor one tribe. People from all over the world can earn the privilege to become American citizens and share in Liberty. To me, American exceptionalism is indivisible from the concept of Liberty. It is a uniquely American belief that Americans are entitled by their inalienable rights as citizens to individual Liberty, to equality, to opportunity, to a free market, to raise themselves up by their own merit and talent, to a limited government, and to the right to defend all of this by force, if required. Underpinning it all is the unshakable dictum that governing power is derived from the consent of the people, that, as President John Kennedy said, "the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the State, but from the hand of God." We are exceptional because, as Alexander Hamilton once said: "Here, sir, the people govern."**

ACG: And yet, you aren't espousing jingoism. You point out, "American exceptionalism does not place America above the law." Would you expand on that, please?

**John Antal: Yes. I believe that American exceptionalism demands the United States to act to a higher standard. It should govern us to be humble for the blessings of Liberty and require us to act in accordance with the rule of law. American exceptionalism does not place America above the law. No nation is perfect and the United States is not perfect. American exceptionalism is an ideal that should act as a force to hold this country and its leaders to a higher level of scrutiny. When the United States of America misses the mark in actions foreign or domestic, when we fall short of our belief in the exceptional character of our democratic-republic, when we do not earn the sacrifice of previous generations, we err against our most important principles: we err against Liberty.**

ACG: Thanks for talking with us, Colonel Antal. Is there anything you'd like to add in closing?

John Antal: Thank you, Gerald for allowing me the honor to address your readers. As a final comment, I want to emphasize that leadership is always in demand, especially in today's troubled times. Leadership matters. It matters at home, in school, in the community, in the military, and in government. Leadership is something you can learn through study, reflection and practice. A good step on the road to improving your leadership is to read this book and inculcate the lessons learned from the Founding Fathers. The leadership skills told in these stories are timeless and telling. These leadership stories convey the story of the birth of the United States as well as providing case studies that can improve your leadership at home, in business, in your community, in the military or in government. If you wish to improve your personal leadership skill, this book provides the role models for you to study. Their struggles are our struggles and their challenges are our challenges. Learn how they secured our Liberty so you can transform today into a better tomorrow. To find out more, please go to [www.American-Leadership.com](http://www.American-Leadership.com) or go to Amazon.com to order:

***7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution: The Founding Fathers, Liberty and the Struggle for Independence. By John Antal***



About the Author: John Antal is a Soldier, author, historian, motivational speaker and a life-long student of leadership and art of influence. He has published twelve books on military and leadership subjects. He has appeared on numerous documentaries on the History Channel and has written hundreds of articles for military publications and for the Armchair General Magazine. He is also the Executive Producer for Brothers in Arms Games for Gearbox Software. He served 30 years in the US Army, commanding from platoon to regiment and held senior level staff positions in the US and overseas. He is an Airborne Ranger, a graduate

of the United States Military Academy at West Point, the Command and General Staff College and the US Army War College.

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