

## **MORAL VICTORY**



Following the disastrous battles in and New York, Commander-in-Chief George Washington was in desperate need of military achievement before the end of 1776. Morale in the army was very low, and enlistments were ending. The Continental Army was on the verge of dissolution, and the American war effort was on life support.

Washington hatched an audacious plan to raise the morale of the army. He would coordinate an attack on a Hessian military post near Trenton, New Jersey. On Christmas night, his army crossed the half-frozen Delaware River and marched through the night to Trenton, where they easily defeated the astonished Hessian soldiers. Washington's men captured over 800 Hessian soldiers.

Most historians acknowledge that Washington's victory of Trenton was more of a moral victory, than a major tactical achievement. The capture of the Hessian soldiers, while significant, was not a major blow to the British. It was, however, crucial to the Patriot cause, as it resulted in renewed confidence and improved morale, and prompted many soldiers to renew their enlistments, which legally ended on the last day of 1776. Washington's victory at Trenton was a classic "moral victory." While it didn't necessarily change the trajectory of the war, it injected good news and increased confidence into what was a dire situation.

Now, can you think of a "moral victory" in your life? Was there a time when you lost a game, match, or contest, but gained knowledge, wisdom, or confidence? If you can't think of one in your own life, think of a moral victory you've read about in books, witnessed in sports or music, or have seen on television or the movies.