

United States Postal Service

*Bicentennial
Souvenir Sheet
Collection*

Bicentennial Souvenir Sheets

At INTERPHIL 76 the United States issued four large souvenir sheets with Bicentennial themes. Reproduced on the sheets are details from famous paintings portraying events of the Revolutionary period. Overprinting and perforations permit five portions of each sheet to be removed and used as postage stamps. Vincent Hoffman designed the souvenir sheets issued May 29, 1976, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776 at Philadelphia

On the evening of July 4, John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress boldly signed the Declaration of Independence. This action marked the end of months of debate concerning the future of the American colonies and their position relative to independence from England. More importantly, Hancock's action signalled a beginning. The word "colony" was not to be used again.

Washington Crossing The Delaware

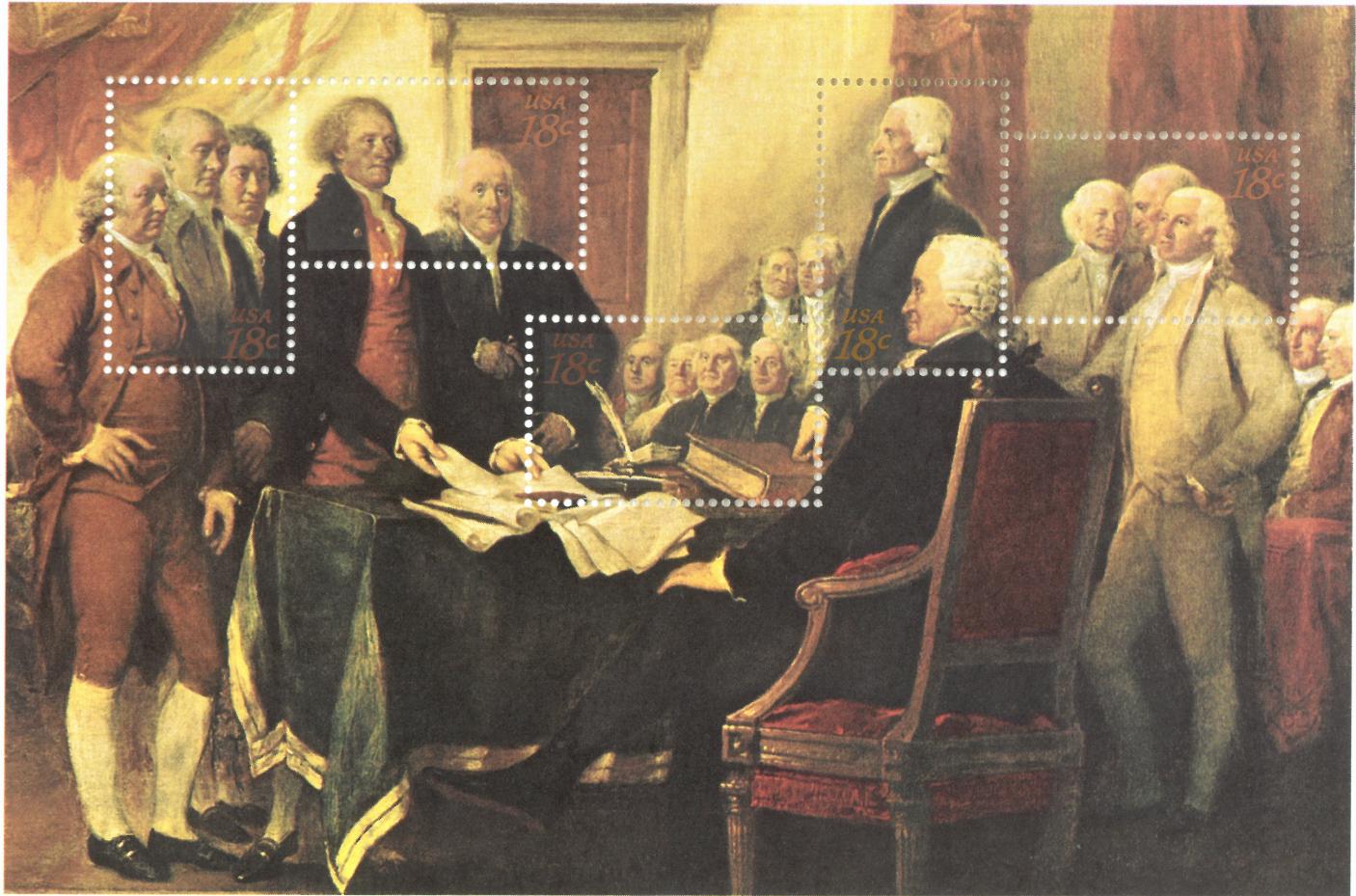
In a last ditch effort to keep America's hope of independence alive, General George Washington planned a surprise attack on England's Hessian mercenaries at Trenton in December 1776. On Christmas Day, Washington led his troops out of Pennsylvania and across the Delaware River that evening. Marching nine miles to Trenton, the American forces completely surprised and routed the Hessians on December 26. America's dream of independence was still alive.

Washington Reviewing His Ragged Army At Valley Forge

At Valley Forge, the Continental Army's 1777 winter quarters, General Washington helplessly watched his army begin to disintegrate. The troops were deserting or leaving as their enlistments expired. Fortunately, in early 1778, Major General Baron von Steuben of Prussia began drilling the troops despite the language barrier. The men responded enthusiastically and General Washington was able to break camp in the Spring with a well-trained force.

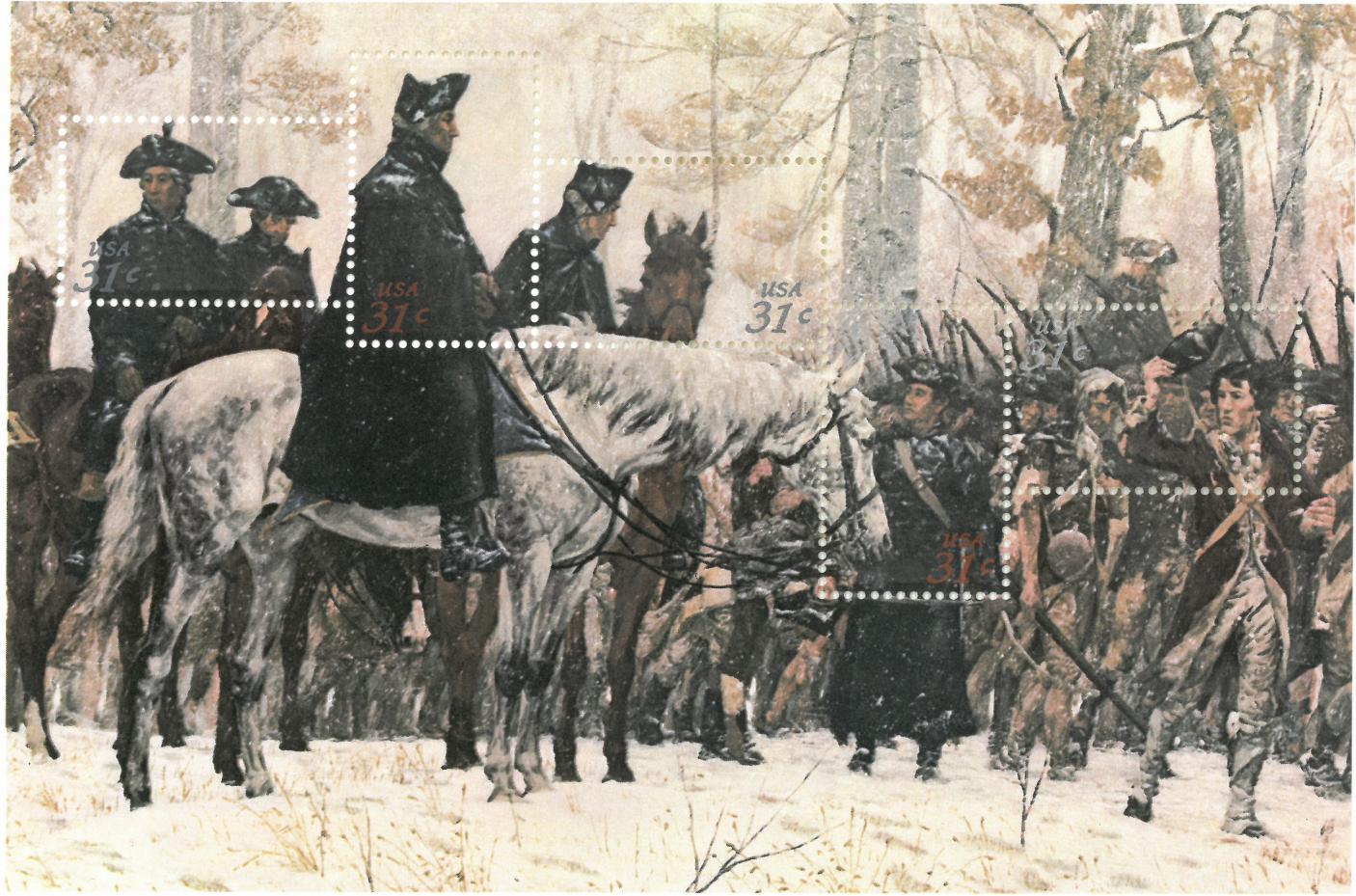
The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown

On October 19, 1781, General Washington wrote to Congress that "a Reduction of the British Army under the command of Lord Cornwallis, is most happily effected." General Washington and Rochambeau had begun their seige of Yorktown twenty-one days earlier. Because British reinforcements failed to arrive as Cornwallis had planned, his situation was hopeless by October 16; surrender was official three days later. The war for independence had been won.



The Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776 at Philadelphia
From a Painting by John Trumbull

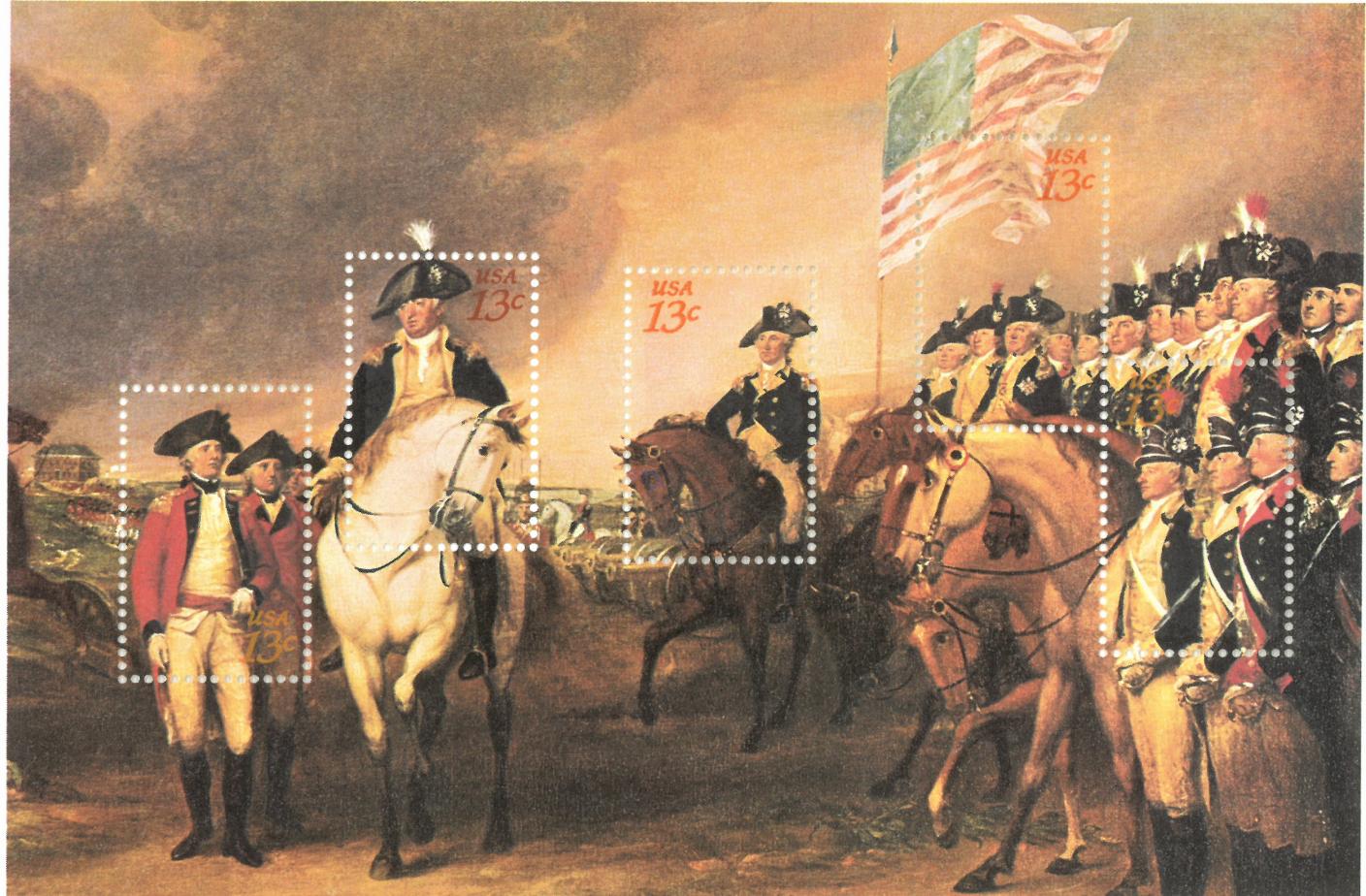




Washington Reviewing His Ragged Army at Valley Forge

From a Painting by William T. Trego





The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown

From a Painting by John Trumbull





Washington Crossing the Delaware

From a Painting by Emanuel Leutze / Eastman Johnson

