

# Taking Up a Musket

Today is Presidents' Day, an American holiday celebrated on the third Monday in February. Originally established in 1885 in recognition of President George Washington, it is still officially called Washington's Birthday by the federal government.



Traditionally celebrated on Feb. 22 – Washington's actual day of birth – the holiday became popularly known as Presidents' Day after it was moved as part of 1971's Uniform Monday Holiday Act, an attempt to create more three-day weekends for the nation's workers. While several states still have individual holidays honoring the birthdays of Washington, Abraham Lincoln and other figures, Presidents' Day is now popularly viewed as a day to celebrate all U.S. presidents past and present.

Here is a little-known story about John Adams, before he followed Washington to become the second President of the United States.

Sailing to France to take a diplomatic post, Adams found himself in the middle of the action when a British warship was sighted. The captain of the American ship, although assigned to take Adams to France without incident if possible, nonetheless wanted to battle the enemy ship. Adams was quick to support the captain – who then ordered Adams to go below deck to keep him safe.



In the middle of the battle, however, the captain was shocked to see Adams back on deck with a musket in his hands, fighting alongside the contingent of Marines on board. Adams hadn't been content with merely supporting the fight, he wanted to be part of it.

The captain, on the other hand, couldn't have his most important passenger take quite that much risk, and he himself took Adams below deck and made sure he remained there.

We don't know exactly what the crew thought of Adams' turn as a Marine, but it's likely they were cheered by it, just as our associates today are when they see a leader pitch in when things are tough.

The best leaders are willing to set the example and take risks, working alongside associates to achieve the desired objective.

*Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter