

Reed's The Life of Reed (p. 313-315): This is a letter from Anthony Wayne to President Reed where he refers to his soldiers as a “skeleton of an army.”

neers, armed with a considerable train of artillery, were strong enough to have put Philadelphia, whither their course seemed to be directed, under contribution. The history of the revolt and its suppression, is assumed to be familiar, and need be no further referred to than as it illustrates a purely personal narrative. Mr. Reed's services, as all contemporary testimony shows, were very great, and his correspondence contains the most intelligible narrative of the affair that is extant.

The main source of difficulty, as stated by the soldiery, was the uncertainty of the terms of enlistment. But beside this, there were causes of exasperation scarcely less influential—the want of food, of pay, and clothing. It is a great mistake to suppose that the mutiny was, or ought to be considered, an unlooked for and unaccountable explosion, which might have been averted. The following extracts from letters written from Camp during the fall of 1780, show a state of suffering and destitution which accounts for all the discontent that was manifested. On 17th October, Wayne had written:

“I am induced to call on the Honourable Council to adopt some mode to procure a fresh supply of blankets and winter clothing for the officers and privates belonging to the State of Pennsylvania. The weather begins to pinch. Hard necessity obliges us to be economical. Our soldiers' uniforms are much worn and out of repair. We have adopted the idea of curtailing the coats to repair the elbows and other defective parts, for which we shall immediately want needles and thread. Will your Excellency be so obliging as to direct them to be procured and sent to Camp with the other stores with all possible despatch.”

WAYNE TO PRESIDENT REED.

Camp at Totowa, 7th November, 1780.

I was honoured with yours of the 31st ultimo, and sincerely lament that *gold*, the common pest of human felicity, should so absorb the minds of gentlemen of the first influence and abilities as to prevent them from exerting every power to rescue their country from impending ruin, for however they may think of public affairs, we never stood upon such perilous ground

as the present. The period is fast approaching when America will have only the skeleton of an army to oppose the British, and even that destitute of almost every comfort and necessary of life, whilst that of the enemy are in high expectation, well appointed, and fully prepared, and instructed to improve the favourable crisis in which we are most vulnerable, in order to obtain territory to go to the European market with. Is it not very probable that Russia and the other Northern States will not only call upon, but demand the Belligerent Powers to meet in Convention this winter, in order to restore peace to the European and American world? Will they not offer themselves as mediators? Overtures must necessarily follow. France is bound in honour to insist upon the independence of America as a preliminary, to which Britain will certainly object, but to evince her moderation and pacific disposition, may as an ultimatum propose, that all such States as at the time of the ratification are in the full powers and peaceable possession of Government and Independence shall remain so, and that all those whose capitals and seaport towns are garrisoned by, and under the influence of the British Government, to be and continue subject to her, agreeably to the Charters and Laws antecedent to 1763.

I don't know what weight such plausible overtures may have with a general convention, but have my apprehensions, and sincerely wish that we may not be reduced to the necessity of fighting our own battles. I suppose, for a moment, the possibility of their being adopted; let us examine the map of America, and see how it will then stand.

Canada, Nova Scotia, New York, South Carolina, Georgia, and the Floridas—can I stop here, or must I have the painful idea of annexing *another State* to the British dominions? Is there an American in either the civil or military line base enough to submit to such conditions? “Forbid it, honour, and forbid it, virtue.” Permit me to draw a veil over the horrid picture, and to impress every gentleman with the absolute expediency of doing away all party prejudice. With regard to the Constitution, it will be time enough to take that up when we have fully determined whether we shall have any left to contend for; at present every power ought to be exerted in establishing magazines, replenishing an exhausted Treasury, and a completion of the quota of troops, which may once more place us in a situation not only to defend this country from depredation, but, by one of those fortuitous events which sometimes happens, to reclaim the ground we have lost.* I know the character of those we are to contend with—they will certainly commit themselves, in the course of the winter, from a presumption that we shall not be in force to meet them in the field. You may rest assured that they have changed their mode of operation, and, if we improve the present moment, we shall effectually frustrate them. I must beg leave once

* These patriotic counsels of Wayne, like those of Edward Biddle, two years before, (*supra*, p. 47,) were, unhappily, inoperative. Hostility to the State Constitution trampled down all higher and purer considerations.

more to refer you to my letter of the 17th Sept. on the subject of recruiting, &c., and also to suggest, that in place of raising a corps of four hundred and eighty artificers, you agree to enlist a due proportion with the other States, as, from the nature of the service, they will necessarily be detached to every point of operation, from Canada to Georgia, which will add to the difficulty of sending them the usual supplies—beside the almost impracticability of procuring so many in the State, and in place of the whole you agree to a seventh regiment of infantry for the defence of the Western frontier, which will leave us six regiments, or two complete brigades, in the field. General Irvine will have it more in his power to explain this matter viva voce, than I can attempt to do on paper. I therefore must beg leave to refer you to him on that subject as well as other matters.

Interim I have the honour to be, with much esteem,

Your Excellency's most obedient and very humble servant,

ANTHONY WAYNE.

The next letter, written little more than a fortnight before the mutiny, puts the actual grievances of the officers and men in a strong light. It is very curious.

WAYNE TO PRESIDENT REED.

Mount Kemble, 16th December, 1780.

Your favour, (without date,) inclosing Captain Zeigler's appointment as State Clothier and Issuing Commissary of State Stores, I had the honour to receive a few days since.

You very justly observed to Mr. Little that, had I been made acquainted with your instructions to him, I would not have attempted to contravene them, unless justified by pressing circumstances; but not being informed of your orders, and finding that there was a very great deficiency of supplies upon comparing the issues with the letter of the law, together with the good policy (I might have said absolute expediency) of a liberal donation of these comforts at an approaching *crisis*, induced me to order him to Philadelphia. The last reason operates rather in fuller force at this period. I have therefore directed Captain Zeigler to wait on your Excellency with the enclosed returns and estimate of clothing, on the presumption that the most effectual means will be adopted to procure a full supply of that essential article, and that every exertion will be used for the immediate completion of our quota of troops.

You'll please to observe, that the return of officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates entitled to receive State stores, are only those of the ten regiments of infantry and seven companies of Proctor's artillery now under my command. What number of troops there may be in the German