

Trenton Jan^y 13th 1781

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Sir,

The dispute with the Pennsylvania Line being happily terminated, I take the liberty of giving your Excellency a short account of the rise and progress of this unexpected and surprising revolt.

Many of the Men were held by enlistments which expressed the term of service to be for three years, or during the war. As three years began to expire about the first of Jan^y: they inquired of their Officers, whether they were to expect their discharges at the end of that Period. The Officers in general supposed the term of enlistment could not expire but with the war. This construction gave them much uneasiness, which was increased by some arrears of pay (which they were to have received from the State) not being furnished. And though the State had taken measures for paying those arrears, unfortunately the intelligence had not reached them previous to the first of Jan^y. These were the real sources of the mutiny, for though there were some other grievances common to the American, as well as other Armies, they have never mentioned these as having any weight, in their proceedings. — The two first effected a great part of the conversions, who used every art to induce others to support them in their intended revolt; which they were then more encouraged to attempt, as they were

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sixty miles distant from the main Army.

The affair was conducted with so much secrecy, that the Officers had not the most distant suspicion of it till the evening of the first of Jan^y. when hearing that the Troop were in Arms they repaired to the parade and not supposing it was general excited themselves to quell the mutiny. — The Soldiers in general show no disposition to injure their Officers though some who were intoxicated with Liquor discharged their Muskets, killed one Officer, and wounded three or four. Part of the division moved a few miles that evening, and the remainder followed them the next morning: when the whole assumed a military order under the command of their Sergeants, and marched without offering the least insult to the Inhabitants: except in one instance for which the Culprit was immediately apprehended and delivered over to the civil power. The Inhabitants say that on their march they never suffered the Soldiers to enter their houses even for water; nor was any article taken from them during their march. Upon their taking post, at Princeton, it began to be ^{sus}pected that their intentions were to join the enemy: but they persevered in declaring their ~~disaffection~~ ^{devotion} to the cause of the British and their attachment to the cause

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of their Country. They said they were only seeking a redress of grievances, which when obtained they would cheerfully return to their duty. And if the one my appeared in the interim they would fight them with desperation. This however was not ^{fully} credited; untill they were and brought to Genl. Duane who with Col Butler and Stewart remained among them without commission. Two British emissaries from Sir Henry Clinton with a written invitation, promising them great rewards if they would march to South River about 20 miles distant from Princeton where he would cover them with a body of British Troops. The Spies were delivered over to Genl. Duane and after Governor or Friends arrival to him, but afterwards by their request returned to them. The board of Sergeants, who had assumed the command issued orders next morning, stating the facts and declaring that the Pennsylvania line displayed a treachery and meanness like that of Benedict Arnold: that their views were honorable and their attachment to the cause of their country unalterable: and they were only seeking redress of grievances, from men of Honor. When Governor Mifflin came to Princeton they received him with every mark of respect and esteem they mentioned to him the grounds of their complaints which were principally the two first mentioned. He made them some proposals and communicated from

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the Committee of Congress which were readily accepted they were then requested to march to Trenton which they agreed to. and delivered to the Committee of Congress the two spies sent from Sir Henry Clinton; who were tried by a board of Officers—condemned and executed, on the 11th Inst. The Committee of Congress have appointed Commissioners, to determine respecting their instruments, to discharge such as are intitled thereto, and to give them the necessary certificates.— This seems to be perfectly satisfactory to them; many of those discharged are now offering to enlist upon having a furlough for a short time.

Thus Sir how this surprising affair has brought to a happy issue. Perhaps History does not furnish an Instance, of so large a body of troops revolting from the Command of their Officers; marching in such an exact order, without doing the least Injury to Individuals, and remaining in this situation, for such a length of time, without divisions or confusion, among themselves, and then returning to their duty as soon as their reasonable demands were complied with—

This Conduct ought to convince the British how much they mistake the disposition of the Americans at large when they assert that they would willingly

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join them; if not overawed by their tyrannic rulers. There was a large body composed as well of foreigners as natives having no officer to command them and no force to prevent their joining the enemy for which they had repeated invitations, yet though they well knew they were liable to the severest punishment for their revolt they disclaimed the British offers, with a firmness that would have done honor to the ancient Romans: and through the whole have shown the greatest respect to the Committee of Congress to the Governor and members of the Council for the State of Pennsylvania. And expressed the highest confidence in the justice of their civil rulers and have not through the whole deviated from that order and regularity which upon other occasions must have done honor to military discipline.

I have the honor to be with the
most perfect esteem your Excellency
most Obed Servt

John Sullivan

His Excellency the
Minister of France

Turn over —

P.S. One circumstance ought not to be omitted
which in my opinion does the Insurgents much
honor. When they delivered up the British Emif-
series Governor Reed offered them a Hundred golden
Guineas which they refused saying that what
they did was only a duty they owed that Country
And that they neither received nor would receive
any reward but the approbation of that Coun-
try for which they had so often fought and died.