

New Windsor March 4th 1781.

57/76

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 5th Ult. by Mr. Javitt lays me under an additional obligation. I am exceedingly sorry that you were unable to procure proper clothing for the officers of our line. They are prodigiously deficient in uniform cloth. And unless some mode can be adopted to provide for them, this circumstance will be truly shabby and situation very mortifying. They will need Boots and Hats likewise. I hope the State will take measures to provide decent clothing for their soldiers, without placing the least dependence on any from the continental Agents. Who I am persuaded have in many instances betrayed this Trust, and richly deserve death for their male-conduct. As it is owing to them that we have not long since been supplied with clothing from France. Our State can at least supply their men with Hats or leather Caps. If the Caps could be procured they would be much cheaper than Hats. as the first cost is but very little, if any thing more than Hats. and will last three times longer. They make very elegant ones at Middletown in Connecticut. where I could contract for them, if authorized by the State, or Board of war, & have them completed before we take the field in the best manner.

You request me to give you the particulars of the Pennsylvania Troops revolting or in other words deserting back to their ^{brother} citizens who had not completely fulfilled their promises or even complied in a single instance. This mutiny was unjustifiable unmilitary, and shook us to the foundation as it

terminated. Had it been quelled by force of arms, as it ought to have been, the example would have been less dangerous, and a circumstance not uncommon to other armies. But that about two thousand men, in the Centre of New Jersey & vicinity of Pennsylvania, should openly revolt kill & wound their officers, and set all authority at defiance, and finally be permitted to leave the service with impunity, is the most fatal blow ever struck to our discipline & subordination. Had our Troops in the highlands been better clad a detachment of them would have ^{been} sent to suppress ~~them~~ immediately, although the militia of the two States aforesaid ought to have been assigned for the purpose. But Congress and the executive authority of Pennsylvania took up the matter, a Committee from the former, & the Governor and a Committee from the latter waited on the Rebels, treated them with as much respect as if they had been ever so legal & respectable an assemblage, and ~~that~~ means superseded military Force. They permitted them to take their Oaths in preference to the Ouliftments they had signed & their officers answereations, whereby six eighths of them swore through thick & thin, and damned themselves out of the service. I am informed that at least 600 of them have absolutely perjured themselves. The remainder of them ^{had} some small pretext for what they did but by no means adequate. Their first complaints were grounded on the equivocal Ouliftments for three years or during the war. Though there were pretty generally stifled by a gratuity

58
given them of 100 Dollars each in consideration
of their being engaged for the war. And they had
universally signed receipts purporting the same. (per-
haps too great a compulsion was made use of to bring
it about) And had those Troops been well clothed, fed &
paid I believe ^{they} would have served to the end of the war
without a murmur. The principal causes of their com-
plaints were common with all the other Troops, The virtue
perseverance, Fortitude & patriotism of all our soldiers
have been put to the extremest Trial, and I'll assure
you the officers have not escaped the severest Trials. Their
situation now and for a long time past has been the
most unenviable of any one I can conceive of.

Although our Troops have undergone every hardship with
unparalleled resolution, yet I conceive they never will
again endure the like. It will at least be endangering
the very Existence of the army, and very probably
at a critical period, when the Existence of the
Liberties of the united States may be involved in the
catastrophy.

I most devoutly join with you in wishing that
this may be the last campaign, and I am persuaded
the whole army are of similar sentiments. The only
method to bring about so desirable an event, is to make
the most spirited exertions to raise the full quota
of recruits, and have them early in the field. And to
send on full supplies of every necessary for their subsistence.
A well found army is commonly a well disciplined one.
But when hunger compells the soldiery to maraud and
plunder, when the badness of their clothes excuses them from
duty and discipline. When the insufficiency of pay &
supplies sours their minds. When the plighted Faith
of Congress, the States, and that of the officers borrowed

on both, are so frequently violated. Murmuring, discontent, desertion, bad discipline, distrust and finally mutiny must take place. - -

I wrote you some time since an Answer to the Letter brought by Leavitt, with one enclosed both enclosed in a Letter address'd to President Weare, which I hope have come safe to hand. pray make my best compliments to Mrs Gilman. I should have been extremely happy in visiting my friends in Exeter the winter past but my Finances would not permit me the satisfaction. I am really apprehensive that my continuance in the army will deprive me of what I have ever supposed the truest happiness in Life. and that my attachment to the service will deprive me of the opportunity and means of attaining to the long wish'd for felicity. But at the same time I wish all my friends the most perfect enjoyment of that Bliss of which I am depriv'd. I am much oblig'd to you for your kind friendly wishes, and wish I had sufficient grounds to hope for a completion of them.

You have undoubtedly heard of Morgan's complete Victory over Tarleton. That Lt Col Lee surpriz'd the enemy's post at Georgetown. That Arnold is stealing Tobacco in Virginia and that a french GA has taken the Monmouth a 50 Gun Ship & 9 Transports from the british in Chesapeake. we hope for a confirmation of D'Estering's Victory over Hood. Lord Cornwallis having divested himself of all his heavy Baggage has push'd ~~for~~ into Virginia, G^d Greene is oblig'd to retire before him. Had the State fill'd their duty agreeable to the Requisitions of Congress. The enemy would not have presumed to leave their strong holds, or penetrated into the Country. I have some small hopes that Cornwallis may be Burgoyne, and that Arnold may be speculatively upon to advantage. The Fortune of war will determine very shortly. if it has not already. Y^{rs} most sincerely,
Joseph Gilman Esq. Alex^r Scammell

Mar. 4. 1781
Alex^r Scammell -

Letter from Col. Alexander

Scammell. March 4, 1781.

Remains waiting - waiting of Morgan on Tarleton.