

THE TAKING OF THE BAHAMAS BY THE
CONTINENTAL NAVY IN 1776.

CONTRIBUTED BY MALCOLM LLOYD, JR.

Bahamas New Providence 2d May 1776.

My Lord,

I take this first opportunity of informing Your Lordship that His Majestys rebellious Subjects of North America, knowing that the Company of the fourteenth Regiment was removed from hence, and the Savage Sloop of War recalled from this Station, and that thereby these Islands were left in a defenceless State, fitted out an armed Force from Philadelphia, consisting of one Ship of thirty two Guns, one of thirty, two Brigantines of sixteen Guns each, a Sloop of fourteen, and a Schooner of six Guns,—having on Board, besides Seamen, about three hundred Marines and Rifle Men, in order to attack this place, and to possess themselves of His Majesty's Powder, Artillery, and other Stores in his Forts in New Providence. On the third of March last this Fleet came off the Bar of the Harbour of Nassau, on which the Country was, by order of His Excellency the Governor, alarmed, and the greatest part of the Militia assembled in Fort Nassau, to prevent its coming into the Harbour, but, when it was expected these Vessels would come in, they suddenly tacked, and made to the Eastward, and the Ships and Brigantines being anchored at a place called Hanover Sound, about three Leagues distant from this Harbour, the Sloop and Schooner, with two Sloops belonging to these Islands, which they had taken in their passage hither, proceeded to the east end of this Island; on which the greatest part of the Militia were sent off from Fort Nassau, to join a small party lodged at Fort Mon-

tague, in order to prevent the landing of any Troops; but, before the Militia could reach the place where the Sloops and Schooner were anchored, the Rebels had disimbarked their Marines and Riffle Men, and the Militia, finding themselves unable to oppose such a force, were obliged to return to Fort Montague, where the Governor then was, and from thence to Fort Nassau, where the Powder and Stores were lodged: The Rebels soon after took possession of Fort Montague, where they remained till next Morning: in the meantime the Governor, finding that many of the Inhabitants had left the Fort, and that part of those remaining were unwilling to stay longer, called together the Council, Militia Officers and some of the principal Inhabitants, to consider whether the Fort in its then present Condition, with the few People then in it, could be effectually defended, the majority of whom were of opinion that as most of the Gun Carriages were defective, and as different kinds of Shot and other material Stores were wanting, it was not defensible, on which His Excellency consulted with the Council what should be done with the Powder (in all about one hundred and sixty Barrels) when it was determined to ship the same to St. Augustine to prevent its falling into the Hands of the Rebels, and it was accordingly shipped, and ordered to be delivered to His Excellency Governor Tonym, and the Fort was soon after evacuated. On the fourth the Rebels marched to the Town of Nassau, and took possession of the Fort, and also took the Governor Prisoner, and having taken on board their Vessels, which were brought into the Harbour for that purpose, His Majesty's Cannon, Mortars and Stores, from both the Forts, except a few Shott and Shells, they sailed from hence on the sixteenth of the same Month, and carried with them Governor Browne.

As soon as possible after the departure of the Rebels I dispatched an Express to His Majesty's Admiral at

Jamaica, acquainting him with what had happened, and representing to him the unhappy situation His Majesty's Servants here would be in, in case the Americans should return; as at their departure they had threatened to do, and requesting that he would afford what assistance he could for the defence and protection of this Government. I also requested that he would embrace the very first opportunity he should have of acquainting His Majesty's Ministers of this Rebellious Transaction, and of the present defenceless condition of these Islands, as I had then no other way of communicating them to your Lordship.

On considering, My Lord, the precarious condition of the Trade of this Place, and of the property of its Inhabitants, and thinking it incumbent on the People of this Government to do all in their power for the future security and protection of both, I thought fit, by the advice of his Majesty's Council, to convene the General Assembly, who passed a Law for Appointing Commissioners to put the Forts Nassau and Montague in a defensible State; but as no new Fund was provided for defraying the Expense, I am doubtful whether anything can be done to them; especially, as the present Revenue is so small as not to be sufficient to defray the usual contingencies of the Colony, and during the present unhappy disturbances it cannot be increased, as the Trade of these Islands is almost entirely ruined: so that His Majesty's Servants and Subjects, relying on his known Goodness, hope he will be graciously pleased to grant them such Support and Protection as their present Situation requires.

When His Excellency Governor Browne was carried from hence, My Lord, he carried with him, His Majesty's Commission appointing him Captain General, etc., and also that constituting him Vice Admiral of the Bahama Islands, but left His Majesty's Instructions to His Governor, the Great Seal, and the Com-

mission for the Trial of Piracies; so that when I took the Command of the Colony, I found no other Authority for so doing but the said Instructions and the Record in the Secretary's Office of the Governors Commission, and by which I shall continue to act, until His Majesty's Royal Will shall be known.

I have the Satisfaction to inform Your Lordship that William Chambers, in the Sloop called the Mississippi Packet, who voluntarily took the Powder on board his Vessel, was so fortunate as to escape the Enemy, and carried the same safe to St. Augustine, where it was delivered by him to Governor Tonym.

I now, My Lord, transmit to Your Lordship by the Snow Experiment, whereof William Fuller is Master, Copies of all the Laws that were passed in the two last Sessions of Assembly, under the Seal of this Government, as also Copies of the Journals of the Council; The Council in Assembly; and of the General Assembly to this Time; all which are particularly mentioned in the List herewith inclosed.

I have the Honor to be with the greatest Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most humble

and

most obedient Servant

John Brown.

R. 20th June.

New York November the 5th 1776.

My Lord

The beginning of this year I did myself the honor of congratulating your Lordship upon your promotion to the American department, which Event I may truly say, has given universal Joy and satisfaction to all the friends of Government on this great Continent, since that period, I have experienced the most complicated scenes of distress that can be well imagined, which with the Circumstances attending the refusal of the

Kings power and stores to General Gages order, and the consequences attending the dismembering the Forts at New Providence, I will as briefly as possible endeavor to explain;—I must therefore request your Lordships patience and forbearance.

In the Month of July 1775, during my absence from my Government (on account of my health), there arrived at New Providence His Majesty's ship of war, the *Falcon* commanded by Captⁿ. Lindzie, with Two Transports to carry away the Stores, Gunpowder, and Ordinance in His Majesty's Forts of said Islands, accompanied with a Letter from his Excellency Genl Gage, signifying that certain intelligence had been received by him, of the intention of the Rebels in North America to seize and carry away all the Kings Powder and Stores; That in consequence John Brown Esq^r. President of His Majesty's Council and then Commander in Chief of the said Islands, by and with the advice of His Majesty's Council, and on a petition of representation of the Inhabitants (that they would defend the said Stores against the Rebels) did absolutely refuse to deliver the same to Captain Lindzie, as by Copy of their petition and the minutes of council, already transmitted to your Lordship will more fully appear;—That on the 3d of March following an Armed force consisting of Two Ships of 30 Guns each, Two Brigs of 16, and a Schooner of 12 Guns, besides Two Large Armed Sloops, their Compliment in all, upwards of One Thousand men infested the Island of Providence, and a formal demand was imediatly made (by a certain rebel by name Hopkins, stiling himself Admiral and Commander in Chief of the Fleets of the United Colonys) in behalf of the Continental Congress of all the Kings powder and Stores; That upon the appearance of the said Fleet off the Harbour, I did without delay summon His Majesty's Council as also the Militia and all the inhabitants to assemble and de-

fend the said Garrisons, according to their resolution and petition to the president as already mentioned; But finding the majority of the Council rather Backward in their assistance, I did select and Join the principal inhabitants to the Council, in order to take the General Sence of the whole; And that upon proposing to them whether they would assist me to defend his Majesty's Fortresses and Stores, there appeared 14 against defending the same, to 10 for defending them; Considering then the eminent danger the powder was in, and finding that it was the visible opinion of the whole Community, that sending away the whole of it might enrage a disapointed enemy, and induce them to burn the Town, and commit other depredations, I immediatly determined to charter a vessel in order to Ship it, which was accomplished without a moments delay by Wm. Chambers a native of England, to whom great merit is due, as at my request he instantly Cast overboard a cargo of Lumber with which he was ready to sail to Jamaica, and was the only man in the Government that would have ventured at the risque of his Life and Ship to carry it away, and he sailed at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 4th of March, notwithstanding the Rebel Fleet was off the harbour, and delivered the whole (162 Large Barrels) to His Excellency Governor Tonym at St. Augustine;—That a little after daybreak the Rebels had taken possession and had made me a close prisoner at Fort Nassau, and put two Leitut^s and Thirty two men to guard me in a place without food, water, bed, table, or chair, from whence I was soon after removed to the Government house for the better convenience of their officers and men, who used at discretion all my wines and other Liquors as they did everything else they had occasion for;—That on the 10th day of March the Rebel Admiral sent a Number of His Sea Officers to conduct me on board his Ship, with orders to allow me but One Quarter of an hour

to prepare myself for a voyage, but to what part of the world they did not themselves know;—this indulgence, I refused, adding, that I would receive no Compliment from a sett of Rebels, who by breaking thro' a proclamation issued by their admiral upon his Landing, had forfeited every degree of Honor, faith, and Confidence, upon which I was seized, Collerd, and Draged away like a fellow to the Gallows in the presence of a Dear wife and an aged Aunt both near relations to the Earl of Dartmouth who were treated with such abuse, and such Language as certainly could not be equalled at Billingsgate, and tho' I was several days Wind bound in the harbour and within an hundred yards of the Government house, I was not permitted once to see my family;—O' tempore, O' mores;—as soon as Hopkins came on board I demanded the reason of my confinement, and the crime for which I was to be carried away, to which he answered, “for presuming to fire upon his Troops from Fort Mountagu, but the principal and original motive was, for daring to send away the powder;—On the 21st we sailed accompanied by my Sec^r. Mr. Babbidge and Mr. Irving, the first imprisoned for being an Officer on half pay, and the latter for being a Mandamus Councillor in So. Carolina, and in our passage to New London we fell in with his Majesty's Ship the Glasgow of 20 Guns who fought the whole rebel fleet for upwards of one hour and three Quarters; as I was eye witness to everything that passed do think it a Common Justice to declare Captⁿ Howe a brave and gallant officer, he killed and wounded above thirty of the rebels, among the former were Two Lieut^s. and a master, among the Latter, the Rebel Admiral's Son, and some Others; every wounded man died, I suppose on Acct. of the unskilfulness of their Surgeons, and the want of Cloaths and other necessarys at their Hospital, Captⁿ. Howe was very near sending the Alfred (the admiral's Ship) to the bottom, we received seven

nine pounders between Wind and Water, and for three Days they could scarce gain upon the water She made, the fire at one time was so hot that the rebels left their Guns; what a pitty it was Captⁿ. Wallace could not get out with the Glasgow; in such case the whole rebel fleet would have fallen into our hands;—the greatest mortification I had during the action was to see a fine spirited young man (an acting Lieut. belonging to the Bolton bomb Brig, which the rebels took the day before) killed by my side in the Cockpit by a nine pounder, Hopkins was so disabled in this action that he was obliged to put into New London to refit from whence I was sent to Norwich, Lebanon, Windham and Hartford in Connecticut, and Lastly to Middletown where I did not experience the same hard usage I did at first, and at which place I remain'd till I was a few days ago exchanged, for that rebel, who calls himself Lord Sterling; I am much indebted to General Howe (with whom I had the honor to serve last war), for this unexpected as well as distinguished mark of His favor and attention which I shall never forget;—

Before I conclude this long Letter, for which I entreat your Lordship's forgiveness, I beg leave to mention that the behaviour of the greater number of the Inhabitants of Bahama Islands, both before and since the Rebels invested them, as also from the resolution of the Continental Congress forbidding any of their Privateers to make Captures of, or molest any of the trading vessels of that Colony, gives me the strongest reason to believe that the Rebels were invited by some of the principal inhabitants, and I beg Leave to add that I have been upon my arrival here credibly informed that the Rebel Privateers make use of the Island of Providence as a harbour, and that Some of them had very Lately actually chased the same Captain Chambers whom I have already mentioned to have carry'd the powder to St. Augustine, he is just now

arrived here and has given me this information, I likewise understand, that these Rebels are aided and assisted by *James Gould Speaker of the assembly* (who mutiny'd in Fort Nassau on the night of the 3d of March last and took Eighty of my militia from me at one time) Alex^r Frazer a well known rebel, Tho^s Duncoun, Jer. Newton, John Kemp y^e Younger, Jno. Bedon—Adderly and others, as also Countenanced and encouraged by some of the members of His Majesty's Council, and officers of the Crown and Customs.

From the present wretched situation therefore of the Bahama Islands, I flatter myself that your Lordship will agree with me in Opinion that it would be highly imprudent for me to return to my Government during its present abandoned state, in which his Lordship the Admiral, as well as his good brother the General agree with me in Opinion; adding that it is for the present intirely out of their power to reinstate me;—I most heartily congratulate your Lordship on the success of His Majesty's Troops, and with expectation of receiving your commands by the first Opportunity to this place, I beg leave to Subscribe myself—My Lord

Your Lordships

Most Obedient and
most devoted Serv^t.

Montfort: Browne

P. S. It is necessary, in my own Vindication, to acquaint your Lordship, that the removal of y^e detachment of the 14th regiment by Gen^l. Gage, and the two Sloops of war by Adm^l. Graves occasioned my falling an easy Prey to the rebels, for I had not even a sick man left behind.

R. 30th December

New Providence 10th May 1777

My Lord,

I had the Honor of writing to Your Lordship on the 16th of May last, at which time I transmitted Copy of

my Letter to Your Lordship of the 2d of that Month; Duplicates of sundry Laws then passed, together with Duplicates of the Council and Assembly Journals, to that Date. I have not since had any opportunity 'till now of acknowledging the receipt of Your Lordship's Circular Letter of the 10th of November 1775 and those of the 23d of December following, with the Act to Prohibit all Trade and Intercourse with the Colonies in North America, now in Rebellion, all which came to my Hands by the way of Jamaica, in the beginning of May last. I also received a Packet containing sundry printed Copies of an Address Petition and Memorial from Nova Scotia, and of the Resolves of the House of Commons thereon, without any Directions concerning the same, but I conceived they were sent in order to be made publick to His Majesty's Subjects here.

In my Letter to Your Lordship of the 2d of May 1776, I informed Your Lordship that the Legislature here had passed a Law for appointing Commissioners to put the Forts in a Defensible State, at the same time I expressed my Doubts whether anything could be done to them, knowing the poverty of the Country:—Nothing has been done to them, except that six small Guns are mounted on that nearest to the Bar, so that the port is in a manner open to any enemy; and as none of His Majesty's Vessels have been here since the Schooner St. John left this Place in March 1776, the Armed Vessels of the Rebellious Colonies have often ventured amongst these Islands, and took several Vessels and Slaves the property of the Inhabitants, which, indeed, were restored soon after. On passing the Law now mentioned I, with the Advice of the Council, sent to St. Augustine for twenty Barrels of the Powder which had been sent from hence, to enable me to keep any of the Armed Vessels that frequented these Islands out of this Harbour, as I thought they might attempt to procure Refreshments here; and it was for-

tunate we did so, as on the 30th of October last a large Brigantine fitted at Philadelphia, with 14 Carriage Guns, 16 Swivels and 101 Men, came to the Bar of the Harbour of New Providence, and the Captain of her having procured a Pilot, sent in to let me know that he wanted Wood and Water, and that he was determined at all events to come into the port to procure them and to refit his Vessel, and he actually anchor'd on the Bar, but on finding that I had, with the Council and about thirty of the White Inhabitants, and forty Negroes, all that could be prevailed on to join me, repaired to Fort Nassau, with design to oppose his entrance, he weighed and went from this Island, and no other armed Vessels have made the like Attempt since.

I am now to inform Your Lordship, that, as many of the Laws of these Islands would have expired at Christmas last, I was obliged, being thereto advised by the Council, to call the Assembly together, who renewed them; Copies of which, under the Great Seal, together with Copies of the Journals of the Council; of the Council in Assembly, and of the General Assembly to this Time, as also copy of the Treasurers Accounts from Christmas 1775 to Christmas 1776 are with this inclosed in a Box directed to Your Lordship.

I have the Honour to be, with the greatest respect

My Lord,

Your Lordships most humble
and most obedient Servant

John Brown

R. 25th June

Whitehall 14th January 1777

Gov^r. Browne. Sir.

It was a great pleasure to me to find, by your letters of the 5th and 10th Nov^r that Sir Wm. Howe had availed himself of the opportunity of an Exchange of Prisoners, to procure your release from the long and disagreeable confinement you had been kept in by the

Rebels, and that you were safely arrived at New York, upon which I most heartily congratulate you.

There can be little doubt from the whole behaviour of the generality of the Inhabitants of the Bahamas, that the Rebels were invited to undertake the Enterprise they formed against those Islands, and the refusal of the President and Council to deliver the Ordnance and Stores to Genl. Gage's order, was evidently in consequence of a Plan they had concerted with the Rebels for putting them into their hands.

The time is not yet come for shewing a proper resentment of such treachery. But as soon as the more important operations on the Continent will admit of the sending a small Force to those Islands for your security, and the re-establishing of Legal Authority, there, I shall expect it will become a chief object of your attention, to discover the principal contrivers or abettors of this traitorous proceeding. In the meantime I desire you will transmit to me the names of such of His Majesty's Council and other Officers of the Crown whom you have good ground to suspect were privy to it, that I may lay them before His Majesty as altogether unworthy of holding any Office under His Government.

The account you give of the favourable disposition of the People in that part of Connecticut in which you was confined, and their earnest desire to return to their Allegiance, is very pleasing to The King, and His Majesty very much approves the steps you took to encourage that good disposition, by holding out assurances of bounties in Lands, as rewards for engaging in His Majesty's Service.

If the success be at all answerable to your Expectations it must be productive of the best consequences, and I shall be very happy to hear from Sir W^m Howe, that he has formed a considerable Body of Connecticut Volunteers, upon the plan you have laid down; and altho' I have not received from Sir Will^m Howe

any intimation of your undertaking or its effects—I have, notwithstanding, by this conveyance, signified to him His Majesty's Pleasure, that he should give assurances in His Majesty's Name, of Grants of Land agreeable to the terms of the Proclamation of 7th October 1763, being made to all such of those Volunteers as he shall approve of and receive into The King's Service.

It is natural to imagine that your presence will be necessary for the prosecution of your own plan, but of that you must be the best judge, and therefore His Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant you His Royal License for coming to England, and I inclose an instrument, signed by His Majesty for that purpose. But I must acquaint you at the same time, that His Majesty confides in your zeal and attachment to His Service, for with-holding you from making use of it, if, in the judgment of Sir Will^m Howe, your absence will be productive of any material Inconvenience.

I am etc.

Geo. Germain

My Lord

Atwood March 22 1776

In obedience to, and at the request of, His Excellency Governor Browne, I with all due Deference presume to transmit to your Lordship a brief Account of the late unfortunate Event that has happen'd here: But previous thereto, I conceive it necessary to acquaint your Lordship, That in the Month of last His Majesty's Ship Falcon and two Transports were sent here by Order of General Gage to take from Us the Cannon, Powder, Shot, and other Stores out of our Forts Nassau and Montague, Which the President, in the Absence of his Excellency, with the Advice of Council and at the Intercession of the Inhabitants of this Island, thought fit to decline sending them away at that Juncture for the Reasons assigned in their Memorial

for that purpose Notwithstanding We had then no Regulars to defend Us and since when the Militia has constantly mounted Guard at each Fort for the Protection thereof, and whereby We thought Ourselves secure with our own internal Strength and Defence, But Fate has proved the contrary—For on Sunday the 3d instant there appeared off this Island early in the Morning Two Ships, Two Briggs a Sloop and a Schooner—His Excellency in Consequence ordered three Guns to be fired at Fort Nassau as an Alarm for the Militia to turn out, and then summoned his Council to attend him at the Fort, That before the Council met, The Major of the Militia had dispatched a Detachment of Thirty Men up to Fort Montague, (two Miles distance from Fort Nassau) which was soon afterwards followed by a like Detachment, But few of either Party were furnished with more than common Fowling Pieces; That at this time His Excellency gave the necessary Directions in Fort Nassau for the proper Defence of the same And having received Intelligence that the Rebels had landed part of their Troops at a Place called the Creek to the Eastward of Fort Montague, He then marched himself with a third Detachment consisting of about Eighty Men in order further to succour the other Fort That before His Excellency had reached the same Lieutenants Burke and Judkin had been dispatched from Fort Montague with a Party of thirty Men to reconnoitre and if possible to prevent their Landing but which they had effected to the Number of about 250 Men and several Boats being clearly seen near the Shore His Excellency thought fit to order another Detachment of 40 Men commanded by a Captain Lieuten^t. and Ensign to support the former Detachment who soon returned without accomplishing the purpose intended As the other Party was then upon the Retreat, Upon which His Excellency ordered three Guns to be fired on the Enemy which did no Execution,

And therefore it was tho' adviseable to march back what Force he then had to Fort Nassau His Excellency first ordering the Guns to be spiked up, and Lieutenant Burke to wait on the Commanding Officer of the Enemy to know his Errand and on what Account he had landed his Troops, Who returned for Answer, He was come for the King's Stores and Gunpowder in our Forts and wo^d. have them Now my Lord from this sudden and unexpected Attack it was almost impossible to collect together a Force equal to the Report made of the Numbers of the Rebels, But in order to obtain every Assistance His Excellency issued his Proclamation by beat of Drum offering a Reward of a Pistole to every free Negroe and others that wo^d. immediately enter the Fort properly armed, and further to prevent the Enemy from gaining the Advantageous Post at the Government He sent a Detachment of 40 Men under the Command of Captain Thomas Hodgson (altho' not then an Officer in the Service) and Ensign Barrett to protect the same, (As that Eminence sho^d. the Enemy have got any Cannon mounted thereon wo^d. greatly have annoy'd Fort Nassau, Which being done, and the Rebels having got Possession of Fort Montague, and their Comander having by Lieutenant Burke sent Word He sho^d. see the Governor in the Morning His Excellency about 8 o clock in the evening called a Council of War at Which assisted the Council, Militia Officers, and several of the Principal Inhabitants, to know whether from the Force the Rebels were supposed to be, and the Condition Fort Nassau was then found to be in, with what Strength was then in the Fort It was defensible or not? To which Question only Ten were of Opinion it was defensible, and Fourteen that it was not; And therefore in Consequence His Excellency with the Advice of his Council got about 160 Barrels of the Gun Powder removed out of the Fort (the whole not exceeding 182 Barrels some time before) and ime-

diately sent off to Augustine in a Sloop belonging to one Captain Will^m Chambers, A Man truly attach'd to Government and Active upon this Occasion; His Majesty's arm'd Sloop the St. John not being in any Condition fit for Service altho' commanded by Lieutenant Grant whom His Excellency directed to putt to Sea to prevent his Vessell falling into the Hands of the Enemy, and whereby he might be enabled to give Intelligence of their Proceedings In Case he met with any of his Majestys' Ships of War—The next Matter that ensued and in which His Excellency took the Opinion of his Council was; Whether, from the Determination of the Council of War it was not advisable in our defenceless Condition and the Powder being ship'd, off, Which Circumstance alone almost instantaneously produced a Desertion of three fourths of the Men and Negroes, It wo^d. not be proper to have the Assistance of the Detachment then doing Duty at the Government House for the ultimate Protection of the Fort, which being approv'd of, His Excellency himself went from thence and soon returned with that Succour, But they not conceiving themselves a suffic^t. Force for that purpose, solicited that they might not remain, the rest having left the Fort; Whereupon it was then thought most advisable to evacuate the Fort instead of being made Prisoners to the Enemy, But His Excellency dissented therefrom and said He was not willing to leave the Fort while any One wo^d. stand by him And certain I am My Lord That this whole Affair has been brought upon Us by the Treachery of some few Individuals, and that the Americans wo^d. never have thought this Enterprize worthy of their Notice, Had they not been apprized of our unguarded Situation, and invited here for this purpose by the Enemys of Government—But the Result has proved too successful to the Rebels—For they have not only dismantled our Forts and possessed themselves of every service-

able Part of the Cannon, Shot, and Stores, but have also forceably taken from Us His Excellency the Governor after confining him to his House some few Days under a Guard of an Officer and 40 of the Rebel Army, and then Dragging him by Violence on Board one of their Ships mounting 32 Guns called the Alfred In which Ezek Hopkins is stiled the Comodore and Commander in Chief, where He remained four Days previous to their sailing from hence, Which was on Saturday the 16th instant in Company with Lieutenant Babbidge and Mr. Irving whom they made Prisoners immediately upon their Arrival here from Pensacola One by being an Officer (tho' upon half Pay only) and the other as Receiver General of South Caroline—There are several other Matters His Excellency directed Me previous to his Departure to acquaint your Lordship, respecting singular Proceedings here, But the short Notice I received even to communicate to your Lordship the foregoing I hope will in part apologize for any incorrectness therein and be excused by

My Lord

Your Lordship's

Most truly faithfull

and Obedient humble Servant

Tho. Atwood

New Providence

22d March 1776

A LIST OF THE ARMAMENT, ETC.

	Captn. names	Guns	Men & Marines	
Frigate Alfred	Saltinsel	32	300	
Do Columbus	Wipple	32	250	swivels
Brig Cabott	Hopkins	16	200	16
Do Andrew Doria	Biddle	16	180	16
Schooner Wasp	Hallock	8	60	10
Sloop Fly	Hacker	14	100	14
Do Providence	Hazard	12	80	14
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		130	1170	70

N. B. The two Frigates were two Deckers mounted 9^s on her lower Deck and double fortified 4^{rs} on her upper.

R. 15th June

My Lord

I am now a close Prisoner on board the Alfred Frigate belonging to the Americans and prudence in my present distressed situation will not allow me to say more at present, than that I have been tore away from my family at a moment's notice,—I refer your Lordship to Mrs. Browne and to Mr. Chief Justice Atwood for the particulars of what has happen'd to this Colony, my person as well as his Majesty's Garrisons and Stores (Powder only excepted) has been shamefully betrayed to the Enemy;—

I have requested the Chief Justice and Mrs. Browne to forward without loss of time the minutes of Council, etc. to your Lordship; I write in the greatest haste and dread that these few lines may be intercepted, as I have innumerable Senterys over me.

From on Board the Alfred } I am My Lord
frigate March 17, 1776 } Your Lordship's
much distressed and most dutifull St.

Montfort: Browne

P. S. I have been cruelly treated by a few here. I have saved his Majesty's Powder by sending it at the nick of time to St. Augustine.

To

The Earl of Dartmouth
Whitehall
London

R. 15th June