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Reinterpreting the "Very Trifling Mutiny" at Philadelphia in June 1783

IN A LETTER OF JANUARY 16, 1784, to the Marquis de Chastellux, Thomas Jefferson reported "some dissatisfaction in the army at not being paid off before they were disbanded, and a very trifling mutiny of 200 soldiers in Philadelphia."[1] Some historians have likewise dismissed the unrest in the Continental army at the moment of its disbandment. They consider that George Washington quelled the officers' conspiracy at Newburgh in March 1783; they then project the image of an army that suffered patiently during the war and departed quietly after it—an image designed to reassure European observers that the fledgling nation

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[1] See Julian P Boyd, et al, eds, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, 1950–), 6 466 Jefferson appears to be quoting financier Robert Morris, who described the mutiny as "a trifling Thing which has no Importance in itself and which might derive some by treating of it seriously" See RM to the consortium of Dutch bankers, Dec 31, 1783 (first letter), in E James Ferguson, John Catanzariti, et al, eds, *The Papers of Robert Morris* (hereafter, *PRM*) (Pittsburgh, 1973–), vol 8, forthcoming

was viable.[2] This understatement masks the degree to which Generals Washington and Greene struggled to contain their armies' anger and the anxiety with which state legislatures awaited their soldiers' return.

The Philadelphia mutiny in June 1783 was one of the most significant manifestations of army dissatisfaction at war's end. Contemporaries were convinced that its objectives "were of greater magnitude and of deeper dye than as yet can be made appear,"[3] but only a retired army captain and a lieutenant were charged with responsibility for it. Historians also have failed to identify military conspirators capable of planning so sinister a plot against government. Some describe the two-week demonstration by 500 troops from Philadelphia, Lancaster, and the southern army as a spontaneous explosion of discontent. Others blame the Office of Finance for the protest. Although there are scattered references to soldiers' involvement in an earlier mutiny of the Pennsylvania line, most writers give little attention to the radical milieu that nurtured and sustained their protest.

The earliest historians of the mutiny trace its origins to the Office of Finance. William Gordon wrote a brief account of it in the history he published in 1788. Gordon mentioned that sergeants in Philadelphia had sent an angry message to Congress, but considered that the mutiny proper had originated at Lancaster and had been directed at the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. He described Congress's attempts to manage the disturbance, after the state refused to call out the militia and its decision to flee to Princeton, and noted that the mutiny was suppressed without bloodshed or destruction of property. Congress, he stated, realized that the mutiny was "partly owing" to the fact that the soldiers "did not receive part of their pay previous thereto, agreeably" to its intention. "The financier's notes with which such payment was at length made," he commented, "soon passed at a considerable discount. . . . " Mercy Otis Warren recognized the "very dangerous nature" of the army's discontent in 1783 and suspected that "some of the largest

[2] George Bancroft provides a classic statement of this viewpoint. He describes Washington as distressed for his soldiers but powerless to do better for them: "The veterans . . . in perfect good order, . . . retired to their homes 'without a settlement of their accounts, and without a farthing of money in their pockets.' " See his *History of the United States of America from the Discovery of the Continent* (6 vols., 1885, reprint, Port Washington, N.Y., 1967), 6:83.

[3] See Robert Howe to the President of Congress, Sept. 2, 1783, Papers of the Continental Congress 1774-89, National Archives, no. 38, 119 (hereafter, PCC).

public creditors on the continent" had been fomenting it. While she acknowledged that "both officers and soldiers grew loud in their complaints, and bold in their demands," she emphasized that "some persons not belonging to the army, and who were very *adroit* in fiscal management, had their full share in ripening the rupture." She judged that the officers who protested at Newburgh "sustained a character pure, and morals correct" when compared to those "looking forward to projects of extensive speculation, to the establishment of banks and funding systems and to the erecting a government for the United States, in which should be introduced ranks, privileged orders and arbitrary powers." Warren considered the conspiracy at Newburgh as the linear ancestor of the discontent at Philadelphia.[4] While she held the nationalists responsible for the continuum of discontent that produced the march on the State House, she did not ask whether the officers at Newburgh were involved in the Philadelphia mutiny.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Louis Clinton Hatch, Varnum L. Collins, Edmund Cody Burnett, and Robert L. Brunhouse discussed the mutiny from their particular perspectives. Years later, H. James Henderson described the mutiny as "anomalous" from "the standpoint of congressional politics," denied that officers were involved in it, and disassociated it from the Newburgh affair completely, arguing that it "was as spontaneous as the Newburgh affair was contrived." Richard H. Kohn mentioned the protest, not as it related to the army's grievances, but as instrumental in granting Arthur Lee's wish to have Congress removed from Philadelphia. Kenneth R. Bowling was the first modern scholar to research the episode in detail and to emphasize that the soldiers had directed their final demands to Pennsylvania and not to Congress. Like Kohn, he noted that "capital movers" had used the army's discontent as a pretext to move Congress out of Philadelphia, and, like Warren, he believed that certain "centralist" politicians had hoped to use the army's

[4] See William Gordon, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America* (1788; reprint, Freeport, N.Y., 1969), 4:372-74; and Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution Interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral Observations* (1805; reprint, Lester H. Cohen, ed., Indianapolis, 1988), 611-13. Both Gordon and Warren were probably influenced by Samuel Osgood and Arthur Lee, whose views are discussed below. Gordon also corresponded with Horatio Gates.

discontent to strengthen the federal government.[5] Bowling's findings were overlooked by some subsequent historians, however. Charles Royster described a "brief mutiny by a few hundred unpaid Pennsylvania soldiers" that "embarrassed Congress." He continued: "The ease with which Continentals were discharged, their pay and bounty bought for a song, showed how little danger they had posed to civil government." Jack N. Rakove depicted the mutiny as an "insult" offered by a "small contingent of Pennsylvania soldiers." Minor Myers, Jr., also failed to take Bowling's essay into account, but he noticed something that earlier historians had virtually ignored: the presence of Newburgh conspirator John Armstrong, Jr., by then retired from the army and serving as secretary to the Supreme Executive Council in Philadelphia. Myers wondered whether he might have passed along "suggestions" to the mutineers. The editors of the *Letters of Delegates to Congress* also noted Armstrong's strategic position and suspected that he "may have played a significant role in the campaign of these troops to obtain a just settlement of their demands."[6]

This essay agrees for the most part with Bowling's narrative but disputes suggestions that prominent "centralists" fanned the army's discontent into flame.[7] Instead, it measures the resources available to Congress against the demands upon it and finds the resources inadequate and the executive departments thereby unable to manage the disbandment satisfactorily.

[5] See Louis Clinton Hatch, *The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army* (1904; reprint, New York, 1971), 181-87; Varnum Lansing Collins, *The Continental Congress at Princeton* (Princeton, 1908), 8-36; Edmund Cody Burnett, *The Continental Congress* (New York, 1941), 575-80; Robert L. Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790* (Harrisburg, 1942), 135-40; H. James Henderson, *Party Politics in the Continental Congress* (New York, 1974), 339-41; Kenneth R. Bowling, "New Light on the Philadelphia Mutiny of 1783: Federal-State Confrontation at the Close of the War for Independence," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter, Bowling, "Mutiny") 101 (1977), 419-50; and Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1892* (New York and London, 1975), 50.

[6] See Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1979), 342; Jack N. Rakove, *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress* (New York, 1979), 334; Minor Myers, Jr., *Liberty Without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati* (Charlottesville, Va., 1983), 35-38; and Paul H. Smith, et al., eds., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789* (hereafter, *LDC*) (Washington, 1976–), 20:329-30n. C. Edward Skeen does not even mention the mutiny in his *John Armstrong, Jr., 1758-1843, A Biography* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1981).

[7] Despite his suspicions, Bowling later argued that "there is no evidence to support . . . contentions" that "civilians with deep designs were behind the affair." See Bowling, "Mutiny," 428-29, 445 and below at note 89.

Circumstantial evidence, largely overlooked by historians of the mutiny, strongly suggests that John Armstrong, Jr., is the key conspirator sought by contemporary investigators and by historians. Armstrong recognized that soldiers of the Pennsylvania line felt "like Men" who "might do some good" if they could "be brought to think like Politicians." It is reasonable to suppose that he decided to utilize their revolutionary potential to attempt to introduce "some new principles" and to bring government "to conform to the Genius of the People."[8] Although the political repercussions of the June uprising are clear, this essay focuses on the army, concluding that veteran Pennsylvania soldiers and officers recognized their common interest and together invoked an indigenous radical tradition to define and explain their efforts to secure proper recognition and adequate recompense for sufferings endured in the struggle for independence.

A number of historians have defined and described the development of a radical tradition in Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century.[9] Frontier folk and city dwellers protested exclusion from the political process, economic hardship, and profiteering and speculation practiced in greedy disregard of the common interest. In the years before independence, when prior petitions for redress of grievances were ignored by the authorities, soldiers joined civilians in taking direct, militant action, including three organized and popularly supported marches on the seat of government in the space of twenty years. In 1764 politicians drew lower-class Philadelphians into a hotly contested election in which the lower orders were actively involved. The "Paxton Boys" from Lancaster protested government protection of Indians and their own under-representation in the legislature by marching on Philadelphia. While the conflict between the government and the frontiersmen was resolved,

[8] See John Armstrong, Jr., to Horatio Gates, May 30, 1783, Gates Papers, New York Historical Society.

[9] This essay adopts the definition of radicalism proposed by Gary B. Nash in "The Transformation of Urban Politics, 1700-1764," *Journal of American History* 60 (1973), 605-32. Other discussions include: Richard A. Ryerson, *The Revolution Is Now Begun: The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776* (Philadelphia, 1978), 3, 25-26n., 39n., 89n., 145-47, 155-59, 207n.; and Ronald Schultz, *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720-1830* (New York, 1993), 3-62, 69-70.

discontent remained.[10] Postwar economic changes created widespread hardship and disposed the lower classes in Philadelphia to demonstrate their anger and frustration. Their commitment to the struggle against Britain was visible from its earliest days. Tradesmen manned the militia units raised in the city in 1775, while their betters often managed to evade such service. Along with leaders such as Thomas Paine, the militia protested the steady accrual of wealth and power to the merchant class and demanded expansion of the franchise and equalization of the burden of militia service. In 1776 radicals and their supporters engineered the ratification of the most democratic constitution adopted by any state.

Conditions did not improve, however, and on October 4, 1779, Philadelphia militiamen, angered by sharp price increases, which they blamed on greedy merchants, menaced a group of prominent individuals gathered at the home of attorney James Wilson, a well-known opponent of price controls. Shots were exchanged and both sides suffered casualties. The rioters were finally dispersed and many arrested by the "City Horse," an upper-class volunteer brigade that had been called out by Joseph Reed, then president of Pennsylvania and previously a supporter of the radical cause. This episode, known as the Fort Wilson Riot, constituted a significant defeat for radical Philadelphians.[11] The city's elite was much shaken by the outburst, however. Republican Benjamin Rush described the protest as an "insurrection" and suggested that "the objects of the mob" which was "enraged chiefly by liquor" were "unknown or confus-

[10] On the Paxton Boys, see James H. Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1746-1770: The Movement for Royal Government and Its Consequences* (Princeton, 1972), 84-120, 172-73; Brooke Hindle, "The March of the Paxton Boys," *William and Mary Quarterly* (hereafter, *WMQ*) 3 (1946), 461-86 (hereafter, Hindle, "Paxton Boys"). For reports that Philadelphians had instigated the Paxton Boys' march, see *PRM,* 7:177-79n.

[11] On the Philadelphia militia, the Constitution of 1776, and the Fort Wilson Riot, see Steven J. Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" During the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1987), 49-75, 103-8, 205-27; Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York, 1976), 172-78; William B. Reed, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1847), 1:149-54; John F. Roche, *Joseph Reed, a Moderate in the American Revolution* (New York, 1968), 160-62; C. Page Smith, "The Attack on Fort Wilson," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter, *PMHB*) 78 (1954), 177-88; Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution,* 68-76; and John K. Alexander, "The Fort Wilson Incident of 1779: A Case Study of the Revolutionary Crowd," *WMQ* 31 (1974), 589-612; Douglas McNeil Arnold, *Political Ideology and the Internal Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790* (New York, 1989), chaps. 1-3; and Theodore Thayer, *Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy, 1740-1776* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1952), 175-97.

edly understood." He complained to John Adams that, while "the perfection of government consists in providing restraints against the tyranny of rulers on the one hand and the licentiousness of the people on the other," the Pennsylvania constitution left its citizens "exposed to all the miseries of both without a single remedy for either."[12] Rush's remarks illustrate the gulf between the radicalized populace and upper-class supporters of the struggle against Great Britain, and the propensity of the latter to link popular protests to excessive consumption of alcohol.

After the Fort Wilson Riot, the radical torch passed to Pennsylvania soldiers in the Continental army recruited from both Philadelphia and the frontier. The Pennsylvania line was narrowly prevented from joining a mutiny in May 1780.[13] Six months later, grievances over enlistment provoked veterans to mutiny because new recruits were offered bounties of $25 in gold, while veterans had received no pay and lesser bounties in Continental dollars. Over 2,000 disgruntled soldiers who had recently been coerced to reenlist for the duration of the war marched toward Philadelphia on January 1, 1781. Congressman John Sullivan, chair of the congressional committee appointed to deal with the uprising, attempted to give it the brightest face possible in a letter to French minister Chevalier de La Luzerne. Sullivan described this mutiny as a misunderstanding over the terms of enlistment and arrearages of pay. He reported that the soldiers showed no inclination to injure either civilians or their officers, "though some who were intoxicated with Liquor discharged their Musketts, killd one Officer and wounded three or four."[14] He was also able to point out that the mutineers, "composed as well of foreigners as natives," proved their loyalty to the cause by rejecting British overtures and handing over several British agents to the authorities. His carefully crafted report may have moved La Luzerne to recommend direct financial aid to keep the American army from disintegrating.[15]

[12] See L H Butterfield, ed , *Letters of Benjamin Rush* (hereafter, *RL*) (2 vols , Princeton, 1951), 1 240

[13] See Joseph Plumb Martin, *Private Yankee Doodle,* (Conshohocken, Pa , 1962), 182-87

[14] For a convincing argument that hostility between officers and enlisted men was in fact an issue, see Royster, *Continental Army,* 303-6

[15] For this and other mostly sympathetic depictions, see *LDC* 16 554, 596-8n , *RL,* 1 261, William T Hutchinson and William M E Rachal, eds , *The Papers of James Madison* (hereafter, *PJM*) (Chicago and Charlottesville, 1962–) 2 279-84, 287, and David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution in Two Volumes* (1789, reprint, Lester H Cohen, ed , Indianapolis, 1990), 539-41 Sullivan was in the pay of La Luzerne See William C Stinchcombe, *The American Revolution and the French Alliance* (Syracuse, N Y , 1969), 163-64

The mutiny was not explained either by the presence of foreigners or by the effects of alcohol, however. Washington recognized the soldiers' grievances and was apprehensive that the mutineers "might . . . wreak their vengeance upon the persons and properties of the Citizens." He feared that "in a town of the size of Philadelphia there are numbers who would join them in such a business."[16] Reed and the congressional committee eventually negotiated concessions with the mutineers and the uprising appeared to be at an end. Historian David Ramsay considered that the authorities had redressed complaints and quelled the revolt by "healing measures." Mercy Otis Warren remarked that the mutineers returned "cheerfully" to their duty.[17]

Shortly thereafter, Sullivan gave Washington a more honest appraisal. He indicated that "the almost total Dissolution of the Pensylvania Line by Furlough or Discharge was absolutely necessary & a re-incorporation the only remedy that could be applied for as a body they would have been Troublesome if not Dangerous." He expressed fear that "too many of the Disorderly ones," and "unprincipled Irish & English men ungovernable in their Nature" would reenlist and recommended keeping the Pennsylvanians "always Seperated & Intermixed with other Troops."[18] Sullivan's fears were not without foundation. As he recommended, the Pennsylvania line was reorganized and several units were sent to serve in the Carolinas,[19] but the spirit of mutiny persisted. As their march southward was about to begin, soldiers began to demand pay in "real, not ideal money." They refused to obey orders to return to their quarters and were arrested. On May 28, 1781, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer reported: "General Wayne was obliged to Order a Platoon to fire on

[16] See John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (39 vols., Washington, 1931-44), 21:57.

[17] See Ramsay, *American Revolution,* 541; and Warren, *American Revolution,* 415. Other accounts of the mutiny include Gordon, *Independence,* 4:16-22; Carl Van Doren, *Mutiny in January* (1943; reprint, Clifton, N.J., 1973); Roche, *Joseph Reed,* 182-88; Paul David Nelson, *Anthony Wayne, Soldier of the Early Republic* (Bloomington, 1985), 115-31; Glenn Tucker, *Mad Anthony Wayne and the New Nation* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1973), 173-89; and Charles Janeway Stille, *Major-General Anthony Wayne and the Pennsylvania Line in the Continental Army* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1968), 238-62.

[18] See *LDC* 16:641-42.

[19] The Pennsylvania line was recruited throughout the state. Periodic reorganizations of the army make it difficult to determine the provenance of the men in any given unit, but see Robert K. Wright, Jr., *The Continental Army* (Washington, D. C. 1983), 24-25, 78-82, 259-69, 339-41.

part of the right Wing who refused to March—four of the Mutineers were killed." Madison commented that Wayne had "moved at last after bringing the competition b[etween] discipline & the mutinous spirit of the troo[ps to an] issue."[20] The triumph was only temporary, however.

By April 1782, Wayne was apologizing for the "murmuring tone that pervades the army, & much more so for a second appearance of a Mutiny" in the Pennsylvania line, a "distemper" that he had "thought effectually cured by a liberal dose of Nitre &c administer'd at York In Pennsa." Nathanael Greene, commander of the southern army, considered the "face of mutiny in the Pennsylvania line" to be "strongly marked." He blamed continued hardship for creating a "constant fever of discontent" that had a "deeper root than sufferings." He believed Pennsylvanians were attempting to involve the Maryland line and other units "not without the appearances of success," and investigated a plot to hand over officers to the enemy unless pay and clothing arrived. He searched especially for "Sergeants in the Pennsylvania line formerly British deserters" but found very few culprits of this sort. Those punished included Sergeant Gornell [Goswell], "one of the most forward in the former mutiny," who was hanged, four other Pennsylvanians and a Marylander (Sergeants Nicholson, Connell, Spice, and Hustler, and Richard Peters), who were sentenced to hard labor, which had a "better effect upon the Army then even their execution."[21] Thus, by spring 1782 Pennsylvania soldiers had established that they would put force behind their demands for adequate recompense for military service. Their state had shown some willingness to negotiate with its citizen-soldiers and to redress their grievances.

Congress, unable to provide the army with real pay or adequate provisions and clothing, considered any challenge to its authority a serious

[20] See Hatch, *Revolutionary Army,* 141; *LDC* 17:270; and *PJM* 3:141.

[21] See Wayne to Greene, April 9, Nathanael Greene Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; John Nicholson, Terce Connell, John Speer, and Thad Hustler to Greene, April 27, Nathanael Greene Papers, Library of Congress; Greene to Wayne, April 21, Anthony Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Greene, Orders, April 22, 28, McKinney Orderly Book, PCC; Greene to Henry Lee, April 22, Nathanael Greene Papers, Huntington Library; Greene to RM, April 22, *RMP* 5:35-36; Greene to Washington, April 22, Washington Papers, Library of Congress; Greene to Otho Williams, April 22, Otho H. Williams Papers, Maryland Historical Society; Francis Mentges to Greene, April 22, Greene Papers, Clements Lib.; Greene to President of Congress (John Hanson), May 18, 1782, PCC, no. 155, 2:441-42. Dennis Conrad, editor of *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene,* supplied me with copies of these as yet unpublished letters.

threat. Individual delegates extolled the army's virtues, to disguise the seriousness of army unrest, but discredited mutineers by suggesting that they were foreigners or drunkards. Army unrest and stagnation in the war effort moved Congress to seek nationalist solutions to governmental paralysis. In February 1781, barely a month after the first mutiny of the Pennsylvania line, the delegates persuaded Robert Morris, a wealthy Philadelphia merchant who had been present in Wilson's home when it was besieged during the riot in 1779, to serve as superintendent of finance.[22] Morris kept Washington's army fed and in the field until the war's end, but the army received only a month's pay in specie before the critical battle of Yorktown, and the promise of another for the month of January 1783.[23] Furthermore, Morris's efforts to wring revenue out of the states eventually created the impression that the government was more remote from common folk, more concerned with paying contractors and civil servants than soldiers, and less sympathetic to the hardships suffered by the working classes as a result of wartime economic dislocation.

As prospects for peace and disbandment increased, so did the army's anxiety. Early in January 1783, a delegation from the main army visited Congress to demand settlement of accounts and payment of arrears, but the officers obtained only a promise of one month's pay and attention to the army's other grievances. Soon after, Morris secretly tendered his resignation to Congress. He and other nationalists were believed to be plotting to use the threat of army revolt to obtain passage of a Continental revenue package that would strengthen the central government. The Newburgh conspiracy (March 1783), which raised the specter of a military coup, was believed to be a part of the effort.[24] Its oracle, John Armstrong, Jr., one of a group of officers associated with General Horatio Gates, second in command at Newburgh, circulated a pair of addresses among the officers there. Armstrong described how the soldiers' faith in the justice of government had been tested and expressed fear that, once the

[22] On the appointment of Robert Morris as superintendent of finances, see *PRM* 1:3-5, 8-9, 17-19, 20-25.

[23] On the pay for 1781 and for January 1783, see *PRM* 2:172-75, and 7:327-42. On the allocation of responsibility for army pay between Congress and the states, see *PRM* 4:397-98 and 7:150-52.

[24] On the Newburgh conspiracy, see Richard H. Kohn, "The Inside History of the Newburgh Conspiracy: America and the Coup d'Etat," *WMQ* 27 (1970), 187-220; and *PRM* 7:247-50n., 361-71, 412-20, 462-74.

army was deprived of its strength by disbandment, there would be nothing left for veterans but "poverty, wretchedness and contempt." He reflected on past sufferings and bleak prospects for the future. Armstrong then challenged his fellow officers to abjure passivity, to seize the moment to "oppose tyranny under whatever garb it may assume, whether it be the plain coat of republicanism or the splendid robe of royalty," and to carry their appeal "from the justice to the fears of government." To his eloquent encapsulation of the previously established agenda of Pennsylvania radicalism, Armstrong added a strategy for war's end: "If peace, that nothing shall separate you [them][25] from your arms but death." In other words, veteran soldiers should not disband until their claims were satisfactorily settled.[26] Washington quelled these portentous rumblings in March 1783 by pledging that Congress would not disband the army before it had made reasonable provision to meet these demands.

Although Washington outmaneuvered the conspirators and some members of Gates's circle clearly believed that the "best opportunity" had been lost,[27] Armstrong gave no sign that he accepted defeat at the hands of a man for whom he had nothing but scorn.[28] Soon after the Newburgh episode, Armstrong moved to Philadelphia to assume the position of secretary to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, probably soon after the *Freeman's Journal* printed the Newburgh texts on April 2.[29] During the ensuing months, Gates's aides commented bitterly about the army delegation, calculated whether the states would ever fund Congress's plan to commute officers' pensions,[30] and monitored

[25] For the Newburgh addresses, see Washington Papers, Library of Congress, and Worthington C Ford, et al , eds , *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (hereafter, *JCC*) (34 vols , Washington, 1904-1937), 24 295-97, 298-99 On the two versions of this passage, the first reading "you" and the second "them," see *PRM* 7 592-93n

[26] There are striking parallels between the Model Army's refusal to disband when denied a worthy settlement by Parliament (1647) and the Philadelphia mutiny On the Model Army episode, see Wilbur Cortez Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, with an Introduction, Notes and a Sketch of His Life* (2 vols , Cambridge, Mass , 1937), 1 400-550 I wish to thank E James Ferguson for calling this to my attention

[27] See Christopher Richmond to Gates, May 29, 1783, Gates Papers

[28] Of Washington, Armstrong wrote "Of all his illustrious foibles, I think the affectation of Zeal in a cause he strove so anxiously to damn, is the most ridiculous, and like the lies of Falstaff, or Falstaff himself, it is gross and palpable " See Armstrong to Gates, May 30, 1783, Gates Papers

[29] See *PRM* 7 687-88n

[30] On commutation, see *PRM* 7 393-99n

prospects that obligations to the army would be satisfied.[31] On April 22 Armstrong passed on to Gates a report from Walter Stewart and Christopher Richmond that L[incol]n had recommended the army should throw itself on "the justice and gratitude of their State." This, they considered, would "divide and destroy" it; but by April 29, Armstrong was alarmed at reports that the soldiers were eager to disperse at war's end, for "with them will every loitering hope of ours break also."[32]

In April 1783 Congress passed a revenue plan and sent it to the states for ratification. Morris did not believe the plan would raise enough revenue to sustain public credit. Nevertheless, he agreed to remain in office to provide the army with three months' pay in tax-anticipation notes redeemable six months after their date of issue. He insisted, however, that he would be unable to pay off these notes unless the army was disbanded to save the cost of feeding it.[33] An apprehensive Congress hesitated to discharge the "war men." Instead, on May 26, it instructed Washington to furlough soldiers enlisted for the duration of the war. A second resolution instructed Greene to furlough North Carolina troops enlisted for eighteen months.[34] Neither resolution mentioned pay for the troops, nor did Congress order furloughs for troops in the middle department at this time.

Secretary at War Benjamin Lincoln personally conveyed the furlough order to Washington at Newburgh. On May 27 Alexander McDougall, head of the army delegation, also returned to headquarters. Armstrong commented: "I have his Assurances that he will not be reserv'd, that He will conceal nothing, and if possible convince them that they have been wrong and that they might have been happy and respectable."[35] Washington began to implement the furlough immediately, before any of the notes for the three months' pay arrived. When his officers protested,

[31] For the correspondence (April, May 1783), see the Gates Papers.

[32] See Edmund Cody Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* (hereafter, *LMCC*) (8 vols., Washington, 1921-1938), 7:150n., 155n.

[33] On the congressional revenue plan and on Morris's decision to remain in office, see *PRM* 7:513-38n., 767-81n., 789-90. For discussions on paying the army, see RM to a Committee of Congress, May 15, 1783, headnote and notes, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming.

[34] See *JCC* 24:364-5.

[35] Before he described McDougall's trip to headquarters, Armstrong noted that soldiers enlisted for the war would be "obliged" to take the furlough. See William Clajon to Gates, May 27, and Armstrong to Gates, May 30, 1783, Gates Papers.

Washington allowed "war men" either to accept the furlough or find other soldiers to go home in their place.[36] McDougall's mission may well have been to persuade the officers to demand the furlough option. There was no time, however, to convince the soldiers to remain, and most left with little to show for their years of service. Even so, they were more fortunate than units stationed elsewhere. Troops in the middle department had not received the one month's pay in cash that Congress had ordered for the army in January, a portion of which most units of the main army had received.

How widely the resolutions of May 26 were known in Philadelphia has not been determined. On May 27, before he learned they had been approved, William Clajon reported to Horatio Gates that Congress had debated disbanding the army and recommending them to the "Justice and Sensibility of the respective States."[37] On May 29 Delaware delegate Eleazer McComb informed his state about the furlough order. A day later Armstrong wrote a long, angry letter to Gates about the furlough, hinting that the army should turn to the states. "The meaning is evident," he commented bitterly, "wrest the instruments of Redress from the hands of the officers—by removing the Old Soldiers from about them and then discharge the obligations to both with a dash of the pen. Admirable policy! In this State I find some disposition to be honest. . . . If the troops here had force, with Mad Anthony at their Head I know not where they would stop."[38] Anthony Wayne was still in the south, however. Was this remark intended to inform Gates that Armstrong would make one more attempt to obtain satisfaction of the army's grievances before the link between officers and veteran soldiers was broken by disbandment?

Back in Philadelphia, Lincoln reminded Congress that the furlough order had not been extended to the middle department. On June 11,

[36] On the June crisis at Newburgh, see Washington to RM, June 3, 1783, and notes, *PRM*, vol. 8, forthcoming.

[37] See Clajon to Gates, May 27, 1783, Gates Papers. Clajon's source was almost certainly Armstrong, who was privy to reports from Pennsylvania congressmen to the council. Both men had been Gates's aides and now lived in the same house on Race Street. Of Clajon, Joseph Nourse commented: "He is so averse to the present mode of Finance that if he does not write against the System I am sure it is not the want of Inclination but a convenient Time." See Nourse to Gates, Feb. 8, 1783, Gates Papers.

[38] See Smith, *LDC* 20:286; and Armstrong to Gates, May 30, 1783, Gates Papers. The letter then continued with the passage quoted at note 8, above.

Congress instructed him to furlough the "war men" of the Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia lines in accordance with its resolution of May 26.[39] On June 7, four days before this resolution passed, the *Independent Gazetteer* commented on Congress's earlier decision to furlough troops under Washington's and Greene's command and suggested that all other troops would soon be dismissed:

> Congress, having no further occasion for the services and sacrifices of the army . . . in their great wisdom . . . have thought proper to grant, unsolicited, the troops of the respective states, a furlough *sine die.* It would not be amiss . . . if the people, *their* master, were to give them also *leave of absence,* when the definitive treaty is fixed and ratified, as their services may then be dispensed with. . . . The monies drawn forth from the public treasury for salaries on the *civil list,* which are by no means inconsiderable, might be appropriated to a much better purpose, viz., discharging the arrearages of the army.[40]

This piece, apparently the first notice of the resolution of May 26 in Philadelphia, sounded the army's major grievances against the "assembly of *Lordlings*": disbandment without settlement and payment of the civil list while soldiers were not paid.[41] Passages similarly derisive of Congress are scattered through Armstrong's correspondence. His facility with the pen and his access to information about the furlough suggest that he may have been the author of this piece.[42] Comments published subsequently in

[39] See *JCC* 24:390. Lincoln also informed Congress about Washington's decision to make the furlough optional at this time.

[40] La Luzerne forwarded a translation of this piece to the French foreign ministry under cover of his dispatch of June 15, 1783. See Correspondence politique, Etats-Unis (hereafter, CPEU), 24:346-47, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris. Hamilton, author of the furlough resolution, also thought that Congress should consider adjourning as soon as the definitive treaty was ratified to demonstrate the inadequacy of its powers. See Harold C. Syrett, Jacob E. Cooke, et al., eds., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (hereafter, *PAH*) (27 vols., New York, 1961-87) 3:462-63.

[41] For earlier, anonymous protests about payment of the civil list in the *Pennsylvania Packet,* by the army delegation and by "Belisarius" in the *Freeman's Journal,* Feb. 19, 1783, see *PRM* 7:76n., 116n., 249n., 330, 453-54n., 502.

[42] Clajon or Eleazer Oswald might also have written the notice of June 7. On Clajon's writings for the *Freeman's Journal,* see *PRM* 7:503. Vernon O. Stumpf suggests that Oswald, publisher of the *Independent Gazetteer,* may himself have written all the pieces that his paper carried on the mutiny. See Stumpf, "Colonel Eleazer Oswald: Politician and Editor," Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1968, 166-77.

the Philadelphia press would also define the impending confrontation in the terms he so eloquently articulated at Newburgh.

One of the first detachments furloughed at Newburgh was a Maryland unit that arrived in Philadelphia in a "mutinous disposition" on June 12. It collected the three months' pay notes at the Pay Office, spent the night in the Philadelphia barracks, and then marched home. In all likelihood, the Maryland men informed Pennsylvania troops stationed at the Philadelphia barracks that they had received the "January" pay in cash or goods and had been allowed to choose whether or not to accept the furlough. The Pennsylvanians may also have learned that Maryland was withholding monies collected to fulfill its quota of Continental requisitions to provide its line with extra pay.[43]

On June 13, acting on orders from Lincoln, Gen. Arthur St. Clair implemented the congressional resolution of June 11 by furloughing the "war men" of the Pennsylvania line, effective immediately. The order specified that payrolls should be made out for the three months' pay in notes, but it made no mention of the "January" pay and did not allow the "war men" to choose whether or not to accept the furlough.[44] The order triggered the first phase of the mutiny, which began that day when a group of sergeants sent an angry memorial to Congress, and lasted until a unit from Lancaster submitted on June 26.

None of the drama of the confrontation on June 13 has been preserved for us, nor has the sergeants' petition been found. Madison, writing that day, indicated only that it was "recd. & read," and "excited much indignation & was sent to the Secretary at war."[45] He did not describe its contents or how it was presented or to whom. Congress, pretending that news of Washington's furlough option had not arrived when it instructed Lincoln to furlough the Pennsylvania line, agreed to allow the Pennsylvania soldiers the same choice Washington had granted to the

[43] The Maryland division was commanded by Thomas Lansdale, probably a member of the Gates circle. See Christopher Richmond to Gates, June 15, 1783, Gates Papers. On the arrival of the Maryland troops in Philadelphia and on the state diversion of Continental revenues to pay its line, see Diary, June 12, 13, RM to Benjamin Harwood, June 10, and notes, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming; and *LDC* 20:374, 511.

[44] On the furlough of the Pennsylvania troops, see Diary, June 11, 1783, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming; Lincoln to the President of Congress of that same date, PCC, no. 149, 2:539; and the Report of Richard Humpton, June 24, 1783, PCC, no. 138, 3 (hereafter, Humpton Report).

[45] For Madison's comments, see *PJM* 7:141.

troops under his command. Hurried arrangements were made to provide the January cash-pay to the Second Pennsylvania Regiment based in Philadelphia,[46] but nothing was done at this time to pay the other units at the barracks.

On June 17 Madison again described the event in a private letter to Edmund Randolph. He indicated that the memorial had been "signed by the non-commissioned officers in behalf of the whole," and that it had "painted the hardships which they had suffered in the defence of their country & the duty of their Country to reward them, demanding a satisfactory answer the afternoon on which it was sent in, with a threat of otherwise taking such measures as would right themselves."[47] Armstrong was more specific in a letter to Gates written on June 16: "The late unqualified resolve of Congress . . . discharging or furloughing as they are pleased to call it, all those men who have been engaged for the war, without even a *Settlement of Accounts,* was taken up very spiritedly by the little Corps at this place, consisting of but 300 Men. They Addressed themselves to Congress upon the occasion in language very intelligible—'We will not accept your furloughs & demand a Settlement.' " Armstrong was the first to mention the number of men involved in the protest and to relate their refusal to disband to settlement of accounts.[48] On June 24 Richard Humpton, commanding officer at the Philadelphia barracks, reported to Congress on the mutiny. He indicated that the men in the barracks appeared "perfectly satisfied and under good subordination till the orders of the 13th June [unconditional furlough for 'war men' and only three months' pay] were issued." He carefully pointed out that the sergeants' petition had been presented to Congress "unknown to me or to any other officer that I know of." He reported that when revised orders allowing the Pennsylvania "war men" a choice about the furlough were published, the men exulted, convinced that their protest

[46] Immediately thereafter, Morris left Philadelphia on private business and did not return until June 17. See Diary, June 13, 1783, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming.

[47] See *PJM* 7:158-59.

[48] See Armstrong to Gates, June 16, 1783, Gates Papers. Armstrong distinguishes between "settlement of accounts" and the more encompassing "settlement," which includes not only determination of each soldier's claim, but a reasonable satisfaction of it.

had wrung the concession from Congress. They refused the furlough, however.[49]

These accounts reflect different understandings of the mutiny. Madison's first report underestimated the protest and led some historians to do the same. His second commentary, however, set the sergeants' memorial in the broader context of the first Newburgh address. Armstrong's comments, which indicate that he understood the significance of the petition well before it became clear to others, emphasized that furlough without "even settlement of accounts" was the overriding grievance around which the mutiny was organized. Humpton's portrayal of "calm before the storm" suggests a disciplined conspiracy encompassing all of the soldiers at the barracks. His account focuses on preliminary concessions which the protesters had to win from Congress (the January pay and the furlough option to prevent disbandment), before they could marshal their forces on a grander scale and seek more substantial satisfaction by aiming at a different target.

Investigators later traced the origins of the mutiny to retired Capt. Henry Carbery (Eleventh Pennsylvania), reported to have "spent a pretty fortune in the service of his Country,"[50] and Lt. John Sullivan, on leave from a unit at Lancaster (Fourth Continental Dragoons).[51] These two officers had been covertly working for several weeks to prepare the troops to resist the furlough without settlement when it was announced. Sgt. James Bennett later gave sworn testimony that he had been called to an upstairs room in the Doctor Franklin tavern by the two men "about three weeks before the Troops assembled riotously at the State House" (June 21). There, he reported, he was asked whether the soldiers "expected soon to be settled with." When he affirmed that they did, Sullivan told him that he could "depend" that the troops would all be "speedily

[49] See Humpton Report, 5-6. Hamilton later suggested that "designing persons" may have "encouraged" or "misled" the soldiers, but his account was written after Henry Carbery and John Sullivan (not the congressman) had been identified as the instigators of the mutiny. See *PAH* 3:449-50, 456.

[50] See John Sullivan to Stephen Moylan, June 30, 1783, PCC, no. 38, 42.

[51] On Carbery (Carberry), see Dorothy Twohig, ed., *The Papers of George Washington,* Presidential Series (Charlottesville, 1991) 3:309-12. Carbery had been deranged on Jan. 17, 1781, shortly after the mutiny of 1781. Sullivan was on active duty with his unit, Moylan's Light Dragoons, until approximately May 26. See Sullivan's memorial, June 1786, and the testimony of Stephen Moylan, Oct. 10, 1785, PCC, no. 38, 215, 225; and *LDC* 20:405n.

dismissed without any settlement at all" unless Bennett agreed to "assemble the Troops under Arms," under the leadership of Carbery and Sullivan, who would take them to a place where they would "get every farthing" due them and "get honour by it." Bennett agreed to determine whether the soldiers would support the plan and to report back to the two officers. He admitted having told Sgt. Richard Murthwaite about his meeting, but said Murthwaite wanted nothing to do with the plan. Bennett claimed he had spoken to no one thereafter, including Carbery and Sullivan, and heard nothing further on the matter until June 21.[52]

Bennett's testimony indicates that Carbery and Sullivan were informed about Congress's plan to furlough the "war men" almost immediately after the initial order passed on May 26, before the article appeared in the *Independent Gazetteer* and before Congress furloughed the Pennsylvania troops (June 11). It establishes that efforts to organize the soldiers to resist disbandment were underway two weeks before the sergeants petitioned Congress on June 13. From the State House, Armstrong could certainly have seen the furlough decision taking shape. His remark to Gates on May 30 that the soldiers felt "like men and could be brought to think like Politicians" suggests that he was aware of these efforts and believed that the soldiers were willing to take action. Was Armstrong only an interested commentator? Could he have been informed that resistance to disbandment was being planned and not be involved? Would he have allowed men so little proven as Carbery and Sullivan to plan the confrontation unassisted if he knew of their project? Armstrong also had compelling reasons to hide his activities. His involvement cannot be conclusively documented, but it would explain how two obscure officers, one retired and the other from an outlying post, knew about Congress's plan to disband the army in time to plan a protest that had all the hallmarks of a far-reaching, intricate, and well-organized conspiracy.

On June 15 Spanish agent Francisco Rendón reported that the muti-

[52] See the affidavit of James Bennett, July 1, 1783, PCC, no. 38, 65-66 (hereafter, Bennett affidavit). The first Newburgh address also asserted that there could be no honorable discharge without adequate recompense. Armstrong argued: "To be tame and unprovoked when injuries press hard upon you, is more than weakness. . . . A country courting your return to private life, with tears of gratitude . . . longing to divide with you that independency which your gallantry has given, and those riches which your wounds have preserved? Is this the case? Or is it rather a country that tramples upon your rights, disdains your cries and insults your distresses." See *JCC* 24:295-96.

neers gave "signs of being ready to strike a desperate blow, seizing the National Bank, overthrowing the Superintendent of Finance, or forcing the Assembly to appropriate money to pay them." He indicated that they were hostile toward the Republican Party and mentioned rumors that the constitutionalist party was "directing" their actions. Rendón reported further that "Some persons in authority . . . went yesterday to explain to the soldiers . . . how harmful to themselves it would be to intimidate the government by force . . . But it appears that those appeals had little or no effect." La Luzerne informed his government that when Lincoln visited the barracks during this period, the troops drowned out his remarks with whistles and hisses.[53]

The mutineers had also invited units from Lancaster, Carlisle, and York to join the mutiny. On June 17 eighty to a hundred troops from Lancaster set off for Philadelphia. Meanwhile, the Philadelphia barracks were thrown into turmoil when a subordinate in the Pay Office ordered the regimental paymasters to pay only those men who accepted the furlough. When and why this order was issued has never been clearly established, but it was probably between June 14 and the morning of June 17, when Morris was absent from Philadelphia. The financier's diary records that Benjamin Lincoln and William Jackson from the War Office and Arthur St. Clair had each called at the Office of Finance on June 17 to inquire whether all soldiers or only those accepting the furlough were to receive the three months' pay. On his return, Morris "answered that those who remain as well as those who do not remain are to have it." The repeated attempts to consult the financier strongly suggest that a controversy had arisen that needed to be resolved. Humpton's "Garrison Orders," dated June 17, specified that "all Soldiers who go on furlough, as well as those who remain, are to receive four months pay." This did not persuade the soldiers to obey orders, however, and they remained in the barracks awaiting the men from Lancaster.[54]

[53] For reports on the soldiers' threats and demands, see Rendón to José de Gálvez, June 15, 1783, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, legajo 1354, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (Aileen Moore Topping translations, Library of Congress; hereafter, PPC); La Luzerne to Vergennes, June 18, 1783, CPEU 24:357; and *PAH* 3:450.

[54] See Diary, June 17, 1783, *PRM*, vol. 8, forthcoming; Humpton Report, 5-7; [Humpton], Revolt of the Pennsylvania Line [ca. July 1783], Irvine Papers, Draper Manuscripts, Wisconsin Historical Society (hereafter, Humpton, Revolt); and Samuel Hodgdon to Timothy Pickering, June 22, 1783 (first letter), Pickering Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Congress and the Pennsylvania Assembly sat on the first and second floors of the State House in Philadelphia. On June 19, John Dickinson, president of Pennsylvania, showed Congress letters announcing that Lancaster troops were marching on Philadelphia, where they intended to "obtain *Justice*" and to "procure their pay (or perhaps to possess themselves of money at any rate)," perhaps by robbing the Bank or the Treasury. Richard Butler, commander at Lancaster, suspected that the movement had originated in Philadelphia.[55] Congress believed itself to be the target of the protest and asked the Supreme Executive Council to call out the militia to prevent the unit from entering the city. The council, arguing that the "soldiers had behaved very regularly upon their march" and had as yet committed no "actual outrage," refused and reminded Congress that the militia might well be sympathetic to the mutineers.[56] On June 20 the Lancaster men entered the city with bayonets fixed, fifes playing, drums beating, and green boughs, a traditional symbol of resistance, sprouting from their hats. Reports indicate they were "applauded by the citizens for looking after their just demands."[57]

Congress struggled to find ways to satisfy the soldiers. Morris made arrangements with Lancaster businessmen to provide the January pay in cash to the Lancaster troops—but only when they returned to that base.[58] An official delegation consisting of Congressman Alexander Hamilton,

[55] See Richard Butler to John Dickinson, and to the soldiers of the Third Pennsylvania Regiment; and William Henry to Dickinson, June 17, 1783, PCC, no. 38, 37-38, 45-46, 58, 123.

[56] See *PAH* 3:399, 443-44n., 445-46, 450; and *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, 1683-1790* (hereafter, *Col. Recs. Pa.*) (Harrisburg, 1851-1853) 13:603, 654. The government had also adopted a "pacific course" toward the Paxton Boys and the mutineers in 1781. See Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics,* 110-13, 118-20; Hindle, "Paxton Boys," 480; and Royster, *Continental Army,* 306. The militia had indicated that it would serve against the mutineers of 1781 only if they joined the enemy. See Rosswurm, *Philadelphia Militia,* 240-41, 246-47. For a report that Governor Benjamin Harrison also believed he could not count on the Virginia militia to oppose the mutineers of Baylor's Regiment, see Nathaniel Pendleton to Nathanael Greene, July 17, 1783, Greene Papers.

[57] See Benjamin Spyker's affidavit, June 28, 1783, PCC, no. 38, 57-58 (hereafter, Spyker affidavit), and "An Observer," *Freeman's Journal,* July 2, 1783. For other instances where green boughs were used, see Royster, *Continental Army,* 237; and Richard Severo and Lewis Milford, *The Wages of War* (New York, 1989), 10, 66.

[58] This policy, much resented by the mutineers, was first suggested by Richard Butler. See Butler to Dickinson, June 17, 1783, PCC, no. 38, 38. On the arrangements for payment, see Diary, June 20, and Circular to Mathias Slough, William Parr, and Henry Dering, June 20, and notes, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming.

William Jackson from the War Office, and Gouverneur Morris, the financier's assistant, visited the barracks on the evening of June 20. Humpton reported that the soldiers "seem'd a little easier" the next morning, but some of the mutineers testified otherwise.[59] Sgt. Solomon Townsend, later identified as a prime suspect in the mutiny, stated that Carbery and Sullivan also met secretly with certain sergeants that evening, assuring them that money could be raised to pay the army, if only the government would borrow it.[60] They apparently agreed that nothing further was to be gained from Congress and that it was time to seek redress from the state.[61]

There may have been other visitors as well. Benjamin Rush later reported that mutineers had "confessed that two citizens came to them on Friday evening before the 21st of June and urged them to use threats with council to obtain their pay. They recommended to them to go up to the State house on Saturday, as the Congress never assembled on that day." Rush did not name either of the two citizen-instigators, but he reported that the description of one of them "answers to that of a noted incendiary."[62] By the time his letter was written (July 4), Rush would have known that Carbery and Sullivan were considered leaders, but neither was considered a rabble-rouser prior to the mutiny. After describing Carbery and Sullivan's activities, President of Congress Elias Boudinot mentioned to the American ministers abroad that "it is also said that two of the Citizens have been concerned in this wicked plot, but they are not yet ascertained," adding that the soldiers "were certainly encour-

[59] See Humpton Report, 7, and RM, Diary, Sept 2, *PRM,* vol 8, forthcoming, and below at note 95

[60] Richard Murthwaite and Solomon Townsend both mentioned that Carbery and Sullivan had told them that merchants and others would advance money for the soldiers See the affidavits of Murthwaite, June 30, and Townsend, July 2, 1783 (hereafter, Murthwaite affidavit, Townsend affidavit), and Henry Carbery to William Nichols, June 29, 1783, PCC, no 38, 51, 75, 233-34 Similar subscriptions had been tried in 1781 See Jerry Grundfest, *George Clymer, Philadelphia Revolutionary, 1739-1813* (New York, 1982), 148-58, and Roche, *Reed,* 185-86

[61] As early as 1781 many in the army doubted Congress could raise revenue and favored turning to the states for pay See *PRM* 7 734, 735n , William Henry Smith, ed , *The Life and Public Services of Arthur St Clair* (2 vols , Cincinnati, 1882), 1 581, and John Shy, ed , *Winding Down The Revolutionary War Letters of Lieutenant Benjamin Gilbert of Massachusetts, 1780-1783* (Ann Arbor, 1989), 34

[62] See *RL* 1 305 Townsend claimed to have carefully ascertained that the two "Gentleman" who came looking for Sergeant Nagle on the evening of June 20 ("one dressed in plain cloaths, the other in an Officers uniform") were "a couple of Officers " See Townsend affidavit, 49

aged by some of the lower class."[63] Neither Rush nor Boudinot identified the witness who reported this visit. Rush may have been suggesting the involvement of Armstrong, but knowledge of his role in the Newburgh affair was probably confined to the Gates circle at this time.[64] Armstrong would almost certainly have taken precautions to avoid being recognized at the barracks.

The next morning (June 21), a delegation from the barracks headed by Sergeants Christian Nagle and Robinson presented itself to John Dickinson. In 1781 the mutineers had negotiated without intermediaries, but these demanded to be allowed to appoint officers to negotiate on their behalf and threatened violence if the Supreme Executive Council did not promptly approve. The council did not act and several hundred soldiers surrounded the State House, guns at the ready. Bystanders cheered them on and nearby taverns supplied liquor as they paraded menacingly in the oppressive heat. Hamilton recommended that Boudinot call Congress into emergency session. Congressional delegates made their way through the soldiers surrounding the State House without incident. Dickinson conferred with Congress, but he again refused to call up the militia. Congress then tried but failed to persuade the mutineers to disband on the basis of its severance plan, and finally agreed, reluctantly, to allow the mutineers to elect a committee of officers to negotiate for the soldiers with the council. Delegates leaving the State House filed through the mutineers unmolested until, incited by bystanders, several soldiers seized Boudinot. Although a sergeant immediately ordered his release, the incident fed fears that the soldiers might take hostages.[65]

The mutineers eventually marched back to their barracks defiantly. The next day they appointed a committee of sergeants which included Bennett, Murthwaite, Townsend, Joseph Morgan, and two others. They

[63] See *LDC* 20:418-19. On the concern about citizen involvement, see ibid., 511; *LMCC* 7:201n.; and *PJM* 7:354. In May 1784 John Montgomery reported to Rush that Carbery, recently returned from Europe, "mentioned in Sundrie Compnays in Baltimore that he was advised by some of the leading men in the Civil and military line to Act as he did on the 21st June." See *LDC* 21:596.

[64] Although Washington and others initially believed that Gouverneur Morris had penned the addresses, Richard A. Harrison asserts that Armstrong was recognized as their author at camp. See his sketch of Armstrong in *Princetonians, 1776-1783: A Biographical Dictionary* (Princeton, 1981), 7.

[65] See the Murthwaite and Townsend affidavits, 50, 75; La Luzerne to Vergennes, June 18-25, 1783, CPEU 24:361; *PJM* 7:176-78, and *LDC* 20:355, 356, 367-68.

also chose a delegation of officers, including Carbery, Sullivan, Captains James Christie, John Steele, and Jonas Symonds, and Lieutenant William Houston, and instructed them to use "compulsive measures" if necessary to achieve "speedy & most ample justice." Their commission continued: "We will support you . . . to the utmost of our power. Should you shew a disposition not to do all in your's, death is inevitably your fate."[66] In a letter of June 23, Clajon reported the march on the State House, indicating that Congress recognized that "they were not the Object, the Mutineers having sent a Deputation to the Council of the State." He mentioned the many broken promises made to the army and commented that Armstrong's silence was now "accounted for."[67]

Dickinson, who had been advised not to call out the militia by its officers, continued to refuse Congress's requests for protection. Congress then ordered Washington to send troops to suppress the mutiny and fled to Princeton, New Jersey.[68] By June 24 the sergeants had drawn up a set of demands that they presented to the council by the officers representing them.[69] The demands included payment of half the wages due each man and of arrears for rations and clothing; patents for lands promised them; due consideration of soldiers already discharged and to be discharged, especially if they had lost limbs; extension of the settlement to all soldiers of the Pennsylvania line wherever they might be; and settlement of the Lancaster troops' claims in Philadelphia.[70] Like the mutineers of 1781 who demanded "real, not ideal" money, the mutineers of 1783 wanted the balance of their pay in certificates with a specified redemption date and bearing lawful interest, "not such ones as we have before this been put off with." The list expressed the grievances of veteran and retired soldiers, not those of new recruits, who would be paid for most of their service under the congressional settlement, who had no arrears for rations

[66] On the sergeants' committee, the delegation, and its commission, see Humpton, Revolt, 369; the affidavits of Murthwaite and Joseph Morgan, July 1, 1783 (hereafter, Morgan affidavit), PCC, no. 38, 54-55, 74, and *Col. Recs. Pa.* 13:658, 660, 662-63.

[67] See Clajon to Gates, June 23, 1783, Gates Papers.

[68] Armstrong remarked that the "Grand Sanhedrin of the Nation" had "left a State where their wisdom has been long questioned, their virtue suspected and their dignity a jest." See Armstrong to Gates, June 26, 1783, Gates Papers.

[69] Morgan reported that the sergeants drew up the memorial themselves and read it on parade to the men before presenting it to the Supreme Executive Council. See Morgan affidavit, 55; and Humpton, Revolt, 369, which described it as "high in its demand."

[70] See James Bennett to John Dickinson (June 25, 1783), PCC, no. 38, 35-37.

and clothing, and who had lost no limbs in battle. Veterans wanted the nation whose independence they had won to give them adequate recompense and all due respect.

Even though the officers reported that the men were under arms and ready to use them, the council refused to consider their petition until they had submitted to congressional authority. Shortly after, in response to rumors that an attack on the Bank was planned, Dickinson called out the militia and the Light Horse to maintain order. No attack occurred. In all likelihood, very few ordinary militiamen responded to Dickinson's call.[71] Rush informed John Montgomery that "The experiment of calling out the militia was at last tried but without effect. Only 13 men assembled at the parade of Colonel Reed's battalion. The universal cry was the men have been neglected and injured, and it is wrong to shed their blood only for the sake of preserving the *dignity* of government." His view that the safety of the men was more precious than the dignity of Congress was debated fully in the newspapers in the days that followed.[72]

The mutiny collapsed when word spread that troops under Gen. Robert Howe were on their way to suppress it. Carbery and Sullivan, possibly alerted by Armstrong, took ship for Europe. Humpton persuaded some members of the sergeants' committee to go with him to the barracks. When he and other officers announced the flight of Carbery and Sullivan, all but the Lancaster men laid down their arms. After an "ill-intentioned inhabitant" warned the men that the "militia" would arrest them, the soldiers took up arms again and it was only with difficulty that Humpton coaxed them to submit.[73]

The Lancaster unit surrendered on June 26. It had hardly marched out of Philadelphia when the *Independent Gazetteer* (June 28) carried three

[71] For reports that only the Light Horse and a few militia responded, see Humpton, Revolt, 370; Rendón to José de Gálvez, June 25, 1783, PPC; *LDC* 20:379; "Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer," *PMHB* 16 (1892), 165; "An Observer" and "A Lover of Facts," *Freeman's Journal,* July 2, 16, 1783.

[72] See *RL* 1:302. These views echo those expressed in the minutes of the Supreme Executive Council, which note that Philadelphia citizens considered the soldiers as "objects of compassion . . . and could not bear to avenge the dignity of Congress, *accidently* and *undesignedly* offended, by shedding the blood of men whom they considered as having fought and suffered for the *American* cause." See *Col. Recs. Pa.* 13:61. Armstrong, as its secretary, may well have shaped these remarks. Either he or Rush may have written the anonymous comment expressing these same views in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of July 15.

[73] See Humpton, Revolt, 371-3; and "An Observer," *Freeman's Journal,* July 2, 1783.

items on the uprising. An anonymous piece reminiscent of the June 7 furlough notice commented on Congress's concern to *"support and maintain their dignity,"* and remarked that the soldiers had "long considered" it "like their paper currency, in a state of *depreciation,* having no *solidity or real worth.*" An anecdote in the same issue told the story of a "poor pennyless soldier" who asked a "huckster-woman to credit him for a few cherries" and was refused because his *"paymasters"* had "run away." Again in the same issue, "Z" argued that Congress had exaggerated the danger and censured its flight from the city.[74] On July 2 the *Freeman's Journal* printed a response from "Sincerus," probably Thomas Paine, former radical, now subsidized by the Office of Finance and the French minister to write nationalist pieces. "Sincerus" hoped to "pacify and unite rather than to inflame internal contention," arguing that it was "essential to the welfare of every country that the supreme power should be respected."[75] This issue also carried the "Observer's" chronicle of the mutiny, which defended the course adopted by the state and suggested that "reflections . . . will doubtless arise . . . on former occurrences in this city." The "Observer" was answered in the July 5 issue of the *Pennsylvania Packet* by an anonymous supporter of Congress who remarked that, while the soldiers may have "thought of nothing but obtaining their pay," the flight of "their prompters" suggested something more had been intended. On July 16 the *Freeman's Journal* carried another defense of Congress by a "Lover of Facts" who admitted the soldiers had been "extremely ill used." Where Armstrong had advised the officers at Newburgh to carry their appeal "from the justice to the fears of government," the "Lover of Facts" thought the mutineers should be censured for appealing to the "fears of government before they have made a full and fair experiment upon her justice." "Vox Populi" replied to the "Lover of Facts" in the *Freeman's Journal* (July 23) by charging Congress and the departments of war and finance with exposing the soldiers to victimization by speculators, thereby driving them to mutiny. In a lighter vein, a "Friend to Government" advised beautiful girls with good fortunes to "bestow their persons" on officers, thereby easing their transition to civilian life.

[74] Armstrong and Clajon are possible authors of these pieces. "Z" was a pseudonym used by Philip Freneau; see Philip M. Marsh, *Philip Freneau: Poet and Journalist* (Minneapolis, 1967), 72, 331.

[75] On "Sincerus," see Paine to RM, May 19, 1783, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming.

Pennsylvania, Congress, and Washington ordered investigations of the mutiny. Gen. Robert Howe, commander of the troops sent by Washington, suspended all furloughs not yet implemented, interrogated all Pennsylvania officers in Philadelphia, obtained the testimony already taken by Pennsylvania authorities from four members of the sergeants' committee (Bennett, Murthwaite, Morgan, and Townsend), and made exhaustive efforts to identify the principals in the uprising. Howe was distressed that Townsend, Robinson, and Smith[76] had disappeared; apparently they had been warned that they were suspects. Nagle was captured at Lancaster and sent to Philadelphia for trial. A judge advocate was appointed to insure that proper procedure was followed, and officers of high rank served on the court-martial. Pennsylvania officers were excused from sitting in judgment over fellow officers who had served on the negotiating committee and were suspected of complicity in the movement.[77] Sergeants Nagle, who had figured prominently in the mutiny, and Morrison, about whom nothing is known, were sentenced to death. Sergeant John Lilly, who headed the march on the State House, Abner Van Horn, Thomas Flowers, and William Carman were convicted of lesser unidentified offenses and sentenced to corporal punishment. Congress's universal pardon was announced at the moment their sentences were about to be carried out. Howe came to believe that most of those involved had been "employed" but not "trusted" by the principal conspirators. He could not believe either that his painstaking investigation had yielded such insignificant results or that the known culprits accounted for a conspiracy of such magnitude.[78]

Claims by some of the sergeants that they were only unwittingly involved cannot be taken at face value. To the extent that the claims are true, they suggest efforts to carefully control information and prevent

[76] On Robinson's activities, see Murthwaite affidavit, 73-74. Smith's role has not been identified.

[77] The officers were acquitted. La Luzerne reported that many officers took secret satisfaction in the revolt and hoped to derive advantage from it. See his letter to Vergennes, July 2, 1783, CPEU 25:4.

[78] On Howe's investigation and prosecution of the mutineers, see PCC, no. 38, 85-122. For the names of those convicted, see the "Extract of a letter from New Jersey," *Virginia Gazette,* Oct. 11, 1783. On Lilly's activities, see Townsend affidavit, 50. On the pardons, see *LDC* 21:13. Carbery returned from Europe in 1784 and was arrested and ordered to stand trial. See *LDC* 21:538, 555, 556n., 565, 574, 589, 596, 628, 809.

betrayal or to limit and obscure responsibility. The reports of Rendón and La Luzerne indicate that local taverns resounded with the mutineers' discussions about attacking Congress or the Bank or of forcing the state to raise the money to pay them. Richard Butler certainly believed the Lancasterians had clear objectives, targets, and tactics. All descriptions of the meeting of Carbery and Sullivan with the mutineers after the march on the State House describe broad participation. Boudinot also believed that the sergeants were actively involved. On June 23 he wrote: "The Mutineers still continue in the Barracks in possession of the Arsenal and Magazine, and nothing but force can bring them to obedience. There are no higher Officers with them than Sergeants."[79]

After the mutiny, Continental officers and officials attempted unsuccessfully to preserve the army's reputation and the government's credit from damage by proclaiming that the mutiny was the work, not of veterans who "would not be prevented" from seeking their rights "in a becoming manner,"[80] but of raw recruits and "foreigners." Murthwaite testified that two of the soldiers who seized Boudinot as he left the State House spoke French. North Carolina delegates claimed that few of the Maryland troops who arrived at the Philadelphia barracks just before the mutiny began were "natives of America," and described Lt. John Sullivan as "a young Irishman." They also noted, however, that some of the troops at the Pennsylvania barracks "had formerly been concerned in a mutiny" and that the rebellion was ignited "when Congress resolved to grant furloughs to the war-men."[81]

Humpton's report on the uprising laid the foundation for the insupportable thesis that recruits were largely to blame. Pennsylvania delegate John Montgomery suggested that many of the mutineers "were not more than five months in sarvic . . . , fellows who had never been in action the offscourings and filth of the Earth promted by fellows in Dispared

[79] For disclaimers, see Bennett to Dickinson, June 25, 1783, and the affidavits of Murthwaite, Morgan, Bennett, Townsend, and Howe to the President of Congress, August 12, 1783, PCC, no. 38, 34-35, 50, 53-54, 66-67, 75-76; for evidence of involvement, see *LDC* 20:358 and the dispatches cited at note 53 above.

[80] See Bennett to Dickinson (June 25, 1783), PCC, no. 38, 34-35.

[81] See *LDC* 20:511, 512; and Murthwaite affidavit, 75. Sullivan, Irish by birth, was a naturalized citizen of France. Stephen Moylan, his commander, later testified that he had risen to command a troop of horse "by his merit," and that he "did not know an officer who conducted himself with more honor and spirit." See *LDC* 20:404n.; and PCC, no. 38, 209, 215.

Corcomstances." He concluded that there was no cause for alarm unless "the armie those Brave men who have fought our Battles acted thus." Boudinot, concerned about European reaction to the mutiny, informed the American ministers there that "a number of new Recruits, . . . having not been brought under any regular discipline, made many objections against accepting their discharges" and suggested that battle-hardened, mutiny-prone veterans from the southern army "had been unwillingly forced into the measure." Quartermaster General Timothy Pickering wrote from army headquarters in New York to a friend in Philadelphia: "The only thing feared from it here is that the threats of the rascals (it is understood that the mutiny is among the recruits . . .) will have prevailed on Congress to grant them more than has been done for the veteran troops." Robert Morris also blamed the mutiny on "some inconsiderate rash Men among a Number of Recruits."[82] Recruits may have been involved in the mutiny, but they were not its mainstay. Veteran sergeants cooperated with officer-conspirators and proudly led the men who surrounded the State House. Nagle and Morrison had each served over seven years in the army.[83] Like them, most sergeants had probably served since the early days of the war. Lancaster veterans contributed leadership, manpower, and persistence to the uprising and resisted submission to the authorities the longest. The most significant contribution to the mutiny by the recruits stemmed from the veterans' anger that soldiers enlisted in January 1783 were issued the same four months' pay as "war men."

Commentators who link the Philadelphia mutiny to the Newburgh affair have usually argued that the Office of Finance rather than the army itself was the connection. Arthur Lee suspected that Robert Morris

[82] See Humpton Report, 5-6; *LDC* 20:408, 416-17; and Pickering to Hodgdon, June 25, 1783 (first letter), Pickering Papers. Washington repeated Boudinot's assertion about the southern veterans in a letter of June 24 published in the *Freeman's Journal,* July 16, and the *Pennsylvania Packet,* July 17, 1783. The "Observer" also asserted that the "most noisy and troublesome" of the mutineers were the recruits. See the *Freeman's Journal,* July 2, 1783. For Morris's remarks, see his letter to the consortium of Dutch bankers, Dec. 12, 1783, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming. Despite these efforts, subscriptions to the Dutch loan fell off immediately on report of the mutiny. See Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams,* (10 vols., Boston, 1850-56), 8:171.

[83] See Nagle to Washington, Aug. 13, 1783, and Morrison to Congress (August 1783), PCC, no. 38, 181-87.

was involved in both plots.[84] Writing to St. George Tucker on July 21, 1783, he commented: "It is much suspected that he & his friends have been the prime movers of all the disturbances in the Army, for the purpose of enforcing the 5 per Ct. in the shape most parental of a corrupt influence in Congress of which he with reason expected to be the prime Minister. Naturally, I conceive, the Soldiers, had they not been otherwise tutord, would have made their attempt upon him, as it is notorious that all the funds of the U.S. are in his hands." Lee also acknowledged that the mutiny and the departure of Congress had diminished Morris's ability to be effective, however.[85] Evidence to support suspicions that the financier deliberately provoked or attempted to manipulate the mutiny to achieve nationalist objectives is slim. Rumors that he issued the three months' pay in notes to create an opportunity for speculators do not consider that the treasury was devoid of resources to meet the army's demands.[86] The decision to issue the same amount of pay to veterans and recruits alike was necessitated by inability to complete the settlement of army accounts before disbandment. Morris shared responsibility with Congress and the war department for the furlough policy, its implementation, and the decision to withhold pay from the Lancaster troops until they returned to their base. He urged Dickinson to call out the militia to suppress the uprising, and when the soldiers surrounded the State House he closed the Office of Finance and hid at the home of a friend.[87] He subsequently took pains to minimize the mutiny's significance to

[84] Lee's suspicions were shared by Samuel Osgood, delegate from Massachusetts, who argued that, had Lincoln not been secretary at war, Morris would have *prevented* Congress from disbanding the army. He considered that "the Finance Office was probably the Center of Motion" to alter the present form of government and predicted its "Party" would "persevere inflexibly in their Attempts for any Alteration, by Intrigue, & by open Force." See *LDC* 21:187-88. As noted above, Morris had insisted that the army had to be furloughed to make it possible for him to pay it.

[85] See *LDC* 20:436.

[86] Morris was unable to complete the one month's pay in cash and paid off the notes for the three months' pay only by overdrawing the Dutch loan. Like many others, Humpton considered the three months' pay notes a "fine subject for speculation" and remarked bitterly: "The river full of Ships, the town of goods, and all the C—— are complete Jews." See Humpton, Revolt, 374. On rumors about Morris's links to speculators, see John Chaloner to [Wadsworth and/or Carter], June 22, 1783, Chaloner and White Letterbook, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Alexander Gillon to Arthur Lee, [November 29, 1783], Lee Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; and Washington to RM, June 3, 1783, and notes, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming.

[87] See Diary, June 21, and notes, and June 24, 1783, *PRM,* vol. 8, forthcoming.

control damage to American credit abroad.[88] In sum, Morris was keenly and immediately aware that the mutiny would not further centralist objectives.

Kenneth Bowling's thesis that Gouverneur Morris was responsible for the controversial order to withhold the three months' pay to soldiers who would not accept the furlough is equally difficult to sustain.[89] Most probably, the order was issued when he was absent from Philadelphia (May 31-June 17).[90] Bowling's argument depends on the chronology of events supplied by "Vox Populi" in the *Freeman's Journal* of July 23,[91] but this account is a cleverly fabricated distortion, not a straightforward report on events. "Vox Populi" alleged that Lincoln had countermanded the "second resolve" of Congress which granted the furlough option. It then asked:

> Did not a messenger come to the Barracks, on Friday the 20th of June, from the paymaster general's office, to stop the issuing of those financeer's notes, which they had already received for distribution?
> Did not two ministerial assistants, one of them to the financeer, the other to the secretary at war, appear in an official capacity, at the barracks, on the evening of the same day, together with one of the New York delegates? And did they not then declare, that the financeer would not suffer his notes to be issued to such soldiers who would refuse the unlimited furloughs?
> Did not the soldiery at the barracks, thus sported with, by oeconomical tricksters or speculators, in flagrant violation of the last mentioned act of Congress, immediately project the mutiny, which they effected on the next morning?
> Just before they had openly mutinied, did not a general officer [Humpton] wait on the financeer, to inform him of their disobedient disposition and its cause?
> And did not the financeer then affirm, that it never was his intention that his notes should be withheld from any soldier, whether or not he accepted a furlough?

[88] Morris's letters to the consortium of Dutch bankers and Jefferson's letter to Chastellux, cited above, were all written after Morris received word that the mutiny had brought subscriptions to the Dutch loan to an abrupt halt.

[89] See Bowling, "Mutiny," 428-29.

[90] See Diary, May 31, and notes, *PRM*, vol. 8, forthcoming.

[91] Bowling, "Mutiny," 429n., believes Humpton was "Vox Populi." He was not acquainted with Humpton's report cited above.

The writer then challenged readers to decide who had "courted" the soldiers and then "drove" them to mutiny, what might be their motive, and who might be the "authors" and "instruments" of such "horrid deception."[92]

Lincoln, however, could not have countermanded Congress's approval of the furlough modification in his initial furlough order of June 13, since Congress did not pass the resolve until June 19, a day after Lincoln had left Philadelphia for Virginia. Furthermore, Humpton reported that the furlough option was announced to the troops at the Philadelphia barracks in the "After Orders" of June 13, six days before Congress officially approved Washington's modification.[93] The option was also included in the furlough orders sent to Lancaster. Evidence cited earlier shows that the controversial order halting distribution of pay to soldiers who refused the furlough was issued during the Morrises' absence from Philadelphia. It is highly improbable that either Robert or Gouverneur Morris would have provoked the troops and prolonged the mutiny by reversing the order of June 17 to pay all troops. Humpton privately reported that "the three months pay was ordered to be stopped from such soldiers as would not go on furlough as said pr. order of the Genl."[94] No reliable report on the uprising accuses Gouverneur Morris of responsibility for this order. This pattern of error and the absence of corroborating testimony on this particular charge suggest that "Vox Populi's" chronology is inaccurate and cannot be taken at face value.

The mutineers themselves, however, did not hesitate to suggest that Gouverneur Morris's comments on the January pay, made during the delegation's June 20 visit to the barracks, infuriated them. James Bennett's letter to John Dickinson (June 25) expressed outrage at the suggestion by a "particular gentleman" (undoubtedly Gouverneur Morris) that veterans should be expected to be "happy as they would receive one months pay, which would carry them home in a genteel manner." Bennett reminded Dickinson and the council that many of the soldiers were from one to

[92] "Vox Populi" attempted to shift blame for the mutiny away from the army and to cast it on "men of high trust"—Congress and its executive officers. The piece appeared at approximately the time the mutineers were scheduled to be tried by court-martial and was intended to influence the decision in their favor.

[93] See Humpton Report, 4.

[94] See Humpton, Revolt, 374. "The General" might have been either Arthur St. Clair or Benjamin Lincoln.

five hundred miles from their homes and had families to support. Spyker reported that Nagle told how "a certain wooden-legged Morris" had made a speech "whom they soon turned off (telling very opprobrious language that he made use of)."[95] Although Gouverneur Morris clearly insulted the troops by an insensitive explanation of the bureaucratic decisions made about the pay, it is unlikely that he would have *deliberately* "sported" with the soldiers while attempting to persuade them to accept less than they demanded.[96] Congress's penury fed the suspicions of soldiers and civilians who had come to the revolutionary struggle convinced that tyrannous imperial (or central) government could be counted on to tax the poor while it nurtured the speculative greed of the rich and powerful. The inability of the delegation to explain policy decisions without offending the sensibilities of common soldiers appeared to substantiate charges that the government was more concerned with its own dignity than with justice to the true heroes of the revolution. All the bureaucratic sensitivity imaginable, however, could not have satisfied an army that wanted pay, not explanations.

It cannot be conclusively demonstrated that John Armstrong, Jr., planned the Philadelphia mutiny as a final attempt to achieve the objectives that the Newburgh conspiracy had failed to realize. If involved, Armstrong was careful to conceal his involvement—carelessness would have cost him his position as secretary to the Supreme Executive Council at the very least. Nevertheless, his role at Newburgh and his mordant sense of grievance indicate that he would not shrink from one more attempt to make the army "more happy" and government "more respectable." When the correspondence with Gates is considered in the context of Newburgh and as Gates himself would have read it, it strongly suggests that Armstrong had decided to make one last attempt to carry the army's appeal "from the justice to the fears of government." Could he have remained uninvolved as his Newburgh address became the creed that shaped the discourse of the uprising in Philadelphia and articulated its strategy: "If peace, that nothing shall separate . . . you [them] from your arms but

[95] See Bennett to Dickinson, [June 25, 1783], PCC, no. 38, 33-34; and Spyker affidavit, 60.

[96] For comments on Gouverneur Morris's insensitivity, see *Brieven en Gedenkschriften van Gijsbert Karel van Hogendorp,* (7 vols., 'S Gravenhage, 1866-1903), 1:349; and Rebecca Vaughan to Catherine Livingston [December 1784], Matthew Ridley Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

death." Armstrong, if not the author, was probably the source of information on the furlough notice that appeared in the *Independent Gazetteer* on June 7. He may also have written the anonymous comment on the mutiny and the anecdote of the penniless soldier that appeared in the same paper on June 28 and the "Vox Populi" queries in the *Freeman's Journal* on July 23. On the day the mutiny collapsed, Armstrong dejectedly wrote to Gates "after the hurry of a week, in which I have had my share of sweat, dust and watching," "I have scarcely spirits to hold up my head."[97] What produced the "sweat" and the "dust" if not actual involvement in the struggle to win justice for the army?

Common folk in Pennsylvania had come to the war against Great Britain looking for economic justice and government responsiveness to their just demands. As disbandment loomed, some army officers made common cause with veteran soldiers. The Philadelphia mutiny was born of a fusion of leadership from a few officers with a critical mass of radicalized veterans. It brought together talented conspirators, propagandists, and army veterans who had repeatedly demonstrated determination to win their just deserts from government. Armstrong, assisted by Carbery and Sullivan, may have orchestrated the Philadelphia mutiny, but the sergeants and soldiers who protested their grievances in 1783 were more than tools of upper-class conspirators. Nurtured in the radical milieu that spawned the Paxton Boys, the Pennsylvania constitution, Fort Wilson, and the mutiny of 1781, the soldiers of the Pennsylvania line consciously felt "like Men." They became a force powerful enough to force Congress and the state to confront their years of unremunerated privation and suffering in the patriot cause and to acknowledge that those higher on the social scale had failed to match their contribution to the triumph of revolutionary objectives.

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[97] See *LMCC*, 7:199n.-200n.; and *LDC* 20:329-30n., and 465n., where the editors suggest that Armstrong might have been the "young, sly & crafty politician" who "had too much influence in the late transactions" and "of whose principles and conduct" Secretary of Congress Charles Thomson had "not the best Opinion." On Armstrong's propensity for dissimulation and intrigue, see Harrison, *Princetonians*, 6, 9, 12-13.