

Appendix C

The following text covers excerpts from historical newspapers including, the Providence Gazette (Providence, RI), Massachusetts Spy (Worcester, MA) and the Royal Gazette (New York, NY). All articles included pertain to the Battle of Rhode Island, its lead up and aftermath, and are displayed chronologically. They were selected, studied and transcribed by James Rehill.

Battle of Rhode Island in Historical Newspapers Transcribed Articles

20 June 1778

Providence Gazette: Letter from General John Sullivan to General Pigot²⁷⁰

“Sir, the repeated application of the discussed Families of those Persons who were captured by your Troops on the 25th...induce me to write you upon the Subject. As those Men were not in...Service, or found in Arms, I cannot conceive what were the Motives for taking them, or guess the Terms upon which their Release may be obtained... the War, on the Part of Britain, been founded in Justice; and had your Troops, in their [Excellence], completed the Destruction of the Boats, and our military Preparations in that Quarter, without wantonly destroying defenceless Towns, burning Houses...to the Deity, plundering and abusing innocent Inhabitants, and dragging from their peaceful [Habitations] unarmed and offending Men, such an Expedition might have shone with splendor. - It is now darkened with savage Cruelty, and stained with [undeniable] Disgrace.

“In your last Letter to me, you gave it as your Opinion, that the Inhabitants of America, at large, would entertain more favourable Sentiments of the Views and Intentions of Great-Britain, than I seemed inclined [to have]. If, Sir, the unprecedented Cruelty of your Troops, displayed upon ever petty Advantage, since the Commencement of this Conflict; the inhuman and unexampled Treatment of Prisoners, who by the Fortune of War, have fallen into your Power, had not sufficiently convinced the Inhabitants of the United States, that they had nothing to

²⁷⁰ "Letter From General John Sullivan to General Pigot." *Providence Gazette* 20 June 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

expect from that Nation, but a Continuance of those tyrannical and cruel Measures which drove them to a separation; the Conduct of your Party...late Excursion, must have stamped it with Infallible Certainty.

“The Law of Retaliation has not as yet been exerted by the Americans. Humanity has marked the line of their Conduct thus far, even though they knew that their Tenderness was attributed to...; but if a Departure from the Laws of Humanity can in any Instance be justified, it must be when such relentless Destroyers are entrapped by the Vigilance of the Party invaded. Perhaps...Period, the Americans, fired with Relentless... accumulated Injuries; wearied with the long... or a humane Conduct, which has only been regarded with... and Insult... despairing to mitigate the Honors of War, by... in the Practice of a Virtue, which their Enemies seem to have banished from their Minds; may, by suddenly executing the Law of Retaliation, convince Britons, that they have mistaken the Motives of American Clemency, and is... too long with undeserved... should such an Event take Place, the unhappy Sufferers may charge their Misfortune to the Commanding Officers of the British Army in this Country, whose mistaken Conduct has weaned the Afflictions of Americans from your Nation, driven them to disavow Allegiance to your Sovereign, and at length routed them to Acts of Retaliation.

“I should not have wrote you so particularly upon this subject, had I not observed, in the Newport Gazette, that the Conduct of your Troops, employed on the late Expedition, had receive your Approbation, and warmest Thanks.

“Your favoring me with a Line, informing upon what Terms a Release of those unfortunate Persons may be obtained, will much oblige, Sir,

Your most obedient and very humble Servant,

JOHN SULLIVAN”

Providence Gazette: Letter from General Pigot to General Sullivan²⁷¹

²⁷¹ "Letter From General Pigot to General Sullivan." *Providence Gazette* 20 June 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

“Sir, I received your very extraordinary Letter, and as you request nothing more than the Favour of a Line to inform you upon what Terms the Prisoners taken on the 25th of last Month can be obtained, it is unnecessary to trouble you with a Reply to any other Part of your Letter.

“You are pleased to say, you cannot conjecture upon what Terms their Release may be obtained; You certainly must know, that by the Laws of this Country every Man above sixteen, and under sixty, is...to serve as a Soldier, under very severe Penalties; and have Generals and Field Officers appointed to lead them, whenever called forth; and I have no Doubt but many of those very Persons, whom you call peaceable Inhabitants of this Island, by General Spencer. This being the case, I do not see there can be any Objection made to their being exchanged for Soldiers or Seamen. Any one who does not come under the above Description, of being between sixteen and sixty, shall, upon your pointing him out, be immediately set at Liberty, without any Exchange, Should this Proposal be agreeable to you. I am ready to make the Exchange as soon as you please; but in case it does not meet with your Approbation, I am sorry to acquaint you, that not having it in my Power to accommodate the Prisoner so conveniently and well as I could wish to do, must be under the Necessity, when an Opportunity offers, of sending them to New York, where they will be better attended to, and more at large, and I wish I could say their Exchange more easily effected.

“I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

ROBERT PIGOT.”

Providence Gazette: Letter to General Sullivan from a General Officer in the American Army²⁷²

“The Enemy have every Thing in Readiness to [make] their Departure from Philadelphia. It is reduced to a moral Certainty that they mean to march through Jersey. They were under Orders to proceed this Morning, but were prevented by the Commissioners arriving last Evening from England. They are, the Earl of [Carlisle], Governor Johnstone, and Mr. Eden, Brother to the late

²⁷² "Letter to General Sullivan from a General Officer in the American Army." *Providence Gazette* 20 June 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

Governor of Maryland. Lord Cornwallis is with them, but in what Capacity I am not able to say - I do not imagine this will prevent them from leaving the City; It may possibly delay them a few Days.

“One County in England rose in Rebellion, in Consequence of the Attempt to raise a new Regiment upon Subscription. The Master went to a great Length; but I am not fully ascertained of the Particulars.”

Last Week several Transports arrived at Rhode Island from New York, and bought a Reinforcement of what are called the new Levies, alias Tories; their Numbers not known.

Thursday last Brigadier General Varnum arrived here from the Grand Army in Pennsylvania.

We Learn, from good Authority, that the British Commissioners are arrived at Philadelphia from England; and that some Dispatches, relative to the Negotiation proposed by them, have been forwarded by Express to Congress.

We hear that a Cartel is settled, and that a general Exchange of Prisoners will speedily take Place.

The Privateer Ship *Blaze-Castle*, Capt. James Munro, of this Port, has taken a small Cruiser, of two 6 Ponders, and 4 Swivels, fitted out at Antigua. She had taken several Prizes before Capt. Munro met with her. The *Blaze-Castle* has also taken a Vessel with dry Goods, and a Brig of 130 Tons, laden with Wine, and a Schooner with slaves. The three former are safe arrived, but the Schooner has been re-taken.

18 July 1778

*Providence Gazette: Letter to General Sullivan (USA) from an Officer at Bristol*²⁷³

“The Enemy landed last Night on Hog-Island, and with their usual Spirit attacked and burnt an empty House and barn, together with some Hay which had been cut by the Inhabitants and through Neglect was left on the island.”

²⁷³ "Letter to General Sullivan from an Officer at Bristol." *Providence Gazette* 18 July 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

Monday last a Number of the Enemy's Ships and smaller Vessels went up the Western Sound from Newport, bound to New York or Long Island. The next Day 21 Sail were observed coming down Sound; one of them, a Sloop, ran on a Reef of Rocks, but was got off; her Boat, on board which was a Captain in the British Land Service, three or four Seamen, and several American Prisoners, was brought on Shore by the latter, who inform that the last mentioned Fleet had on board 2000 Invalids bound to Rhode Island.

Wednesday last General Sullivan reviewed the Troops stationed at Bristol, Swansea and Tiverton, when Salutes were fired from the Batteries in those Towns. The Men made an excellent Appearance and performed the Manoeuvres and Firings with great Alertness and military Order.

Captain George Allen, who lately sailed from this Port in a small Privateer, has taken a Vessel laden with Coal, and carried her into New London.

22 July 1778

*Royal Gazette: New York, July 22*²⁷⁴

The following is a list of the Toulon fleet off Sandy Hook, under the command of the Comte D'Estaing;

Ships	Commanders	Guns	Men
Le Languedoc	D'Estaing	94	1160
Le Tonnane	Bougainville	80	1100
Le Caesar	Le Brave	74	900
Le Hector	Moliere	74	900
Le Guerrier		74	900
Le Protecteur		74	900
Le Marseillels		74	900
Le Zele		74	900
Le Vaillant	Du Lubin	64	700

²⁷⁴ "New York, July 22." *Royal Gazette* [New York] 22 July 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

La Provence	64	700
Le Fantasque	64	700
Le Sagittaire	54	500
L'Engageant	26	300
La Chimere	26	300
Le Clement	26	300

Three ships [were] sent by Le Compte D'Estaing (names unknown) to the river Delaware.

....Yesterday it was reported that an engagement had happened between a French frigate of 28 guns, and his Majesty's ship Greyhound, Captain Dixon, and that after a fierce battle the Frenchman yielded and was carried into Rhode Island.

25 July 1778

*Providence Gazette: Newport, July 16*²⁷⁵

Last evening a fleet from New York, in which came his Excellency Major General Prescott, with his Majesty's 38th regiment, two regiments of [Anspach], Col. Fanning's new raised corps, and a detachment of royal artillery.

30 July 1778

*Massachusetts Spy: Hartford, July 28*²⁷⁶

....The Brigades of Generals Glover and Varnum are on their march to the Eastward.

²⁷⁵ "Newport, July 16." *Providence Gazette* 25 July 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁷⁶ "Hartford, July 28." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 30 July 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

We have an account of the arrival of another Squadron of the French fleet; 'tis supposed to be at Newport.

We learn that a number of the best pilots are gone on board the French fleet likewise several gentlemen well acquainted with the coasts and harbours.

As the Count de Estaing will doubtless be eager to improve the present favourable moment, we every hour expect accounts of the most important and interesting events.

***Massachusetts Spy: New London, July 24.*²⁷⁷**

On Saturday a flag from hence sailed for Newport, with a number of British Prisoners and returned again on Tuesday night with one American and seven Frenchmen; by these we learn that the fleet mentioned in our last to have gone down the Sound, from New York to Newport, had upwards of 3000 Hessian Troops on board, whom they landed on Conanicut Island - that the enemy are fortifying Brenton's Point. Conanicut, and Beavertail, at the Lighthouse that they had received intelligence of the French fleet's arrival on this coast, by a brig which fell in with them, but made her escape and afterwards got into Newport; that this account put them in great consternation; since which the American prisoners had received much better treatment; but that they are still very sickly. Among the prisoners who came in this... is a Frenchman, who has been but 24 days from Martinico; he informs, that a fleet of 18 sail of Spanish men of war was shortly to sail from the Havannah, to join the French Squadron on the coast.

1 August 1778

***Providence Gazette: Providence, August 1*²⁷⁸**

Wednesday... the great... of every good Subject, the Fleet of his Most Christian Majesty, the great and wise Ally of these States, commanded by Admiral Count d'Estaing... Point of Judith,

²⁷⁷ "New London, July 24." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 30 July 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁷⁸ "Providence, August 1." *Providence Gazette* 01 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

when a Number of [Persons] belonging to this Town went immediately on board, and brought them safe to Anchor off the Harbour of Newport, whereby our savage Enemies are in their...blockaded. On Thursday two French Ships of the Line came up the West Side of Conanicut, and took their Stations above the North End of that Island; several Shot were fired at them as they passed, and a few returned; the Enemy's Ship which lay there got under Sail on the near Approach of our Friends, and entered Newport Harbour by the West Side of Conanicut. Their Troops soon after evacuated Conanicut, and fled to Rhode Island, having previously...up the Magazine, spiked their Cannon, destroyed the... and set Fire to the Barracks. The [Kingfisher], of 16 Guns with two Gallies, were blown up by the Enemy in Sakonnet River, on the Approach of two other French Ships. The Britons, with their friends the... are in great Consternation; and a few... will probably produce Events of the utmost Importance.

The French have brought in 15 Sail of Prizes, one of them a ship bound to New York, laden with... among which are six large Mortars, and a Quantity of Shells.

The Honorable Major General Sullivan, with his [Suite], went on board the French Admiral's ship on Thursday last, and yesterday returned to...

On Thursday Major General Greene arrived at... Seat in East Greenwich, from the American Army; and yesterday came to town Brigadier-General Glover.

Yesterday two Boats landed on Conanicut, and brought off some Beds, a Number of Hogs, and two Hessians.

The Navigation in this Port is now open by Way of [Sakonnet] and the West Passage.

On Thursday a vessel arrived here from Stonington.

Since our last several Deserters have arrived here from Rhode Island, who inform that the Enemy's Troops Consist of between 5 and 6000 men; more than one Half of them Hessians; The latter were greatly dissatisfied on hearing of a French fleet being on the Coast; the Britons endeavoured to pacify them by suggesting that the French Admiral intended nothing more than to... with the Rebels. The Harbour being now blocked up, the Hessians will have an Opportunity of judging what Kind of Trade is proposed, and were then on the Main; would doubtless desert in great Numbers.

The Deserters likewise inform that the Enemy intend to destroy all their Ships, if they find it impracticable to defend them.

Providence Gazette: Navy-Board, Boston, July 18²⁷⁹

All Officers and Seamen, belonging to any Continental Ship or Vessel of War, within the Eastern Department, now absent on the recruiting service, or otherwise, are hereby required immediately to repair on board their several Ships; and all Seamen now in America, who regard the Liberty of Mankind, or the Honor of the United States of America, as well as their own Advantage, are now earnestly entreated to enter immediately on board some of the Continental Vessels, in order to afford all possible Aid and Assistance to His Most Christian Majesty's Fleet, under the Command of the Count de Estaing, the Vice-Admiral of France, now in the American seas, for the Purpose of assisting these American States in vanquishing a haughty and cruel Enemy, too long triumphant on these Seas, now is the Time to secure to yourselves Safety in your future Voyages, and to avoid the Cruelties which all those experience who have the Misfortune to be captured by the Britons; and now is the Time to make your Fortunes.

6 August 1778***Massachusetts Spy: Worcester, August 6***²⁸⁰

A considerable body of men, are by this time assembled at Rhode Island, as the militia of this state, who were ordered thither, are chiefly arrived, also two brigades of continental troops, so that we may soon expect interesting intelligence from that quarter.

We hear the State of New Hampshire are raising men very fast for the expedition.

A list of line of battle ships, etc. under the command of Lord Howe, at Sandy Hook, 21st July, 1778.

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Guns</u>	<u>Pounders</u>
Leviathan	70	24
Somerset	64	32
Ardent	64	24
Trident	64	24

²⁷⁹ "Navy Board, Boston, July 18." *Providence Gazette* 01 August 1778: 4. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁸⁰ "Worcester, August 6." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 06 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

[Nonsuch]	64	24
Eagle	64	24
St. [Albans]	64	24
[Isis]	50	18
Experiment	50	12
Roebuck	44	18
Phoenix	44	18

Venus, Frigate 36

Besides several 32 gun frigates, 20 gun ships, a sloop of 16 guns.. and 1 fire-ship.

Extract of a letter from an American naval officer dated Philadelphia July 12, 1778:

“I came over in the French fleet, and send you an account of the same which you’ll show our friends. The ships under command of Vice Admiral Count D’Estaing are:

Ship	Guns	Ship	Guns	Frigates	Guns
Languedoc	90	Guerrier	74	Chimere	36
[Tonanne]	80	[Fantasque]	64	[L’Engageant]	
	36				
Cesar	74	Provence	64	[Clement]	
	36				
Zelee	74	[Vaillant]	64	[L’Arimable]	
	26				
[Hector]	74	[Sagitaire]	50		
Marseillels	74				
Protecteur	74				

Besides the fleet that sailed with Count D’Estaing, there are five French ships of forte, gone to Virginia with supplies of various kinds for the States, and designing to return to France loaded with tobacco, etc. ...one of 50 guns; two of 40, and two of 32 guns. These ships were put under the direction of Beaumarchais, one of the French ministers, noted for his affection to the American cause, and though they belong to the King, came out under the appearance of

merchantmen. This fleet, it is said, is soon expected to join the Count D'Estaing, and act for a season under his orders."

Gen. Prescott is the Commander in chief of the enemy's forces at Rhode-Island.

8 August 1778

*Providence Gazette: Providence, August 8*²⁸¹

Sunday last the Marquis de la Fayette arrived here from the grand American Army, and on Thursday set out for the Camp at Tiverton.

On Monday Generals Varnum and Glover's Brigades, with two Companies of the Train of Artillery, arrived here from White Plains, and have since marched to the Southward.

Thursday last a Company of Volunteers arrived here from Salem, to serve in the intended Expedition against the Enemy on Rhode Island. A great Number of Volunteers are likewise expected from Newburyport, Boston, and several Towns in Connecticut.

Yesterday the Honorable Major-General Sullivan left this Place, to take upon him the Command of the Army destined for the [Redaction] of Rhode Island.

Monday last seven Prizes, taken by His Most Christian Majesty's Squadron, arrived safe at this Port; one of them a Sloop of War, called the York; the others laden with Sugar, Rum, Coffee, etc.

The Fleet have also taken a sloop laden with [Pines]...Limes, Turtle, etc.

Two Hundred and Forty-five Prisoners, taken in the above Prizes, have been since conducted here by Land from Point Judith, and sent on board a Guard-Ship prepared for their Reception.

Wednesday last, on the appearance of two French Men of War on the East Side of Conanicut, the Enemy ran four of their Frigates and a Galley ashore on Rhode Island, and soon after burnt them with their Stores, Provisions, etc. We since learned that the Vessels destroyed are the Lark, Orpheus, and Juno, of 32 Guns each, the Cerberus of 28, and the Pigot Galley.

²⁸¹ "Providence, August 8." *Providence Gazette* 08 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

A small Privateer landed a Number of Men the same day on Rhode Island, and brought off four...belonging to the above mentioned Frigates, having on board small Arms, clothing, etc.

The Flora, of 32 Guns, and the Grand Duke of Russia, a Storeship, are all the Vessels of Force the Enemy have now remaining in this State.

On Wednesday three Persons made their escape from Newport; they inform that the Enemy have sunk 11 Transports between Goats and Rose Islands, and that they have destroyed all the Farming Utensils on Rhode Island.

Nine of the new Levies deserted from Rhode Island on Wednesday last.

12 August 1778

*Royal Gazette: Extract of a Letter from Newport (Rhode Island) dated August 3, 1778*²⁸²

We are now blocked up by the French fleet, 12 ships of the line, 3 frigates, and an incredible number of American privateers, which ply backward and forward to supply them and obstruct the passage of small craft or intelligence. Five days ago they made their appearance. Two ships went down Conannicut and fired at a small battery we had at the Light House, which, when they had passed, we blew up; two more went on the other side of the Island, which caused us to blow up the King Fisher sloop of war and two galleons, stationed to defend the island. Two of the French ships cruise, two lay on the back of the Conanicut, and 12 are at the mouth of the harbor, near the Light-House.

...A person who left Rhode Island last Thursday declares, that the general attack of the British lines had been deferred until last Sunday, as a large body of the Connecticut militia had not yet arrived, and that General Green was to command the enterprize.

...By a gentleman from the Eastward we are informed, that last Friday night three whale boats came over from Connecticut to Southhold, on the east end of Long Island, and informed their friends there, that a 74 gun ship, belonging to Count D'Estaing's squadron, in attempting to go through a narrow passage near Newport, run aground, and was so severely cannonaded from

²⁸² "Extract of a Letter from Newport (Rhode Island) dated August 3, 1778." *Royal Gazette* [New York] 12 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

the batteries there, that the crew were obliged to abandon and set her on fire, and that an unarmed Vessel, which was sent to her assistance, suffered the same fate.

...Last night an account was brought to town that the rebels had abandoned their enterprise against Rhode Island, Mons. D'Estaing having suddenly left that place, and two of his ships behind him. We hope soon to give authentic particulars of the events that may have lately occurred in that quarter.

The following anecdote we believe may be depended on:

While the Count D'Estaing's squadron lay off Sandy Hook, a marine officer belonging to one of the ships, a Scotchman by birth, went on shore at Shrewsbury, the inhabitants finding he spoke good English, crowded to converse with him, and told him how happy they were made by the arrival of the French fleet, as they did not doubt their Independence would be established by their co-operation. Whereas the Scotch officer with a significant shake of his head answered them, "he believed they were mistaken, that he looked upon their Independence only as a dream, for that France or Britain must have this country."

13 August 1778

***Massachusetts Spy: Fresh Intelligence from Rhode Island*²⁸³**

By a gentleman belonging to this town, (whose veracity we will vouch for) who went on Rhode Island with our troops last Sunday, and left them in high spirits last Tuesday evening, and arrived here late last night, we have the following particulars, with a confirmation of these preceding:

Last Sunday evening a Fleet of British Ships, (he counted twenty five sail) appeared off Rhode Island; immediately after Count d'Estaing, who lay with 8 sail of the line, between Prudence Island and Newport, properly arranged for an attack on Rhode Island and sent a message onshore to Gen. Sullivan, requesting him to be under no...with regards to the English fleet, for as soon as the wind and tide would permit he determined to go out and attack them. The next morning the English fleet lay off Newport and about 9 o'clock the French admiral weighed

²⁸³ "Fresh Intelligence from Rhode Island." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 13 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

anchor with 10 ships of the line, passed the enemy forts on his way, which he saluted with some of his heavy metal, and silenced two of their batteries which had begun to play on his shipping, and made fast for the British fleet, which seeing the movement of the French squadron formed for battle; but as the French approached, the English, perceiving their force, did not wait till the Count could come up with them, but made all the sail they could to get out of the reach of his cannon. The count pursued them, and had not returned last Tuesday night. Two sail were seen standing in about sun-down that evening, supposed to be two prizes which the French had taken, as a gentleman, who was observing the motions of the shipping after our informant (the place of observation being on an eminence where they could discover great way at sea) said he perceived, by help of his glass, the ship the French Admiral was in, to come up with some of the British, and concluded that two of them had stuck to the French flag.

The British fleet before mentioned are believed to be under the command of Lord Howe, who has been very assiduous in collecting his force together, to attack Count d'Estaing ever since the Count's arrival on this coast.

As soon as the Count d'Estaing returns, which without doubt will be soon, a general attack is intended to be made on the enemy on the island.

The French Admiral left several of his ships at anchor near Newport, and we are told, there is not an English ship of force in sight of the island. The Marquis La Fayette is to have the command of the French troops, which are to be landed immediately after the return of the Count d'Estaing.

The American force now against Rhode Island is supposed to be above 10,000 men. The arrival of the English fleet, from St. Helen's on this coast, has been reported for two or three days. The Tories tell the story with great glee, one asserts this fleet was lately seen off the Banks of Newfoundland, another says she was parted with off the Western Islands, while others do not scruple to say it is actually arrived before Newport; Alas poor souls... let them enjoy it. We have search the various reports to the bottom, and if we are not mistaken, they all spring from one fountain. The New London Gazette, of last Friday, has the following paragraph:

“A British ship of 64 guns arrived at New York last week, supposed to be from Halifax, though it is given out in New York that she belonged to Admiral Byron's squadron from England, and that she parted with it in a gale of wind a few days before her arrival.”

Another account, from Boston, says, "A commander of a privateer belonging to this state, not long since captured by the enemy, and since made his escape from New York the... says, A British man of war of 64 guns had lately arrived there, which came out as was reported in that city, with a British fleet consisting of eleven sail of the line, bound for America, and every moment expected at New York. Our informant had this account from the Doctor of the captured privateer, who attended a hospital in the city. He received this account from a midshipman of the 64 gun ship, who was sent there as an invalid." This undoubtedly is the same ship mentioned under the New-London [article]. A third account, also from Boston, says, "A vessel arrived from the West Indies, in a neighbouring port, on her passage was brought to by a British man of war said to be from England bound to New York, who informed that a fleet of British men of war of 20 sail was at Portsmouth, when she left it, and was expected to come out for American in about 12 days." It is highly probable this is the ship mentioned in the other two accounts, and that she was from Halifax.

Two of the Cork provision fleet, one of them a ship of 300 tons, the other a large brig, are taken by a French man of war, and sent into Bedford. Another ship belonging to the British fleet was captured by one of our....

When the enemy evacuated the Island of Conanicut, they left a large number of sheep there, which they... from the neighbouring island....

15 August 1778

*Providence Gazette: Providence, August 15*²⁸⁴

Saturday last Count D'Estaing, with 12 Ships of the Line, entered the Harbour of Newport, to cooperate with our Army destined for the [Redaction] of Rhode Island. The Ships were briefly fired on as they passed the Enemy's Batteries, but received very little Damage; the Fire was gallantly returned, and we since learn, by a Deserter, that several of the Enemy were killed in the North Battery.

²⁸⁴ "Providence, August 15." *Providence Gazette* 15 August 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

On Sunday a British Fleet, supposed to be Lord Howe's, consisting of about 30 Sail, arrived off Point Judith, with Intention, as is conjectured, of throwing [Succours] on Rhode Island. The Wind being southerly, His Most Christian Majesty's Fleet could not get out of the Harbour till next morning, when a Breeze springing from the Northward, the brave Count D'Estaing, with the 12 Ships above mentioned, came to sail. They were again briefly cannonaded from the Enemy's Batteries as they passed, and the Fire was returned with great Spirit. The dastardly Britons, on perceiving the French Ships under Way to engage them, immediately weighed their Anchors, and crowded all Sail towards the South-East. At Two o'Clock, P.M. the southernmost of the French Ships were supposed to be within four Miles of the British, and in our next we hope to give our Readers a good Account of them.

A person from New London informs, that a Fishing Boat is arrived there, the Master of which says that he was between Block Island and [Monsock] on Monday last, and saw some of the French Ships towards Evening, come up with Part of the British Fleet, when a heavy Firing commenced, but does not know the Event.

On Wednesday and Thursday we had severe Storm of Wind and Rain, which has prevented the Return of Count D'Estaing.

On Sunday and Monday last the Honorable General Sullivan, with the Army under his Command, landed upon Rhode Island without Opposition. The Enemy abandoned all their Works and Barracks at the North End, leaving them in good Order, and retreated within their Lines, which are about three Quarters of a Mile from the Town of Newport. Our Troops have Possession of Quaker, Wind-Mill, and Butts's Hills, and a strong Detachment is advanced within a Mile and a Half of the Enemy's Lines, near which, on Saturday, the Enemy burnt several Houses.

Our Army, consisting of about 12,000 Men are in fine spirits. The Advance, composed of the light Troops, Independent Companies, and 50 Men from each Brigade, under the Command of Col. Levingston; the right Wing is commanded by General Greene, the Left by the Marquis de la Fayette, the second Line by General Hancock, and the Reserve by Col. West.

Forty-seven Deserters have come over to our Army since their landing on Rhode Island.

In the Storm on Wednesday and Thursday last a Sloop, a Schooner, and several Boats, were drove ashore near the South Ferry.

20 August 1778

*Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a Letter from an officer on Rhode Island, to an officer in this town, dated August 10, 1778*²⁸⁵

“The cannonade, which continued very brisk about two hours was occasioned by the French fleet’s passing the enemy’s batteries as they were going out to sea after the fleet which lay at the mouth... more than eight ships of the line, besides a large number of frigates. The Admiral sent to General Sullivan, that he should attack them in the morning, which obliged the land army to lay upon the oars until the event is known....

“The advance of the army is composed of the light troops, independent companies, and fifty men from each brigade, commanded by Col. Livingston, the right wing of the army by Gen. Green, the left by the Marquis de La Fayette, the second line by General Hancock, and the reserve by Col. West.

“The army are in fine spirits, and are determined to return victorious.”

A letter from a gentleman in the army on Rhode Island, to a General officer in this town, dated August 11, says, “I embrace this first moment since our landing to inform you, that at 9 o’clock yesterday, I landed with the [first] line of the army, the artillery of which I command, with the enemy having left their works there the evening before. We have not yet go to [Logger-beads]. The heavy artillery is mostly over; it is probable we shall move forward this afternoon; our distance from the enemy is seven miles. An English fleet of 8 ships of the line, and 25 sail of other vessels, appeared yesterday, near the evening, to the mouth of the harbor of Newport. The French fleet sailed out this morning to meet them. The cannonade from the enemy’s forts as they passed them, and from the ships was beyond description. We are in anxious expectation for the event, as our further proceeding depends much upon it.”

²⁸⁵ "Extract of a Letter from an officer on Rhode Island, to an officer in this town, dated August 10, 1778." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 1. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

***Massachusetts Spy: By Boston Tuesday's Post - Boston, August 17*²⁸⁶**

The late violent storm, and the Count d'Estaing's going out after Lord Howe's fleet, which in all probability were bringing large succours of men, etc. to the British army on Rhode Island, have retarded a closer advancement of our troops to the enemy; many of them were sheltered from the severity of the weather in houses... and huts which they made for themselves by putting sails and such like materials upon the stone walls, and covering them with hay and straw, etc. Those who had tents suffered the most, as the violence of the wind blew them down.

***Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from an Officer on Rhode Island to an officer in this town:*²⁸⁷**

"The French fleet have not returned; we shall wait no longer for them; to-morrow morning the whole army advances.

"The enemy's principal fortification is on Domini Hill - They keep entirely within their lines - few deserters, no prisoners. The enemy have six British and six German regiments, about six thousand - strong.

"We may soon expect some favourable accounts from the French fleet. The General has this moment returned from reviewing the army, they are a fine body of men, from whose exertions we may expect the most happy decision. - Affairs wear the most promising aspect."

***Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from the same place:*²⁸⁸**

"We are now encamped within about 4 miles of the enemy. Yesterday we were alarmed by the enemy's advancing, [Estimated] to be a party of about 600, that came out to [reconnaissance].

²⁸⁶ "By Boston Tuesday's Post - Boston, August 17." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁸⁷ "Extract of a letter from an Officer on Rhode Island to an officer in this town." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁸⁸ "Extract of a Letter from the same place." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

They took a few stacks of hay and returned. We were immediately under... and advanced within about one mile of their works, but they had retired before we got up with them. We should have advanced with the whole army this morning but the weather has been stormy all night and still continues. We shall march as soon as it is cleared up; Gen. Sullivan says he has 12,000 men today, and expects to make up 14,000 tomorrow.”

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter brought by the last express from Rhode Island, dated August 15²⁸⁹

“At six o’clock this morning the army were paraded, and at seven the signal for marching was given, when the whole began to advance, we arrived without opposition, within two miles of the enemy’s lines in the afternoon. Where the army now remain encamped on the hill.” - The French fleet had not arrived when the express came...

It is said that the Count d’Estaing, when he was coming into the harbour of Newport, put onshore a number of American gentlemen, that had been on board his fleet, saying that though he should be proud of their joint services upon many occasions, he would have none of the exposed in attacks that were proper to his own ships. When he went out to meet Lord Howe’s fleet he left two 64 gun ships and a brig to guard that harbour.

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from an Officer of distinction dated Rhode Island, August 14²⁹⁰

“You have doubtless hear before this of our being in possession of the North-end of the island, and may perhaps soon expect to hear of our being in Newport. The situation of the enemy is such that it is almost impossible to make any impression upon their works - They are strongly fortified across the whole island - Their works consist of a chain of redoubts seven in number, within half musket shot of each other; which is what they call the front line. They have in the rear of these five other redoubts at about the same distance from each other connected by a breast work seven

²⁸⁹ "Extract of a letter brought by the last express from Rhode Island, dated August 15." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁹⁰ "Extract of a letter from an Officer of distinction dated Rhode Island, August 14." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

feet high, with a ditch ten feet wide, and a battery in front, and a strong line of pickets in the rear of the ditch. Their numbers are about 6000 - Provision they are not in want of - Desertion prevails much among them; we had 43 come out to us yesterday. As soon as the weather permits we shall move close down to their lines. We are not at the distance of five miles from them. The late storm was very unseasonable for us. The Count d'Estaing is not in sight. By deserters from them we hear, that he took four and sunk two of Howe's fleet; but nothing certain is yet arrived.

Massachusetts Spy: Worcester, August 20²⁹¹

From our correspondents in the army on Rhode Island, we have the following intelligence, as late as the morning of Tuesday last, our army were then in high spirits, and well provided with necessaries, as appear by the following letters to the printer hereof.

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from an Officer of distinction, dated, Camp near Newport, August 17th, 1778²⁹²

“We landed on this island Sunday the 9th...and took possession of the enemy's works on the north part which they had evacuated without damaging them in the least, those on Quaker Hill were considerable, with commodious barracks. The army was immediately formed in three lines across the island: first and second line of battle, with a Corps de reserve; the first line composed mostly of Continental troops. Exclusive of the aforesaid arrangement, we had a very considerable body of light troops advance. In this situation we remained until Saturday the 15th, in consequence of the most severe storm I ever knew; the army suffered much, for it was impossible to keep the tents standing, the wind was so exceeding strong.

“The morning of the 15th, we advanced towards Newport, each line in three columns; during our march, as we passed over some eminence, I could almost take the whole in at one view; the heavy columns, with the artillery, together with the advance corps and flanking divisions, all moving in the most regular manner, with standard displayed, was a sight truly

²⁹¹ "Worcester, August 20." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁹² "Extract of a letter from an Officer of distinction, dated, Camp near Newport, August 17th, 1778." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

animating. We advanced within about one mile and a half of the enemy's lines, where we have secured our camp by throwing up some redoubts. We are now employed in raising batteries the distance of about 100 [rods] from the enemy's redoubts; they are very frequently saluting of us from their works.

"The French fleet, that you was informed failed out to attack the English, has not yet returned The wind is now fair, we expect they will soon appear in sight; after which we hope soon to render a good account of the British army in Newport.

"Gen. Pigot, (who commands the British army) was heard to say, that if the French fleet returned, they must all be prisoners. Between fifty and sixty have deserted from the British since we came on the island..."

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of another letter, dated Rhode Island, four miles from Newport, August 17²⁹³

"Last night we began to throw up some works not above a hundred rods from the enemy's redoubts; in which we were favoured this morning by the fog; it has now cleared off, since which the enemy have saluted us with a few cannonballs. We expect the French fleet in today, and are all ready for an attack."

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from an officer in camp dated Rhode Island, four miles from Newport, August 16²⁹⁴

"We marched from Portsmouth yesterday morning, headed by Major-General Green and the Marquis de la Fayette, and the reserve commanded by Col. West, and arrived here about noon. The enemy gave us no manner of interruption. We are in plain view of their works. Our troops last night lay on their arms, and without any covering; The Marquis to encourage them, had a marquee pitched, and lodged just in the rear of our brigade among his guard, which the corporal

²⁹³ "Extract of another letter, dated Rhode Island, four miles from Newport, August 17." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁹⁴ "Extract of a letter from an officer in camp dated Rhode Island, four miles from Newport, August 16." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 20 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

was about to remove, but the Marquis ordered them to lie still, adding, ‘We are all soldiers alike now.’

“August 17th. A party went last night on fatigue near the enemy’s lines; it was very foggy and so continues, which favours the design...

“P.S. Since writing the above the fog is cleared off, and a small cannonade has begun.”

22 August 1778

*Providence Gazette: Providence, August 22*²⁹⁵

Early on Saturday Morning last the Honorable Major General Sullivan, with the Army under his Command, advanced towards Newport, and the same Evening encamped on an Eminence two Miles from the Enemy’s Lines, without Opposition, where the main Body of the Army now lies. The same Night a Detachment took Possession of a Height on the Enemy’s Right, about Half a Mile from their front Line of Works, which it commands. On Sunday Morning, the 16th, the Enemy began a brisk Cannonade, though without Effect, and in the Evening a Battery was opened on the Right, which they cannonaded next Day; but the Fire was not returned. Tuesday and Wednesday, two other Batteries being opened, there was much Firing on both Sides, and the Enemy were driven from a Work on the Right. On Thursday Afternoon a brisk Cannonade again commenced, but nothing decisive has yet taken Place. Our Troops are in high Spirits, and eager for Action. Deserters from the Enemy continue to come in daily, and on Sunday three Prisoners were taken.

Thursday last his Excellency Count D’Estaing, with 11 Ships of the Line, returned from Pursuing the British Fleet, and came to Anchor off Point Judith. The [Caesar], of 74 Guns, parted with the Fleet in the late Storm, and is hourly expected.

The British Fleet consisted of 22 Sail, among which were [8] Ships of the Line. The French Fleet came up with them the Day after they left Newport, when Preparations were made for engaging; but the Storm coming on, they were compelled to separate, which favoured the

²⁹⁵ "Providence, August 22." *Providence Gazette* 22 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

Escape of the Britons. Two only were taken... the Senegal Sloop of War, commanded by a Captain Gambier, and the Carcass Bomb Ketch.

The Languedoc, and one other Ship, received some Damage in the Storm, which came on at a most critical Time, as a fair Prospect had otherwise presented of capturing a great Part of the Enemy's Fleet.

A small Privateer fell in with Part of the British Fleet after the Storm, the Master of which informs, that he observed a 74 Gun Ship and a frigate to be dismasted.

Certain accounts are received, that the Spithead Fleet, of which so much Parade has been made in the English Prints...at Anchor in that Harbour the 9th of June last. The [Brest] Fleet, which is much superior in Force, continued to wait their Motions.

Since the destruction of the Enemy's Shipping in the Bay, upwards of 30 pieces of Cannon, (chiefly 12 pounders) 4 Anchors, a large Quantity of Rigging, several Boats, etc. have been taken from the wrecks, and brought to this Town.

Royal Gazette: Some Particulars of the British and French fleets²⁹⁶

On Tuesday the 11th Instant, a most violent tempest arose, which continuing until Friday following, dispersed both the fleets. On Sunday the French Rear Admiral, supposed to be Mons. Bosse of the Le Zele (the Zealous), a ship of seventy four guns and rated to have nine hundred men, bore down on his Majesty's ship Isis, commanded by Capt. John Raynor, of fifty guns, and rated to have three hundred and fifty men; who permitted not a gun to be fired until the enemy approached very near the Isis, when a fierce engagement ensued, and continued, it is said, about an hour and an half. The Rear Admiral's fire being very much directed against the Isis's rigging, rendered her utterly incapable of pursuing the Zele, who wore round, and being one of the best sailing ships of the Comte D'Estaing's squadron; escaped from capture merely by ... during the action a quantity of papers were observed to be thrown out of the cabin windows of the Zele.

On Saturday afternoon his Majesty's ship Renown, of 50 guns, commanded by Captain George Dawson, fell in with the Languedoc, of 94 guns, and rated to have eleven hundred men, about 30 leagues southeast of Sandy Hook; this capital ship had been distanced in the storm on

²⁹⁶ "Some Particulars of the British and French fleets." *Royal Gazette* [New York] 22 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

the 11th instant. The Renown attacked her on the quarter, and kept up a steady fire against her from 4 o'clock till dark, intending to renew the engagement in the morning, but the French Admiral, availing himself of the darkness of the night, brought his ship to an anchor, by which means the Renown became separated three or four miles from him. At daybreak, Captain Dawson observed the Count D'Estaing, attended with several other ships of his own squadrons, which occasioned the fifty gun ship to bear away, and thereby escaped from a superiority, to himself, invincible.

His Majesty's ship Preston, commanded by Commodore Hotham, of 60 guns, and rated for three hundred and fifty men, fell in with the Le Tonane, of 84 guns, and rated for eleven hundred men, said to be commanded by Mons. Bougainville, a gentleman who in the last war, had the honour of serving his sovereign in Canada; and is allowed to be an officer of distinguished abilities. This ship had lost her [port-sprit?] and fore-mast, on the 11th instant. The Preston raked her fore and aft a considerable time, and would certainly have made a prize of Her but for the intervention of several other ships of the Toulon fleet, which occasioned the Preston to leave her to their protection.

27 August 1778

*Massachusetts Spy: By Boston Friday's Post - Boston, August 20*²⁹⁷

Authentic Intelligence from our army on Rhode Island:

"On the 15th instant, at six o'clock, P.M. a detachment of our troops, with a covering party, paraded in the front of our army, where the ...intrenching tools... etc were ordered, and as soon as it was dark, took possession of a height on the enemy's right, which commands their front line of works, at the distance of about half a mile. - The enemy did not discover our taking possession of this post until the morning of the 16th, when they began and continued a brisk cannonade without effect. During the time our detachment were at work, they opened a covered way, and about half completed a battery on the right, which was to be finished, and another on the left

²⁹⁷ "By Boston Tuesday's Post - Boston, August 20." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 27 August 1778: 1. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

erected, the next night that our batteries would opened on the 19th. Our troops were in high spirits, and that great regularity ha been conspicuous in all their manoeuvres. The French fleet not returned on the morning of the 18th.”

By the last night’s express from Rhode Island, we are informed, that on the night of the 17th instant the covered way and two batteries of 4 guns each, were almost completed. That a fatigue party of 1000 men, were employed on the works on the 18th, which so much provoked the enemy, that they fired three or four hundred shot at our people, but to very little purpose, two men only being slightly wounded, and the party continued at work.

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from Major General Hancock, to the Hon. J. Powell, Esq; dated Tuesday evening, Aug. 18²⁹⁸

“Nothing material has happened since my letter of this morning except a constant cannonade from the enemy, without any other damage then slightly wounding one man. A firing has been heard a sea, which we think denotes the approach of the French fleet, and expect to see them in the morning, after which we shall proceed with great vigour and dispatch. Our men being fully employed in completing the works near the enemy’s lines. Desertion prevails among them, notwithstanding their circumscribed situation and double guards, this night being very dark we expect many, in one day 41 have come in.

“Wednesday morning, five o’clock. Everything quiet, and very heavy fog and small rains. No account of the French fleet; indeed it is impossible they should set in, as it is exceeding thick.”

Massachusetts Spy: By Boston Tuesday’s Post - Boston, August 24²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ "Extract of a letter from Major General Hancock, to the Hon. J. Powell, Esq; dated Tuesday evening, Aug. 18." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 27 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

²⁹⁹ "By Boston Tuesday’s Post - Boston, August 24." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 27 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

On the night of the 20th instant, our army erected another battery on Rhode Island, advanced 40 or 50 rods in front of these at first...on the hill, which have been already mentioned: This battery is not only nearer, but better situated to annoy the enemy. We had one more killed and two wounded. On the afternoon of the 20th, the Count d'Estaing returned with his squadron having taken an English frigate of 28 guns... Two of the French ships suffered some little damage in their masts in the late severe storms. The spirit of desertion greatly prevails among the enemy.

*Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from an officer on Rhode Island, dated Aug. 21.*³⁰⁰

“We thought it very unlucky for us, that the French fleet [left us], but it was unavoidable. Lord Howe had 3000 men on board his fleet...which he would have landed... The Wednesday after... The Languedoc lost some of her topmasts, and a 74 lost some masts. They are now off Point Judith, and have brought up the Senegal.... We have some batteries of eight guns each playing upon the enemy today, tomorrow we shall open the mouths of fourteen guns more, and [some of our] mortars will begin playing in the morning. We have had, I imagine, near 2000 shot fired on us, which has killed one man wounded [some]...”

29 August 1778

*Providence Gazette: Providence, August 29*³⁰¹

On Wednesday next the Honorable General Assembly of this State will meet at East Greenwich.

The Caesar, a French Ship of 74 Guns, mentioned in our last to be missing, is arrived at Boston Soon after the Violence of the late Storm had abated, in which she was separated from the Fleet, she fell in at 10 o’Clock at Night with a British Ship of 64 Guns; about Three in the Morning a sharp Engagement commenced, which continued 3 hours, when two other British Men of War heaving in Sight, the Caesar quitted her. The British Ship was greatly damaged,

³⁰⁰ "Extract of a letter from an officer on Rhode Island, dated Aug. 21." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 27 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

³⁰¹ "Providence, August 29." *Providence Gazette* 29 August 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

several of her Ports being beat into one, and her Pumps going, when the Caesar made Sail. We learn that 13 Men were killed and 19 wounded on board the Caesar. The Captain had his right Arm badly wounded, which has been since amputated, and one of the Lieutenants lost a leg.

Two of His Most Christian Majesty's Ships having been disabled in the last severe Storm on Saturday last they sailed from Point Judith to refit, convoyed by the Remainder of the Fleet.

The Operations against Rhode Island continue to be carried on with Vigour, and if the Enemy should not receive large Reinforcements in the Absence of Count D'Estaing; whose Return is daily expected, there is the fairest Prospect that the Expedition will be crowned with Success. A brisk Fire has been kept up several Days this Week, with very little Effect on the Part of the Enemy. Deserters continue to come out daily.

Last Monday Night a Party of the Enemy from Rhode Island landed on the Narragansett Shore, and with their usual Spirit dragged an inoffensive Farmer from his House (Mr. Rowse Potter) whom they carried off, with one of his Negroes.

Capt. Tredwell, in the Privateer Sloop Hero, of this Place, in Company with the Privateer Barton, of Dartmouth, has taken a Schooner from Jamaica, laden with Molasses, Rum, etc. and brought her into Port.

The above mentioned Schooner, previous to her being captured, took up Capt. John Bell and his Crew, late of the Brig Ruby; also Capt. John Daggers, and three of his Men, late of the Ship Nancy, the Remainder of her Crew, 15 in Number, being drowned. They were Part of a Fleet from Jamaica, bound to England, and were, with nine others, wrecked on the [Bahamas] Banks, in the late violent Storm.

The Privateer Sloop General Stark, of Warren, in this State, has taken a Brig with 100 bags of Cotton Wool, and a Quantity of Redwood, and sent her into Boston.

3 September 1778

Massachusetts Spy: By The Rhode Island post - Worcester, September 3. Extract of a letter from an officer of distinction, dated camp at Rhode Island, August 30³⁰²

³⁰² "By The Rhode Island post - Worcester, September 3. Extract of a letter from an officer of distinction, dated camp at Rhode Island, August 30." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 03 September 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

“The night before last we adjourned from our camp before Newport, leaving behind us neither ten, equipage, stores, or even an old shoe, and retired in very good order to this place, called Butt’s Hill. At 7 o’clock yesterday morning the advance of the enemy attacked our light troops who were posted in advance of the enemy on the east and west roads. After a severe action, in which the enemy had vastly the superiority in numbers, we retired in excellent order to the main body. I was sent with this order in the east road. The fire was very hot, both of cannon and musketry, and rather disobliging for a few minutes to my nerves.

“The enemy advancing rapidly, were received warmly by a number of heavy cannon, which induced them to halt. After lying quiet for an hour a strong party advanced Hessian and British light infantry, with an intention to gain our right flank, under cover of two ships which were then opposite to us; they were soon drove out of the way by the cannon from Bristol, and two 18 pounders, which we took down on the open beach; the Hessian and British light infantry mean-time, advanced briskly through a hollow way covered by small brush in front of a redoubt. They were opposed, but at first ineffectually by a few brave fellows, whom they pushed in on our quarter, a hundred yards behind the redoubt. Two continental regiments were now ordered to attack their right, while a brigade of your militia, under General Lovell, and led on by your friend, were to attempt their left and rear. The enemy soon gave way to this manoeuvre... I pushed on almost too far with the militia, quite under the brow of a hill on which was a small redoubt with artillery, and in its rear the whole left wing of the enemy. I was conscious of being near them, but as I could not know their exact position, from the hollow in which we were, I rode up the hill to reconnoitre them, and found myself instantly within musket shot of their whole line; I retreated you may well believe, to my men with full speed. Our troops soon after retired, and the enemy were happy to remain quiet, after retiring some distance from where they first formed their line- in retiring from our right, they plundered and ruined all the houses which were in their way in a scandalous manner.

“In the whole day we have lost about 50 or 60 killed, and 180 wounded, as near as we can hitherto guess. The enemy’s loss must be much greater, as they received most furious and effectual fires after they broke and ceased to return it.

“Had our troops been excessively fatigued by the retreat, we should P.M. have attacked the enemy, and forced them to a general action. If it does not storm that will probably happen today. Some fine lads have slept in death already. Jackson’s regiment was in all the actions, and

behaved to admiration, as did everyone else, whether officer or soldier. Better I assure you than British or Hessians.”

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of a letter from an officer of distinction, dated Camp at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, August 30³⁰³

“It is with the greatest mortification I have to inform you, that we have retreated from the enemy’s lines at Newport, after erecting works, covered ways, batteries, etc. to such an amazing extent in the space of ten or twelve days, as must I think surprise the British army to view. We did not retreat in consequence of having anything to fear from the army that is at present on the island, but by being informed by General Washington that Lord Howe’s fleet had arrived at New York, and that there was the greatest possibility of their reinforcing Rhode Island, immediately. The General in his letter has nearly the following words, that he hopes this will arrive before the fleet, so that you may take every precaution in order to secure a safe retreat. We began our retreat from the lines on Friday evening, at 8 o’clock the pickets and advanced parties, left their posts at twelve, we come off without being discovered by the enemy; they came on in the morning and we had a severe contest with them. I have not time to give you the particulars as the post is now obliged to cross the ferry.”

Massachusetts Spy: Extract of another letter from the same gentlemen, dated Tiverton, August 30, 1778³⁰⁴

“We evacuated our lines on the South end of the Island on Friday at nine o’clock in the evening and retired to the north end, which was about 5 miles, it was discovered by the enemy by daybreak next morning, and by 8 o’clock they came in sight, moving in two solid columns toward us, our army was immediately formed for order of battle and detachments sent to engage them, they seeing our army in a position for action, halted upon an eminence opposite to us a short time, then their left wing advanced and attacked our right but were soon repulsed and drove

³⁰³ "Extract of a letter from an officer of distinction, dated Camp at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, August 30." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 03 September 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

³⁰⁴ "Extract of another letter from the same gentlemen, dated Tiverton, August 30, 1778." *Massachusetts Spy* [Worcester, MA] 03 September 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

back with considerable loss. We finally held our ground and obliged the enemy to retire. Yesterday both parties were busy in intrenching; but the General finding himself and army liable to be surrounded by an English fleet, which could cut off a possibility of retreating, he ordered all the baggage to be carried off the Island and last night the whole army crossed unmolested and I believe unobserved. I think the retreat has done the General great honor, to get off an Island with so large an army and such a quantity of baggage without loss.”

We are well informed that the succours sent into the enemy, at Newport, by Gen. Howe, were very considerable. It is supposed they consisted of 6000 men, and their whole number on the island of 14000, besides the advantage of their shipping. Their loss in the action of the 29th was very great...We hear the French fleet will soon be ready for sea.

5 September 1778

*Providence Gazette: Boston, August 31*³⁰⁵

Friday last the fleet of His Most Christian Majesty, commanded by his Excellency the Count D’Estaing, arrived in Nantucket... and the day following his Excellency and part of the fleet, came up to town. He was saluted by the shipping and forts on his landing.....

Sept. 3. A fleet of ships, supposed to be Lord Howe’s... has been discovered standing off this harbour for several days past, but disappears this day. The fleet, it is conjectured, consisted of upwards of 20 sails, some very...ships.

The Count D’Estaing has erected very formidable... on George’s Island, in which we hear he has mounted 100 cannon of heavy metal, which he took from his fleet with a determination to defend himself against any invasion from our enemies, while his fleet are repairing the damage they sustained in the late storm.

³⁰⁵ "Boston, August 31." *Providence Gazette* 05 September 1778: 2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

Providence Gazette: Providence, September 5³⁰⁶

The Fleet of His Most Christian Majesty having sailed to Boston to repair the Damages sustained in the late violent Storm, the Operations by Land against the Enemy's... Holds on R. Island were continued to be carried on with vigour till the Evening of the 28th, at which Time our... by a Field return, consisting of only 5400 Men...unanimously determined by the General Officers, in... to change to Position of the Army from the Advanced Batteries before the Enemy's Lines, and to take Post on Butts's Hill, at the North End of the Island, till the Return of the Fleet. This was effected before Two o'Clock the next Morning with the greatest Order, the Picket, commanded by Col. Wigglesworth, remaining on Quaker Hill, a Mile in Front of the main Body, and Livingston's and Laurens's Corps advanced on the East and West Roads, a Mile beyond the Picket. At Seven o'Clock the advanced Corps were attacked by the Enemy, and after returning the fire briskly,...to the Picket on Quaker Hill. Here the [army] made a stand, and were reinforced on the Left by a Regiment from Glover's Brigade, commanded by Lieut. Col...and on the Right by a Regiment from Varnum's Brigade commanded by Lieut. Col. Livingston. The Actions became severe; our Men were well posted, and twice pulsed the Enemy on the Left; but they being strongly reinforced, and a general Action not intended on this... the advanced Corps were ordered to retire, which they did with the greatest Order and Regularity, having 5 killed and 16 wounded on the Left, and bringing off a Lieut. and...Prisoners. The Enemy about Nine in the Morning began a cannonade, which was returned with great Spirit, and Skirmishing continued between the advanced Parties until near Ten, when their two Ships of War and...small armed Vessels having got up the River on our right flank, the Enemy send most of their Force that Way, and endeavoured to turn our Right, under Cover of the Ships fire; they were twice Driven back in much Confusion, when a third effort was made with greater Numbers; General Sullivan now ordered the Right to be reinforced, and a sharp Conflict of near an Hour succeeded, in which also the Artillery of both Armies played briskly from the Hills. The Enemy were at length routed, and fled in great confusion to a Hill, where they had Cannon and works to cover them, leaving their dead and wounded on the Field; we took about 60 prisoners. The... must have ended in the Ruin of the British Army, had not the Redoubts on the Hill covered them from a close [Pursuit]. Immediately after the Repulse of the Enemy on the Right, they appeared advancing on our Left,

³⁰⁶ "Providence, September 5." *Providence Gazette* 05 September 1778: 2-3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

in Consequence of which Glover's Brigade, were ordered in advance, and form in a cross Road within Half a Mile of the Enemy; They accordingly took Post, and a Cannonade, with Skirmishing, ensued, and continued till dark. It was not judged adviseable to attack them in their Works, as our Troops, inferior in Number to the Enemy, were much fatigued, and had been without Provision or Refreshment of any Kind for 36 Hours. Too much... cannot be given to the Officers and Soldiers in general for their exemplary Bravery. On the Morning of the 30th our Army pitched their Tents on the Front of Butts's Hill, and a heavy Cannonade commenced and continued through the whole Day. At Seven in the Evening our Picket was posted in advance of the...Line, and a Chain of [Sentinels] formed from the East to the West River. In Consequence of authentic Intelligence received that Lord Howe, with his Fleet, had sailed from Sandy Hook, and that from the best Information 150 Sail of Transports were in the Western Sound, with 5000 Troops, bound to Newport, a Council was called, who were unanimously of Opinion, considering the Situation of the Army, the Absence of the French Fleet, and the momentary Expectation of the Enemy's receiving a strong Reinforcement of Troops, with a Number of Ships, that the Island should be evacuated, which was accordingly [completed] by 12 o'Clock the same Night, in perfect Order and Safety, not leaving behind the smallest Article of Provision, Camp Equipage, or military Stores. The Enemy's Fleet, with the Reinforcement, arrived off Point Judith at Seven o'Clock next Morning.

The Number of the Enemy left dead on the Field of Action, according to the best Accounts, was 180, exclusive of those killed in the Engagements with the light Troops, Picket, and skirmishing Parties, and exclusive of those killed by the firing of our heavy Artillery, which played upon their Line through the Day, with apparent great Success. The whole Loss, in Killed Wounded and Prisoners, is supposed to be upwards of 700.

Return of the Killed, Wounded and Missing, of the American Troops, in the Action of the 29th of August.

Col. Laurens advanced Corps, 2 noncommissioned Officers, 8 Privates, killed; 7 NCOs, 24 Privates, wounded; 1 NCO, 3 Privates missing. - Col Livingston's light Corps, 2 [Subaltern], 1 NCO, 5 privates killed; 4 [Subaltern], 5 NCOs, 16 Privates wounded; 9 Privates missing. - General Varnum's Brigade, 3 Privates killed; 1 Field Officer, 2 [Subaltern], 19 Privates wounded; 1 Private missing. - General Glover's, 1 [Subaltern], 2 Privates killed; 1 [Subaltern], 16 Privates, wounded; 4 Privates missing. - Col. Commandant Green's, 1 [Subaltern], 2 Privates,

killed; 9 Privates wounded; 11 Privates missing. - General Lovel's, 2 Privates killed; 1 Field Officer, 1 Captain, 1 NCO, 13 Privates wounded; 1 NCO, 4 Privates missing. - General Tyler's, 1 [Subaltern], 4 Privates, wounded. - Col. Commandant Brown's 1 Private wounded.

Total, 4 [Subaltern], 3 NCOs, 23 Privates killed; 2 Field Officers, 1 Captain, 8 Subalterns, 13 NCOs, 113 Privates, wounded; 2 NCOs, 27 Privates, Missing. Total, of Killed, Wounded and Missing, 211.

Lieut. Col. William Livingston received two slight Wounds; Major Sherburne of New Hampshire, wounded Lieut. Lowell, of Jackson's, killed; Lieut. Barber, of Lee's, and Lieut.s. Henley and Phelon, of Henley's, wounded.

On Thursday last a large Fleet was seen in the Western Sound, near New London, supposed to be the same that brought reinforcements to Newport.

16 September 1778

*Royal Gazette: Newport, September 3*³⁰⁷

Last Saturday morning it being discovered that the rebels had dismantled their redoubts opposite to our lines, Sir Robert Pigot gave orders for the grenadiers and light infantry, with the Hessian [chaffeurs], to advance, which they did with their usual alacrity, being supported by the 22nd, 43rd, Brown's and Fanning's regiments, with the Regiment De Hayne, and two regiments of Anspach. It was discovered as they advanced, that the rebels had been for several days removing their stores and heavy cannon to the north end of the island. The troops met with little opposition until they had advanced some miles, when they were fired upon behind stone walls by large parties of the rebels posted to annoy them. But these obstacles were soon removed by the ardour of the troops, who rushed on with such [impervosity], that the rebels were soon obliged to betake themselves to their last post, which was upon Windmill Hill, so strongly fortified, and so commanding a spot, that Brigadier General Smith thought it was prudent to check the progress of the troops (who had been already fatigued by so long a march) and to take post on Quaker Hill.

³⁰⁷ "Newport, September 3." *Royal Gazette* [New York] 16 September 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

The troops remained in this situation all the next day, in hopes the rebels would feel bold enough to renew the attack, which they however declined, and took themselves off on Sunday night, leaving their barracks in good order.

The loss of the rebels on this occasion is supposed to be between three and four hundred killed and wounded.

Thus ended the THIRD expedition of Rhode Island, so greatly to the honour of Mr. Sullivan, that there is no doubt he will be enrolled among the heroes of New England.

Such was the bravery of the troops engaged, British, Hessians, and Anspach, that they deserved to vie with each other in their exertions against the enemy.

26 September 1778

*Providence Gazette: Letter from General Sullivan to the President of Congress, August 31*³⁰⁸

“Upon the Count D’Estaing’s finding himself under a necessity of going to Boston, to repair the loss he sustained in the late gale of wind, I thought it best to carry on my approaches with as much vigour as possible against Newport, that no time... be lost in making the attack upon the return of the fleet, or any part of it, to cooperate with us. I had sent expresses to the Count to hasten his return, which I had no doubt would at least bring part of his fleet to us in a few days. Our batteries played upon the enemy’s works for several days with [apparent] good success, as the enemy’s fire from the...visibly grew weaker, and they began to abandon some of those next...and on the 27th we learned they had removed their cannon from all the outworks except one. The town of Newport is defended by two lines, supported by several... connected with the lines. The first of these lines extends from a large pond called Easton’s pond, near to Tomminy hill, and then turns...to the water, on the north of Windmill hill; this line was defended by five redoubts in front. The second line is more than a quarter of a mile within this, and extends from the sea to the north side of the island, terminating at the north battery; On the south, at the entrance by Easton’s beach, where this line terminates, is a redoubt which commands the pass, and has another redoubt about twenty [rods] on the north. There a number of small works

³⁰⁸ "Letter from General Sullivan to the President of Congress, August 31." *Providence Gazette* 26 September 1778: 1-2. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

interspersed between the lines, which render an attack extremely hazardous on the land side, without a naval force to cooperate with it. I however should have attempted carrying the works by storm, as soon as I found they had withdrawn their cannon from their outworks, had I not found, to my great surprise, that the volunteers, which composed a great part of my army, had returned and reduced my numbers to little more than that of the enemy; between two and three thousand return in the course of twenty-four hours, and other were still going off, upon a supposition that nothing could be done before the return of the French Fleet. Under those circumstances, and the apprehension of the arrival of an English Fleet with reinforcements to relieve the Garrison, I sent away all the heavy articles that could be spared from the [army] to the main; also a large party was detached to get the works in repair on the north end of the island to throw up some additional ones, and put in good repair the batteries at Tiverton and Bristol, to secure a retreat in case of necessity. On the 28th a council was called in which it was unanimously determined to remove to the North end of the island, fortify our camp, secure our communication with the main, and hold our ground on the...till we could know whether the French fleet would return in our assistance. On the evening of the 28th we moved with our stores and baggage, which had not been previously sent forward, and about two in the morning encamped upon Butts's hill, with our right extending to the west road, and left to the east road; the flanking and covering parties still further towards the... on the right and left. One regiment was posted in a redoubt advanced of the right of the East line; Colonel Henry B. Livingston with a light corps, consisting of Colonel Jackson's detachments, and a detachment from the army, was stationed in the...Another light corps, under the command of Colonel Laurens, Col. Fleury, and...was posted on the west road. These corps were posted near three miles in front; In the rear of those was the picquet of the army, commanded by Col. Wade. The enemy having received intelligence of our movement, came out early in the morning with nearly their whole force, in two columns, advanced in the two roads, and attacked our light corps; they made a brave resistance, and were supported for some time by the picquet. I ordered a regiment to support Col. Livingston, another to Col. Laurens, and at the same time sent them order to..the main army in the best...they could. They kept up a retreating fire up on the enemy and retired in excellent order to the main army. The enemy advanced on our left very [front] but were repulsed by General Glover; They then [moved] to Quaker hill. The Hessian columns [moved to] a chain of hills running northward from Quaker hill. Our army was drawn up, the first line in front of the works

on Butts's hill, the second in rear of the hill, and the reserve near a creek, and near half a mile in the rear of the first line. The distance between these hills is about one mile. The ground between the hills is meadow land, interspersed with... The enemy began a cannonade upon us about nine in the morning, which was returned with double force. Skirmishing commenced between the advanced parties till near ten o'clock, when the Enemy's two ships of war and some small armed vessels having gained our right flank, and began a fire, the enemy bent their [force] that way, and endeavoured to turn our right under cover of the ships fire, and to take the advanced redoubt on the right. They were twice driven back in great confusions, but a...made with greater numbers and much more resistance when, had it not been for the timely aid sent forward would have succeeded. A sharp conflict of nearly an hour ensued, in which the cannon from both armies placed on the hills, played briskly in support of their own party. The enemy were at length routed, and fled in great confusion to the hill where they last formed, and where they had artillery and...works to cover them, leaving their dead and wounded in considerable numbers behind them. It was impossible to ascertain the number of dead on the field, as it could not be approached by either party without being exposed to the cannon of the other army. Our party recovered about twenty of their wounded, and took near sixty prisoners, according to the best accounts I have been able to collect; amongst the prisoners is a Lieutenant of Grenadiers. The number of their dead I have not been able to ascertain but know them to be very considerable. An officer informs me that in one place he counted sixty of their dead. Col. Campbell came out the next day, to gain permission to view the field of action, to search for his nephew, who was killed by his side, whose body he could not get off, as they were closely pursued. The firing of artillery continued through the day, and the...with intermission six hours. The heat of the action continued near an hour, which must have ended in the ruin of the British army, had not their redoubts on the hill covered them from further pursuit. We were about to attack them in their lines, but the men's having no rest the night before, and nothing to eat either that night or the day of the action, and having been in constant action through most of the day, it was not thought advisable, especially as their position was exceedingly strong, and their numbers fully equal, if not superior to ours. Not more than fifteen hundred of my troops had ever been in action before. I should before have taken possession of the hill they occupied, and fortified it, but it is no defence against an enemy coming from the south part of the island, though exceedingly good against an

enemy advancing from the north end towards the town, and had been fortified by the enemy for that purpose.

“I have the pleasure to inform Congress, that no troops could possibly show more spirit than those of ours which were engaged. Col. Livingston, and all the officers of the light troops, behaved with remarkable spirit; Colonels Laurens, Fleury, and Major Talbot, with the officers of that corps, behaved with great gallantry. The brigades of the first line, Varnum’s, Glover’s, Cornell’s, and Greene’s, behaved with great firmness. Major General Greene, who commanded in the attack on the right, did himself the highest honor, by the judgment, and bravery exhibited in the action. One brigade only of the second line was brought to action, commanded by Brigadier General Lovell; he, and his brigade of militia, behaved with great resolution. Col. Crane and the officers of artillery deserve the highest praise. I enclose Congress a return of the killed, wounded and missing on our side, and beg leave to assure them, that, from my own observation, the enemy’s loss must be much greater. Our army retired to camp after the action; the enemy employed themselves in fortifying their camp through the night. In the morning of the 30th I received a letter from his Excellency George Washington, giving me notice that Lord Howe had again failed with the fleet, and receiving intelligence at the same time that a fleet was off Block Island, and also a letter from Boston, informing me that the Count D’Estaing could not come around so soon as I expected, a council was called, and as we could have no prospect of operating against Newport with success without the assistance of a fleet, it was unanimously agreed to quit the island until the return of the French Squadron. To make a retreat in the face of an enemy, equal, if not superior in number, and cross a river without loss, I knew was an arduous task, and seldom accomplished, if attempted; As out [sentries] were within 200 yards of each other, I knew it would require the greatest care and attention. To cover my design from the enemy, I ordered a number of tents to be brought forward and pitched in sight of the enemy, and almost the whole army to employ themselves in fortifying the camp. The heavy baggage and stores were falling back and crossing through the day; at dark, the tents were struck, the light baggage and troops passed down, and before twelve o’clock the main army had crossed with the stores and baggage. The Marquis de la Fayette arrived about 11 in the evening from Boston, where he had been by request of the general officers, to solicit the speedy return of the fleet. He was sensibly mortified that he was out of action; and that he might not be out of the way in case of action, he had rode from hence to Boston in seven hours, and returned in six and a half, the

distance near seventy miles. He returned time enough to bring off the pickets, and other parties which covered the retreat of the army, which he did in excellent order, not a man was left behind not the smallest article lost. I hope my conduct through this expedition may merit the approbation of Congress. Major Morris, one of my...will have the honor of delivering this to your Excellency; I must beg leave to recommend him to Congress as in the officer who in the last, as well as several other actions, has behaved with great spirit and good conduct, and doubt not Congress will take such notice of him, as his long service and spirited conduct deserves. I have the honor to be, dear Sir, with most esteem, Your Excellency's most obedient

And very humble servant,
JOHN SULLIVAN

P.S. The Event has proved how timely our retreat took place, as one hundred sail of the enemy's ships arrived in the harbour the morning after the retreat. I should do the highest injustice, if I neglected to mention that Brigadier-General Cornell's indefatigable industry in preparing for the expedition, and his good conduct through the whole, merits particular notice. Major Talbot, who assisted in preparing the boats, and afterwards served in Col. Laurens's corps, deserves great praise.

[Since the foregoing letter was forwarded to Congress, it has been since ascertained that the enemy's loss, in the action of the 29th of August, amounts to a thousand and twenty-three killed, wounded and missing]

***Royal Gazette: New York, September 20, General Sullivan's Letter embellished*³⁰⁹**

On my return from this expedition to the eastward two days ago, there fell into my hands a letter from General Sullivan containing a very magnificent history of the warlike achievements of his army upon Rhode Island, which it seems was published three weeks ago in your paper without any remarks. Now although an account so palpably ridiculous should not appear to those acquainted with the true state of the facts to deserve any notice, it ought to be considered that misrepresentations of that kind are greedily received and implicitly believed by many ignorant

³⁰⁹ "New York, September 20, General Sullivan's Letter embellished." *Royal Gazette* [New York] 26 September 1778: 3. *America's Historical Newspapers*. Web.

folks throughout the provinces, and thereby answer the purposes for which they are calculated. It would therefore be of use if any officer would upon such occasions employ an idle hour in furnishing some illustrations to the very sublime and heroic [stories] of their rebel excellencies.

Mr. Sullivan informs Congress that, upon the departure of the French fleet, he resolved to carry on his approaches against Newport with all possible vigor, that he silenced most of the batteries, and drove us from all our out-works, except one, that as soon as that was also silenced, he should have attempted to carry our lines by storm, notwithstanding their great strength, had not the Volunteers (magnanimous fellows) abandoned him by thousands a day.

Now, Sir, during the 26 days that the General remained before our camp, or rather in sight of it, his vigorous resolutions went executed, in so desperate a manner, as to kill one very unfortunate soldier, and wounded another, by a random cannon shot, all his batteries being erected at a useless distance from our lines, except one, which they attempted to bring within point blank, on the 17th of August, and which they abandoned for ever and ever, as soon as some guns were pointed against it.

Those who know our troops, will readily agree with Mr. Sullivan, that they are as unlikely to abandon a post before their enemies have come near enough to be distinguished without glasses, because in the course of a month's cannonade, they had left one man, without ever having had a gun damaged. Indeed the parapets still remain standing witnesses the innocence of his Excellency's experiments upon gunnery. In fact, as General Sullivan had, with great prudence encamped with a...between his camp and ours, and had, further to facilitate his approaches (although the idea was rather new), rut up and abetted the only practicable passage to us, it became unnecessary to fatigue our men, and expose some other unlucky fellow wantonly to the chance of having his bones broke, by keeping them in the lines and our cannon, as the General observes, were indeed silenced, after a very thorough experience, that the rebel batteries were at such a distance, as to render it extremely absurd to expend ammunition against them. Had General Sullivan been pleased to advance his batteries within execution distance, and to have removed those obstacles of his own constructing that prevented the approaches of his troops to our camp, the guns would have, I will not say to his astonishment, again broken silence, and the lines have been again manned.

As our garrison considered themselves as the besieged, not as the besiegers, although the rebel army seems to have held a different opinion, we did not think it incumbent upon us to

interfere with those obstacles which Mr. Sullivan threw between us to prevent all communication and ill blood; not whilst the French fleet threatened us in the rear, did it appear to our commander necessary to break the truce which the rebel general had effectually established by means of this precaution. But how General Pigot can justify himself, after this very civil and inoffensive manner in which his antagonists have behaved themselves during their visit, for the rude way in which he wished them a good journey, I cannot see. I know those who attempted to defend him say, that without some little skirmish, a share of the ridicule which his visitors have drawn upon themselves would have remained with him and that it was rather creditable with a part of a besieged garrison unreinforced, to drive the enemy, who had come there with a certain confidence of making him a prisoner, for six miles before them, into lines, from the nature of the ground and works much stronger than those which he himself had occupied and still more creditable to remain afterwards with this detachments, (which did not consist of one half of his garrison) in front of the rebel lines, fully as near as they had ever adventured to approach to his camp, and without any [merafs] or abettee between them, until the rebel army thought it prudent to abandon them silently in the night, and steal over to the continent, singing in whispers, *Is Triumphe!* And with reason says the General, for was it not glorious to withdraw in the face of this garrison, which had by enchantment became a superior army. What, General, do you forget that you served out daily nearly twenty thousand rations to your army and that General Pigot's garrison never consisted of 5000 men, the latter half of which (the other remained many miles off at the opposite extremity of the Island) were then boarding your army, ready to give you another parting blow, as soon as you quitted your stronghold, had you not yet stolen off in the dark.

Apprehensions of so small a detachment could not proceed from nature. In spite of appearances I will do more honour to the nerves of our antagonists. The council of war, I am convinced, are men of reading, and must have received their precautionary ideas from Falstaff, "what if they should rob us" or perhaps they were aware of the mishaps of the adventurous Scotsman, who essay'd to catch a Tartar. This warlike Caledonian entered a wood in quest of his enemy, and soon after hallowed out to his commander, "I have caught a Tartar," "Bring him then" "He won't come," "come yourself", "he won't let me".

Out of the respect I bear for Congress, who certainly are an ingenious body, I will take the liberty of giving them a little advice which cannot be disagreeable, as it accords so well with

their grand object of saving appearances. It is to have some sober man at hand, to revise the letters from their different commanders, upon the accomplishment of such great events as the retreat from Rhode Island, to prevent all palpable contradictions, to give the accounts, in some degree, an air of truth and consistency, and above all to avoid those libels, which their Generals, without any bad intentions, I sincerely believe, have been in the custom lately of writing against their own conduct, and the behaviour of the good people under them. Whether the reviser understands anything of military matters, is immaterial, as I apprehend it is since hoped that those pieces of a composition, however glossed over, can mislead men versed in war, however, they may mislead the mob.

Had this precaution been taken, General Sullivan would not have written the paragraph that he remained master of the field of battle, and in others, that his troops retired three miles before those assailants when attacked, and did not stop till they [reached] the lines which the General, with a prophetic eye, had been preparing for their safety several days before. That this field of battle, by which his Excellency must mean the ground immediately in front of his lines, was so commanded by our cannon that he does not send people to count the dead. That General Pigot sent out nearly his whole force, when it is known to every old woman in Rhode Island, that eight regiments remained in the lines. Neither would he have wrote that he had been shamefully abandoned by the greatest part of his army, so as only to have a number equal to the detachment of two thousand men that attacked him, and remained at his [back] until he withdrew. Nor would he have spoke of the strength of the lines before Newport, when he must know, that those we occupied, were crafted in days and after he had landed on the island.

From what I have said, I mean not to infer that Americans are deficient in natural courage. The idea is illiberal, and I disavow it. Although the stubborn climate of England may produce more course and steady nerves, than either the sunshine of the continent of Europe or of America, yet I am persuaded that the breed of Englishmen, wherever transplanted, feeling as they retain a real love of freedom and independence, will display that superior [vigor] which we inherit for a series of centuries from our SACRED ANCESTORS. In a just cause, Americans have shown what blood they are sprung from with us, fighting for the constitution of Freedom, Justice, and of their Fathers, that have reportedly proved their gallantry.

ESCARMOUCHE