

# **Naval Documents of The American Revolution**

**Volume 7**

**AMERICAN THEATRE: Nov. 1, 1776–Dec. 31, 1776**

**EUROPEAN THEATRE: Oct. 6, 1776–Dec. 31, 1776**

**AMERICAN THEATRE: Jan. 1, 1777–Feb. 28, 1777**

**Part 5 of 9**

**United States  
Government Printing Office  
Washington, 1976**

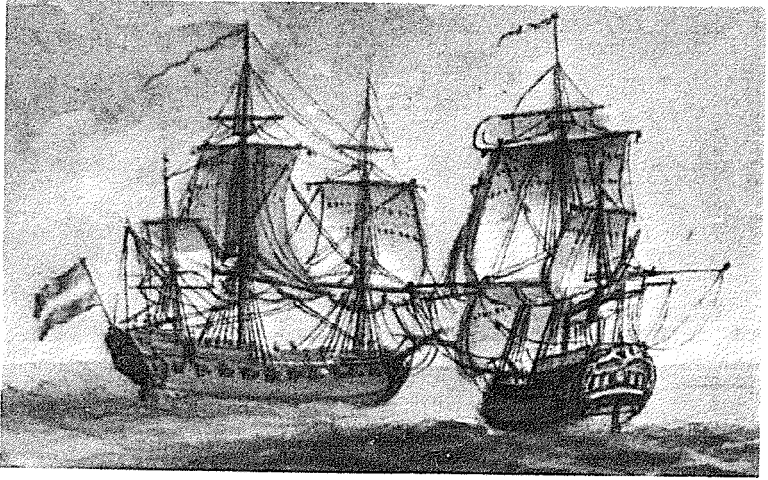
Electronically published by  
American Naval Records Society  
Bolton Landing, New York  
2012

**AS A WORK OF THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
THIS PUBLICATION IS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.**



# EUROPEAN THEATRE

*From October 6, 1776, to December 31, 1776*



## EUROPEAN THEATRE

From October 6, 1776, to December 31, 1776

### SUMMARY

American privateering ventures in European waters increased markedly during the closing months of 1776. The spiralling number of captures being made by these "rebel pirates," and their use of French and Spanish ports, deepened the concern of government and the mercantile community in Britain. All was not one-sided, of course, and newspaper accounts from the port cities also told of American privateers being taken and of numerous prizes recaptured.

The Admiralty ordered more Royal Navy ships to anti-privateer patrol duty, and convoy coverage was extended. Naval officers registered not unfamiliar complaints about the difficulties they were experiencing getting masters to conform to convoy discipline, and preventing the merchant ships from wandering off on their own.

The eagerly awaited word of the success achieved by the King's arms at the Battle of Long Island was joyously received in Britain. And, no time was lost through diplomatic channels in attempting to exploit the victory as a sure indication that the revolution would soon be crushed. In effect, Britain was cautioning her continental neighbors that it would be folly to back a lost cause either openly or covertly.

Meanwhile in Paris, Silas Deane naturally played down the impact of the American defeat on Long Island as he continued to seek munitions and all forms of material assistance. He likewise prepared articles for a proposed United States alliance with France and Spain.

The Continental brig *Reprisal*, Captain Lambert Wickes, came to anchor in the Loire River with a distinguished passenger on board, Dr. Benjamin Franklin who would join Deane at Paris. Wide acclaim and equally wide speculation about the nature of his mission greeted Franklin's arrival in France.

Across the Channel, England was watching with intent interest the sizeable French fleet assembled at Brest. George III opened the Third Session of the Fourteenth Parliament, and the North Ministry asked that "45,000 seamen, including 10,129 marines, be employed" for the next year. To meet the manning needs of an expanding sea service, the Royal Navy put a massive impressment effort in motion.

News of the destruction of the American fleet at the Battle of Valcour Island on Lake Champlain was greeted with an elation tempered by realization that the action had come too late in the season for Sir Guy Carleton to pursue his advantage this campaign.

**6 Oct. (Sunday)**

“A LETTER FROM PLYMOUTH-DOCK, DATED OCT. 6.”<sup>1</sup>

An American prize, called the *Molly*, of Dartmouth, in New England, laden with flour and lumber, and bound to Hispaniola, taken by his Majesty's ship *Galatea*, is arrived here.

1. *London Chronicle*, October 8 to October 10, 1776.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM BILBOA, DATED OCTOBER 6, 1776”<sup>1</sup>

By this time we judge the capital events of the American armies are over, and from the silence observ'd in the court of London every body imagines the King's troops have been worsted: all Europe is in expectation of what has happen'd on your side, and we in hourly hopes of some arrival, may God Almighty bring it soon and to our entire satisfaction, is the hearty wish of those that are and will be with true esteem.

We are now on the 14th inst. and your favour 22d. Aug. per Lee is come to hand, after 39 days passage, in which he took five prizes, so that he will make a fine voyage if they get in safe.<sup>2</sup> On his arrival one Mr. Gomez who receives some Newfoundlanders, applied to the Commissary to stop the vessel on account of her being an illegal privateer, and said Commissary granted it, and order'd the master to present his commission, which we had him comply with, with a proper protest and petition, insisting on his being set at liberty; upon which it was order'd that the vessel should remain until his Majesty should give instructions how to proceed about it – As soon as we heard of it, we drew out a fine petition for his Majesty and dispatched an express for the purpose, and notwithstanding the power and activity of the British Ambassador, we have obtain'd a charming order from his Catholic Majesty, a copy whereof you have herein translated into English, by which you see the point is now settled for the future, and all American vessels are allow'd to enter into our ports without distinction, whether privateers or merchantmen; on sight hereof our commissary releas'd Capt. Lee's vessel immediately, and is now getting things in order to proceed home. Some great news are just come to hand – in consequence of the express sent to Madrid we find the Commissary has receiv'd orders from his Majesty to inform Capt. Lee and all other Americans, that all their vessels, viz. privateers, and prizes will have all manner of assistance in the Spanish ports, to say they will be safe and unmolested and will be provided with every thing but the articles prohibited in such cases; in short that a strict neutrality will be observ'd by his Catholic Majesty, so that you may henceforward be quite easy and send your vessels freely, as well as prizes from any quarter whatsoever; you ought to improve this fine opening, and your worthy rulers ought to send over some body, or empower some person – We are with joy but in haste.

*A true Copy of His Catholic Majesty's Order wrote by the Marquis of Grimaldy prime Minister in Spain, to d'Manuel de Mollinado, Commissary of Marine, translated into English.*

By your letter of the 4th inst. and the testimony that accompanied it, his Majesty is acquainted with what has occurred respecting the American schooner *Hawk*, Capt. John Lee, from the time of her entry to the time of your laying her under a formal embargo by obliging her to deliver up the tiller—all at the instance of Gomez de la terre, inhabitant of your place; his Majesty has likewise seen the protest of said American captain against all the damages that might ensue:

In consequence of which, says to you, that whereas his Majesty from the great friendship he professes to his Britannick Majesty maintains a perfect neutrality in the present war – not giving to the Colonists any of those aids prohibited in like cases, so likewise it corresponds to the same neutrality not to deny them the entrance into his ports which they have always been used to enjoy, so long as they respect the territories of his Majesty in proper terms; besides the above his Majesty thinks Mr. Gomez an unqualified improper person to solicit a proceeding of the like nature. You will therefore be pleased immediately to put said American in full liberty, restoring him all his papers, and permitting him to purchase what provisions and goods he needs to return to his own country, but without assisting in any prohibited thing.

Signed,

Marquis of Grimald[i].

1. *Boston Gazette*, December 9, 1776.

2. Captain John Lee commanded the 6 gun Massachusetts privateer schooner *Hawke*, Mass. Arch., vol. 6, 77, 80.

JOSÉ DE GÁLVEZ TO BERNARDO DE GÁLVEZ, GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA <sup>1</sup>

The King having learned by Your Lordship's letter of 19 June past of the news it communicates about the events and deployments of English Armed Forces and of its Insurgent Colonies in New England, according to information received from various vessels of that nation navigating along the [Mississippi] River there to its settlements: His Majesty has approved the precautions and provisions taken by Your Lordship to investigate the intentions and plans of both parties, by the present method to prevent any happening.

San Ildefonso, 6 October 1776

1. AGI, Cuba, Legajo 174, LC Typescript.

**7 Oct.**

*London Chronicle*, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 TO TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1776

London [October 7].

On Saturday advice came from Liverpool, that two of their homeward bound vessels, which sailed without convoy, are taken by an American privateer, viz. the *Isaac*, Craig, from Tortola, and the *Lancaster* [*sic Lancashire*], Jones, from Jamaica, both laden with sugar and rum. The Captains were put on board a French vessel.

*Public Advertiser*, MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1776

London [October 7].

Letters by the *Hope*, Capt. Wilcox, which is arrived at Dartmouth from Senegal, brings advice that two American armed Ships were cruising on the coast

of Africa, and purchasing of such ships as they meet with arms and ammunition, except of the English, from two of which they took what few arms; &c. they had, and by such means were sailed with a considerable cargo for America.

LORD GRANTHAM, BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN, TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

No 47.

[Madrid] 7th October 1776.

The last advices from Galicia and Sir John Hort's intelligence to His Majesty's Consuls in this country bring an account of the progress and boldness of the American privateers who have ventured so far as the coasts of this and the neighboring kingdoms; a circumstance which affects, and ought to alarm every commercial nation in Europe, and to induce a general opposition to it. There is now at Bilbao, as I am informed by letters written in the instant of the post setting out from thence, at anchor in the river there, a Captain [John] Lee, with an American armed schooner, named the *Hawke*, mounting eight carriage guns and sixteen swivels, who had landed there two captains of vessels which he had taken and sent to America; it is added that this vessel was fitted out even at Bilbao itself. The English vessels now there are detained for fear of this active privateer.

I have communicated these circumstances to M Grimaldi, who has promised to make the strictest inquiry, which I likewise do by this night's post, concerning it. I did not fail on this occasion to represent how absolutely necessary it was to convince the masters and captains of such vessels that they were not to expect the least countenance in the ports of this Kingdom. It does not appear that this privateer had come into the harbor, but only that it is at anchor in the river, which being the case, M Grimaldi could not be induced to take any direct measures against it.

Whenever he communicates to me the answers made to his inquiries on this head, I will again endeavor to bring him to some fixed point, but at present, being on my side much averse to meet with any refusal, and he unwilling to take anything upon himself, I cannot presume to promise how far any explicit measures may be avowed, tho' I think I can answer that no protection will be afforded, or even entrance allowed to a vessel manifestly armed against us.

1. Letters and Extracts from the Correspondence of Lord Grantham In Spain, January 1776 to June 1779, Sparks Transcripts, No. 23, I, 13, 14, HU. Hereafter cited as Sparks Transcripts, Lord Grantham, HU.

## 8 Oct.

*London Chronicle*, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 TO TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1776

London, Tuesday, Oct. 8

The *Ann*, Capt. Duncan, from Dominica for London, that was taken by an American privateer in August last, was decoyed in the following manner: When the privateer saw Capt. Duncan mounted eight guns, and was able to cope with her, they hoisted out their boat, and said she was one of the *Isis* man of war's attendants, and they must come on board to see her papers; and as soon as they got on board, they told Capt. Duncan he was their prize, and shewed him their commission from the General Congress.



“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM GUERNSEY, OCT. 8.”<sup>1</sup>

Advice is received here from L'Orient, that a vessel is arrived there, which had been boarded off Cape Finisterre, by a large schooner privateer of 14 guns, who put on board her the crew of two British vessels she had taken, one loaded with oats, the other with cod-fish; and that the said privateer had an engagement with one of our outward-bound transports, which mounted 10 guns, and obliged the privateer to sheer off, having had two men killed and 10 wounded.

1. *London Chronicle*, October 12 to October 15, 1776.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE HAGUE, OCT. 8.”<sup>1</sup>

In the memorial presented to the States General by the English Ambassador, Sir Joseph Yorke, on the 11th of this month [*sic*], his Excellency after setting forth that the prohibitions made by their High Mightinesses in the Placart, which is just expired, were very badly kept up to, as their subjects had publicly loaded ammunition and warlike stores, and sent them to the rebels in America, &c. That he therefore requested, in the name of the King his Master, that the States General would renew the Placart, and take the most efficacious methods to prevent their subjects from furnishing the rebels, either directly or indirectly, with any thing; that their vessels be forbid entering into any of the ports of the Republic; and that if any should appear to want to come into any port under their government, they might not be permitted to enter on any account whatever. This memorial being communicated to the States of Holland, who renewed their deliberations this morning, we have reason to believe a new publication on that head will soon be issued.

1. *London Chronicle*, October 12 to October 15, 1776.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen:

Paris October 8th 1776

Your Declaration of the 4th of July last has given this Court, as well as several others in Europe reason to expect you would in form announce your Independency to them, and ask their friendship, but a three months silence on that subject appears to them mysterious, and the more so as you declared for foreign alliances. This silence has given me the most inexpressible anxiety, has more than once come near frustrating my whole endeavours, on which subject refer you to mine of the 1st instant. Employ must be found for the forces of Great Britain out of the United States of North America. The Caribbs in St Vincent if set a going, may be supplied through Martinico with Stores. The Mountain Negroes in Jamaica may employ a great number of their Forces. This is not employing Slaves, which however the example of our enemy authorizes. Should there arise troubles in these two Islands, which a very little money would effect, the consequence would be that Great Britain, which can by no means think of giving them up, would be so far from being able to increase her Force on the Continent that she must withdraw a large part to defend her Islands. I find every one here acquainted with Bermuda is in my sentiments, and by the officiousness of the treacherous Hopkins<sup>2</sup> the ministry here have got it by the end, this makes me the more solicitous that the Island should be fortified this winter if practicable.

Tobacco in Holland is at the enormous price of 7 Stivers, and will soon be as dear in France, Germany &c I have promised that you will send out twenty thousand Hogsheads this winter, in payment of the articles wanted here; Let me advise you to ship the whole to Bordeaux, after which it may be shipped in french Bottoms to any other port, the price will pay the convoy therefore I would recommend the Vessels in which it should be shipped, be armed, and that each ship shall sail under Convoy of one of your Frigates, which may also ballast with it, this will be safer than coming in a Fleet. On your [*sic* their] arrival, Messrs [Samuel & J. H.] Delap, whose zeal and Fidelity in our service is great, will be directed by me, or in my absence by Mr. B. M. [Beaumarchais], or ostensibly by Messrs Hortalez & Co, where to apply the money; Eight or ten of your Frigates, thus Collected at Bordeaux, with a proper number of Riflemen as Marines, where they might have leisure to refit and procure supplies, would strike early next season a terrible blow to the british Commerce in Europe and obtain a most noble indemnity. The appearance of american Cruisers in these seas has amazed the british Merchants and insurance will now be on the war establishment, this will give the rival nations a great superiority in Commerce, of which they cannot be insensible and as our Vessels of War will be protected in the ports of France, and Spain, the whole of the british Commerce will be exposed. I hope to have a liberty for the disposal of prizes here, but dare not engage for that. The last season the whole coast of England, Scotland and Ireland has been and still remains unguarded; three or four Frigates arriving as they certainly might unexpectedly would be sufficient to pillage prt Glasgow or other western Towns; the very alarm which this would occasion might have the most suprizing and important effects, and in this method it might be effected with the utmost certainty if entered upon early next spring, but should that be laid aside, the having five or six or more of your stoutest Ships in these Ports, where you may every day receive intelligence of what is about to sail from England, would put it in our power to make great reprisals.

I wrote for blank Commissions, or a power to grant Commissions to Ships of War, pray forward them, as here are many wishing for an opportunity of using them in this way; they will take a cargo in an armed Vessel for america, and if they meet with any thing in their way take it with them. The granting Commissions against Portugal would insure the friendship of Spain. Grain will bear a great price in this Kingdom and the south of Europe, and I have made application to the Minister of the marine to supply masts and spars from America for the french Navy; pray inform me how, and on what terms the british Navy formerly used to be supplied from New England. I am fully of opinion that a War must break out soon and become general in Europe. I need say no more on the situation I am in, for want of further instructions. I live in hopes, but should I be much longer disappointed the affairs I am upon as well as my credit, must suffer if not be absolutely ruined, my most respectful compliments to the Honorable Congress. I am, gentlemen [&c.]

(Copy)

Silas Deane

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, 10-12, NA.
2. A Marylander and brigadier general in the French army.

NEWS ITEMS FROM ITALY<sup>1</sup>

Genoa, October 7. On advice received by the Company of Assistance in this city, that some American privateers had made their appearance in the Portuguese seas, they have declared that they will insure no ships for those seas, under the rate of 4 per cent, above the former charge.

Naples, Oct. 8. We have received advice here that the American privateers have appeared off Cape St. Vincent's, one of which has taken a ship destined for this city, with a very valuable cargo, which will be a great loss to several merchants and other persons belonging to this place.

1. *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser and Mercantile Chronicle*, November 15, 1776.

MARQUIS DE GRIMALDI TO COUNT DE ARANDA, PARIS<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

San Ildefonso, 8 October 1776

. . . It is certain that now more than ever it behooves us to foment that war and incite those Colonists to extend their privateering and capture Portuguese vessels. Regarding admission to our ports, I have already expressed to Y. E. [Your Excellency] what the General thought. But if they were to capture Portuguese vessels in South America, from where we have information that the Colonists sail there to fish, there would be no objection to admitting them to sell and dispose of their prizes if they were accommodated, in view of our present relationship with Portugal. . . .

1. AHN, Estado, Legajo 4072, LC Photocopy.

JOHN MARSH TO LORD GRANTHAM<sup>1</sup>

Malaga 8th October 1776.

Notice has been given me in the most secret and confidential manner, that our Deputy Governor has received instructions from M de Grimaldi to protect, in case of necessity, any American vessel that may arrive in this Port, but on no account to publish his having such orders, except he should at any time find it absolutely necessary. This notice, My Lord, Your Excellency may be assured is without doubt, as the person from whom I had it, read the order, at the same time earnestly requested that in case Your Excellency should make any use of this information, it may be done in such a manner as to prevent its being suspected to have been divulged at this Port. I suppose the order has been general throughout the Ports of this Kingdom.

I have likewise heard from this same person under equal secrecy, that about a month or six weeks since, the Spanish Minister desired to be informed if American ships came here, and ordered the Deputy Governor to form his reply conformable to the tenor of a paper which was transmitted to him by the said Minister, who hinted that Your Excellency had made application on the subject of those vessels. The answer was, that if any such vessels came here, they hoisted English colors, and that the real property could not be known.

1. Sparks Transcripts, Lord Grantham, I, 18, 19, HU. Marsh was British Consul at Malaga.

9 Oct.

*Public Advertiser*, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1776

London [October 9].

A Correspondent assures us, there is no Truth in the Report of the French Court having entered into a Treaty with our revolted Colonies, or with their Agent Mr. Silas Dean; on the contrary, the French Ministry are much *alarmed* at the Idea of North America becoming an Independent Empire; and therefore strict Orders are sent to all the Sea Ports of France, to search every American Vessel, and to prevent as much as possible their carrying any Supplies of Arms or Ammunition.

*London Chronicle*, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8 TO THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1776

London [October 9].

The Lords of the Admiralty have put his Majesty's ship *Druid*, now at Deptford, into commission, the command of which is given to Capt. Cartwright, and she is fitting out for the North America station.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Most Confidential

Paris Octr 9. 1776

The almost universal Partiality of the French to the Rebels makes it as difficult for me to collect information of what relates to the american Agents as it is to get Intelligence in an Enemys Country. I have however learnt the following Particulars: viz Mr Deane and a Doctor [Edward] Bancroft who resides in London but is either come or coming hither for a short time at the Desire of Deane with whom he is much connected receive their Letters under Cover to Messrs Germany and Girardot with whom Deane dines frequently: He, Deane, is likewise directed to sometimes by the Name of J. Jones and Dr Bancroft by that of Monsr Bierda at Mr Philips Charing Cross. I am assured that Deane was much displeas'd with Dr [Hugh] Williamson, and among other Things reproach'd Him for the Visit he made me. I mention this the rather as thinking it possible that Williamson who I imagine is returned to London and who appear'd to Me to be well enough calculated for being a double Spy might be of some Use now that he finds himself Obnoxious to His Countrymen.<sup>2</sup>

Deane is intimately connected with a Monsieur le Roy of the Academy of Sciences whom I know very well but he has no suspicion of my being privy to his Connexion with Deane. He has long been in Correspondence with Doctor Franklin, but in former Times their Correspondence turn'd only on Philosophical Subjects.

The House of Benson at Bourdeaux is much confid'd in by the Americans. The Congress lately pass'd a Remittance for sixteen thousand Pounds Sterling thro' their Hands on London and Glasgow. But it is said My Lord that this House of Benson have scruples about the Part they have been acting and are now inclin'd to be useful to Government. They or any considerable Mercht at Bourdeaux that would secretly give Exact and regular Information of all that is doing there in favour of the Rebels might certainly be of no small Utility.

I am likewise informed that a Ship is now loading at Dunkirk for Nantes which is a very unusual Thing. Mr Bordreu who has made so much Noise of late from the violent Part he took against Monsieur de Guines and several other English Merchants are it is said, to be freighters in Part. And there is some Reason to suspect that some Military Implements from Lisle will be put on board this Vessel, all ultimately intended for Philadelphia.

Deane has for some time talked of going to the South of France, but he is still here. He was at Germany's this Morning. He certainly goes frequently to Versailles, and chiefly as I am told to the Bureau de la Guerre. . . .

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 64-65.

2. Dr. Hugh Williamson instead of going to London, as Stormont surmised, took passage for America.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM LISBON, DATED OCT. 9.”<sup>1</sup>

Capt. Emmerson, a London trader, came in last Saturday, and brings an account, that a ship from London, laden with wheat and flour, was taken off this port, with a Portugueze pilot on board, by an American privateer; and this day we have further advice of another ship being taken loaded with rice from America.

Yesterday two French traders arrived, the Captains of which had both been chased by three American privateers in the Channel, and off Cape Finisterre, the one of 18 guns, and the other of 16, which last two came up with them.

1. *Public Advertiser*, London, October 23, 1776.

**10 Oct.**

*Public Advertiser*, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1776

London [October 10].

Mr. Dean, American Agent at Paris, has several Correspondents in London. In a Letter to one Gentleman he makes no Scruple of acknowledging that his Countrymen have been greatly assisted by other Powers, and particularly the Dutch. This Dean is a Favourite of Adams, who like a British Minister embraces every Opportunity of providing for his Creatures.

Mr. Deane was a conspicuous Member of the Congress: He is a Man of very liberal Abilities. In the Letter abovementioned he desires his Respects to be presented to a Mr. Corbiere in London, and speaking of some American Seeds he sent that Gentleman, says, in Allusion to the Spirit and natural Courage of his Countrymen, “La bonne terre nourrit les plantes.”

One of the Owners of the American Privateers that took our West Indiamen so richly laden, on receiving his Share of Prize Money, immediately deposited 3000 l. towards building larger and more complete Vessels for intercepting and annoying our Trade.

**11 Oct.**

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM LIVERPOOL, OCT. 11.”<sup>1</sup>

Capt. Wilson, of the *Union*, arrived here this day from St. Kitts, says, on his passage he was boarded by an American privateer on the 7th of September, of 10

six pounders, and 103 men, called the *Sally*, Capt. [James] Munro, of Rhode Island, in lat. 33.9. lon. 55.13, who took out his cargo of ivory and Malageta pepper. The above privateer had taken the *Blaze Castle*, Smith, of Bristol, from Barbadoes, and the *Agnes*, Mather, of London, from Antigua, a little before the privateer put on board the *Union* 24 prisoners, and some provisions. On the 9th ditto, in lat 33.25. long. 55.13. they were boarded by another privateer, commanded by Capt. [Isaac] Field, of two four pounders, and four two pounders, and 34 men. On the 8th ditto they were boarded by a third privateer belonging to the Congress, of 14 six pounders and 130 men, in lat. 39.16. long. 43.55. called the *Cabot*, Capt. Hinman, who ordered him to stand to the N.W. After searching him, and steering that course a while, Capt. Wilson saw a fleet of ships heave in sight (they could count 35 sail) to the S.E. of them, when one of the large ships gave chase to the privateer, which Capt. Wilson supposed was a frigate, for about two in the morning they saw a firing of guns, and think the privateer must be taken. He supposed the ships he saw to be the Jamaica fleet.

1. *London Chronicle*, October 12 to October 15, 1776.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO LORD GEORGE GERMAIN <sup>1</sup>

My Lord,

Admiralty Office 11th Octr 1776

Vice Admiral Young Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships & Vessels at the Leeward Islands, having transmitted to Us, in his Letter of the 10th of August last, Copies of the Correspondence which had passed between him & the Governor of Martinico, respecting the Action between the *Shark* Sloop & an American Armed Vessel off that Island (an account of which was enclosed to Your Lordship in Our Letter of the 17th Ultimo); We send your Lordship herewith a Copy of Vice Admiral Young's said Letter with its several Inclosures for His Majesty's Information; And as your Lordship will observe by the Admiral's said Letter that he wishes to receive farther direction in regard to that part of His Majesty's Instructions (a printed Copy of which is herewith enclosed) respecting American Prisoners, no place of security being provided for them on shore, and the number likely to be soon encreased too considerably to admit of their being kept with any propriety on board of Ships in a hot Climate; We are to desire Your Lordship will receive & signify to Us His Majesty's further pleasure, respecting such American Prisoners as have already been carried, or may hereafter be carried not only to the Leeward Islands but to Jamaica & other Places, as the like Inconveniency may be expected to arise there, as are pointed out by Adml Young in his Letter abovementioned. We are [&c.]

Sandwich J Buller H Palliser

[Endorsed] Admiralty Office 11th Octr 1776. Lords of the Admiralty.

B. R 14th (6 Inclosures) Entd

1. PRO, Colonial Office, 5/125, 59a.

"A LETTER FROM BRISTOL, DATED OCT. 11." <sup>1</sup>

Capt. M'Kennon, of the *Kitty*, from Jamaica, having arrived here this morning, I have thought proper to send you the news he brings.

Capt. M'Kennon says, that he sailed from Jamaica on the 9th of August, in company with 118 sail of shipping, under convoy of the *Pallas* and *Maidstone* frigates, who saw them through the gulph, and then the *Maidstone* returned to Jamaica, and the *Pallas* was to see them to England. Captain M'Kennon left the fleet in lat. 30, long. 77, when he counted from the topmast-head 80 sail.

The reason for the detention of the fleet so long at Jamaica, was owing to an insurrection of the negroes in different parts of the island, which they had planned to put in execution as soon as the ships sailed; but it was happily discovered by a boy belonging to Mr. Chambers, of the parish of Hanover. Thirty of the ringleaders were accordingly taken up and executed.

The great number of captures, raised the insurance on vessels homeward bound from the West Indies, to twenty-three per cent.

1. Almon, ed., *Remembrancer*, IV, 156-57.

## 12 Oct.

*Public Advertiser*, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1776

Extract of a Letter from Bordeaux, in France.

Several American Ships arrived here in the Course of the Summer, and some are here now, addressed to an English House, who procure Gunpowder and other warlike Stores, with which they return loaded.

## 13 Oct. (Sunday)

SILAS DEANE TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

Sir

Paris October 13th 1776

The inclosed extract of a Letter, from a Friend of mine, of undoubted Credit, at Bilboa, occasions my Troubling your excellency, at this Time. As the congress have no Agent at present, at the Court of Madrid, I am apprehensive that the British Ambassador will endeavor to take advantage of this Circumstance, to obtain some resolution respecting this Vessel, not so much, to operate as by way of reprisal, as by way, of precedent, for future proceedings, & by the report of any decree, or decision against this Vessel to discourage any future adventures of the Armed Vessels of America in these seas against British Shippis – The Facts are indisputably these, That The Shipp was Commissioned by the Congress of the United Colonies or States of North America, – That in her passage to Europe, She made sever[al] prizes of Shippis belonging to Great Brittain, with which sd States are in open Warr– That depending, on the supposed Neutrality, of his most Catholic Majesty, the Captain peaceably entered, one of his Ports, And that the Agents of Great Brittain laying a Charge of Piracy to the charge of the Captain & having procured a detention of the Vessel, are laboring to have her proceeded against & confiscated – <sup>2</sup> Were the Value of the Vessel, all that depended on the Resolution, I would hardly Trouble Your Excellency on the subject, but leave the Captain & his Owner to console themselves for their Loss, out of the reprisals they have made, but when so much depends on this determination should it be unfavorable to the Captain, I can but be anxious to have every thing Necessary, and prudent done, and I conceive my Application to Your Excellency is not improper, for advice and direction,

for which would have done myself the honor of waiting on You, in person, but for Prudential motives, and that probably, a Line from Your Excellency, might give Me all The Direction Necessary – meantime I beg leave to suggest, that as the line of Conduct Towards The United Colonies or States of N. America, will undoubtedly be uniformly the same by this Court & that of Spain, and as the Eyes, & Hopes of the united Colonies are on those Two Kingdoms, as their most Natural Freinds, & Allies, it might be extremely prejudicial, to take so discouraging a measure, as that of excluding American Cruisers entirely from these ports, at so Critical a Period of their Affairs, and that undoubtedly, the Court of Spain will not proceed in this Affair, without a previous Consultation with the Court of France – I have the honor to be with the most profound Respect, Your Excellencys [&c.]

S. Deane<sup>3</sup>

P. S. I received the Letter late last Evening

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 589.
2. Massachusetts privateer schooner *Hawke*, Captain John Lee. See "Extract of a Letter from Bilboa, dated October 6, 1776."
3. Deane wrote of this matter to Vergennes again on October 17. In this second letter Deane also tried to play down the seriousness of the American defeat in the Battle of Long Island, Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 590.

#### 14 Oct.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PORT GLASGOW, DATED 14TH OF OCTOBER."<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday the *Speirs*, from the Bay of Honduras, with mahogany, arrived here, under the command of Mr. William Carmichael, formerly the Mate of the said vessel.

She sailed from the Bay on the 15th of July last, and on the 6th of September long. 56.13. lat. 40.50. fell in with the *Eagle* schooner of Rhode Island, an American Privateer, commanded by Elijah Freeman Payne, burden about 50 tons, mounted with six carriage guns and ten swivels and 50 men, who took the master of the *Speirs* (Lamont) all the papers belonging to the vessel, and some bales of dry goods on board, putting her under the command of a Mr. Hall, in character of a Lieutenant and Prize-master.

The schooner had then under convoy the *Caledonia*, M'Kinlay, bound from Grenada to Clyde, loaded with sugar and rum, which sailed from Grenada on the 3d, and was taken on the 30th August, long. 50. lat. 40. – On the 28th of August, she took the *Venus*, Collins, from the Bay of Honduras, with log-wood and mahogany, and on the 29th of the same month the *Nancy*, Tuckley,<sup>2</sup> a brigantine from Virginia, with 300 hogsheads of tobacco, having a pretended clearance from Lord Dunmore for London, and another from the Congress for Dunkirk, and sent both vessels to some port on the continent.

The mate of the *Caledonia* and one Mr. Williamson of Dundee, a passenger from Grenada being suspected of concerting a scheme for carrying off the vessel, were taken out of the *Caledonia* and put on board the *Speirs*, with another passenger and three hands, also part of the crew of the *Venus* and *Nancy*, making in all twenty seven people, and the better to secure her from the least attempt of an escape, allowed them only 150 lb. bread and two barrels of beef for provisions.



On the 15th of September long. 66.23. lat. 41.33, by favour of a fog and a gale of wind springing up Mr. Carmichael took command of the *Speirs*, parted from the schooner, and steered directly for Clyde.

When he found himself clear, he ordered a spar to be cut in pieces which he shaped into wooden guns; and tho' several American armed vessels appeared for the first three days after, yet none of them attempted to come near him, taking her to be a vessel of force.

They were put to allowance of provisions, which ran so short, that they carefully caught rats by traps, which proved to them most delicious morsels; when on the 25th of September they espied a sail making for them, to which they gave chase, long. 47.17. lat. 44.32. and coming up with her, found her to be the *John*, Alex. Simes master, from Plymouth, who supplied them with bread, beef, and potatoes; and off Tory, spoke with the *Mercury*, Holmes master, from Newfoundland for Clyde, who supplied them with fish butter, beef, bread, and every other necessary article.

We hear the *Speirs* was insured at London, and we make no doubt of the insurers rewarding Mr. Carmichael's merit in this lucky adventure.

1. *Public Advertiser*, London, October 23, 1776.

2. Not the *Nancy*; brig *Fanny*, William Tokely, master.

#### BEAUMARCHAIS TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

Monsieur le Comte

Paris, 14th October 1776.

I have the honour to recommend to you the contents of the enclosed letter. We are not aware for what reason the Customs officers in charge at Bilbao have detained the American vessel in question. It would be very serious if it were to be known in America that the Court of Madrid had ill-treated one of their privateers. Then they would think it very certain that they had nothing to hope for from France and Spain, a view which the English do all in their power to propagate, and that alone would be capable of making them accept either a truce or an open negotiation, and perhaps an entire reconciliation with England, which, profiting by such a gross fault on the part of Spain, would not fail to magnify still more its consequences, and make all sorts of concessions to the Americans, to re-unite them to the mother-country. The remedy for this evil is to promptly send a courier to Madrid, and there to recommend that, without any regard to the reason, just or unjust, which may have caused this vessel to be detained, the Court should release it, or at least should not give any decision against it, until a complete success of the Americans at New York shall teach that Court that it can without risk offer its help to a brave nation, which will no longer have need of it, or until the ill luck of their arms shall cause that Court to make of that privateer a cowardly trophy to the Court of England, as the weak Cleopatra offered to the victorious Caesar the head of Pompey, who had placed himself in her hands. Let them shuffle if they like, abandon the Americans to their own courage, and not help them to crush

our only enemy. People may suppose that we are preparing to do so, and that partly saves the honour of our judgment. But to arrest a brave privateer! to tear away the veil which at least made the intentions of the Spaniards doubtful! truly it is enough to turn one's head with sorrow or fury!

Pardon me Monsieur le Comte, if I give way to the vexation which this causes me. Poor France! A thousand years will not give thee back the moment which thou lovest. And the moment lost, thou will be the fable and the laughing-stock of all the sensible people who will take up the pen in Europe to relate this event to our children! Write, I conjure you, Monsieur le Comte, to those cruel Spaniards! – Good Heavens, if they will not serve the cause, at least let them not damage it. Is this too much to require of them?

Whenever I reflect that we hold in our hands the destiny of the world, that it only depends on us to change its whole system, and I see so many good things, such glory, and such advantages ready to escape us, I much regret not having more influence on the resolutions of the Council of both Courts, and not being able to be in two places at once, in order to prevent evil on the one hand, and to cooperate for good on the other. I know your patriotism too well to fear to offend you in giving vent here to my great uneasiness.

I expect to be at Fontainebleau on Thursday at the latest: From now till then, I shall not sleep until I have finished the paper on finances, which I have promised M. de Maurepas. No bankruptcy! it would be infamous during perfect peace. A better system of tax-gathering should in a short time furnish the means of making a war which events render indispensable, and which we avoid perhaps only through fear of not having the wherewithal to keep it up.

Accept my respect and my devotion.

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 899.

**15 Oct.**

*Public Advertiser*, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1776

London [October 15].

The *Devonshire*, Fisher, from Antigua, which is arrived at Corke, was taken by the Americans, and re-taken by the *Liverpoole* Man of War, after being Six Weeks in Possession of the Provincials.

The *Neu[is]*, Capt. Coffin, from Nevis to London, that was taken by the Provincials last August, was retaken, and arrived on Sunday Night off Gravesend.

According to Advices received from Lisbon, dated the 20th of September, the *Rover* American Privateer, commanded by Capt. Simon Forester, hath taken an English Vessel richly laden, and destined for Salerme [Salerno], Naples and Messina. The *Rover* hath also taken six other Vessels, the Crews of which she has put on Shore, some at Faro in Algarva.

The above Simon Forester told the Commander of a Portuguese Vessel, that he hoped soon to have the Honour of seizing some of his Master's Vessels, as War either was or soon would be declared by the Congress against Portugal. The

Portuguese Commander not understanding him, one of Forester's Crew interpreted what he had said, when the Portuguese Captain immediately made answer, "Your Congress be d——d; come hither, and I'll declare War across thy Shoulders." Forester replied, "I fight only with Gentlemen."

CONTRACT BETWEEN JOHN JOSEPH DE MONTHIEU, RODERIQUE HORTALEZ & Co.  
AND SILAS DEANE <sup>1</sup>

We the subscribers John Joseph de Monthieu and Rodrique Hortalez & Co. are agreed with Mr Silas Deane, agent of the United Colonies upon the subsequent arrangements.

That I de Monthieu do engage to furnish on account of the thirteen United Colonies of north america, a certain number of Vessels to carry arms and Merchandize, to the burthen of sixteen hundred tons, or as many Vessels as are deemed sufficient to transport to some harbour of north america belonging to the thirteen United Colonies, all the ammunitiion and appurtenances agreeable to the estimate signed and left in my possession, and which we esteem would require the abovementioned quantity of Vessels to carry sixteen hundred tons burthen, which are to be paid for at the rate of two hundred Livres the ton, and that I will hold said vessels at the disposal of said Messrs Hortalez & Co, ready to sail at the Ports of Havre, Nantes and Marseilles vizt, The vessels which are to carry the articles and Passengers mentioned in the aforementioned list and are to depart from Havre as well as those that are to go from Nantes to be ready in the course of November next and the others in the course of December following, on condition that one half of the aforementioned freight of 200 Livres per ton, both for the Voyage to america and back to France, laden equally on account of the Congress of the thirteen United Colonies and Messrs Hortalez & Co aforesaid, who are responsible for them, shall be advanced and paid immediately in money, bills of exchange or other good merchandize or effects, and the other half the said Messrs Hortalez & Co do agree to furnish me with in proportion as the vessels are fitting out, in the same money or other effects as above: over and above this they are to pay me for the passage of each officer not belonging to the ship's crew, the sum of 550 Livres tournois, and for every Soldier or servant 250 Livres, and for every Sailor who goes as passenger 150 Livres. It is expressly covenanted and agreed between us that all risques of the sea either in said Vessels being chased, run on shore or taken, shall be on account of the Congress of the United Colonies, and shall be paid agreeably to the estimation which may be made of each of these vessels, agreeably to the bills of sale of each, which I promise to deliver to Messrs Hortalez & Co before the departure of any of the said Vessels from any of the Ports of France mentioned above.

Finally it is agreed that if the americans detain these Vessels longer than two months in their Ports, without shipping onboard them the returns they are to carry to France all demurrage, wages or expences on them from the day of their arrival to that of their departure these two months excepted shall be at their charge and paid by them or by Messrs Hortalez & Co in our own name as answerable for the Congress of the United Colonies. we accept the above conditions as

far as they respect us, and promise faithfully to fulfil them and in consequence we have signed this instrument of writing one to the other at Paris 15th October 1776.

Monthieu  
Rodrique Hortalez & Co  
Silas Deane, Agent for  
the United Colonies of North America

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, Appendix, 7-9, NA.

16 Oct.

*Public Advertiser*, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1776

London [October 16].

The Merchants and Underwriters begin to be in great Pain for the Jamaica Fleet, as they were seen safe through the Gulph, but have not been heard of since; and Accounts daily arrive, that there are many Provincial Privateers waiting to intercept some of them.

A Vessel under Dutch Colours, loaded with Gunpowder and warlike Stores, was taken by one of our Transports, and sent into Falmouth last Thursday Evening. She proves to be the *Two Brothers* belonging to Philadelphia, and was taken by the *General Conway*.<sup>1</sup>

It is reported, that a Portuguese Man of War, of 40 Guns, had been taken at the Mouth of the Tagus by two American Privateers.

1. This item was corrected in the *Public Advertiser* the next day, with the statement: "On the 12th inst. was brought into Falmouth by the *Conway* Transport, Capt. Thorsby, bound for Quebec, the *Two Brothers*, Henry Van Dis Horst, from Rotterdam for St. Eustatia, laden with Bale Goods, Gunpowder, &c. She was met with 30 Leagues West of Scilly."

17 Oct.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL ROBERT MAN, GIBRALTAR<sup>1</sup>

Sir

17h October 1776

I have received and communicated to my Lords Commrs of the Admiralty your Letter of the 4h of last Month acquainting them with your return to Gibraltar; with the advices you had received of an american armed Vessel being cruizing off Cape St Vincent, and with your having ordered the *Alarm* and *Levant* to cruize off that Cape, and Cape Roant, in search of the said armed Vessel and in return I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that they very well approve of your having done so I am also commanded to acquaint you that their Lordships intend to order the *Worcester* to sail from Spithead the first fair wind after the 25h instant as Convoy to the Trade bound to Spain, Portugal and the Mediterranean; seeing the latter as far as Gibraltar, and after waiting there twenty one Days return to England with such homeward bound Trade as may be ready and willing to accompany her.

If upon the arrival of the *Worcester* with the Trade at Gibraltar you judge it necessary to send a Convoy with the latter up the Mediterranean their Lordships recommend it to you to send one of the Ships of your Squadron, with them as far as you think may be proper for their Security, but upon no account whatever

to divert the *Worcester* from the prosecution of the orders her Captain will receive from their Lordship. I am &c

P: S:

(By the Post)

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 88-89.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN DIGBY DENT,  
H.M.S. *Arethusa*, SPITHEAD<sup>1</sup>

You are hereby required and directed to proceed to Sea with His Majts Ship under your command and cruize for one Month after you get upon your Station from 5. to 30. Leagues West from Cape Finisterre, for the protection of the Trade of His Majesty's Subjects, and to look out for any Privatiers belonging to His Majts Rebellious Colonies that may infest those parts, using your best endeavours to take, or destroy such of them, as also any other Vessels belonging to the said Colonies as you may fall in with.

Having cruized for the time abovemention'd you are to proceed to Lisbon, where you are to make a stay not exceeding seven days, and then taking under your Convoy such Ships and Vessels bound to England as may be ready and willing to accompany you, see them in safety to Spithead, or as far as your way & theirs may lay together; sending to Our Secretary an Account of your arrival and proceedings, and waiting there for farther Orders. Given &c. the 17. Oct. 1776.

By &c. P.S.

Sandwich J. Buller H. Palliser

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 339-40.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN THOMAS PASLEY,  
H.M.S. *Glasgow*, SPITHEAD<sup>1</sup>

*Beaver*  
*Hornett*

Whereas we intend that His Majts Ship under your command, together with the Sloops named in the Margin, which are now at Spithead & the *Fly* Sloop which is on her Passage thither, shall convoy the Trade bound from hence to the West India Islands and to West Florida; You are hereby required and directed to take the said Sloops under your command (their Commanders being directed to obey your Orders) and so soon as the Wind shall have been fair to bring the Trade from the Downes for the space of 48 hours after the 20. of this Month, you are to make enquiry for, and take under your Convoy, all Ships & Vessels bound to the Leeward Islands, Jamaica, and West Florida, and, if the *Fly* shall have joined you, or, if not, as soon afterwards as she does, make the best of your way with them to the Island of Barbadoes, & having seen the Trade bound to that, and the neighbouring Islands safe into Carlisle Bay, You are, in case you should not find Vice Admiral Young, or any part of his Squadron there, to leave the *Beaver* Sloop in that Bay, with Orders to her Captain to take under Convoy such Ships as are bound to the neighbouring Islands, and having seen them in safety thither, to make the best of his way to join Vice Adml Young wherever he may learn he is; But in case you find Vice Adml Young or any of his Squadron in Carlisle Bay, you are to leave the Trade bound to the Islands in that neighbourhood, to his, or their care, and

take the *Beaver* with you as far as Antigua, leaving her there under Orders to join Vice Adml Young as above directed.

From Barbadoes you are to proceed with the Convoy to Antigua, and having seen the Trade bound to that, and the neighbouring Islands into St John's Road, and not finding Vice Adml Young or any of his Squadron there, you are to leave the *Fly* Sloop with Similar Orders to her Captain to see the Trade in safety to the Islands in the neighbourhood of Antigua, and then make the best of his way to join Vice Adml Young. — But if Vice Adml Young is at Antigua, you are to leave the *Fly* to follow his Orders, and the Trade to be convoy'd to the neighbouring Islands in such manner as he shall direct.

You are then to proceed with the *Glasgow & Hornet* to the Island of St Christophers, where you are to leave the Trade bound to that Island, and then proceed with the remainder of your Convoy to Port Royal in the Island of Jamaica, where on your arrival you are to put your self under the command of Vice Adml Gayton, and follow his Orders for your further proceedings, leaving the Trade bound to West Florida, to be convoy'd thither in such manner as he shall think fit to direct.

And whereas the West India Merchants of London did at a General Meeting on the 1<sup>t</sup> of this Month, Resolve, that they would discourage the future Employment of any Persons, who having the Conduct of Vessels shall separate from their respective Convoys, or otherwise willfully disobey the Orders received from the Commodore's thereof; We send you herewith a Copy of the said Resolution and require and direct you to take all possible care on your part, not to separate from the Ships and Vessels which shall put themselves under your convoy, and to give such Orders & Instructions to their Masters, as you conceive may be most likely to prevent their separating from you; And in case any of them do lose Company with you, or disobey your Orders, you are to transmit to Our Secretary a List of their Names with the circumstances attending such separation or disobedience, that the Merchants may have full information thereof.  
Given &c. the 17. October 1776.

Sandwich Palmerston H. Palmerston [*sic* Palliser]

By &c. P.S.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 335–37.

LORD SANDWICH TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE<sup>1</sup>

Admiralty, 17th October 1776.

My Lord — I am to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's private letter of the 7th of August, and have the happiness at the same time of congratulating you upon the very great and successful outset of your campaign, from which in this part of the world we all form to ourselves the most pleasing ideas of what is to follow.

You may be assured that everything within my department that you can suggest as likely to give additional force to your measures shall be supplied; with as little delay as possible. You mention your wish to have 15 two-deck ships; but I apprehend you do not think so many will be wanted in the winter, and by the spring I hope we shall be able to give you the number you mention, though as

things are circumstanced in Europe (with great preparations going on both in the French and Spanish ports, where they are putting a very large number of capital ships into readiness to receive men) it is much to be wished that all our line of battle ships should be kept at home; and I imagine I am right in supposing that 4th-rates and 40-gun ships will answer your purpose as well, if not better than two-deck ships of a higher class. Of these there are only two now in any forwardness, namely the *Warwick* [50] and *Panther* [60]; therefore, if you adhere to your opinion that 15 are necessary, I see no way of supplying that demand but by sending one or two 3rd rates, to which I am sure you will see the objection in as strong a light as I do. However, at all events you may depend that the important service on which you are employed shall not be cramped, let what will be the consequence.

There are two new bomb vessels lately launched. Does your Lordship advise their being sent out to you in the spring?

Twelve frigates are now on their way to join you, most of which I hope are with you before this time; these, with what you had under you when you wrote last, and those that I conclude will come to you from the River St Lawrence before the winter sets in, will I hope enable you to make such a disposition as will render it difficult for the rebel cruisers to do so much mischief as they have hitherto done. But, while almost the whole American fleet is necessarily taken up in attending the operations of the army, other services must of course in some degree give way to the principal object.

The necessity of sending the ordnance stores in ships of force, which your Lordship mentions with so much propriety, has been fully attended to; and I understand that all the ships that have lately been taken up by the Board of Ordnance are either old Indiamen or other large ships that will be armed with upwards of twenty guns, and manned with a proportionate number of seamen besides parties of recruits, which will make them stronger than any rebel cruiser I yet have heard of. This in my opinion is the most judicious and indeed the only method of conveying these valuable cargoes with safety; for I can by no means concur in opinion with the Board of Ordnance that their stores might be carried in men of war, as your Lordship well knows that, when a ship is fitted for a foreign voyage, her own stores leave no room for anything that does not belong to herself; indeed there are so many objections to this measure that I am persuaded will occur to your Lordship as well as to me that it would be taking up your time unnecessarily, was I to enter further into the subject.

I find by your Lordship's letter and by one from Lord Shuldhham that he is coming home in the *Bristol*: every part of your behaviour with regard to his return is exactly conformable to what I took the liberty to suggest to you in a former letter, and requires my particular acknowledgements for your attention to what fell from me on that occasion.

That your Lordship and your brother may reap fresh laurels in the great cause so properly entrusted to your management, and so successfully begun, is the very ardent wish of your Lordship's most obedient [etc.]

Sandwich

1. Barnes and Owen, eds., *Sandwich Papers*, I, 159-62.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Paris 17th October 1776

. . . a Vessel with a Commission from the Honble Congress detained in Bilboa as a Pirate, and complaint carried to the Court of Madrid, I have been applied to for assistance, and though I am in hopes, nothing will be determined against us, yet I confess I tremble to think how important a Question is by this step agitated, without any one empowered to appear in a proper Character and defend, could I present your Declaration of Independence and shew my Commission subsequent, empowering me to appear in your behalf, all might be concluded at once, and a most important point gained, no less than that of obtaining a free Reception and Defence or Protection of our Ships of War in these Ports, a determination which must eventually ruin the Commerce of Great Britain. . . . P.S. . . . The Vessel referred to is commanded by Captain [John] Lee of Newbury Port, who, on his passage, took five Prizes of value and sent them back, but brought on two of the Captains and some of the men Prisoners to Bilboa, where the Captains entered their Protest, and complain against Captain Lee as a Pirate, on which his Vessel is detained, and his Commission &c sent up to Madrid; this instantly brings on a Question as to the legality of the Commission, if determined Legal a most important point is gained, if the reverse, the consequences will be very bad and the only ground on which the determination can go against the Captain, is that the United States of America or their Congress are not known in Europe, as being Independent States otherways than by common Fame in Newspapers, &c on which a serious Resolution cannot be grounded; the best therefore that the Captain expects will be to get the matter delayed, which is very hard on the brave Captain and his honest owners, and will be a bad precedent for others to venture into the European Seas. I have done everything in my power, and am in hopes from the strong assurances given me, that all will be settled to my satisfaction in this affair, but cannot but feel on the occasion as well for the Captain as for the public; I have been told repeatedly I was too anxious, and advised "rester sans inquietude;" but I view this as a Capital affair in its Consequences, and though I wish to, cannot take the advice.

Warlike preparations are daily making in this Kingdom and in Spain, in the latter immediately against the Portuguese, but will most probably, in its Consequences involve other powers. I need not urge the importance of immediate Remittances towards paying for the large quantity of Stores I have engaged for, and depend this winter will not be suffered to slip away unimproved. . .

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, 13-16, NA.

SILAS DEANE TO WILLIAM BINGHAM, MARTINIQUE <sup>1</sup>

Dr Sir

Paris 17 October 1776

Since receiving yours of the 4th and 5th of August last I have wrote you repeatedly, and have no doubt of your receipt of them, to which refer you. You are in the neighbourhood of St Vincent, and I learn that the Caribbs are not contented with their Masters, and being an artful as well as revengeful People would undoubtedly take this opportunity of throwing off a yoke, which nothing



but a superior force can keep on them, my request is, that you would Enquire into the state of that Island by proper Emissaries, and if the Caribbs are disposed to Revolt, encourage them and promise them aid of arms and ammunition. This must tear from Great Britain an Island which they value next to Jamaica and to which indeed they have no Title but what rests on violence and Cruelty. at any rate they will oblige Great Britain to withdraw part of her Forces from the Continent. If any thing can be effected then inform me instantly, and I will order to your Care such a Quantity of Stores as you shall think necessary.

The enclosed Letter I desire you to break the seal of, and make as many Copies as there are Vessels going Northward, by which some one must arrive. A war I think may be depended upon, but keep your Intelligence of every kind secret, save to those of the Honorable Secret Committee.

You will send also a Copy of this, by which the Honble Committee will see the request I have made to you and the reason of their receiving several Duplicates in your hand writing, I wish you to forward the enclosed to Mr Tucker of Bermuda and write me by every vessel to Bordeaux or Nantz. I am with great esteem, [&c.]

Silas Deane

(Copy)

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, 18-19, NA.

**18 Oct.**

LORD GEORGE GERMAIN TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

My Lord,

Pall Mall Octer 18th 1776.

I take the Opportunity of Major Cayler's return to New Yorke, to assure your Lordship of my constant Regard and best wishes. The glorious Success of His Majesty's arms <sup>2</sup> gave universal Satisfaction to every good Subject, as they were sensible that after your humane Endeavours to restore Peace, had met with so unfavourable a Reception, no alternative was left but the proving the Superiority of the British Troops over the Army of the Rebels. Your Brother's Conduct is seen in the Light it deserves, and We have Reason to flatter ourselves with the happiest Consequences from the joint Efforts of the Fleet & Army, since there can be no misunderstanding between the two Commanders, united by Friendship & Affection. I have troubled the General with a long Letter the Contents of which I need not repeat, as I conclude it is the same as if I had addressed them to Your Lordship.

The Congress is using every possible means to induce France to espouse their Cause, and the Naval Preparations making there must raise Suspicions here as if their Agents met with too much Encouragement. What Effect the late Victory will have upon the French Councils, We have not yet heard, what We perceived here was that the Spanish Ambassador shewed the greatest Satisfaction, at our Success, whilst the French Minister looked disappointed and dejected.

The declaration of Independency has staggered many of the former Advocates for America. Among others I hear Lord Cambden says, there is no supporting the Americans upon their present ground. Indeed the Leaders of the Rebellion have acted as I could have wished, & I trust that the deluded People will soon have

recourse to your Lordship for Mercy & Protection, leaving their Chiefs to receive the Punishment they deserve.

I shall be happy if you will honour me with any Commands, as I shall have the greatest Satisfaction in obeying them.

I am my Lord with great regard &ca

1. Germain Papers, CL.
2. Battle of Long Island.

M. GARNIER TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 18 October, 1776

The English islands are suffering more and more from scarcity and the cost of victuals, as from the multiple takings of the American corsairs. The news of three new ships taken on their return from the West Indies was received this week, and the most moderate calculations place the value of losses during this year by English commerce at 600 thousand pounds Sterling.

People are even more alarmed today by the taking of the vessel *Susanne* coming from Oporto. It was taken near Cape Lizard in the Channel by a corsair of 8 guns. The English vessel carried between 60 and 70 thousand pounds Sterling, but the Corsair which took it is, we are assured, itself held at Bilbao, where it had put in.<sup>2</sup> It had also taken a transport vessel from Cork, and three other vessels. What is certain is that the Government does not know what to do to protect its transports everywhere and also the national commerce from which it has however, great interest in not raising a clamor. Since almost all the frigates and corvettes are already at sea for this reason, the British are of necessity beginning to use ships of the line, although they are less appropriate for this kind of service.

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 518, LC Photocopy.
2. *Hawke*.

PRINCE MASSERANO TO THE MARQUIS DE GRIMALDI <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 18 October 1776

. . . And Y. E. should also know that the knowledge here of ships being readied in the Ports of France can also be the cause of wishing to be prepared for any event, with sea forces opposing those of that Power and ours if we be of a mind to disturb the peace. In addition to this, as almost all its frigates and smaller war vessels are off the American coast, they [English] must make use of ships of the line here to protect the merchant ships going to our seas and into Italian waters, where Americans are constantly capturing vessels. Perhaps this is the reason orders have been issued to cruise the English Channel in the three 64-gun ships *Exeter*, *Ardent*, and *Somerset*, which are among those guarding the Ports and carrying a crew of 500 and six months provisions. . . .

1. AHN, Estado, Legajo 4281, Apartado 2, LC Photocopy.

GIAMBATTISTA PIZZONI TO HIS GOVERNMENT IN VENICE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 18 Oct 1776

. . . It is however beyond doubt that the Americans continue to capture many English ships both in American seas and European waters, as frequently there is

news unfavorable to this place. Three more ships having fallen into Colonial privateer hands, according to latest reports, notices are anxiously awaited on the fate of a ship departed from Lisbon with a considerable sum of money; also unknown is the whereabouts of a packet which left Lisbon a few weeks ago, on board which was Mr. de Horta, Minister of the Portuguese Court to Holland. For this reason these merchant ships, hopefully expecting some relief from the government, are in the meantime increasing their crews and installing some guns to resist the privateers they may meet on the voyage. These precautions have lowered the cost of insurance somewhat, and the English government order issued to commission a number of 12-gun and 14-gun corvettes to escort merchant convoys bound for Spanish and Portuguese ports, and inbound from them, may not reduce the premium rates of such insurance very much. . . .

1. Papers of the Senate, ASV.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN MARK ROBINSON,  
H. M. S. *Worcester*, SPITHEAD <sup>1</sup>

Whereas we intend that His Majestys Ship under your command shall proceed as Convoy to the Trade bound to Portugal, Spain & the Mediterranean; You are hereby required & directed so soon after the 25th of this Month as the Wind shall have been fair for the space of 24 Hours to bring the Ships from the Downes, to make enquiry for, and take under your Convoy all Ships & Vessels bound to the Parts abovemention'd & then to proceed down Channel til you get off Falmouth where upon your hoisting a Jack at the Foretop Gallant-Mast head the Trade from thence will join you, and taking them also under Your Convoy you are to see the Ships bound to Oporto, Lisbon & Cadiz into their respective Ports & then to proceed with such of the Trade as may be bound up the Mediterranean to Gibraltar where you are to leave them to pursue their several Voyages

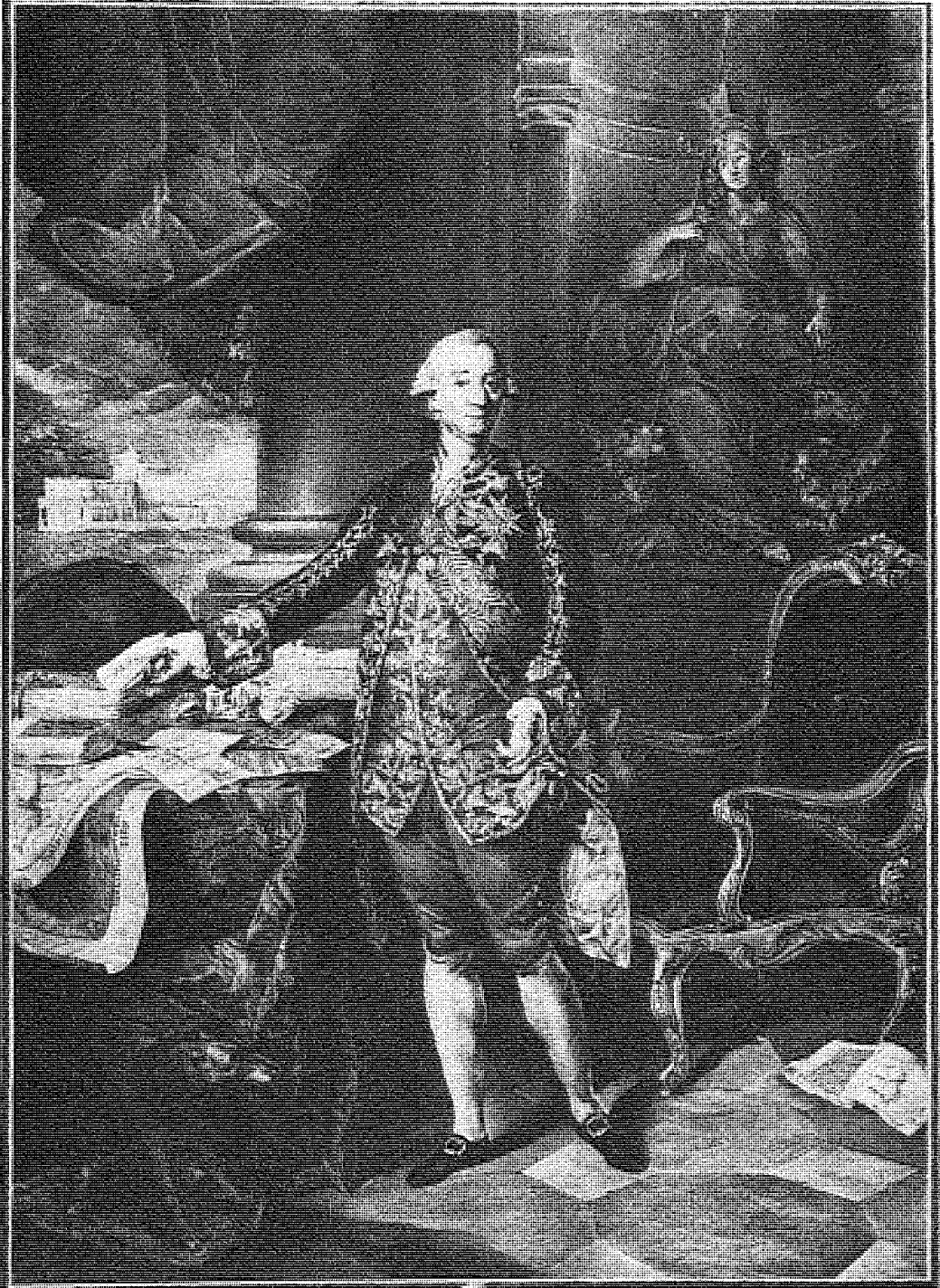
You are to remain in Gibraltar Bay for the space of Twenty one Days after Your arrival & then taking under your Convoy all Ships & Vessels bound to Great Britain or Ireland that are ready & willing to accompany you, see them in safety to Spithead or as far as your way & theirs may lie together, transmitting to our Secretary an account of your arrival & proceedings & waiting there for further Orders

Upon your arrival at Gibraltar you are to write to His Majts Consul at Cadiz to acquaint him with the Day you intend to sail from thence & to enquire whether there will be any homeward bound Trade ready to accompany you by that time & in case you learn from him that they will, You are to call off Cadiz for them & Convoy them to England or as far as your way & theirs may lie together, but as you are not upon any Account to go into Cadiz You are to settle a signal for their coming out to join you upon your appearing off the Port. Given &c 18th Octo 1776

By &c P S

Sandwich J Buller H. Palliser

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 345-46.



*Don Jeronimo de Grimaldi*  
Comandante de las tropas de la Florida Occidental  
y de las Indias de la Florida Occidental de España del Rey



*Don Jeronimo de Grimaldi*  
Comandante de las tropas de la Florida Occidental  
y de las Indias de la Florida Occidental de España del Rey

Jeronimo de Grimaldi

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN JAMES ROBERTSON,  
H. M. SLOOP *Hound*<sup>1</sup>

Whereas upon the application of the Merchants trading from Bristol to the West India Islands, We have thought fit to appoint His Majestys Sloop under your command, together with the *Favorite* Sloop, to Convoy the Trade from thence to the West Indies: You are hereby required and directed to take the *Favorite* under your command (her Commander being directed to repair to Bristol & obey your Orders) and to take under your Convoy all Ships & Vessels bound from Bristol to the Leeward Islands & Jamaica & putting to Sea with the first opportunity of Wind & Weather after the 30th of this Inst (if the *Favorite* shall then have joined you or as soon afterwards as she does) make the best of your way with them to the Island of Barbadoes; And having seen the Trade bound to that & the Neighbouring Islands & safe into Carlisle Bay, you are to proceed on to the Island of Antigua; And having seen the Trade bound thither & to the Islands in the Neighbourhood of it into St John's Road you are to leave the *Favorite* there with Orders to her Commander to make the best of his way to join Vice Adml Young wherever he may learn he is & to follow his Orders for his further proceedings.

You are then to proceed yourself with the remainder of your Convoy to Port Royal in the Island of Jamaica & putting yourself under the command of Vice Adml Gayton follow his Orders for your further proceedings. Given &c 18th Octo 1776

Sandwich J Buller H Palliser

Capt Robertson – *Hound* – Kingroad

By &c P S

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 346-47.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL CLARK GAYTON, JAMAICA<sup>1</sup>

Sir

18th. Octr 1776

His Majesty's Ship *Glasgow*, by which you will receive this, being appointed to convoy the Trade bound from England to the Leeward Islands & Jamaica: and being also ordered to convoy the Trade bound to West Florida as far as Jamaica: I am commanded by my Lords Commissrs of the Admty to signify their direction to you, upon the Arrival of the said Ship at Jamaica, to appoint a proper Convoy to see the Trade bound to West Florida in safety thither. I am &c.

P. S.

By the *Glasgow*

Duplicates sent the 1st Jany 1777 By the Packet

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 93.

*Public Advertiser*, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1776

London [October 18].

Letters from Lisbon bring Advice, that the Merchants there (by Permission) are fitting out armed Ships to cruize against the Americans, and those they take they are determined to treat as Pirates. These armed Ships are to be joined by

some Portugeze Men of War, in order to clear the Coast of Portugal of the American Privateers now cruising there.

19 Oct.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO WILLIAM EDEN <sup>1</sup>

Sir,

19th October 1776

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having received a Letter from Mr John North, a Midshipman of the Navy, who was put on board of the *General Conway* Storeship to superintend the navigating her to Quebeck, giving an account of his having siezed and brought to Falmouth a Brig laden with Gunpowder, arms Woolens &c said to be bound from Rotterdam to St Eustatia, but supposed to be intended for His Majestys Rebellious Subjects in North America; and their Lordships having also received a Letter from Captain Kempe Commander of His Majesty's Sloop the *Wolf*; upon the same Subject; I am commanded by their Lordships to send you herewith Copies of the said Letters and to acquaint you, for Lord Suffolks Information, that their Lordships have directed their Sollicitor to take the opinion of Council as to the Steps that may be proper to be pursued respecting the said Brig. I am &c.

P: S:

P: S: Their Lordships understand that the Brig abovementioned is called the *Twee ge Broeders*, and that Hendrick Ferhost is Master of her

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 93-94.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

My Lord

19h October 1776

I had the honor to receive on the 28h ultimo by Mr Robarts your Lordships Letters of the 28h of July, 8h and 14h of August, and on the 10h instant by Major Cuyler, two of the 31st of August, and one of the 3d of September giving an Account of your arrival at Staten Island, of your being joined by the Commodores Sir Peter Parker and Hotham, and of your proceedings from the date of your Letter off of Halifax All which, with their several Inclosures were immediately laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty; and in return I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that their Lordships very well approve of the whole thereof, but more particularly the judicious measures your Lordship took for landing the Troops with so much expedition on Long Island, and the disposition you made of the Fleet for co-operating with the Army.

My Lords have great satisfaction in the Account your Lordship has given of the Abilities and diligence shewn by Commodore Hotham and Captain Davis of the *Repulse*, in conducting to your Lordship the Transports under their respective Convoys: and their Lordships are well pleased with the Spirit and perserverence of Captain Parker and the Small Squadron which had been sent up the North River under his Conduct at the request of General Howe.

Their Lordships are glad to find that you have concurred in a Proposition that has been made to you for an exchange of Prisoners: and they have no doubt that the measures your Lordship has taken to prevent the decrease of the Complements of the Ships under your Command, will have a good effect.

My Lords will confirm the Appointments your Lordship has made not only of Officers to the Ships under your Command, but those of Agent Victualler, Master Attendant and Agent to Transports; and as Captain [Alexander] Scott, late of the *Experiment* was under the necessity of quitting her to return to England on account of the Wounds he received in the late attack upon the Fort on Sullivan's Island, their Lordships are pleased to dispense with that restriction in your Instructions, respecting the appointments of Officers to which your Lordship alludes, and to leave it to your Lordship to confirm in such manner as you shall judge proper the appointments made by Sir Peter Parker in consequence of Captain Scotts Resignation.

No time was lost in transmitting to the Board of Ordnance an Extract of so much of your Lordships Letter of the 14h of August as relates to the want of ordnance Stores, and I have the honor to acquaint your Lordship that in consequence thereof three Storeships are now laden in the River with a supply for the Fleet under your Command, and nearly ready to sail for Spithead, from whence they will be conveyed to your Lordship by the *Thames*, Captain [Tyringham] Howe, who will likewise take under his Convoy the *Elephant* laden with Naval Stores and a Victualler laden with the Sour Krout mentioned in my former Letter.

I have only to add that my Lords approve of your Lordships permitting Lord Shuldham to return to England in the *Bristol*, and to repeat the assurances of the great regard with which I have the honor to be &c

P: S:

(By Major Cuyler)

Duplicate sent by the Packet 6 Novr

Triplicate sent 20th Novr By the *Thames*

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 100-03.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO VICE ADMIRAL JAMES YOUNG <sup>1</sup>

Whereas we have received undoubted information that His Majestys Rebelious Colonies in North America do find a means of carrying on a Trade to the Islands of St Croix & St Eustatia & of supplying themselves with Gunpowder; Arms & Ammunition from those Islands; And Whereas His Danish Majesty, by his Edict of the 4th of October 1775 has forbid His Subjects to send, for the purpose of Traffic either for their own account or that of others, unto His Islands or Colonies in America on board Ships carrying His Flag or provided with His Sea passports any Ammunition or other Commodities whatever serving for Warlike Ammunition & considered as Articles of Trade; And Whereas their High Mightinesses the States General by their Proclamation dated the 28th of August 1775, have prohibited for the Term thereinmentioned all exportation of Ammunition Gunpowder, Guns & Shot by Ships belonging to the Dominions of Great Britain & have enacted that no Gunpowder, Guns, Shot, or other Instruments of War, shall be embarked on board any other Ships, whether Foreign or belonging to that Country to be transported Abroad without permission of the College of Admiralty, (Copies of which Edict & Proclamation are herewith enclosed); You are hereby required & directed to have a particular attention to the suppressing the practices abovementioned, which are so contrary to the Declaration of the abovementioned Powers and so

highly detrimental at this time to His Majestys Service; And, to that end, you are notwithstanding former Orders, to appoint such a number of the Ships & Vessels of your Squadron as you shall judge necessary to Cruize off the Ports of the said Islands of St Croix & St Eustatia and on such other Stations as you shall judge most likely for intercepting & seizing all such Vessels as shall be found employed in the said practices taking due care not to infringe the just protection which such Powers have a right to give within their Ports to Ships of all Nations. Given &c 19th Octo 1776

Sandwich J Buller H Palliser

By &c PS By the *Glasgow*.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 361-62.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. ANDREW RAY, MASTER OF THE *Anne of Burntisland*, TO HIS OWNERS, DATED ON SHIPBOARD AT DOVER, OCTOBER 19.”<sup>1</sup>

We left Cork on the 27th September, and on the 5th of October had the misfortune to be taken by an American privateer of eight guns and twelve swivels, two or three leagues from Burlins, at ten o'clock forenoon. At six o'clock the same day, they took a brig belonging to London; and, having made prisoners of us all, with a fresh gale of wind, run right out to sea with both ships, till the 7th, being better weather, the privateer lay to, and having ordered us to hoist out our boats, the men belonging to the privateer fell to plundering the prizes of provisions, and all the ships stores they could take out of them. They then put on board my ship one Capt. Strutland, from the Mediterranean for Dublin, and twelve of his men, whom they had taken three or four days before; one Captain Ray, from London, for Lisbon, with six of his men; and the Portuguese pilot, whom he had got on board two or three hours before he was taken; and myself with my men. The Captain of the privateer had previously given a letter to Capt. Strutland, making a present of my ship to the two captains and me, equally amongst us, a copy of which letter I have sent you, as they would not trust me with the original. I know this disaster will surprize you as much as it did me, having no notion that any American privateers were so far to the eastward. Captains Strutland and Ray insisted to have the ship carried to London, and we are now off Dover, with the wind at S.W.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, October 31 to November 2, 1776. An item in the same issue reads: “On the 5th instant, the *Anne of Burntisland*, Andrew Ray master, was taken near Lisbon, by an American privateer called the *True Blue*. The same day, she took the *Betsey* belonging to London, Matthew Ray, Master; and, some days before, another ship from the Mediterranean, bound for Dublin, commanded by Isaac Strutland.”

**20 Oct. (Sunday)**

LORD SANDWICH TO LORD NORTH<sup>1</sup>

Sunday morning, 20th October 1776.

My dear Lord – Sir Hugh Palliser came to me this morning by appointment that we might consider what steps are necessary to be taken in the present alarming situation. The accounts of the French armaments multiply so fast that I must tell your Lordship that every hour is precious, as the French are certainly greatly ahead



in their preparations, and I dread the consequence of their being at sea before us. I enclose some fresh accounts I have just received from Lord Weymouth, as also one paper sent me by your Lordship's order, by which you will see that there can no longer be a doubt that everything is going on in the French ports with the utmost alacrity; if you will give Sir Hugh Palliser and me leave, we will wait on your Lordship presently to talk the matter over and to consider what is advisable to be done. If we have not our Cabinet meeting till Thursday, we shall lose four or five days, which as we have lost so much time already is a matter of great importance.

Your Lordship will find Sir Hugh Palliser's examination of a master of a ship which has been taken and carried into Bilbao, from whom it appears that several American privateers are actually arming in that port, as also that one of the Treasury victuallers of 16 guns has suffered herself to be surprised by a privateer of 8 guns and 60 men. I am [etc.]

Sandwich

1. Barnes and Owen, eds., *Sandwich Papers*, I, 216-17.

NATHAN RUMSEY TO THE MARYLAND CONVENTION <sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen

An Ardor for the Success of the present Continental Cause, will I doubt not excuse a seeming Impropriety in my addressing a Body with the Members of whom I have the Honor of claiming little or no Acquaintance.

I am here during the War, and my Connection with Mr Penet (for whose Character I refer You, Gentlemen, to the Secret Committee of Congress) influences me to request that preference in your Business which we have already been honored with from the Secret Committee of Congress.

Much pains have been taken to obtain a possibility of doing the American Business from hence, which I have the Satisfaction of informing you have met with such Success as renders it in our power to supply the Continent with any Articles they please.

The Articles wch may be imported to Advantage from hence, are Vitrey Linens fit for coarse Shirting or Sails: Coarse Cloths for Soldiers or Negroes Cloathing and Blankets, with all kinds of Military Articles.

Letters directed to Penet & Rumsey to the Care of Mr John Gruel of this City; Messrs. Reculeux De Basmarein & Raimbaux Merchants in Bourdeaux, or Mons Stepham Cathalon of Marseilles, will be carefully forwarded. With the utmost Respect, I am Gentlemen [&c.]

Nathan Rumsey

Nantes October 20th 1776.

1. Red Book, XI, Md. Arch.

21 Oct.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

My Lord

21st October 1776

The Guardships and other Ships fitting out being distressed by the want of Petty Officers, so great a number having been appointed to superintend the naviga-

tion of Transports and Treasury and Ordnance Victuallers and Storeships to North America; I am commanded by my Lords Commrs of the Admiralty to recommend it to your Lordship to send to England by the first opportunity that may offer such of those Petty Officers as are now with, or may hereafter join your Lordship, to the end that they may be employed in His Majesty's Ships.

And as their Lordships hope that there may not be occasion for the employing in North America for the future so great a number of Agents to Transports as are now there, I have it also in command to recommend it to your Lordship to send to England as soon as conveniently may be, such of those agents as your Lordship may think can be spared without prejudice to the Service. I have the honor to be &c

P: S:

(By Major Cuyler)

Duplicate sent the 20h Novemr 1776

(By the *Thames*)

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 103-04.

*Public Advertiser*, MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1776

London [October 21].

The *Friendship*, Nastel; the ———, Moulpied, and the ———, Ahier, from St. Croix, bound for Guernsey, are all taken by the Americans.

The *Charming Mary*, Halliday, is taken by an American Privateer, between Newry and Dublin, where she was going to join the Convoy, which was intended for the Protection of the Linen Ships, on the News of some Americans being on the Coast. The above Ship is valued at Seventy thousand Pounds.<sup>1</sup>

The American Vessel, which put into Bilboa, was detained by Order of the Consul there. She mounts only eight Guns, and says, when she left Rhode Island, she had 50 Men; but having taken a Transport that mounted 14 Guns, and a Ship (the *Susannah*) from Oporto, with 300 Pipes of Wine, and a very valuable Cargo in Specie, besides three other Ships, she has put all her Men on board except 14, the Number she brought into Bilboa.

Fourteen Sail of the Fleet which sailed from Jamaica, consisting of 118 Vessels, are arrived at the several Ports.

The above Fleet, like most others, left the Men of War when they thought themselves out of Danger; in Consequence of which we have already received Advices, that one of them was taken in Lat. 36, and it is feared we shall soon hear of several more.

1. *Public Advertiser* in the October 22 issue corrected this report and noted that *Charming Mary* had arrived safely in port.

*London Chronicle*, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 TO TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1776

London [October 21].

A letter received from a Midshipman on board the *Lady Keith*, armed schooner at Jamaica, gives the following account:

Our Admiral seeing the necessity there was (from the number of small American privateers hovering about the Islands) to fit out some armed vessels to cruise

against them, I was therefore, with another Midshipman, a Lieutenant, and 50 men, put on board a schooner which was purchased for government, and in compliment to the Governor called after his Lady. She is a swift sailer, and we have been very lucky in her, having taken in the first three weeks of our cruise two prizes, one of them laden with gunpowder and other stores. We chased another American vessel (a rich one I believe) into St. Domingo, where, luckily for her, she got shelter. As we are always at sea, we have taken seven prizes, which we have carried into Kingston, to the no small satisfaction of the Island, four of them being laden with provisions, which fetched us a very good price from the great scarcity; the rest of the prizes we have turned into money, which is quickly done here, and as quickly spent.

MARQUIS DE GRIMALDI TO COUNT DE ARANDA <sup>1</sup>

Confidential No. 11

Escorial, October 21 1776

Most Excellent Sir:

In a letter dated the 10th of the current month in your own hand, Y. E. informed the King of the conversation you had with Vergennes regarding the help which the Court there has disposed to have shipped to the rebellious Colonies of America, and that the mentioned Minister let you read a note stating all the articles and their amount, and having received a copy, you enclosed it in the mentioned letter.<sup>2</sup>

I have brought it all to the attention of H. M. It is sure that the objective can be vital and our common aims very useful; that the King desires to contribute to its achievement. But as we spoke only of a million pounds, and as Vergennes' first proposal did not plan to extend more, there cannot be, at least for now, any further contribution by us beyond that already delivered, and it is what was offered. Y. E. will easily be persuaded that at this time of such exorbitant extraordinary expenditure as we have incurred in the past year, we must economize to face the present and the immediate future.

In the mentioned memorandum copy which Y. E. sends me there is at the end the question of whether the Americans would be allowed to take to our American ports the vessels they might capture from the Portuguese. On this point the King tells me to say to Y. E. that since our Law of the Indies prohibits access by foreigners to the dominions of H. M. except for cases of emergency, we cannot therefore order that as a general rule privateers of the Colonies be admitted with their Portuguese prizes; but they will be welcome in case of need, and there will be that much less difficulty affecting Portuguese prizes as the Marquis of Casa Tilli has orders to seize any Portuguese Ship he meets in the seas of America, to compensate for and in reprisal for what the Portuguese have practiced against us. Y. E. may say such to that Minister [Vergennes] so he can make the American Insurgents understand it in answer to their question.

God keep etc.

1. AHN, Estado, Legajo 4072, LC Photocopy.

2. The long list of articles referred to as being enclosed in Aranda's letter of October 10 was prepared by Beaumarchais and was as follows:

300 thousand weight of gunpowder  
30 thousand muskets

3 thousand tents	
200 cannons, foregun carriages and all furnishings	
27 mortars, mortar beds, etc.	
100 thousand round shot	
13 thousand bombs.	
And the purchase [?] of 8 transport vessels.	
The personal effects of about 30 officers and advances for three months pay.	
The complete suiting of 30 thousand men is made up of 95 thousand ells of cloth for soldiers' uniforms	
150 thousand ells of drag net gauze for lining	
42 thousand ells of cloth to line breeches, pockets, etc.	
30 thousand pairs of woolen stockings	
120 thousand dozens of soldiers' buttons	
30 thousand openings	
30 thousand ells of cloth for officers	
24 thousand ells of drag net cloth	
18 thousand ells of cloth to make officers' shirts	
18 thousand dozens of buttons for officers	
180 thousand ells of shirting cloth for soldiers	
15 thousand pounds of thread in various colors	
1 thousand pounds of silk	
100 thousandweight of ordinary needles	
100 thousandweight of small awls	
30 thousand pocket knives	
30 thousand woolen hats	
24 thousand ells of woolen shag	
30 thousand neckerchiefs	
30 thousand handkerchiefs	
30 thousand pairs of shoes	
30 thousand pairs of garter buckles	
600 baits of tin plate	
This shipment of clothing amounts to about	
two million five hundred thousand livres-----	2, 500, 000
munitions and vessels amount to about the same-----	2, 500, 000
The money advances for officers and crew of the vessel-----	600, 000
	<hr/>
	Total 5, 600, 000

AHN, Estado, Legajo 4072, LC Photocopy.

22 Oct.

*Public Advertiser*, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1776

London [October 22].

Captain Pearce, of the *Dick*, arrived at Liverpoole from Jamaica, in Lat. 40, engaged a Rebel Privateer, who after a Skirmish of two Hours, sheered off; he supposed her a Sloop of ten or twelve Guns. There was a Ship in Company with her, which he took to be a Prize, but it being in the Night could not be certain.

NICHOLA GIAN SANTE TO HIS GOVERNMENT IN NAPLES <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

. . . The various ships, coming to this Port, report the existence of a great number of American pirates among the Islands and between the Strait of Gibraltar and the Channel, where they continue to raid all British ships. Last week arrived here the crews of seven ships captured along the Coast of Portugal. The few Cap-

tains of this Country who still are in this Port, prefer to refuse all cargoes instead of exposing themselves on the open seas.

Lisbon, 22nd Oct. 1776

1. Foreign Affairs, ASV.

23 Oct.

LORD SANDWICH'S PROPOSALS TO GEORGE III <sup>1</sup>

Octo: 23. 1776

A general Press without delay.

The Guardships to be manned to their War Establishment.

The Guardships at Chatham & Plymouth to proceed immediately to Spithead.

The 12 Ships of the Line that are ready to recieve men to be put into Commission.

More Ships to be got in readiness to recieve men.

Shipwrights to work extra.

To encrease the number of Shipwrights and Ropemakers

Navy Board to compleat all stores if any are deficient

Notice to be sent to Minorca & Gibraltar to be on their guard

All the Frigates building in the Merchants Yards to be hastened, without waiting for seasoning.

To compleat the stores & provisions of all the Guardships for their full complement of men.

To advise Ld Howe of the equipment in France & Spain, and to direct him by the first conveyance to send home all the Petty Officers that have been sent out in Transports & Storeships

To apprise the Treasury & Ordnance that no more Petty Officers can be spared.

State of Ships that may be ready in the course of twelve months if the above mentioned measures are immediately carried into execution

Guardships in Commission . . . . .	23
Ships of the Line in America . . . . .	2
in the Mediterranean . . . . .	1
in the East Indies . . . . .	1
ready to recieve men . . . . .	12
on the serviceable list . . . . .	27
more that will be ready within the year . . . . .	12
may on an emergency do for foreign service . . . . .	5

83.

1. Sir John Fortescue, ed., *The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783* (London, 1927, 1928), III, 396-97. Hereafter cited as Fortescue, ed., *Correspondence of George III*.

*Public Advertiser*, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1776

London [October 23].

Letters on Monday from Senegal bring advice, that six Sail of American vessels are slaving on the coast of Africa; they are all armed ships, mounting from 12 to 16 guns each.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM BRISTOL, OCT. 23.”<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday Capt. Carter arrived here, who was taken by the American privateer that engaged the *Africa*, Capt. Baker, of this port, on the coast of Portugal, which blew up (as mentioned lately).<sup>2</sup> He says the names of the three persons who were saved belonging to the *Africa* are Richard Smith, James Linsey, and James Taylor. Capt. Baker fought the privateer six hours, and they were so close together as to converse with each other. Baker declared to the Captain of the privateer, that he would not be taken whilst he had a man to fight. What is very extraordinary, not one of the hands on board the privateer was either killed or wounded.

1. *London Chronicle*, October 24 to October 26, 1776.

2. Massachusetts privateer *Rover*, Captain Simon Forrester.

**24 Oct.**

*Public Advertiser*, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1776

London [October 24].

A Correspondent has desired, through the Channel of our Paper, to inform the Public, that it has appeared from the Account received of the several Captures, which have of late been made by Rebel Cruizers, that their Success has been owing to the following or such-like Stratagem:- On coming in Sight, the Cruizers always hoist English Jack, Ensign and Pendant; and on being hailed, pretend to be King's Vessels, charged with Dispatches going to or coming from America. Their appearance favouring those Pretences, the Ships against which they have Design, are generally put off their Guard, and are then immediately boarded and taken. But when the Attempt has been on a Ship, whose Commander could not be so easily imposed on, but on the contrary has shewn Intention of making Resistance, the Cruizers have always sheered off.

The Captain of the *Bristol Man of War* says, that on crossing the Banks of Newfoundland he learnt, that the American Privateers had been very troublesome on that Station; that they pillaged several Vessels, and that some had run on Shore to escape being taken.

The *Rachel*, Henry, from Granada, and the *Hope*, Quince, from St. Vincent's, were re-taken by the *Galatea Man of War* the 26th and 29th of August, and are carried into New York, and would sail for England under Convoy of the *Bristol Man of War*.

By the *Mary's Goodwill*, Capt. Lawrance, we have the following advices: -. That he sailed from Jamaica with the Fleet on the 9th of August; that they were becalmed on their Passage upwards of three Weeks; that he quitted the Convoy with several other Ships, and on the 20th of Sept. spoke the *Galatea* Frigate, in

Lat. 37. Long. 60, who left New York four Days before, and was then out on a Cruize after the American Privateers that swarmed in that Latitude; he told Capt. Lawrance, that he might expect, in less than 48 Hours to be taken, and that he had already retaken two ships one from Grenada, and the other from St. Kitts, and sent them into New York; and further, that New York was in the Hands of the King's Troops on the 15th of September. It blew hard at this Time, and Capt. Lawrance therefore could not hear any Thing further from her . . .

Capt. Lawrance, after meeting with the Frigate, was chased by an American Privateer, but it blowing very hard he outsailed her, and got clear.

## 25 Oct.

*Public Advertiser*, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1776

London [October 25].

The Americans call the West India Islands their Plantations, and it appears, by the Number of Captures which have been taken within these six Months, that they can call them so with as much Propriety as Great Britain; for as many of their Ships are carried to North America as are brought to England.

Two American Privateers are taken and carried into St. John's, Newfoundland; and by Letters from thence of the 20th of Sept. a large Fleet sailed a few Days before for a Market under Convoy of a Man of War, and another Convoy would sail in October.

The *Catharine*, Oram, and *Polly*, Elford, were taken by an American Privateer in Sept. last on the Banks of Newfoundland.

Letters from Faro mention, that several American Privateers, carrying 12 and 16 guns each, have been seen off the Coast, and that they had taken two or three Prizes.

Advice is received, that the *Galatea* Frigate, after retaking two of our home-ward bound ships, sailed for Bermuda, to release a vessel which was blocked up there by the American privateers.

## 26 Oct.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM LIVERPOOLE, OCT. 26." <sup>1</sup>

In a Letter which was brought by one of our Jamaica-men, which arrived this Week, I have an Account that two Days before this Letter was wrote there arrived in Montego Bay his Majesty's Sloop of War *Pomona*, with two American Prizes; the one a large Ship of 700 Tons, mounting 22 Guns, bound from Cape Francois to Boston with Bale Goods. She has on board 12,000 Pair of Shoes, and several Medicine Chests, which the Provincials are greatly in Want of. The other a Brig, with Flour and Lumber, bound to Guadaloup. These two make 23 Prizes which this Vessel has took since the Commencement of this unhappy War.

On Wednesday the 23d inst. arrived here the Ship *Hereford*, Captain Walker, from Granada, who says, in Lat. 39 N. and Long. 49 W. from London, on the 29th of September, at Daylight, he discovered a Sloop in his Wake giving him Chace; he was steering E. N. E. at the same Time he saw a large Ship upon his Bow hauling up towards him, and came along Side, and sent her Boat on board.

She proved to be the *Unicorn* Frigate of 28 Guns; at the same Time the Sloop still kept on, and came so near that he could discern her Colours to be the American 13 Stripes. The Sloop came up along Side the Frigate before he discovered who she was. The Frigate, in five Minutes, had every Sail set, and Top-gallant Yards up, and kept firing Vollies of small Arms into the Sloop, she making an Attempt to get away, but the Frigate fired a Broadside into her, and laid her on board and struck the Colours, the Americans having quitted the Decks. Captain Walker then run up and spoke the Frigate; they told him she was a Sloop of 12 Six Pounders, two Cohorns, and full of Swivels, and he supposes about 170 Men, had been out of Boston about six Weeks; that there was a Schooner of 16 guns bore E. S. E. from them, and desired Capt. Walker to mind to shape his Course so as to keep clear of her. He further told him that the Fleet was all well in Soundings, with the last Division of Hessians designed for New York.

1. *Public Advertiser*, London, October 29, 1776.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO COMMODORE SIR EDWARD VERNON <sup>1</sup>

Whereas we have received Information that His Majtys Rebellious Subjects in North America have fitted out a great number of Vessels this Year for the Whale Fishery on the Coast of Brasil, and that several Rebel Privatiers are to cruize in those parts with a view of making Capture of the Ships fitted out from Great Britain for that Fishery, which is chiefly carried on along the outer edge of the Banks upon that Coast, You are hereby required and directed in your Passage to the East Indies after having pass'd the Equinoxtial Line, to endeavour in your way, to keep along the Coast of Brasil a little without Soundings until you come into the Latitude of 34. South, diligently looking out for any Privatiers, or other Vessels belonging to His Majestys Rebellious Subjects, and using your best endeavours to take or destroy such of them as you may fall in with; And in case of meeting with any Ships belonging to Great Britain you are to caution them to be on their Guard. Given &c. the 26th October 1776.

To Sir Edward Vernon Knt  
Commr in Chief &c. &c.  
in the East Indies.

Sandwich  
J. Buller  
Palmerston.

By &c. P. S.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 375-76.

*Public Advertiser*, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1776

London [October 26].

The *St. James*, Wilson, from Jamaica to Bristol, was taken the 19th of May by the *Comet* Privateer of 18 Guns and 90 Men, who, with the *St. James* going to Charles-Town were chased by the *Sphynx* Man of War. The Privateer got over the Bar, but the *St. James* ran on shore, and was burnt by the Man of War. The Mate, who brings this Account, came to Bordeaux in the *Dolphin* loaded with Rice and Indigo. Five others were loaded, and bound for the same Place, and were to carry back Powder and Ammunition. . . . On Board the Privateer who took the *Blaze Castle* was the Boatswain, Carpenter, and several Seamen, all Volunteers



belonging to the *Anna Maria*, Pringle, from Barbadoes, who was taken by the Americans, and carried into Rhode Island.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MORLAIX, OCT. 26.”<sup>1</sup>

On Friday last two American vessels, (brigs about 150 tons each) arrived in the port from Williamsburg, in Virginia, loaded with tobacco; a kind of Merchant or Supercargo came in one of them, who is gone to the King's Commissioners (the Farmers of the Revenue of Tobacco) in order to dispose of the cargoes, as no one can purchase it but them. The crews are very shy in speaking about America, &c. for fear, I suppose, of offending the French Laws. I asked one of them how they dared venture into the English Channel? when he told us there was work enough cut out for the British navy in America if it was, double the number it is; and that therefore they did not expect to meet with any ships of war so near their own ports.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, November 9 to November 12, 1776.

**27 Oct. (Sunday)**

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE<sup>1</sup>

My Lord

27th Octr 1776

My Lords Commssrs of the Admty having received a Letter from Lord Weymouth, one of His Majts Principal Secretaries of State informing their Lordships of a Complaint made by the Spanish Ambassador of the Conduct of Capt. [Maximilian] Jacobs with regard to a Spanish Ship called the *Virgen del Carmen* by ordering some Packets directed to his Catholick Majts Officers at Cadez to be opened, and signifying His Majesty's Command that enquirey may be made into the said Complaint, I am commanded to send your Lordship herewith an Extract of so much of the said Letter as relates thereto, and to signify their Lordships direction to you to enquire into the Matter complained of, and report to them how you find the same to be. I have the honor to be &c.

P. S.

By the *Thames*

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 127-28.

**28 Oct.**

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRALS JAMES YOUNG AND CLARK GAYTON<sup>1</sup>

Sr

28th Octr 1776

Lord Weymouth, One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State having transmitted to my Lords Commrs of the Admty Copy of a Paper delivered by Monsr Garnier, charged with the Affairs of the Court of France containing an Extract of the Desposition made at Bourdeaux by Alexander Dubrouch Master of the French Ship *Hercules* setting forth the Proceedings of the Commander of His Majts Sloop the *Pomona*, which are considered as irregular by that Court, and signifying His Majesty's Pleasure that the necessary enquiry be made into the said Complaint; I am commanded by their Lordships to send you herewith a Copy of

the said Paper, and to signify their direction to you to enquire into the Matter complained of and report to their Lordships how you find the same to be I am &c.  
P S.

Vice Adml Young – Antigua }  
By the *Glasgow* }

the like to

Vice Adml Gayton at Jamaica – Ship *Antelope*  
By the *Glasgow*

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 126.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL CLARK GAYTON<sup>1</sup>

Sir

28h October 1776

My Lords Commrs of the admty having received a Memorial from the Merchants trading to the River Mississippi and West Florida, praying that orders may be given for a Ship of War to cruize at the Mouth of the Mississippi for the protection of the Trade, and to rendezvous there between the 15 of March and the 1st of april next, or at Pensacola or such other convenient place as shall be thought meet; and to take the Trade bound from the Mississippi, Mobile, and Pensacola under her Convoy quite home; I am commanded by their Lordships to send you the inclosed Copy of the said Memorial, and to signify their direction to you to appoint a Convoy for the Trade beforementioned accordingly if it can be done consistently with the other important Services entrusted to your care I am &c

P: S:

By the *Glasgow*

Duplicates sent the 1st Jany 1777 By the Packet

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 131.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO ANTHONY TODD<sup>1</sup>

Sr

28th Octr 1776

Having communicated to my Lords Commissrs of the Admiralty your Letter of the 26th instant expressing the Post Master Generals approbation of the Conduct of Mr Robards, a Midshipman, charged with dispatches for Government on board the *Sandwich* Packet Boat, upon her being attacked by a Rebel Privateer in her passage for New York, and recommending him in their Names, for some mark of their Lordships Favour for his good Behaviour on the above Occasion, I am commanded to acquaint you, for the information of the Post Master General, that their Lordships have promoted Mr Robards to a Lieutenantcy in the Navy. I am &c.

P. S.

Post Office

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 129.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN RICHARD BICKERTON,  
H.M.S. *Princess Augusta*, DEPTFORD<sup>1</sup>

By the Commissioners for executing the Office of  
Lord High Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland  
&ca and of all His Majesty's Plantations &ca

In pursuance of His Majesty's Order in Council dated the 28th day of October 1776, We do hereby Impower and Direct you to Impress, or cause to be Impressed, so many Seamen, Seafaring Men, and Persons whose occupations and Callings are to work in Vessels and Boats upon Rivers, as shall be necessary either to Man His Majesty's Ship under your Command, or any other of His Majesty's Ships, giving unto each Man so Impressed One Shilling for Prest Money. And, in the Execution hereof, you are to take care, that neither yourself, nor any Officer authorized by you, do demand or receive any Money, Gratuity, Reward, or other Consideration whatsoever, for the Sparing, Exchanging, or Discharging any Person or Persons Impressed or to be Impressed, as you will answer it at your Peril. — You are not to intrust any Person with the Execution of this Warrant but a Commission Officer, and to insert his Name and Office in the Deputation on the other side hereof, and set your hand and Seal thereto. This Warrant to continue in Force til the 31st day of December 1776. And, in the due Execution thereof, all Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Bailiffs, Constables, Head boroughs, and all other His Majesty's Officers and Subjects whom it may concern, are hereby required to be aiding and assisting unto, and those employed by you, as they tender His Majesty's Service, and will answer the contrary at their Perils. Given under our hands, and the Seal of the Office of Admiralty, the twenty eighth day of October 1776.

Sandwich. H. Penton H. Palliser.

By Command of their Lordships. Ph<sup>p</sup> Stephens.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 388–89.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN RICHARD BICKERTON,  
H. M. S. *Princess Augusta*<sup>1</sup>

Whereas we have given Orders to the Commanders of His Majesty's Ships *Bedford* at Woolwich, and *Aeolus* at Deptford, to cause one Lieutenant from each of those Ships with such a number of their Master's Mates, Midshipmen and Seamen (including the Yachts Men now on board the former) and have also ordered the Captains of the Ships and Yachts named in the Margin to cause as many of their Petty Officers and Seamen as you shall desire, to attend you at such time as you shall appoint; And whereas we have also directed the Captain of the *Bedford* to order the Lieutenants Commanding the *Sandwich* and *Concord* Tenders, and have directed Lieut [Richard] Pickersgil of the *Lyon* Armed Vessel, to attend you with their respective

*Royal Charlotte*  
*Mary*  
*William & Mary*  
*Katherine*  
*Fubbs*

Lt Jno Buchanan  
 " David Maitland  
 " Stepn Sandys  
 " Thos Allen (2)  
 " Thos Hewson

Vessels in such manner as you shall direct; And whereas we have likewise directed Captain [James] Kirk, the Regulating Captain in Town, to order the Lieutenants named in the Margin with their Petty Officers to attend you at such time as you shall appoint; And have directed the Navy Board to cause you to be supplied from His Majts Yards at Deptford and Woolwich with such Boats &ca as you shall desire; You are hereby required and directed to take the whole under your Command and direction, and dispose of them as you shall judge best for Impress- ing as many Seamen and Seafaring Men on the River Thames as possible, agreeable to the Warrants which you will herewith receive, and which you will deliver to the several Persons to whom they are directed (filling up the Blanks of those for the Lieuten- ants of the *Bedford* and *Aeolus* with their respective Names) and you are to begin the Press accordingly at such time this Evening as you shall think proper, sending down to the *Conquistador* at the Nore, or if she cannot contain the whole, to the *Mars* at Blackstakes, as soon as conveniently may be, the Men which shall have been pressed, and reporting to us to morrow morning the Number you shall have procured.

And whereas we intend that Captain Kirk shall order the Lieutenants employed at the several Rendezvouses in Town (ex- cept those abovementioned) to press at the same time as many Seamen and Seafaring Men as they possibly can, agreeable to the Warrants with which he will furnish them, and have directed him to advise, settle and adjust with you the best method for making the said Press, and to station the Tenders under his direc- tion as shall be judged most proper for receiving the Prest Men; You are to advise and adjust matters with Capt Kirk accordingly.

And as we have for the more ready execution of these Orders, directed Captain [Richard] Edwards of the *Mary* Yacht, and Captain [Christopher] Atkins of the *Aeolus* to assist you therein, You will concert measures with, and employ them, in such man- ner as you judge proper. Given &ca the 28th of October 1776.

Sandwich H. Penton H. Palliser.

By &ca P S.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 383-85.

*Public Advertiser*, MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1776

London [October 28].

Only 23 out of 118 sail of ships, which came under convoy from Jamaica, are yet arrived at the different ports in England, which gives great pain to the merchants, there being such a swarm of American privateers out to intercept them;

and the underwriters act with so much caution, that they cannot get one of them re-insured without a very large premium.

Letters from Newfoundland bring advice, that many of the ships which are loaded for England are detained there for want of convoy, for they dare not stir out on account of the number of American privateers; which privateers are supplied by the French with what fish they want. Some of them take in large cargoes, carry them to foreign markets, and are convoyed (out of the reach of the English men of war) by the French men of war.

**29 Oct.**

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO VICE ADMIRAL SIR JAMES DOUGLAS <sup>1</sup>

Having ordered the Complements of His Majesty's Ships named on the other-side hereof to be increased to the Number of Men against each respectively express'd, their Stores to be completed to a proper proportion for Channel Service, and their Provisions to four Months of all Species except Beer, of which they are to have as much as they can conveniently stow; You are hereby required and directed to give Orders to their respective Captains to use all possible dispatch in getting their Complements increased by entering able bodied Landmen, as well as Seamen, and taking in such an additional quantity of Stores and Provisions as may be necessary to complete what they may have on board, to the abovemention'd proportions accordingly; And having so done, those in the Harbour are to go out to Spithead, and with the others now there, to be kept in constant readiness for the Sea. Given &c. the 29th October 1776.

To Sir James Douglas,  
Vice Admiral of the Red & Commr  
in Chief of His Majts Ships & Vessels  
at Portsmouth &c.

Sandwich  
C. Spencer  
H Palliser

By &c. P. S.

	<u>Men</u>
<i>Barfleur</i>	750
<i>Centaur</i>	600
<i>Couragous</i>	600
<i>Culloden</i>	600
<i>Egmont</i>	600
<i>Hector</i>	600
<i>Resolution</i>	600
<i>Royal Oak</i>	600
<i>Exeter</i>	500
<i>Worcester</i>	500

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 399. A similar order the same day was sent to Vice Admiral John Amherst, at Plymouth, increasing the complements as follows: *Ocean*, 750; *Albion*, 600; *Foudroyant*, 600; *Torbay*, 600; *Boyne*, 520; *Somerset*, 520; *Belle Isle*, 500; *Nonsuch*, 500, and *Raisonable*, 500. In conclusion, the order read: "And having so done, to hold themselves in constant readiness for the Sea," PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 400.

**30 Oct.***Public Advertiser*, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1776

London [October 30].

Monday Night upon the Flood Tide, about twenty Boats properly mann'd and officer'd came up the River from Deptford and Woolwich, when a General Press began, and every Man was taken on board the several Ships they boarded, except the Master, Mate and Boys.

The Number of Men impressed as above is variously reported: some say 1500, others 2000, but it is most generally thought that it did not exceed 8 or 900.

Monday Night Press Warrants were sent down to all the Western Ports to impress as many Seamen as possible for the Service of the Navy, and, it is supposed the Press will be general through all England.

A private Letter from Jamaica says, there is a very great Plenty of Seamen at that Place, many of whom leave the Merchant Ships soon after their Arrival at Kingston, and enter on board the Men of War, armed Cruizers, and Privateers, to act against the Americans, on account of the great Success they meet with in taking Prizes. The Crew of a Privateer fitted out at Kingston, it is said, has already shared upwards of 70 l. a common Sailor, Prize-Money.

**31 Oct.**EXTRACTS FROM PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES <sup>1</sup>

[October 31, 1776]

This led his grace [Duke of Richmond] to that part of the speech,<sup>2</sup> which says, "I still hope that all misunderstandings may be removed, and Europe continue to enjoy the blessings of peace; I think it nevertheless necessary, that we should be in a respectable state of defence at home." This, he said, was a most alarming piece of information. If any explanation was wanting, the press-warrants lately issued would serve as the best comment; they justified our apprehensions; they confirmed our fears, and the more so, when we recollected, that the greatest part of our only sure bulwark, our navy, was on the other side of the Atlantic.

---

The Earl of Sandwich said, he should not have troubled their lordships, had not the noble duke, who spoke last, alluded to some matters, which, as connected with the office at which he had the honour to preside, he looked upon himself particularly called upon to explain. The noble duke asserted, that the greatest part of our force was on the other side of the Atlantic, and that we were left defenceless at home. The first of these assertions was not founded in fact; for out of 28,000 seamen, with one of the most formidable fleets this country ever beheld, 15,000, including the marines who were doing duty on shore, as well as on board the ships of war, and two line of battle ships, were only on the other side of the Atlantic: and as to the other assertion, that we were left in a defenceless state at home, it was equally ill-founded; for we had a naval force at this instant ready for sea, fully sufficient for our defence and protection. We had the most ample assurances

from those courts, of their pacific and friendly dispositions; if they should turn out otherwise, we are prepared for the worst. He said, he looked upon it to be his duty, as an official man, to take care, that the navy, which was our only national defence, should be in the best condition in his power. He was happy to inform their lordships, that it was so, and he was determined that this kingdom should be prepared for any event that might happen.

The Earl of Sandwich said, he could assure the House from his own certain knowledge, that before any late preparation was made on our part, we had a naval force sufficient to cope with any now at Brest, fitting out there, or preparing to depart. The armament alluded to was but a small one, consisting only of six ships of the line; but if it had been greater, we were sufficiently prepared.

---

[Earl of Shelburne] why dispatch your press-gangs in every quarter of town? why let loose so many bands of ruffians, to enter by force into people's dwellings, to drag the unhappy master of a numerous family from them, aboard a tender, where perhaps the first account they hear of him is, that he died of grief and vexation, or of the cruel usage he received before or during his passage to, or being aboard at the Nore. His lordship, however, was proud to find, that by the spirited conduct of the lord mayor of London (Mr. Sawbridge) a stop had been put to those horrid outrages within the limits of his jurisdiction. He had refused to back press-warrants, though it was insinuated by those that applied, on his refusal, that the request was merely complimentary, for that the press would be carried into the city. He said, if any proof were wanting of the unpopularity of the present barbarous war, that honest magistrate's conduct, as expressing the sentiments of the inhabitants of the first city in the empire, perhaps in the world, was the most irrefragable and conclusive.

---

Mr. Wombwell said, no press was better conducted than the present. He approved of the Address, and disapproved of the Amendment. He censured the Americans as a bragging, cowardly banditti.

---

Mr. Wilkes. The hon. gentleman who spoke last endeavours to mislead the House. It is certain that no pressing has at this time been carried on in the city of London, or its liberties. No press-gangs have dared to make their appearance in that jurisdiction. Those lawless bands of cruel banditti very prudently chose other scenes of horror and bloodshed of less danger to themselves. The city has hitherto remained in perfect tranquillity, by the vigilance, intrepidity, and noble love of liberty, which are conspicuous in its present worthy chief magistrate. The conduct of administration, Sir, in the late issuing of press-warrants, before they had tried the operation of the high bounty, is totally unjustifiable. The speech now in your hand, Sir, is so very pacific, that the large bounty of 5*l.* for every able, and 50*s.* for every ordinary seaman, promised in last Saturday's Gazette, might safely, for a short time at least, have been trusted to, the emergency not being

thought very critical. From the minister's own state of public affairs there was no danger in the experiment. Much cruelty and bloodshed had been avoided, many valuable lives preserved.

---

[Mr. T. Townshend] As to the state of the navy, there are one or two very striking features in it, that differ much from what we saw last war. We had 12 or 13,000 Americans in our navy. It is unnecessary to say where they are now. They are making reprisals upon our defenceless trade. We have besides, about 15,000 seamen in our fleet in America. What a draught from the general naval force of this country! We have, as you are told, a very fine fleet of ships of the line: but can ships of the line protect your trade, or alone prevent an invasion? Where are your frigates and sloops? Almost all in America. I have been told, and by men who sat many years at the board of Admiralty, with, perhaps, the greatest officer this country ever saw at the head of its navy, that in times of an apprehended invasion, fifty, sixty, seventy of these frigates and sloops were constantly and necessarily employed. What proportion of them can you now command?

---

Lord North. It has been said, that we are stripped of our home naval defence; that though we should procure seamen, and have a sufficient number of line of battle ships ready for sea, the absence of our frigates would prevent us, for some time, at least, from carrying on any effectual naval operations. To this, a very short answer will suffice: we have several frigates at home; there are some building; and if it were not so, we could procure a sufficient number to answer every purpose we want, or wish at present to effect. The armament going on in France, which has been this night so mightily magnified, is but a small one. It consists of six ships of the line and four frigates. They are, it is true, putting their navy on a respectable footing; they have made a demand on the registers. These preparations import nothing directly hostile; their assurances of their pacific disposition towards us are as strong as words can make them: but I repeat once more, that his Majesty's ministers have thought proper to advise him to the present armament, by way of precaution.

---

Admiral Keppel said, that things had an extreme disagreeable appearance. He asserted, from the most authentic information, that Spain had 25 ships of the line, but believed them to be ill-manned with marines. In respect to France, it was otherwise. Their registers commanded seamen, and their military force was known to be sufficient to furnish any number of men they might want, to serve on board their ships of war. He concluded with lamenting, in case of a rupture with France or Spain, the absence of that useful and necessary part of our naval force, our frigates and sloops of war.

1. *The Parliamentary History of England from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803* (London, 1813), XVIII, 1379-1427. Hereafter cited as *Parliamentary History*.
2. George III's speech opening the session, October 31, 1776.



*Public Advertiser*, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1776

London [October 31].

Yesterday a full Board of Admiralty was held at the Admiralty Office, Whitehall, at which the Right Hon. the Earl of Sandwich was present, and several other Lords, when the Returns of the Number of Men pressed into his Majesty's Service on Monday, as near as could be made out, were laid before the Board, which proved to be 1100. Two Hundred fresh Impress Warrants were signed at the Board, and fresh Instructions sent off by Messengers to Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham relative to the forwarding the Shipping at those Places.

By Letters received by Yesterday's Post, we learn, that the Press for Sailors was as hot on Monday in all the Sea-ports in the Kingdom, as in the Thames; and by Accounts received of the Number already got and entered, they amount to about 5000, which is Half the Number that is wanted.

It is said Lord Howe has ordered all the Cruizers to carry those Ships they may take from the Provincials, loaded with Lumber, to the West India Islands to be disposed of, on Account of the great Scarcity there.

1 Nov.

*The General Advertiser. Liverpool*, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1776

A correspondent who has kept an account of the ships taken by the Americans, which come to his knowledge, says they amount to ninety-three.

By a letter from Lisburne [Lisburn], dated October the 15th, we learn that an American privateer came to anchor in the harbour of Newry on the 13th inst. and demanded provisions, for which payment was offered. She mounted 18 carriage guns, had 125 men on board, and is a new vessel well built. She remained but a few hours, then weighed anchor and sailed to the northward. Those who observed her under way think her a remarkably swift sailer.

WILLIAM KNOX, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir,

Whitehall 1st November 1776

Mr [John] Boddington having just now informed me that the *Richmond* and *Nottingham* Storeships were in readiness to go down the River this day and that they might be expected to arrive at Portsmouth by Sunday Evening, but that the *Lord Amherst* had part of her Loading to take in which could not be put onboard until she fell down below Woolwich, and that the time of her Sailing could not therefore be ascertained; I have acquainted Lord George Germain therewith, and his Lordship considering the great Strength of that Ship and being unwilling that the Trade of His Majesty's Subjects should suffer any interruption for which there is not the most absolute Necessity, directs me to desire you will acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that he has no objection to their Lordships ordering the Convoy for the West India Ships to proceed to Sea as soon as the *Nottingham* & *Richmond* Store Ships shall have joined them, without

waiting for the *Lord Amherst*, if she does not arrive before they put to Sea. I am &ca

Will<sup>m</sup> Knox

1. PRO, Colonial Office, 5/254, 106.

*Mercur de France*, DECEMBER 1776

London, November 1

As a result of a proclamation by the King on October 16, which promises a bonus to anyone who will enlist as sailor on board Royal ships, rendezvous have been opened in the ports of the three kingdoms for those who volunteer their services with good intentions. This proclamation seems to have been intended to assure that there would be no coercion. Two days later there were issued from the Admiralty orders requiring all citizens of appropriate qualifications, and especially merchant seamen, to enlist.

These orders, which were necessary to speed up the arming of several ships, required the signature of Lord Sandwich, who has always been opposed to any kind of coercion, and caused disturbances in several places.

The Admiralty received a letter from Lord Howe which was published in the Extraordinary Gazette of the Court, giving details of what the Sea forces did in the capture of New York by His Majesty's troops.

MARQUIS DE NOAILLES TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 1 November 1776

We now know, My Lord Count, the reasons for the impressment. It is a question of manning an observation force of 27 ships of the line whose rendez-vous point is off Spithead. It is reported that the force will be under the command of Admiral Keppel; however, he has not yet been appointed. The Admiralty's order, sent out the evening before the opening of Parliament, states that full complements will be assigned to those ships making up this force, independently of nine other ships which it had been decided previously to bring up to fighting strength.<sup>2</sup>

This tremendous build up which is presently going on and which will be completed in less than a month, no longer makes it possible to predict how long peace will last. . . .

As for the military operations in America, it is announced that the campaign in Canada is finished. General Burgoyne had another plan to carry out, for he was to cross the Lakes and move to the center of the rebellious colonies where he would join forces with General Howe. What do the latter's successes amount to? When the awaited news is received concerning the seizure of the island of New York, it will still only be the capture of an island less than six miles wide by thirteen miles long. More than 1,500 miles of coastal areas to an undetermined depth will remain to be captured. An agreement must therefore be quickly made on the necessity of another campaign to subdue America. His Britannic Majesty says officially that his subjects must prepare themselves for any eventuality. It remains to be seen whether it will be a final campaign in America or the first one in Europe. . . .

You will see, My Lord Count, by the attached report the necessary number of men to man the observation fleet, amounts to 17,400 men. You will have noticed by the last report on ports that the total of crew members on board the guard ships does not amount to more than 7,000. The press gangs on the Thames have not produced 1200 men. Most of the men withdrew into the city for protection; progress was slow after the first instance of surprise. Every trick was used for the success of this operation. The Admiralty had previously announced to the traders of the West Indies that a convoy was being readied to escort their ships. The Admiralty had also put up posters to the effect that the *Worcester*, which, still in Portsmouth, would be leaving Spithead on 25 October to escort loaded ships to Spain, Portugal, and the Mediterranean. Finally, the Secretary of the Treasury was not afraid to assure the President of the India Company that the Government, at this time, had no thought of using press gangs. With these assurances, ship owners hastened to assemble their crews to sail their ships; while, without knowing it, they were promoting the Government's objective, i.e., to find the right moment to make a good showing. The sailors of the India Company fought back, as well as sailors of some privately owned ships. A naval lieutenant was killed, and there were about thirty men drowned or wounded. We are informed from Portsmouth that the press gangs were out on the nights of the 30th and 31st; however, results were meager. . . .

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy. Louis Marie de Noailles was French ambassador in London.
2. See Lords Commissioners, Admiralty, to Vice Admiral Sir James Douglas, October 29, 1776.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PORTSMOUTH, NOV. 1"<sup>1</sup>

On Wednesday night the press began at this place and its environs, and a number of seamen were got from the homeward bound ships. Near 30 of the outward bound ships arrived here this day. The *Sandwich*, *Magnificent*, *Monarque* and *Europa* were this day put into commission, and ordered to be victualled for five months, as are the ten guardships now at Spithead, and are to hold themselves in readiness to sail at the shortest notice.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, October 31 to November 2, 1776.

**2 Nov.**

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 2, 1776

London, November 2.

On Wednesday the Lord-Mayor gave strict orders to his Officers to make a search after the Officers of the two press gangs who violated the liberties of the City, by impressing near 50 hands at Billingsgate, which put a stop to the fish being unloaded. If they can take them they are to be carried before his Lordship.

Two Lieutenants of the navy waited on the Lord Mayor on Wednesday night, intreating his Lordship to back their warrants for impressing men in the city. His Lordship told them, that during his Mayoralty he would not back a warrant; and if they pressed a man in the city, he had ordered his Officers to take them into

custody. The Officers alledged, that they could not pass the streets without being insulted by the sailors.

Yesterday 50 Captains of ships waited on the Lords of the Admiralty for protections for their sailors, which were immediately granted them.

The press warrants, we hear, will be suspended this day till further orders.

SILAS DEANE TO GOVERNOR JONATHAN TRUMBULL <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Paris Novr 2d 1776.

Sr I had the honor of writing to you a few Days before I left Philadelphia, since Which I am so unhappy as to be Without any intelligence from the Colony, Either public or private, except what Newspapers affords, the whole of which has amounted to nothing, either determinate, or of importance—I have not had Leisure to Visit, as I intended, the different Manufactories of this Kingdom, on my Journey from Bourdeaux I visited the Capital Foundery of the Kingdom for Cannon, they cast the Cannon solid after which they put it on a strong frame, or bed, on Which it is turned by a Water Wheel, & With Chisels as in a Turners lath[e] fashioned & polished, at the same time by a succession of Augres, it is bored, to the size Designed, the Augre by a spiral direction constantly presses on as it cutts the metal; Four Men will bore out a Twelve pounder in a Day in these Works – At present Numbers of projects are started in this Kingdom for makeing Cannon on a New Construction, both cheap, & light, it is proposed to Use wrought or barr Iron, cemented with. Copper, the experiment has not as yet been Completed, Whenever it is, I shall be informed of its success—I recollect that Doctr Franklin, was of Opinion, that Wood, might be so secured wth. Hoops as to answer, this Thought is worth Attending to as the fullest Experiment may be made with very little expence, it may be ridiculed for its simplicity, & the experiment formerly made in Your Neighborhood quoted as a Case in point against it, but I would by no means be discouraged by one, & that so partial an Experiment, I would Add to the Hoops an Inch Rope wooled as the Sailors term it over the whole . . .

A Number of brave, & experienced Officers, with large Supplies Will be with you, by the Time You receive this; I will not Attempt to give your honor, an Idea, of the extremely critical, & delicate situation, in Which I have been for the last Three, or Four Months, at this Court—Without direct intelligence from America to support me & the whole Force, or rather Art & Influence of Great Britain against me, Nothing but the Justice of the Cause, & the Countenance of some great, & Good Men, inspired by Heaven, to interest themselves, in Our behalf, could have Carried Me through, What I have engaged in, & finally have, I trust, happily effected, – Every one here, is friendly to America, & the Eyes of Europe, are fixed on that Quarter of the Globe, as the Assylum for persecuted Liberty; & as the place from Which, an intire Change Will rise & be effected, in the present system, as great as that Occasioned by the first discovery of America, then emphatically called the New World. The Officers going out will probably land in some part of New England & should any of them, pass thro' Conneticut I have told them your honor will be happy in Affording them every Assistance, and Accommodation they may

want. I have no time to add save that I am as ever with the greatest Esteem & Respect [&c.]

S. Deane

1. Trumbull Papers, V, 259a, 259d, ConnSL.

**4 Nov.**

*Whitehall Evening Post*, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 TO TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 5, 1776

London, November 4.

The *Friends Delight*, a transport, in lat. 36, having lost her convoy in a gale of wind, was attacked by an American sloop privateer, which the transport, with only 18 men and four six pounders, beat off, and obliged to make the best of her own way.

**5 Nov.**

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN THOMAS PASLEY,  
H. M. S. *Glasgow*, SPITHEAD <sup>1</sup>

By &c.

<i>Ware</i>	You are hereby required and directed to take under your Convoy the four Transport Vessels named in the Margin, lately arrived at Spithead from Dublin, with Captain Commandant Dalrymple's Troops on board, and see them in safety to Jamaica when you proceed thither, agreeable to the Orders you are under. Given &c. the 5th Novr 1776
<i>Northampton</i>	
<i>Elizabeth</i>	
<i>Georgia Packet</i>	

Sandwich J. Buller Lisburne

By &c. P. S.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 425.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 TO TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 5, 1776

London, November 5.

The *Nancy*, Keys, from Antigua, and *Nelly frigate*, Bradstreet, from Honduras, both for London; the *Perkins*, Jenkins, from St. Augustine for Bristol; and *Peggy*, Kennedy, from Halifax for New-York, are all taken by the Americans, and carried into Boston.

The *Ann*, Duncan, from Dominica, which was taken some time ago by the Provincials, is retaken, and brought into Portsmouth, under the command of Lieutenant Forbes.

The *William*, Moore, from Boston, which is arrived in the Downs, had been taken by the Provincials, and was afterwards purchased by the passengers, that they might proceed to England.

The *Nancy*, Jackson, from Jamaica, is arrived at Liverpool, after being chased seven hours, by a rebel sloop, off the Eastward of Bermuda.

GABRIEL DE SARTINE TO ADMIRAL LOUIS CHARLES DU CHAFFAULT, BREST <sup>1</sup>

Versailles, 5 November 1776

I am sending you, Sir, the general instructions relative to your campaign and the particular instructions which will determine your line of conduct in the various circumstances which might occur while you are cruising off the Windward Islands and with regard to the orders you will give to the ships and frigates that you will detach from your Squadron and direct to cruise off St. Domingo. His Majesty's intentions are clearly explained in the instructions I have been instructed to send you and I need not enter into further details with respect to the object of your mission. I will only observe to you that with regard to the American vessels belonging to the Insurgents which you might meet at sea or in the Ports and Roads in America, His Majesty will approve that you help them secretly as much as circumstances will permit without, however, granting them open assistance and protection except in the event that they would have asked for the protection of the Flag whose authority you will heedfully enforce in all cases without ever compromising the forces entrusted to you. I am convinced, Sir, that you will feel all the importance of the mission which the King has given you and that you will use the greatest circumspection in all your movements and avoid carefully anything that may cause objections on the part of Great Britain.

His Majesty counts on your caution as well as on your firmness and the King is sure that, according to the circumstances, you will use one or the other fittingly in order to support his views and justify his confidence in you.

His Majesty also expects from your zeal in his service that you will give the greatest attention to the expenditures on board the ships and frigates of your Squadron. You cannot recommend exactness with enough insistence to the captains and officers in charge of provisions and stores as to the expenditures and replacements. They cannot help but feel the responsibilities imposed by the King's confidence and the dictates of their personal scrupulousness. The least negligence on their part could not be tolerated. You will please to acquaint them with the items concerning them in this letter and in the General Instructions and give a copy thereof to each captain.

By giving you the command of his Squadron His Majesty could not show you, Sir, a more distinguished proof of his satisfaction with regard to your zeal and services. You may remain assured that in all occasions I shall endeavour to bring these under the eyes of the King and I sincerely hope that circumstances will soon enable me to solicit for you the marks of gratitude which you may rightfully claim.

I have the honour to be with sincere attachment etc.

1. AN, Marine, B<sup>4</sup>, 134, LC Photocopy.

## 6 Nov.

LORD SANDWICH TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Admiralty, 6th November, 1776.

. . . In my former private letter, your Lordship will observe that I have promised you every reinforcement you think necessary to be with you in the spring, and you may depend upon my adhering to that engagement; but the conduct of

France and Spain is so mysterious that it is impossible to say what demands we may have for line of battle ships in the course of the winter; however, as I have already said, the important service in which you are employed shall not be starved, and as I shall know all your wants time enough, you may trust to me that they shall be amply supplied. If we had more 40- and 50-gun ships, it seems to me that they would answer your purpose better than 3rd-rates, on account of their smaller draught of water; for I apprehend what you principally want the larger ships for is their great complement of men and number of boats, and this might in some degree be supplied in the 4th- and 5th-rates by allowing them additional boats and a large number of supernumeraries; however, in all this matter, I shall rely on your superior judgment, and get to know your sentiments by the next opportunity.

Nothing can be more proper than what your Lordship proposes in wishing that some mark of honour may be conferred by his Majesty on Captains Parker and Wallace. I heartily wish you had suggested what particular mark of favour from the King you had in view for those meritorious officers, that I might have been certain of gratifying them to the full extent of their wishes, and in such a manner as to raise a spirit in the fleet to emulate their merit and to deserve equal marks of distinction. However, after turning it over in my thoughts, I can see nothing suitable at the present moment but the honour of knighthood, which, being conferred in consequence of your Lordship's recommendation of them in time of actual war, will I think reflect great credit on them and add double weight to the honour conferred. Your Lordship may also add further to the favour in the manner of conveying it to them by letting them know, in as public a manner as you may think proper, that I have the King's particular command to inform them that he is greatly pleased with what he has heard of their behaviour during the whole progress of this unfortunate war, and that he sends them this proof of his gracious approbation of their conduct. Before I quit the subject of Captain Wallace, I must mention that long ago, upon Admiral Shulldham's having wished he might have a larger ship, the Admiralty sent out a commission for him to command the *Experiment* [50], but we still find him in the *Rose* [20] and have never heard what is become of our commission. . . .

1. Barnes and Owen, eds., *Sandwich Papers*, I, 163-66.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

My Lord

6h November 1776

I had the honor to receive by Captain Balfour on the 2d Instant your Lordships Letters of the 18h and 25h of September last, and immediately communicated them to my Lords Commrs of the Admiralty; In return I am commanded to acquaint you that their Lordships have the greatest satisfaction in the accounts you have therein given of the further successful Progress of His Majesty's Forces against the Rebels in the province of New York.

The repeated notice your Lordship has taken of the abilities and distinguished Resolution of the Captains Parker and Wallace does great honour to them and is highly pleasing to their Lordships, as are the meritorious Services of the other Officers particularized in your Lordships Letters My Lords have also a just sense

of the Merit of the Masters and Crews of the Sea Transports your Lordship mentions

The sudden departure of the Pacquet Boat, by which I send this will not admit of my adding more than that I have transmitted to the Board of ordnance an Extract of so much of your Lordships first mentioned Letter as relates to the want of ordnance Stores, to the end that they may provide a proper assortment to follow the supply mentioned in my Letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> ultimo which supply it is hoped will very speedily sail under Convoy of the *Thames* (now waiting for them at Spithead) a specification whereof is herewith inclosed for your Lordships previous information. I have the honor to be &c

P: S:

(By the Packet same day)

Duplicate sent 20<sup>th</sup> Novr By the *Thames*.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 164-65.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 TO THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 7, 1776

London, November 6.

The *Shark* sloop of war has carried into St. Kitt's, a large ship from Port au Prince, which she took under Spanish colours; she is laden with cloathing chiefly, and has besides about five tons of gunpowder, and 2000 musquets; she was bound to Salem. The cruizers on that station have been exceeding fortunate, one sloop of 10 guns having shared near 100 l. sterling each man.

The *Queen of England*, Arnaud, from London to America; the *Mary and Elizabeth*, Bruce, from Barbadoes to Halifax; the *Georgia Diana*, Rigan, from Grenada to London; the *Carolina Packet*, Fowle, from Antigua to London, the *Anna*, Dudfield, from the Leeward Islands to Great Britain; the *Charming Sally*, Steel, from ditto to Bristol; and a ship from Jamaica to London, which sailed with the *Pallas*, with 372 hogsheads of sugar, 82 puncheons of rum, and 42 pipes of wine, are all taken by the rebels, and carried into New-England.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DOVER, NOV. 6.”<sup>1</sup>

This day arrived here the *Juno*, Manson, from Malaga. She was taken by an American privateer in lat. 38 . 53. north, and long. 11 . 8. west, but is as timely relieved by his Majesty's ship *Zephyr*, Capt. Robert Mann, who came up, and obliged the privateer to sheer off.

1. *London Chronicle*, November 7 to November 9, 1776.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Paris 6<sup>th</sup> November 1776

Gentlemen The only letters I have received from you were 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of June last five months since, during which time Vessels have arrived from almost every part of america to every part of France and Spain, and I am informed Letters from



Mr Morris to his Correspondents dated late in July. If the Congress do not mean to apply for foreign alliances let me intreat you to say so, and rescind your Resolutions published on that head, which will be but Justice to the powers of Europe to whom you gave reason to expect such an application. If I am not the proper Person to announce your Independency and solicit in your behalf, let me intreat you to tell me so and relieve me from an anxiety which is become so intolerable that my Life is a burthen. Two hundred pieces of brass Cannon and arms, Tents and accoutrements for thirty thousand men, with ammunition in proportion, and between twenty and thirty brass mortars have been granted to my request, but the unaccountable silence on your part has delayed the embarkation some weeks already. I yesterday got them again in motion, and a part are already at Havre de Grace and Nantes, and the rest on their way there, but I am hourly trembling for fear of Counter orders. Had I received proper powers in Season, this supply would before this have been in america, and that under the Convoy of a Strong Fleet; The disappointment is distracting, and I will dismiss the subject, after taking the liberty to which a Freeman and an american is entitled of declaring, that by this neglect the cause of the United States of North America has suffered in this, and the neighbouring Courts, and the Blood that will be spilt through the want of these supplies, and the devastations, if any, must be laid at this Door.

Captn Cochran being arrived at Nantes I sent to him to come to me, he is now with me and by him I send this with a packet of Letters. He can inform you of the price of american produce in Europe, the very advance on which will pay you for fitting out a Navy. Rice is from 30 to 50 Lives pr Ct Tobacco 8d and 9d pr lb, Flour and wheat are growing scarce, and rising, Masts, spars and other naval Stores are in demand, and the more so as a War with Great Britain is considered as at the Door.

. . . Enclosed you also have the plan of a French Naval Officer for burning Ships, which he gave me and at the same time shewed me his draughts of ships, and rules for constructing and regulating a Navy, of which I have the highest opinion; he has seen much service, is a person of study and Letters as well as Fortune, and is ambitious of planning a Navy for america, which shall at once be much Cheaper and more *Effectual* than anything of the kind which can be produced on the European system. He has the Command of a Ship of the Line in this Service, but is rather disgusted at not having his proposed Regulations for the Navy of France attended to. His proposal generally is to build Vessels something on the model of those designed by the Marine Committee, to carry from 24 to 36 heavy Guns on one Deck, which will be as formidable a Battery as any ship of the Line can avail itself of, and by fighting them on the upper Deck a much surer one. Had I power to treat with this Gentleman, I believe his Character and friends are such, that he could have two or three such Frigates immediately constructed here on credit, and manned and sent to america, but the want of Instructions or Intelligence, or Remittances, with the late check on Long Island has sunk our Credit to nothing with Individuals. . . .

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, 22-25, NA.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Most Confidential

Fontainebleau Novr 6. 1776

Beaumarchais has hired L'Hotel de la Tour du Pin Veille Rue du Temple to establish his Bureaux there for what is called le Commerce des Piastres. Those Bureaux are to be opened on New Years Day. Three Millions of Livres have been advanced him to carry on this Commerce. I mean, My Lord, that that is the Pretence, the Secret Reason is to enable him to execute His american Commissions He has actually agreed with a great Cloth Merchant at Paris for Cloth, Lining, Buttons &c for Ten thousand Men, and He is now in Treaty with a M. Gerard a rich armateur at L orient and Brother in Law to M. Vincent a Banker at Paris to freight Two Vessels for america loaded with twenty thousand Stand of arms, and a large Quantity of Warlike Stores This M Gerard refuses to undertake unless the whole Value is paid Him beforehand.

Beaumarchais intends soon to return to England, one of the objects of his Journey is to purchase for the Navy of France a large Forest in the Neighbourhood of Colchester that is exposed to public Sale. This his Intention being known I hope, My Lord, that it will be easy to find Means to defeat it. . . .

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 212-13.

**7 Nov.**LORD SUFFOLK TO LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY <sup>1</sup>

St. James's Novr 7th 1776

My Lords, I send Your Lordships inclosed Copy of a Memorial, I have received from Count Welderen Envoy Extraordy & Pleny from the States severly as also Copies of three Papers referred to therein. This Memorial represents, that the Vessel called the *Twee Gebroeders*, Henry Torhorst Master, bound from Rotterdam to St Eustatia, & laden with Cannon, Gun powder, Chests of Arms, Provisions, &c has been stopt & brought into Falmouth Harbour by the *General Conway* Transport commanded by John North: And I am to signify to Your Lordships His Majesty's Pleasure that you should give immediate Orders for Enquiry to be made into the Reasons for the Detention of the said Vessel & Cargo; And that Your Lordships should acquaint me therewith, that I may return an Answer as soon as possible to Count Welderen's Memorial. I am &ca

Suffolk.<sup>2</sup>

1. PRO, Foreign Office 95/355, 304.

2. *The General Advertiser. Liverpool*, December 13, 1776, noted: "Heavy complaints are coming over from Holland, on account of our stopping and detaining several of their ships, on suspicion of carrying on an illicit trade with America."

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 TO THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 7, 1776

London, November 7.

The *Friendship*, Jones, from Grenada to London, is taken by the Provincials, and carried into Providence.

Capt. Smith, of the *Unity*, who arrived at Liverpool last Friday from Bilboa in Spain, and left that place the 24th ult. says, that two American schooner priva-

teers of 8 guns each sailed from thence the day before; the commanders names were Lee and Fletcher; one of them has taken five prizes, and the other was fitted out at Bilboa, to whom the Spaniards shewed every favour and indulgence possible; one of the five prizes was a transport of 16 guns, called the *Nancy*, bound from London to some part of America, which they took by stratagem, the Captain pretending his vessel to be a packet with dispatches for our Court, and invited the Captain and his officers to come on board, whom he immediately put in irons. Several vessels besides Captain Smith were at Bilboa, wanting freight, which they could not take on account of the privateers, the Captains having declared they would not touch vessels in ballast.

8 Nov.

*The General Advertiser. Liverpool, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1776*

Recent accounts arrived at Cork, from the different sea-ports of France, confirm the great warlike preparations making in all the maritime provinces, by order of the court. Each province has been enjoined to send 3000 sailors to Brest and other Royal Ports. The single town of Havre furnishes 2400, Dunkirk 1000, and other places in proportion.

There were six or seven American vessels in Bourdeaux the 8th inst. two of which brought rice and indigo from South Carolina; and another discharged masts from Piscataque. They are even suffered to trade openly in the French ports.

Capt. Fletcher, of the *Clayton*, who is arrived here from Jamaica, saw in lat. 41, long. 54, a brig bearing from him E. the wind then at S. W. by S. she stood for the *Clayton*, with her larboard tacks on board, on which Capt. Fletcher imagined her to be a privateer, and immediately thought of a stratagem to keep his course, hawl'd up the ports, and let the people put their heads through, having first fixed pieces of white paper on their hats, to represent the muzzles of guns, and by this scheme the *Clayton* appeared like a 20 gun ship, and had the desired effect; the brig came within a mile and a half, and then bore away to the northward, with all the sail she could carry. Capt. Fletcher saw no other vessel like a privateer.

“A PROCLAMATION FOR RECALLING AND PROHIBITING SEAMEN FROM SERVING FOREIGN PRINCES AND STATES; AND FOR GRANTING REWARDS FOR DISCOVERING SUCH SEAMEN AS SHALL CONCEAL THEMSELVES.”<sup>1</sup>

George R.

Whereas We are informed, That great Numbers of Mariners and Seafaring Men, Our natural-born Subjects, are in the Service of divers Foreign Princes and States, to the Prejudice of Our Kingdom; We have therefore thought it necessary, by and with the Advice of Our Privy Council, to publish this Our Royal Proclamation; and do hereby strictly charge and command all Masters of Ships, Pilots, Mariners, Seamen, Shipwrights, and other Seafaring Men whatsoever and wheresoever, (being Our natural-born Subjects) who are in the Pay or Service of any Foreign Prince or State, or do serve in any Foreign Ship or Vessel, that forthwith they, and every of them, do (according to their known and bounden Duty and Allegiance) withdraw themselves, depart from, and quit such Foreign Services, and return Home to their Native Countries. And farther, We do hereby strictly

prohibit and forbid all Masters of Ships, Pilots, Mariners, Seamen, Shipwrights, and other Seafaring Men whatsoever, (being Our Natural-born Subjects) from entering, and do charge and command them, and every of them, from hence forth, to forbear to enter themselves into the Pay or Service of any Foreign Prince or State, or to serve in any Foreign Ship or Vessel whatsoever, without Our Special Licence first had and obtained in that Behalf; to all which We expect due Obedience, and exact Conformity. And We do hereby publish and declare, That the Offenders to the Contrary shall not only incur Our just Displeasure, but be proceeded against for their Contempt according to the utmost Severities of the Law. And We do hereby declare, That if any such Masters of Ships, Pilots, Mariners, Seamen, Shipwrights, or other Seafaring Men, (being Our Subjects) shall be taken in any Foreign Service by the Turks, Algerines, or any others, they shall not be reclaimed by Us as Subjects of Great Britain. And We do hereby promise and declare, That a Reward of Two Pounds for every Able, and Thirty Shillings for every Ordinary Seaman, shall be paid any Person who shall discover any Seaman or Seamen, who may secret themselves, that no such Seaman or Seamen shall be taken for Our said Service by any of Our Sea-Officers employed for Raising Men, on or before the Thirty-first Day of December next; the said Rewards to be paid for any Seaman or Seamen so discovered and taken in and about London by the principal Officers and Commissioners of Our Navy; and at the Out-Ports by the Naval Officers (where there are any); and where there are no Naval Officers, by the Collectors of Our Customs, immediately upon a Certificate being produced to the said Principal Officers and Commissioners of Our Navy, Naval Officers, or Collectors respectively, by the Person who may make Discovery of any Seaman or Seamen as aforesaid, certifying his Name, and the Name or Names and Number of Seamen procured in consequence of his Discovery; the said Certificate to be given by such Officer as may take such Seaman or Seamen for Our Service. Given at Our Court at St. James's the Eighth Day of November, One Thousand seven hundred and seventy six, in the Seventeenth Year of Our Reign.

God save the King.

1. *London Gazette*, November 5 to November 9, 1776.

“DEBATE IN THE COMMONS ON THE NAVY ESTIMATES”<sup>1</sup>

Nov. 8. In the Committee of Supply, Mr. [John] Buller moved, “That 45,000 seamen, including 10,129 marines, be employed for the year 1777.”

1. *Parliamentary History*, XVIII, 1449.

DR. EDWARD BANCROFT TO SILAS DEANE<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London Novr 8th 1776

. . . I have procured an Account from a Certain infallible Source; a Source from which a great part of the Contents of this Letter is derived, & from which most useful intelligence may be hereafter obtained, if we do not imprudently use what is given to us so as to lead to improper discoveries – you will recollect what I have before mentioned about a certain Ministers private Secretary – he says the Project is upon the arrival of Six thousand Hessians & near 3000 Recruits then hourly

expected at New York to Detach a Considerable part of the Army to take Possession of Rhodeisland, make it a Station for a Considerable part of the Fleet next Winter, and a kind of Marine Arsenal (Hallifax being too remote), and to send thither such a body of Land Forces as will be Sufficient to divide Genl Washingtons Army & perpetually to allarm & harass the Towns in the Coloney of Rhode island & Massachusetts Bay; another part of the Fleet is to Winter at Oyster Bay (on the East end of Long island), which is to be fortified; & a third is to be sent to Antigua, & from thence to be employed in Cruising against the American Vessels sailing to & from the French Islands –

Another part of the Fleet under Lord Howe (consisting altogether of 89 Frigates and Sloops with two line of Battle Ships) being in want of considerable repairs, is to return to England – A Knowledge of this allotment of the Navy may be of infinite Service in regard to your Projects; you will easily perceive that all approaches to New London, between New Port & Oyster Bay, must be dangerous – any where to the North ward will apparently be safe, as little or no force will be left at Hallifax; & I do not find that there will be any on the Coast of America, South ward of New Jersey – Two American Privateers having for some time Blocked up an English Sloop of War at Bermudas Lord Howe in Sepr Dispatched the *Galatea* Frigate thither to release her, & it is said that one or two others would be sent to Cruise in that Latitude, as the American Privateers made it their Station, & as the Congress have in an especial manner exempted the Inhabitants of that Island & their Effects from Capture, &c. . . .

The Sudden Press here was intended to intimidate France & partly to Obviate the Clamours of opposition respecting the defenceless situation of the Kingdom – but few Seamen are however collected by it, & of those the greatest part will be sent to Lord Howe who complains much of the Deficiencies of his Fleet – no such number of Ships as is given out, can be in any readiness for Service. . . .

1. Silas Deane Papers, ConnHS.

## 9 Nov.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 9, 1776

London, Nov. 9.

The *Betsey*, Crosthwaite, from Jamaica, is arrived at Liverpool. She engaged a Provincial schooner off the Banks of Newfoundland; the *Betsey* had only six four pounders.

The *Perkins*, Capt. Jenkins, who sailed from St. Augustine the 24th of July, bound for Bristol, was taken off the Capes of Virginia the 4th of August, by the *Hancock* privateer, Capt. Tucker, and the *Franklyn*, Capt. Seymour [John Skimmer], each mounting eight guns, and carried into Boston.

The *Lucy*, Watson, from New-York, arrived at Corke the first inst. she sailed on the 26th of September, and on the 30th retook the *Suffolk*, of London, laden with rum and sugar, which had been taken by the *Boston* privateer.

We hear from Lancaster, that the *James*, Higgins, arrived there last week from Antigua. She was taken by an American sloop, burden about 25 tons, near

the lat. of Bermuda, but was afterwards retaken by the crew (assisted by some other seamen which were left on board her by the rebel sloop) after wounding the prize-master and some other provincial seamen. The under-writers on this ship have generously rewarded the captors with 5 per cent. on the premium insured.

*Public Advertiser*, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1776

London [November 9].

The *Batchelor*, Barclay, from Granada to London, was taken by some American Privateers the 5th of September off Georgia. The Captain and a Boy are arrived at the Sound in a Danish Vessel from the West Indies.

A large Ship, from Jamaica to Liverpool, Name not mentioned, was taken by an American Privateer soon after she got through the Gulph.

There are now 44 Sail of Ships arrived in different Parts of England, being Part of the Fleet of 118 Sail, which came under Convoy of the *Maidstone* Man of War and *Pallas* Frigate; and it is feared that a great many of them are fallen into the Hands of the Americans, as Advice is received that a great many Privateers were cruizing to intercept them.

It appears by Lloyd's Books, that since the Commencement of the War with the Americans, they have taken ninety Sail of our Merchant Ships.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM BRISTOL, NOV. 9TH, 1776." <sup>1</sup>

The *Charming Sally*, Steele, from the Leeward islands to this port, and the *Anna*, Dudfield, from ditto for Great Britain, are both taken and carried into New England.

Capt. Thomas, of the ship *Hector*, arrived here from Jamaica, spoke on the 28th of September with the ship *Leghorn Galley*, Capt. Macdonald, from Jamaica to Liverpool, which in a hard gale of wind carrying away part of her sheathing in the bows, sprung a leak, and was obliged to pump to keep her free. About noon the same day, says the Captain, saw a schooner wearing round and standing towards us; but, finding we gained on her fast by the compass, (we keeping our ship up, that our sails might draw) instead of bearing down on us, hauled his wind for the *Leghorn Galley*, (which was now four miles astern) and at half after one P.M. was along side of her; he immediately fired 3 guns, and hoisted his colours at the main-mast head; upon this the *Leghorn Galley* hove to, as did likewise the schooner under a foresail; we saw no more guns fire, but traced the vessels as long as we could from our main top gallant mast-head, and at six in the evening lost sight of them.<sup>2</sup> Next day, the 30th, saw two schooners, supposed to be privateers, one of which at 10 P.M. was close under our lee close hall'd; as soon as she perceived us, she kept away before the wind. I imagine as we appeared a large ship, she was afraid to bring us to; and at eleven we lost sight of her.

1. *The General Advertiser*. Liverpool, November 29, 1776.

2. *Leghorn Galley* was taken by Continental schooner *Wasp*, see Volume 6.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PORTSMOUTH, NOV. 9"<sup>1</sup>

On the 25th ult. Capt. Carr of the *Parnassus* parted with the *Pallas* frigate in a hard gale of wind; on the 28th and 29th following he fell in with three American privateers of 10 guns each, who engaged him two hours and a half; and though Capt. Carr had but 12 guns, he gave them such a warm reception as made them sheer off. – The *Suffolk* West Indiaman, Capt. Delamere, and two schooners, were taken by the same privateers in sight of Capt. Carr; he has been 13 weeks on his passage from Jamaica.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, November 9 to November 12, 1776.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen

Paris Novr 9. 1776.

I have wrote you often and particularly of affairs here, the want of intelligence retards every thing, as I have not a Word from you, since the 6 June last, I am well nigh distracted, that I may not omit any chance of sending to you I write this tho I have long & minute Letters by me waiting the departure of Monsr Genl Du Coudry<sup>2</sup> & his train who had I been properly and in Season instructed, would before this have been with you, at present I have put much to the hazard, to effect what I have – inclos'd you have my Thoughts on Naval Operations & I pray you send me some Blank Comm[ission]s which will enable me to fit out Priveteers from hence without any Charge to you – A Warr appears at hand and will probably be general, – all Europe have their Eyes on the States of America, and are astonished to find, Month after Month, rolling away without your applying to them in form, I hope such Application is on its way, nothing else is wanting to effect your utmost wishes –

I am with Compliments to Freinds & with the highest respect for the honorable Congress [&c.]

Messrs Franklin, Dickinson &c, &c,

Secret Committee of Correspondence

[Endorsed by Deane] Copy of a Lettr to Messrs Franklin &c &c

Novr 9th 1776 – sent Two Via Nantes –

1. BPL.

2. Major General Philip Charles Jean Baptiste Trouson du Coudray sailed December 14 on board *L'Amphitrite*. Andrew Limozin to Silas Deane, December 15, 1776, Deane Papers, ConnHS.

11 Nov.

DIARY OF JOHN BRAGG, WHITEHAVEN, ENGLAND<sup>1</sup>

11 Mo: 11th 1776 – New York taken into possession by the Kings troops about the Middle of Ninth Month 1776 –

Previous to this account or about same time in this month November a Bounty of five pounds for every able bodied Seaman was offerd who were disposed to enter into the Kings Service, and imediatly followed a hott press for Seamen

almost all over England &c &c—Whitehaven Gentlemen resolve on giving 40 Shgs a man as an addition to the Kings bounty for Seamen

1. WPL.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DOVER, NOV. 11”<sup>1</sup>

Arrived the *Georgiana*, Kentish, from Bluesfields, in Jamaica, after a passage of 13 weeks and four days, under convoy of the *Pallas* frigate, the Hon. Capt. Cornwallis, with a fleet of about 100 sail of ships. On the 18th of September, in lat. 31. 47. long. 75 [sic], the *Pallas* made sail, and was out of sight of said ship 17 days after. On the 5th of October the *Georgiana* was chased, and taken by an American brig of war, called the *Cabott*, Capt. Hinman, mounting 14 six-pounders, as many swivels, and 150 men. After being plundered of all their arms, powder, and as much sugar, rum, cotton, &c. as the Americans could conveniently get out, they put on board the officers and seamen belonging to the undermentioned ships, prizes which they had taken; viz the *Westmoreland*, Hore, from Jamaica to London; the *Lowther*, Cowman, from ditto to ditto, on the 27th of September, in lat. 41. 30 N. long. 45. the *Esther*, Harvey, from ditto to ditto; the brig *Watson*, Pearson, to Liverpool; and the *Clarendon*, Denniston, from ditto to Glasgow, on the 2d of October, in lat. 41. N. long. 45. They sent on board for the maintenance of the people three barrels of pork, 200 weight of bread, and two puncheons of water; which were not sufficient, as they have been at very short allowance ever since parting from the American pirates, which was the next day. Capt. Kentish spoke with the *Betsy*, Angus, from Jamaica, off Scilly, who spared him some bread and water, or they must all have perished.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, November 12 to November 14, 1776.

## 12 Nov.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 TO TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 12, 1776

London, November 12.

A passenger who came home in the *William*, Moore, from Boston, says, “that there were three privateers, pierced for thirty two guns, ready for sea at Marblehead, and only waited for guns to sail on a cruize.”

Two Dutch ships were expected at Marblehead with ordnance stores, and which were to bring guns for the above ships.

The Provinces of New England have reaped most of the benefit accruing from the prizes taken from us since the rupture; more than three-fourths having been taken by their privateers, and carried into their ports.

BEAUMARCHAIS TO VERGENNES<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Paris, Tuesday 12 November 1776

Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes:

Friday at 8 o'clock I shall be at Your Excellency's.

If I were not certain that I agree with your views in desiring that you lift as many as you are able of the obstacles which are holding up my business, I would



not have the indiscretion to point [it] out, since it seems that I need only submit myself. But I know that you are as vexed as I am about what is being written about me: this idea consoles me and makes me take these mortal displeasures of an uncompensated task with patience, were there not the advantage of pleasing you. For I am still very far from achieving, with the feeble help I have received, the purpose that I set out to achieve, to bring together by all means possible the A —— [Americans] with ourselves, to tie them by the inducements of an advantageous trade, to have them find in France all of the agreeableness that they renounced from the English on separating themselves from them. Truly this great purpose inflames me! But how far away it is! My Heavens, how far what I am doing is from what needs to be done for that. The Spanish ambassador might well say here: “The Lord is a Bourbon, etc. . . .”

Do not consider, Monsieur le Comte, my impatience, my vexations, as signs of insubordination; they are nothing other than zeal, and do me the favor of remarking that if I must go to Santo Domingo, it will be of very little use to transport the artillery at Dunkerque to Brest, while the ship that is awaiting it is hove to at Le Havre.<sup>2</sup> Isn't it just as much in France in this Port as it would be in Brest; and isn't this a waste of time and money to leave me with a ship tied up when it is expressly loaded, not knowing what to do next, unless before you leave Fontainebleau you would be so kind as to have M. St. Germain issue an order to deliver to me in Havre and Nantes two thousand quintals of powder, with which I shall depart in the safekeeping of God and your tiny fleet. All of the magazines are filled to overflowing, and the Minister of War is still rather far from having taken from the stewards the quantity of powder coming to him. As much at Marseille and here I am somewhat consoled; because at least I am not altogether useless, and because my ships will have on board the necessities to pay for their fitting-out. . . .

Why, then, is not a little more confidence accorded me? Is there any one more sincere than I? Have I not acquired the reputation of a man of good sense, who extends himself to the first interesting objective that I seek to establish? Believe me, Monsieur le Comte, my heart is wrung on seeing how everything goes, or rather how it does not go.

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

2. *L'Amphitrite*,<sup>2</sup> one of the ships employed by Beaumarchais under the name of Hortalez & Company, was waiting at Havre for her cargo of munitions for America.

### 13 Nov.

*Public Advertiser*, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1776

London [November 13].

The *Bella*, Smith, from Halifax to Port Medway and Liverpoole, was cut out of Port Medway by an American Privateer the 20th of September; also a Ship belonging to London.

The *Molly*, Randall, from Newfoundland to Market, is re-taken by the Crew, and carried into Trinity.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Confidential

Fontainebleau Novr 13. 1776.

Beaumarchais Connexions with the Rebels begin now to be very generally suspected by all those who have any opportunities of secret Information. Since I wrote last to your Lordship I have had the following Intelligence which I think it My Duty to mention tho' I consider it as less authentic than what I have already sent you. The Intelligence is this: Beaumarchais has engaged to furnish the Rebels with two hundred Pieces of Cannon Sixty thousand Stand of arms, and a very large Quantity of ammunition, all which is now assembling at Havre de Grace and is to be shipped from thence for North America on board Vessels of different Nations. This My Intelligence expresly says, but I think it very doubtful, and am inclined to believe that it will be shipped on Board American and french Vessels only, and that the latter will clear out for the french West India Islands.

as I think it of importance to raise in M. de Vergennes a Suspicion and Mistrust of Deane I contrived this Morning to drop some obscure Hints of a Negotiation, begun by Lord Howe: I did it in such a Way as carried no appearance of Design and made such an Impression as I wished upon M de Vergennes who began with eagerness to ask me Questions to which I avoided giving a Direct answer.

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 233-34.

SUMMARY OF A CONFERENCE BETWEEN LORD STORMONT AND VERGENNES<sup>1</sup>

Summary of my  
conference with  
Lord Stormont  
13th November 1776.

Lord Stormont confirms the news of the advantages gained at New York, and reports some still more important

General Burgoyne, having made all his arrangements, should have embarked on the 2nd October with ten thousand men on Lake Champlain; Colonel [John] Johnson with a corps of light infantry and some Canadians is to enter the River Mohawk by Lake Ontario, in order to arrive in Albany at the same time as General Burgoyne, and take the rebels in the rear, unless a reconciliation prevents the danger which threatens them.

Lord Stormont affirms that he has private information that there is a tendency towards a pacification

The English Ambassador has reported to his Court the satisfactory manner in which the friendly assurances which he had orders to give, have been received here, in announcing the arrangements which his Court could not help taking; he is commissioned to renew and confirm them. He is to observe, at the same time, that his Court has learnt that the squadron which is being prepared at Brest is intended for Martinique and St Domingo, and that it is feared that its object may be to favour the contraband trade which is carried on in these two Islands.

I do not know, I replied, whether this squadron is intended for the Islands, I am not aware that the King has yet fixed the destination, but if it were sent

there, it would be much less with a view to encourage that commerce than to restrain it, if it exists, which we do not know — but many vessels carrying the French flag leave here for America, whither they take munitions of war — at sea each one hoists what flag he likes, and in order to decide whether they are really French, some would have to be stopped. It is not the King's intention that his subjects should sail to North America. Has anyone been captured who can justify this complaint — not that I know — How then prevent the abuse of the flag, if there is not a maritime force to watch over it — Your commanders are so active that they can see to it — very well on land, but beyond that they are without authority; besides we may have reasons to watch over ourselves; there may be excitement in our islands; you are aware of their state of suffering; our commerce also may require precautions. It is obliged to pass along the coasts of America. The Americans, after having taken from the English, may be tempted to take from us; how save ourselves from this, unless we have the means of restraining them. Besides, you are very powerfully armed in that region — The armament cannot cause any uneasiness, we have only two vessels of the line; the rest, which consists of frigates, cannot undertake anything important. But the number of them is so prodigious that it constitutes a real force, especially when there are no obstacles; but then, what are six vessels, divided, as you say yourself, between two stations. It may very well be a protective force, but never one to cause uneasiness — but this squadron is to be reinforced by some vessels leaving Rochefort and other places. — I do not know whether this squadron is to depart, and where it will go, but on my honour, no armament is being prepared either at Rochefort or Toulon or anywhere else to join it — Fresh assurances of the desire of the King of England for peace, and that if it is only to be disturbed by him, we shall enjoy it for a long time — Reciprocal assurances on my part, founded on the love of order and justice belonging to the King's disposition and principles. Confidence in the knowledge that we have of the honourable and virtuous sentiments of the King of Great Britain: we do not allow ourselves to be deceived by the declamations of the opposition; neither should England allow herself to be deceived by the detractors of the ministry. The present conduct is blamed, but this blame does not change the principles of Government — A few more words about the contraband trading — it is impossible to prevent it, the trader wishes to gain, and perhaps more is done by England than by France.

Nothing new from Portugal.

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 905.

**14 Nov.**

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL JAMES YOUNG, ANTIGUA <sup>1</sup>

Sir

14h November 1776

Lord George Germain one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, having transmitted to my Lords Commrs of the Admiralty a Paper containing Intelligence received of the Naval Preparations making by the Rebels in the Port of Boston, and of the supposed object of them; I am commanded by their Lordships to send you herewith a Copy of the said Paper for your information, and to signify their direction to you, to make such a Disposition of the Ships under your

Command as you shall judge most effectual to prevent any annoyance or Insult by the Rebels to any of His Majesty's Possessions within the Limits of your Command and particularly to the Island of Barbadoes I am &c

P: S:

By the *Glasgow*

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 185-86.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12 TO THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 14, 1776

London, November 14.

On Tuesday the *Yankee* privateer, with all her stores, which was taken from the Americans, was sold by auction at Old Lloyd's Coffee-house for 330 l. She has been put up twice before, the first time for 419 l. second at 400 l. and the last time at 300 l.

*Public Advertiser*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1776

London [November 14].

Captain Reveness, who arrived at Southampton in fourteen Days from Oporto, says, Captain Squires, of the *Ceres*, who is arrived at Oporto from Bilboa, gives an Account of sixteen Sail of American armed Vessels being at Bilboa; one of which had taken five English Vessels on her Passage thither. The Day Captain Reveness sailed an Express arrived there from his Majesty's Consul at the Groyne, setting forth that there were then in the Harbour of Ferrol four American Privateers, supplying themselves for a Cruize. The same Day the Post from Lisbon brought Advice, that a Schooner of eighteen Guns, sailing extraordinary fast, had taken several Vessels near the Rock; the Colours are a red Field, with thirteen Stripes, where our Union is placed, denoting the United Rebellious Colonies.

The *Isabella*, Greenleas, from Borowstonness to Minorca; *Carolina*, Rutherford, from Newcastle to Gibraltar, and a Brig from Liverpoole to Antigua, are taken by the Americans off the Coast of Portugal.

VERGENNES TO MARQUIS DE NOAILLES<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

No. 4

Fontainebleau, 14 November 1776

As yet I have only been able to skim through, Milord, the extract of the debates of the House of Lords which you sent me. The King has read it in its entirety. I shall pay particular attention to the two speeches which you recommend. What I notice in general is that they expect the hostile intentions from us that they show toward us. However, one must be on his guard when one sees 41 ships of the line placed in commission and 45,000 sailors or marines voted. It is something admirable, and something to behold, this ease with which the nation, or rather its representatives, proceed to such frightening expenditures. We have apparently, more real resources than does England, but we must be

certain that the action be as easy. That holds to an opinion which can not become established in an absolute monarchy as in a mixed monarchy.

It only remains to speak to you, Milord, of a conversation which I had yesterday with Lord Stormont, after having conveyed to me the news from America, about the happy hopes they have over it, and renewed the strongest assurances of friendship and good understanding. He remarked that they were convinced at Court that our armaments at Brest were destined for Martinique and for Santo Domingo, and that they were afraid that its purpose was to encourage the traffic in contraband which is going on there. Since I had no knowledge that the King might have yet fixed the destination of that squadron, I took refuge in my ignorance, and I remarked that its supposed sending might well also have as its purpose the restraining of this traffic, if it exists, rather than to encourage it. The ambassador answered that many ships leave these islands, hoist the French flag, and set out for America whence they carry munitions of war. I did not argue that it could not be, but at sea each one hoists the flag of his choice, and in order to know if they are French, one would have to stop them. Lord Stormont answered that if there had been any seizures, he did not know of them. I retorted that were an abuse so contrary to the intentions of the King to exist, in our islands, a naval force therefore would be sent there to prohibit it; the ambassador did not agree; he claimed that the vigilance of our commanders ought to be enough. That is altogether impossible; their power can not extend beyond the shore. Moreover, other considerations might require us to keep watch over our islands; they might take part in the general ferment. We have a vast commerce to protect; we can fear that the Americans might be tempted to use upon us the same depredations that they allow themselves against the English. Moreover, England is well in force in those parts for us not to have to be on guard there. . . .

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

**15 Nov.**

LORD SUFFOLK TO LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY <sup>1</sup>

My Lords,

St James's Novr 15th 1776

I am commanded to signify to Your Lordships His Majesty's Pleasure, that You give immediate Directions for Transport Vessels to be provided of sufficient Tonnage to receive on Board about 2700 Infantry, and to convey the same to such Parts of North America as shall hereafter be specified – Allowance of Tonnage for the Men Women Servants and Camp Equipage must be made in the same Proportion usually allotted to His Majestys own Troops; And I must farther desire, that in order to facilitate the Conduct of this Business your Lordship's will as soon as you can specify to me the names and respective Tonnage of the several Vessels engaged.

Your Lordship's shall have due Notice of the Times and Places of Embarkation and Rendezvous with such other particulars as may be necessary for your Information. In the mean Time I have only to add that I expect to receive His Majesty's Commands to direct the several Vessels destined for this Service to be forwarded in different Proportions to the Ports of Bremerleh Stade and Wil-

lemstadt so as to be respectively in readiness for actual Embarkations about the 20th January – if the Navigation is open at that Time. I am &ca Suffolk.<sup>2</sup>

1. PRO, Foreign Office 95/355, 305–06.

2. In a separate letter Suffolk added: “. . . in the late Returns made to me of the Embarkations of the German Troops. there were several Complaints of abuses in the Contracts & particularly in the article of Bedding with regard to which I some time ago transmitted Extracts from Colonel Faucitt’s Letters for your Lordships Information.” PRO, Foreign Office 95/355, 305–06.

#### MINUTES OF THE BRITISH NAVY BOARD <sup>1</sup>

[London] Friday 15th Novr 1776

The Board taking into consideration the Application made on behalf of the Owners to be paid for the Value of the following Transports, which were taken by several Rebel privateers or Armed Vessels near the mouth of Boston Harbour, having Troops on board from the Port of Glasgow bound for that place. Vizt –

The <i>George</i> . Archd Bog, Master. } <i>Annabella</i> , Hugh Walker, do } <i>Lord Howe</i> , Rt Park, do }	Taken in Nantasket Road the 16 June 1776. Do in Boston Bay the 18 June 1776.
--	---

And it appearing by the Affidavits made by the respective Masters of the said Ships that they were separated from their Convoy in a hard Gale of Wind in the night of the 4th May 1776 about 15 Leagues to the Westward of Scilly, that they used all their endeavours to recover the Fleet, but could see nothing of them during all the rest of their Voyage; that they were attack’d by several Privateers or Armed Vessels near the Port of Boston, the place of their destination; (which they did not know had fallen into the hands of the Enemy); that they made all the resistance they could, but were obliged to submit to superior Force, and it being well known they had Troops on board, and did make every possible defence before they were taken, the Board think it unnecessary to put the Owners to the trouble & expence of procuring any further proof by a Court Martial or otherwise, as the Facts set forth are Sufficiently ascertained & well known, and therefore direct that Bills be made out for the Value of their respective Ships, according to what is stipulated in their Charter parties, after a proper abatement Shall be made for their Wear & Tear for the time they continued in the Service.<sup>2</sup>

1. PRO, Admiralty 106/2594.

2. See Volume 5 for accounts of capture of the transports.

#### MARQUIS DE NOAILLES TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 15 November 1776

The ship *Romney*, commanded by Admiral Montagu, arrived from Newfoundland to Portsmouth on the 12th of this month. The Admiral left two small schooners on that island in order to protect it from incursions by American privateers. Impressment continues in the interior with the greatest animation, but all of the seamen are hiding, and they are abandoning the ships to the point where they are obliged to make use of French seamen for the navigation of the Dover-Calais packets. Last night they impressed a kitchen helper of the Spanish ambassador, to whom they had already given a choice of serving as a sailor or

as a soldier. You can well imagine that this man was given up only with difficulty, and I only make mention of this incident to show you that they are seizing without exception anyone whom they can find. The sloop of war *Hornet* set sail for the port of Pool so as to impress the sailors arriving from Newfoundland. The *Exeter*, of 64, set sail from Portsmouth to cruise off Portland and to impress the sailors of the English ships which were re-entering the English ports. The *Somerset*, also of 64, left Plymouth on 10 November for the same purpose. This ship, which has with her several lighters, has 599 crewmen, among which are 255 marines. We assert that the sloop of war *Ranger*, sailed from this latter port, had as her destination to reconnoiter what is going on at the port of Brest. They are increasing the number of workers in all departments of the different shipyards.

Recently the American privateers took 5 English ships off the coast of Portugal, bound for Lisbon or the Mediterranean. The government received today the news from General Howe dated 10 October. The army still occupied the same positions, and there had occurred nothing of interest from 15 September until that date. The ship's captain claims only to have heard a very lively cannonade the day of his departure from New York. Burgoyne's light horse regiment had arrived, and they were awaiting the other troops from day to day, comprising 5,361 men, about 2000 recruits, 100 horses, as much artillery as remounts for Preston's regiment, and a large quantity of wagons. . . .<sup>2</sup>

#### The Marquis de Noailles

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.
2. With this letter de Noailles enclosed a long "Memorandum on the Current Armament of England" in which he concluded that England was bent on war with France, and warned: "it appears indispensable that France bring together her naval forces, either to repulse with advantage the first attacks of a perfidious power, or to anticipate the recklessness of her resolve," AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

#### GIAMBATTISTA PIZZONI TO HIS GOVERNMENT IN VENICE<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 15 Nov 1776

. . . About 16 thousand [seamen] will continue to be employed on duty with the Fleet in America. The Observation Fleet off Spithead has 27 warships; allowing 550 for each, another 14,800 men will be needed; also 4,200 for vessels on guard duty in the ports of this Kingdom. This makes up the total of 35,000 seamen requested by the Ministry, and granted by the House of Commons for next year. Supposing therefore that the entire 15,000 assigned last year to the Fleet in America are on board; that all those men were able to withstand the hardship, fatigue, and poor nourishment; if one duly reflects on the number of dead in combat, or those captured by the Americans, and computes the 6,689 already on board vessels on guard duty, this Admiralty needs to find 13,311 seamen to man said ships. This does not appear easy to provide since two weeks of impressment, not including in Ireland, recruited only 3,500 for this kind of duty. For this reason the Court published a proclamation on last Saturday asking all English seamen serving other nations to return to the ports of this Kingdom by the end of December, in order to serve in the ships of the Crown. . . .

1. Papers of the Senate, ASV.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 16, 1776

London, November 15.

A Captain of a Portugal ship that is arrived from Lisbon, says, that he met with 12 sail of American armed ships in the Bay of Biscay; that he was detained till they examined his papers and cargo, and then suffered him to proceed on his voyage, after taking out some wine.

Captain Chiene, of the *Malaga* transport, for Halifax, took a rebel privateer with tobacco and flour, bound for the French West India Islands to barter for stores, and carried her to Halifax. Captain Chiene having no Letter of Marque, the prize became the property of his Majesty, who was graciously pleased to give her up to the Captain and crew.

The *Liverpool* man of war, Captain Bellew has been the most successful of any of the King's ships on the North American station, having taken and retaken, during twelve months, upwards of twenty-seven sail, large and small.

16 Nov.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL SIR JAMES DOUGLAS, PORTSMOUTH <sup>1</sup>

Sr

16 Novr 1776.

I have communicated to my Lords Commrs of the Admty your Letter of the 14th Inst informing them of the arrival of the *Friendship* Transport from Quebec, & of his having brought over 17 Men who had been taken Prisoners at Quebec & entered into Col McCanes [Allan McClean] Corps, but afterwards deserted to the Rebels & were again taken Prisoners, who, having their Choice to be tried at a Court Martial, or to be sent to the Coast of Africa, chose the latter, and of your having sent them on board the *Barfleur*, 'til their Lordships pleasure is known; <sup>2</sup> also acquainting them with the arrival of the *Surprize* from Newfoundland, & with the reasons why the *Exeter* did not sail sooner to Spithead; And, in return, I am to acquaint you that the Secretary at War is made acquainted with what you represent respecting the aforementioned Men which came from Quebec in the *Friendship* Transport, and desired to report how he would wish to have them disposed of; And when their Lordships have recd his Answer you will receive their directions thereupon. I am &c

P S

PS. You will have Orders by the next post respecting the Marines for the *Kent* Armed Ship

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 192-93.

2. On November 18, Douglas was informed that the Secretary of War had ordered the deserters taken off the *Barfleur* under escort, PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 199-200.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 16, 1776

London, November 16.

The *Samuel and Charles*, Pinlartin, from Barbadoes to Virginia, ran ashore in Chesapeake River [*sic*], and was taken by the Provincials, but retaken by the *Otter* sloop of war, and given to the Supercargo. She is since arrived at New-York.



The *Minehead*, Whithorn, taken on the Banks of Newfoundland, is retaken by the *Liverpool* man of war, and arrived at Halifax.

The *Esther* transport from Cork to Halifax, carrying eight three-pounders, and twenty-five men, on her passage was attacked by a schooner privateer, whom she fought for near an hour – when the privateer attempted to board her; but the transport's people had got to their close quarters, and from thence had killed seven of the schooner's people, and wounded several others. – The *Esther* had not a man hurt; she was a collier, and fitted for close-quarters, having been built during last war.

CAPTAIN THOMAS PASLEY, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir Glasgow Spithead Novr 16th 1776.

I have received your letter inclosing a Packet from their Lordships for Vice Admiral Young, which I shall agreeable to their directions deliver immediately on my joining him –

Likewise acquainting me that their Lordships have received intelligence that Seven Ships from 20 to 30 Guns were preparing by the Rebels at Boston with intention to come into the English Channel; and that five others were intended to be sent to Barbadoes, and in consequence, signifying their commands to me to be particularly careful during my Voyage to keep together the several Ships which may proceed under my Convoy; In answer I must beg you will assure their Lordships that my unwearied endeavors shall not be wanting to the protection of the very large Convoy their Lordships have done me the honor to intrust me with, neither the exertion of my every ability at all times in obedience to their commands. I am Sir [&c.]

Thos Pasley

P:S: The *Richmond* and *Nottingham* Store Ships have not as yet made their appearance

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/2303, 8, 6.

**17 Nov. (Sunday)**

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir *Pallas* at Spithead 17th November 1776

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that there is on board his Majesty's Ship under my Command a Person who called himself Lieutenant of the Privateer that took the *Anne* Merchant Ship whose Commission and Instructions I have enclosed. I am Sir [&c.]

W: Cornwallis

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/1611, 3, 12.

**18 Nov.**

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL SIR JAMES DOUGLAS <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Sir 18 November 1776

I have communicated to my Lords Commrs of the Admiralty your two Letters of Yesterdays date inclosing the State and Condition of his Majesty's Ships and

Vessels under your Command and informing their Lordships of the arrival of the *Pallas* having on board the Lieutenant and Twelve Prisoners belonging to the American Rebel armed Vessel called the *Independance*, which took the *Ann* Merchant Ship from Dominica and I am to acquaint you that the Earl of Suffolk is made acquainted, therewith, and desired to signify His Majestys Pleasure respecting the said Persons.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL JOHN MONTAGU <sup>1</sup>

Sir

18 Novr 1776

My Lords Commrs of the Admty having received a Petition from Iver McMillan, first Mate of the *Friendship* Transport, giving an account that being a Prisoner at Boston he with Jas Parks late Mate of the *Lord Howe* Transport & another Person got on board the *Mermaid* Sloop in the Service of the Provincials, & carried her to St Johns in Newfoundland, where she was sold by your Order at a Public Sale for £280 & that you refused to allow him any Part of the Purchase Money, altho he is informed he has a right thereto & therefore praying for relief; I am commanded by their Lordships to send you his Petition herewith and to signify their directions to you to state the Petitioners Case & with your report you will please to return his Petition to &c

P S

Vice Adml Montagu [in] Town

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 206.

JOURNAL OF H. M. S. *Levant*, CAPTAIN GEORGE MURRAY <sup>1</sup>

November [1776]

C. Ortugal Obs 15 Lgs

Monday 18

A M at 6 spoke a Ship from Charles Town bound to Bourdeaux hove too, sent a Mate, Midshipman & 9 Men onboard her, entered her People as part of Complement, at 9 took the (*Argo*) <sup>2</sup> Prize in Tow. made Sail.  
Light Airs & Cloudy

1. PRO, Admiralty 51/512.

2. *Argo*, "a ship belonging to the Congress at Charles-Town, South Carolina, bound to Bourdeaux, with a lading of Rice and Indigo, valued, according to the Invoice found on board her, at 37,200 L. Currency." *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser and Mercantile Chronicle*, December 20, 1776.

19 Nov.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO LORD SUFFOLK <sup>1</sup>

My Lord

Admiralty Office, 19th Novr 1776

Vice Admiral Sir James Douglas Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships at Portsmouth, having in his Letter of the 17 Instant acquainted Us of the arrival at that Port of His Majesty's Ship the *Pallas* having onboard the Lieutenant and Twelve Prisoners belonging to an American Armed Vessel called the *Independance*, which had taken the *Ann* Merchant Ship from Dominico, which Merchant Ship was afterwards re-taken by the *Pallas* with these Men onboard;

We signify the same to your Lordship for His Majesty's Information, and are to desire your Lordship will receive and signify to Us His Majesty's Pleasure how these Prisoners are to be disposed of <sup>2</sup> We are My Lord [&c.]

Sandwich J Buller. H Penton

P.S. We have just received from Captn Cornwallis the enclosed Commission [&] Instructions given to the Person [ca]lling himself Lieut of the above Armed Vessel.<sup>3</sup>

1. PRO, State Papers, 42/49, 88a.
2. Suffolk replied on December 2: "said Prisoners be kept in safe Custody 'till further Orders," PRO, State Papers, 42/49, 89.
3. Commission of Thomas Truxtun, dated at White Plains, New York, July 16, 1776, and endorsed by Truxtun: "the above is a true copy of my commission Given by the Honourable Continental Congress," PRO, State Papers, 42/49, 88b.

20 Nov.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM CORKE, NOV. 20"<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday arrived the brig *Diana*, of Corke, Heylin Maybury, Master, from Halifax, in 21 days, who says, that he sailed from St. Vincent's last May, laden with rum for Corke, was taken the 7th of June by an American privateer, and with four or five others was making for Salem, and was within half an hour's sail of that port on the 3d of July, when the *Milford* man of war came up and retook her, and conducted her to Halifax.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 10 to December 12, 1776.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM IRVINE, NOV. 20"<sup>1</sup>

The people in Greenock and Port Glasgow are in great terror just now from reports that five American privateers are hovering about Ireland, intending to visit our coast, and chiefly the above two mentioned towns. It is said the Glasgow merchants have wrote to London for some ships of war, and have also sent for some soldiers for their defence.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, November 23 to November 26, 1776.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO SIR GREY COOPER, TREASURY<sup>1</sup>

Sr

20th Novr 1776

The Lords of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council having by their Letter of the 8th instant required the Mayors & cheif Magistrates of the several Sea Port Towns, to cause the proper Officers to give all possible Assistance to those belonging to His Majesty's Ships, and the Constables to take up (by virtue of such Press Warrants as shou'd be sent to them by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty), such Seafaring Men as shou'd be found lurking about their respective Towns, Ports & Liberties, and directed as an Encouragement to the Constables who shou'd take up such Seamen, and deliver them to the regulating Captains, or other Officers of His Majesty's Ships appointed to procure Men, that they shou'd be paid Twenty Shillings for each Seaman fit for His Majesty's Service, by the Naval Officer of such Offices – shou'd reside near the said Town, or otherwise by the Collector or proper Officer of the Customs, and of Money to

be furnished them for that purpose by the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury as heretofore, upon Certificates from the Captain or Commander of the Ship or Vessel where into they shall be put, or from a Regulating Captains or other Officer of His Majesty's Ships appointed to procure Men of his having received them: The said Allowance to be reimbursed to the Officers of the Customs by the Navy Board upon their transmitting to them authentick Accounts of what Money's they shou'd so expend: And press Warrants having been sent accordingly; My Lords command me to acquaint you therewith and to desire you will move the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury that they will be pleased to give the necessary Orders to the Collectors of the several Out Ports thereon, letting them know that the Money they pay in consequence of such Orders will be reimbursed by the Navy Board as aforementioned.

And the said Constables being directed by the Press Warrants, to give unto each Man impressed by them One Shilling for Prest Money; Their Lordships desire the Collectors (at the Ports where there are no Naval Officers) may be also directed to repay the same, which will be reimbursed in the manner before-mentioned. I am &c:

P: S:

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 208-09.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO SIR GREY COOPER <sup>1</sup>

Sr

20th Novr 1776

His Majesty having been pleased to promise by His Proclamation of the 8th Instant, That a Reward of Forty Shillings for every Able and Thirty Shillings for every Ordinary Seamen shall be paid any Person who shall discover any Seaman or Seamen who shall secret themselves, so that such Men shall be taken for the Service by any of the Sea Officers employed in raising Men: the said Rewards to be paid to such Men as may be discovered in and about London, by the Commrs of the Navy, and at the Out Ports by the Naval Officers where there are any, and where there are not by the Collectors of the Customs immediately upon a Certificate being produced by the Person who may make the discovery, certifying his Name, and the Name & Number of Seamen procured in consequence thereof, the said Certificate to be given by such Officers as may take such Seaman or Seamen for the Service. My Lords Commrs of the Admty desire You will move the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury that they will give Orders to the Collectors of the Customs at the several Out Ports to pay the said Rewards as aforesaid, letting them know the same will be reimbursed by the Navy Board upon their transmitting to that Office Accounts of the Money so by them expended, with Receipts from the Men to whom the same shall be paid, together with the aforementioned Certificates from the Officers who shall take such Seamen for His Majesty's Service. I am &c.

P: S:

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 212.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO EDWARD STANLEY<sup>1</sup>

Sr

20th Novr 1776

The Commanders of His Majts Ships & Vessels in the Coasts of Great Britain & Ireland being directed in pursuance of the Kings Order in Council, to impress Men for the Manning of His Majesty's Ships fitting for the Sea. And it being an Instruction to them, when they take Men from Merchants Ships to put a proper Number of Seamen on board such Ships to navigate them to their Ports of delivery, and to direct the said Seamen either to remain at those Ports til called for, or else to repair by Land to some other Port in order to meet their Ships: My Lords Commrs of the Admiralty desire the Commrs of the Customs will please to give directions to their several Collectors at the Out Ports where there are no Naval Officers to pay Conduct Money to such Seamen at the Rate of a Penny a Man per Mile to the Port they shall be ordered to proceed to, or to allow them Subsistance, at the rate of Six Pence a Man per day while they shall remain at the Port they come to according as either shall be desired by their Commanders in sealed written Applications, to be delivered by the said Seamen to the Collectors: and that the Collectors be directed to take the Mens receipts on the backs of the said Applications, for such Money as they shall pay to them, which Receipts and Applications being transmitted to the Navy Board with Accounts of the Money advanced the same will be forthwith repaid: And if it shall be found necessary to employ Tenders to cruize also upon the Coast in order to raise Men my Lords Commrs of the Admty desire the Commissrs of the Customs will also please to give the like directions with regard to Seamen whom the Lieutenants who may command such Tenders shall put in like manner on board Merchant Ships. I am &c

P: S:

Edward Stanley Esqr Custom House

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 210-11.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19 TO THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 21, 1776

London, November 20.

By letters from Jersey, of the 12th instant, we have the following account from Isle Madame: "On the 21st of September, a number of armed men belonging to the *Providence*,<sup>1</sup> an American privateer, with 14 guns, came in a shallop to Arichat, and took possession of the vessels and storehouses. On the 24th, they went off with the *Alexander*, Luce, having 2200 quintals of fish on board. On the 25th, they burnt the *Adventure*, and plundered the storehouses. This privateer took the *Success*, Balliene, with fish; it is supposed the *Alexander*, Luce, and *Success*, Balliene, are retaken by the *Milford* man of war, and carried to Halifax, with the *Providence* privateer."

The *Sarah and Elizabeth*, Foot, from Jamaica to London, was taken by an American privateer the 23d of October last.

The *Elizabeth*, Figtree, from London, is arrived on the Coast of East Florida, after having taken an American schooner laden with 4000 barrels of flour.

1. Continental sloop *Providence*, John Paul Jones.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Most Confidential

Paris Novr 20. 1776

My Lord

I am very secretly and, I am afraid, authentically informed that a Treaty or Convention is not only agreed upon by M. de Vergennes and Mr Deane, but is actually drawn out Article by Article . . .

In this State of Things with these Secret Treacherous Projects against Us Your Lordship sees how very improbable it is that any Thing I can say should prevent the sailing of M. du chaffaults Fleet; which every friend to Great Britain that I meet with here earnestly wishes may be constantly watched by a Superior British squadron. Indeed, My Lord, after all we know of the present Insidious Policy of this Court, it is impossible to place the least Dependence upon their Friendship or Good Faith We can operate upon Nothing but their Fears, and trust to Nothing but our own Vigilance and superior Naval Strength. . . .

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 253-54.

21 Nov.

LORD SANDWICH TO GEORGE III<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Admiralty Nov: 21. 1776

. . . Your Majesty will also find in the box the state of men raised last week, and some Marine Commissions for your Royal Signature. Your Majesty probably has already seen the minute of the resolution taken by the Committee of your servants, relative to the refusal of the Lord Mayor to back the Press Warrants, Lord Sandwich however ventures to send it. at that meeting the Attorney & Solicitor General were both clear as to the Legality of Pressing, and the present time was thought very favourable for bringing that point to trial.

1. Fortescue, ed., *Correspondence of George III*, III, 405.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS<sup>1</sup>

Sir

*Pallas* at Spithead 21st Novr 1776.

I shall enclose by the next Post another Copy of the Trade that left Jamaica under Convoy of his Majesty's Ship *Pallas* under my Command wherein I have set off the time of their parting against the Names of such as we knew, but they chiefly parted in the Night; I hope their Lordships will be pleased to consider that it was totally impossible for the Officers of a Man of War to tell the Names of all the Merchant Ships, particularly as there were not above Eight or Ten out of above a hundred Sail that kept in their Stations or behaved tolerably well.

During the time the *Maidstone* was in Company, I wrote to Capt. [Alan] Gardner to beg that he would oblige the Ships in the Rear to pay attention to my Signals, notwithstanding which when we were off Cape Antonio, between

Twenty and Thirty Sail brought too to buy Turtle, the *Maidstone* being at that time in Chace; when she came up the Masters of the Merchant Ships acquainted Capt. Gardner that their Passengers were on shore purchasing Turtle, and they could not make sail, this Capt. Gardner informed me of before he parted Company and that many of them gave him impertinent answers when he hailed them, and that it was impossible for him to make them attend their duty.

After we got through the Gulf and the *Maidstone* had parted Company, in the Evening it was Squally with Thunder and lightning, we close reefed our Topsails and they were lowered down, so that the worst sailing Ship in the Convoy might have kept her Station as the *Pallas* sailed very ill, we steered during the Night the same Course that we had done several hours before it was dark with the Wind aft, in the Morning there were not above Fifty Sail to be counted from the Mast-head, and not above ten in their Stations the rest being an amasing distance to the Eastward of us, and upon our Starboard Beam and Bow, upon which as I had a great desire to preserve the Convoy I altered my Course and steered after them, though I apprehend it to be the duty of the Convoy to steer after the Man of War, not she after the Convoy. Many of the Masters of the Merchant ships acquainted the Officers of the *Pallas* that they thought it intirely owing to our steering so much to the Eastward after those Ships that we met with the Calms which occasioned the long passage.

From this time to the 24th of Sepr the Weather was such that any Ship might have kept Company that chose it, that Morning there were only nineteen Sail in Company, during the day it blew very hard and we brought too under a reefed Mainsail, the next morning there were only six Sail in sight, which joined us, the *Suffolk* parted Company the 27th by request, the *Anne*, *Northside Planter*, *Hereford* and *London* hoisted their Colours in the Morning of the 30th, and parted Company steering a different course; the *Alexander* kept Company 'till the Evening when we retook the *Anne*, she then hailed us and desired to part Company, I told them we had just retaken a Ship, and that there were a number of American Privateers about, upon which he said he would keep Company, but left us in the Night. I believe the Masters of the Ships thought their only danger was in going through the Gulf, and that if we had not altered our Course and steered after them, none of those that were at a distance would have joined us again, I was informd by one of the Masters of the Ships, that the *Sarah and Elizabeth*, Foote, one of the Ships that parted as soon as we were through the Gulf, hoisted his Colours which occasioned some of the other Ships to go away with him, but he was at such a distance I could not see him. I have already in two letters explained to their Lordships why I put into Newfoundland, therefore shall not trouble them again upon that head.

I see they have got it in the Papers that the *Pallas* has brought a great Freight from Jamaica, I beg leave to inform their Lordships that although her sailing was advertised in the Kingston Papers a considerable time before she sailed, the Merchants chose to send their Remittances home in their own Ships. I am Sir [&c.]

W Cornwallis

[Endorsed] Recd & Read 22d & Ansd do

BEAUMARCHAIS TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

Monsieur le Comte

Paris, 21st November 1776.

I am not fortunate in anything coming from your Department. Since the reply from M. de St. Germain which you showed me, I have obtained the most exact information as to the quantity of powder lying in the King's magazines, and I have found that there are nineteen millions two hundred and odd thousand pounds weight. You will confess that a very malevolent demon must meddle with my affairs, to cause the modest surplus over the nineteen millions to be inexorably refused me! When I made my calculation of the number of naval tons that I wished to embark, I had then, besides the trading goods, all the artillery agreed to and its adjuncts &c The whole mass required six vessels. I reduced them to five, two of which are at Havre, one at Nantes, and two others at Marseilles. From the uncertainties and counterorders, I presumed that, in lieu of the artillery which is withheld by prudence, I should at least not be refused the powder. You know what consideration prevents me from applying to the administration itself. If the Minister for War were really in want of powder, it would be still better for him to demand a supplementary supply from the administration, than to expose me to see too many people, and to allow my secret to be discovered by all the contractors. But with nineteen or nearly twenty millions of powder, is there the slightest reason for leaving me with vessels lying idle without a cargo, and costing me enormous sums in current expenses.

Is not the King of our affair also the King of the artillery? and are not all these difficulties between Departments calculated to vex him who is obliged to act, to conceal himself, to go forward, and to receive no help from anyone? If I were asking a personal favour I would have patience. But I shall lose it, if you do not come to my aid. Believe me, that you will never hear of me in matters in which your help is not absolutely necessary to me.

I have the honour to send you a letter from Nantes the news in which appears to me to be certain. I annex thereto the French translation, begging you to return them both to me after you have read the French, and M. de M. . . . [de Maurepas] the English.

We are not then so badly off as they say in London, since we are fighting well, and causing heavy losses to our enemies, who are obliged to hide them. All their art is used in trying to impose on France, and to lull her to sleep as to her true interests, by false news.

I beg you, M. le Comte, to confer effectively with M. de St Germain respecting this powder.

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 906.

**22 Nov.**MEMORANDUM PREPARED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE <sup>1</sup>[Whitehall, November 22, 1776] <sup>2</sup>

Lord G. Germain has received no Dispatches or Letters from General Carleton or any of the King's Officers or Servants in Canada, but there is an Account by private Letters from Quebec of the 23d of October & from Montreal of the 17th



(& this account is confirmed by two Gentlemen passengers on board the Ship that brought those Letters, who left Quebec the 25. of Octr & have been this afternoon at Lord G. Germaines office) that General Carleton in passing Lake Champlain had three several Engagements with the Rebel Naval Armament consisting of 16. armed Vessells, the Result of which was that the whole of that armament except one or two Vessells were defeated & destroyed & that Genl Carleton having taken possession of Crown point which was abandoned by the Rebels was proceeding to the Attack of Ticonderoga

The passengers further say that Lieut Dacres who commanded one of Genl Carletons armed Vessells, had taken his passage to England with Dispatches from Genl Carleton, on board the *Stag* Frigate which sailed from Quebec the day before they left it.

1. PRO, State Papers, 37/11.

2. The date is established by an item in the *London Chronicle*, dated November 23, reporting the arrival at Dover of the *Montreal*, Captain Gibson, with some dispatches for Lord George Germain which he received "yesterday."

MARQUIS DE NOAILLES TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 22 November 1776

You recall, Your Excellency, all that occurred at the time of the naming of Lord Howe to command the fleet in America. That of Admiral Keppel brought down a new affront on the part of this officer who was summoned to the King last Monday. His Britannic Majesty told him that he would be given command of the fleet which was being formed, that he was asked not to stand aside and to keep himself ready to leave at the first order. The admiral replied that he owed his services to the King, but that he could not accept the honor which His Majesty accorded him except on the condition that he would have no dealings with Lord Sandwich, and that he would not correspond at all with this first Commissioner of the Admiralty, which was agreed upon. This officer, who belongs to the opposition party, believed himself bound to point out to the King of England that, not being able to abandon his principles concerning the American affair, he would not voluntarily take command of a fleet destined to take action against the Americans, and the King assured him in reply that the fleet which he was to command would not leave European waters . . .

I have just learned that at noon today Lord Germain received a letter from General Carleton, dated at Quebec on 23 October, which sends word that the English flotilla having engaged the American flotilla in combat on the 16th and 17th of the same month on Lake Champlain,<sup>2</sup> the latter were almost entirely destroyed. Of the 15 ships which it comprised, only 3 escaped, which they imagined to be able to overtake soon. The English army was supposed to arrive a few days later at Crown Point, where they did not expect to encounter resistance, seeing that the fortifications are destroyed, and since the Americans have removed the artillery from there. The latter's army is positioned at Ticonderoga.

I am not certain, Your Excellency, if I am a proper judge, but this defeat appears to me to be of little importance, for the season in which we are we ought to expect it, since Lord Germain had stated to the Spanish ambassador that



*Charles Gravier Comte de Vergennes.*  
*Ministre et Secrétaire d'Etat.*

General Burgoyne had left with such a superior fleet that it was almost in a condition to engage that of France. But the American flotilla, before being destroyed, had accomplished its purpose, since it obliged the Army of Canada to remain at the head of the lakes from May until October, and that there is no indication that for this campaign it will be able to effect its junction with General Howe's army. Winter is coming on rapidly and with it the close of military operations, which appear to me up to the present to be of scant yield for this country.

I must not omit telling you, Your Excellency, that the impressment is at the point where it is beginning to snatch away servants from behind their masters' carriages. Not since the reign of Queen Anne has one witnessed the commission of such excesses.

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

2. Incorrect dates; the Battle of Valcour Island was fought October 12 and 13.

GEORGE JACKSON TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE<sup>1</sup>

My Lord

22nd Novr. 1776

The King having been pleased by His Order in Council of the 16th of June 1775, to order my Lords Commrs of the Admty to issue out such Warrants as they shou'd find requisite for pressing so many Seamen, Seafaring Men, and Persons whose Occupations and Callings are to work in Vessels and Boats upon Rivers in his Majts Dominions in North America, as shou'd from time to time be necessary for manning His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in those Ports and the Warrants which their Lordships caused to be issued in consequence thereof, expiring on the 31st of next Month; I am commanded by my Lords to send your Lordship here-with Two hundred new Warrants of the same kind for Captains and Commanders of the Kings Ships and Vessels and also Fifty more of another sort for Lieutenants Commanding Schooners and Armed Vessels to continue in force 'til the 31st December 1777 unless duly countermanded before that time of which former your Lordship will please to cause a proper number to be directed dated and deliver'd to each of the Captains & Commanders of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels under your Command, in order that they may depute such as they shall think fit to their respective Lieutenants, And one of the latter to each of the Lieutenants commanding Schooners and Armed Vessels, accompanying the same with such Instructions for their guidance in the execution thereof as you shall judge proper and for your Lordships information in this Matter, I send you herewith printed Copies of the Instructions which accompany the Press Warrants that are issued to the several Officers abovementioned at Home in order that your Lordship may make such use thereof as you shall judge necessary. I have &c.

Geo. Jackson D. S.

P S Their Lordship desire You will keep & transmitt to them an Account of the Officers to whom you shall deliver the above Press Warrants and of the Number to each.

By the *Thames*

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 223-24.

MINUTES OF THE BRITISH NAVY BOARD <sup>1</sup>

[London] Friday 22d Novr 1776.

Mr Hubbort of 13 inst tendering the *Yankee* Privateer & her Stores for Sale. Direct Deptford Officers to survey and report if she is a proper Vessel to be purchased as an armed Vessel, with their opinion of the Value of the Hull, & such Stores as may be proper to be bought with her.<sup>2</sup>

1. PRO, Admiralty 106/2594.

2. On November 30 the officers reported that in their opinion "the *Yankey* Privateer is unfit to be purchased for the Kings Service," PRO, Admiralty 106/2594.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 23, 1776

London, November 22.

Capt. [George] Gray, of the *George*, taken by an American privateer on the Banks of Newfoundland, writes, that the same privateer has taken three more of the same fleet.<sup>1</sup>

Letters from Lisbon, dated the 2d of Nov. mention, that several vessels from Newfoundland were arrived there, among which was the *Dove*, Captain Ware, and that they had been all stopped by the American privateers, but were soon after released.

1. See Volume 6, 1110.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir

*Pallas*, Spithead, 22d Novr 1776

I have enclosed the List of the Trade that left Jamaica under Convoy of his Majesty's Ship *Pallas* under my Command, and have set off the time of parting Company, and the Latde and Longde against such as we were certain of for their Lordships Inspection. they were paid a particular attention to otherwise we never could have known the names of so many of them. The Master of the *Eden* which parted Company the 6th of September, came onboard the 4th, to request leave to make the best of his way, when I expressing my surprize at his wishing to run the risque, he informed me that there was a Report in the Fleet that we had spoke a Sloop which gave us intelligence that Commodore Hopkins had been taken and that therefore he did not apprehend there was any danger, I told him that we never had received any such Intelligence, and I believe it was a Report raised among the Masters of the Ships to give an opening for their parting Company. this I mention that their Lordships may see how desirous they were of leaving the Convoy. I am Sir [&c.]

W: Cornwallis

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/1611, 3, 26.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DARTMOUTH, NOV. 22"<sup>1</sup>

We have just received the following intelligence from on board the *Betty*, who is arrived off this place from Newfoundland; that the *Triton*, Capt. Hookey; the *Lion*, Hervey; the *Flora*, Capt. Whitburn, belonging to this place, and the *Penguin*, Capt. Bussell, belonging to Tinmouth, all sailed from Newfoundland, bound to Spain with fish, the 26th of October, under convoy of the *Fox* frigate of war; and on the 14th of November, having parted with the above frigate, were all taken by an American privateer of 16 guns, and 190 men, called the *Sturdy Beggar*, in lat. 43. 44. N. and long. 13½. W. The Captains and crews of the above ships are come over in the *Betty*, from whom we received this account.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, November 23 to November 26, 1776.

**23 Nov.**

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN TYRINGHAM HOWE,  
H.M.S. *Thames*, SPITHEAD<sup>1</sup>

You are hereby required and directed to take under your command His Majesty's Storeship the *Elephant* (Lieut Bechinoe who commands her being directed to obey your Orders) & under your Convoy the several Store Ships & Victuallers mentioned on the otherside hereof & also any Navy Transports with Recruits for the Army under the Command of General Sir Wm Howe which may be ready to accompany you & then put to Sea with the very first opportunity of Wind & Weather and make the best of your way with them to New York; taking all possible care to keep the said Store Ships Victuallers and Transports together during the Voyage & to dispose of the *Elephant* Store Ship & also of the Ordnance Store Ships (which are Arm'd) in such manner as will best contribute to the protection of the others; And upon your Arrival at New York You are to put yourself & the *Elephant* Store Ship under the command of Vice Adml Lord Howe commander in chief of His Majesty's Ships & Vessel[s] in North America and follow his orders for your further proceedings And at the same time You are to deliver to his Lordship the Packets you will receive herewith directed for him.

In case any of the abovementioned Store Ships shou'd not be arrived at Spithead when this reaches you, You are to wait their til their arrival and then use the utmost dispatch in proceeding as above directed; And in case there shou'd be any other Ships or Vessels at Spithead than those abovementioned which are bound to New York with Provisions Stores or Necessarys for the Use of His Majesty's Navy and Army there you are to take them, or such of them as may be ready under your Convoy also, & see them in safety to that place.  
Given &c 23rd Novr 1776

Sandwich H. Penton H. Palliser

By &c GJ. DS.

<u>Ships</u>	<u>Masters</u>	<u>Lading</u>
<i>Lord Townshend</i> } <i>Unity</i> }		Ordnance Store Ships
<i>Adventure</i>	Jno Sime	} Treasury Store Ships with Camp } Equipage Clothing and Stores for } the Army
<i>Empress of Russia</i>	Jno Kid	
<i>Thames</i>	Jno Kendall	
<i>Duke of York</i>	Josh Graham	
<i>Union</i>	Jno Hudson	
<i>Prudence</i>	Jno Sampson	
<i>True Love</i>	Reed	
<i>Two Sisters</i>	Watt	
<i>Maria</i>	Robt Gordon	
<i>Juno</i>	Long	
<i>Duke of Bedford</i>	Jno Clark	} Navy Victualler with Sour Krout } Marine Clothing and Medicines } for the Hospitals.
<i>Levant</i>		

By &amp;ca

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 508-10.

INTELLIGENCE FROM PAUL WENTWORTH TO LORD SUFFOLK <sup>1</sup>

Recd from Mr P. Wentworth Novr 23. 1776.

Willing & Morris of Philada having writ to Mr Deane a Scheme for an Extensive & very proffitable Commerce, to be carried on between the Subjects of France, & those of G B. now in Rebellion – Mr Deane did actually engage Mr Tho. Walpole – Mess Bourdieu & Co Mr G Apth[ro]p – & others in London – Mess Delap of Bourdeaux – Mess — (the Comp to which the Brig. *Dickinson* was Consd) – at Nantz – Mess Du Cha[u]mont – Mr Grant, of Paris Mess. Honicci, Fiszoux & Co Mess. Crommelin at Amsterdam – a House of Antwerp & many others being sharers of a Capital of £ 400 M to be employed as French property, on French Ships. – The Articles besides others – are Cloathing of all denominations – Sail Cloath – Cordage – Oznabrags & russia Linnen – shoes – Hose – Blanketts – Drugs &c &c. Great Quantitys are shipped by various means to Dunkirk & Ostend – & thence in Coasters to Havre, Nantz & Bourdeaux &c. where they are reshipped in Armed ships provided with American passes besides the Necessary papers as French ships sailing on french Acco. – by which means they assure themselves of safe Conduct to the very Harbours of No America, & they are not to enter them, but as they are found without Brittish ships of force to prevent them. One Condition which is to bind the Adventurers is that they are not to ship any Military stores. The Treaties have been Consulted – the last restraining-act referred to, & Notice taken of its not having been Notified to france, or Spain – & hence

Conclusions drawn in favor of this New Mode of Carrying on Commerce with Colonys in rebellion against its parent State.

The french Ambassador was Confidentially asked His opinion of the probability of His Courts declaring War against G B – & He gave the most positive Assurances that if the safety of the property above stated depended upon the declaration of a War by France, that His Court would take great pains to avoid it –

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 131.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 23, 1776

London, November 23.

Yesterday, some dispatches were received at Lord George Germain's Office, from Quebec, brought by the *Montreal*, Captain Gibson, arrived at Dover, which, it is reported, mention, that part of the King's ships and boats, in crossing Lake Champlain, had been attacked by 17 armed Provincial vessels, which was at first attended with some loss; but on the remainder of his Majesty's fleet coming up, they attacked the Provincials in their turn, took and destroyed the greatest part of their vessels. The army on landing marched to Crown Point, which they found reduced to ashes; they then proceeded to Ticonderoga, and were besieging the place when the accounts came away.

#### SILAS DEANE'S PROPOSED TREATY ARTICLES <sup>1</sup>

Memoire

[Paris, November 23, 1776] <sup>2</sup>

It is to be premised, that the following proposed Articles are simply the Result, of the Thoughts, of a private individual, on the subject of a proposed Alliance between the Kingdoms of France and Spain in Europe, and the United States of North America – he conceives the contracting parties, to have two great Objects, in View, in their Alliance, which the Concurring Events, of the present Time, have put it in their power to obtain, – On the part of France, and Spain; To exclude Great Brittain, from any future Connection, with America, its Islands, or Seas, – Thereby, at once, to reduce, her enormous Naval Power, secure their own Possessions, and increase their Commerce, and marine, to the highest degree Conceivable –

On the part of the United States of North America by such exclusion to secure, to themselves, Peace, Liberty & Safety, in their possessions and Commerce.

Enough has been said, on the Subject, of This dispute, to convince every one, unprejudiced in favor of Great Brittain that these Objects, great as they are, are attainable in the present Crisis, which unattended To for a few Months may be out of the power of either party, United or Separate hereafter.

Proposals.

1st The Thirteen United Colonies, now known by the Name of the United States of North America shall be acknowledged by France, & Spain, and treated

with as independent States and as such, shall be guaranteed, in the possession, and Dominion of all that part of North America on the Continent, which by the last Treaty of Peace was ceded, and Confirmed to the Crown of Great Britain

2. The United States shall guaranty and confirm to the Crowns of France and Spain, all and singular their Possessions and Claims and every other part of America, whither North or South of the Equator, and of the Islands possess'd by them in the American Seas.

3. Should France or Spain, either or both of them possess themselves of the Islands in the West Indies now in possession of the Crown of Great Britain (As an indemnity for the injuries sustained by them in the last Warr in Consequence of its being commenced, on the part of Great Britain in Violation of the Laws of Nations) The United Colonies shall assist the said Powers in obtaining such satisfaction, and guaranty & Confirm to them, the Possession of such Acquisition.

4. The Fisheries on the Banks of Newfoundland, of Cape Breton & parts adjacent commonly called and known by the Name of the Cod Fishery, shall be equally free to the subjects of France, Spain, and the United states of North America, and to the subjects of no other State or Nation. And the Islands of Newfoundland & Cape Breton equally free to either for curing, and carrying on, such Fisheries under such Regulations as may prevent the almost possibility of any misunderstanding on the subject.

5. There shall be free Liberty of Commerce, between the subjects of France, and Spain, and the United states respectively, and they shall mutually engage, to protect, and defend each other in such Commerce

6. The more effectually to preserve this Alliance, & to obtain the great Objects and View, it shall be Agreed, that any and every British ship or Vessel found or met with on the Coast of North America, of South America, or [o]f the Islands Adjacent, and belonging thereto within a certain degree or distance to be agreed on, shall be forever hereafter Considered as Lawful prize to any of the subjects of France, Spain, or the United Colonies and Treated as such as well in Peace as in Warr – Nor shall France, Spain or the United states ever hereafter admit British Shippis into any of their Ports in America North or South, or the Islands adjacent, nor shall this Article ever be altered or dispensed with but only by and with the Consent of each of the Three Contracting States.

7. During the Present Warr between the United States & Great Britain France and Spain shall send into North America & support there a Fleet to defend and protect the Coasts and Commerce of the United states, in Consequence of which if the Possessions of France or Spain shall be Attacked in America by Great Britain or her Allies, the United Colonies shall Afford them all that Aid & Assistance in their power.



8. No peace, or Accomodation shall be made with Great Brittain by either of the Contracting parties, to the infringement or Violation of any one of these Articles.

Should the foregoing Articles, revised, & varied, or similar adopted, by any other private person, be thought deserving any Consideration, of the Courts of France & Spain, The person proposing them, having a knowledge of the disposition of many principal Persons, in high Trust in the United States, of North America he will instantly transmit them, and they may undoubtedly merit the earliest, & most serious Attention of the Congress – As that Body, having Unanimously declared for independance, on Great Brittain, and for Foreign Alliances, will be Attentive to every proposal on the subject though presented them by a private individual. –

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 595.

2. Date is established in November 23 letter, Silas Deane to M. Gerard, Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 594.

**24 Nov. (Sunday)**

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R. N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir *Pallas*, Portsmouth harbor 24th Novr 1776.

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that I have heard Clamours have been raised against my Conduct in bringing the Convoy from Jamaica, and that it hath been said I parted Company from them and bore away for the Coast of America the 18th of Sept; I beg leave to observe that a light breeze springing up on the Night of the 17th to my great surprise in the morning I observed above half the Ships that had been in Company the day before steering away to the Eastward, upon which I made the Signal for them to come into my wake, which they paid no attention to, as it will I believe appear upon my Journal which I transmitted for their Lordships Inspection. if that Wind had continued I certainly should not have gone to any Port, but I thought in the situation that we were in, it would be proper to keep pretty well to the Northward, and as there were a great Number of Men of War employed in America I thought keeping along the Coast would be much safer for the Convoy as the Privateers would naturally keep at a distance to be out of the way of Men of War; the other Ships parted at different times, some of which hailed us, but none of them enquired whether we were going into Port.

I beg you will also be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that as I am not conscious of having failed in any point of duty, if there remains any doubt of my conduct, I beg they will be pleased to order it to be enquired into I am [&c.]

W. Cornwallis

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/1611, 3, 28.

25 Nov.

INVOICE OF GUNPOWDER ON ACCOUNT OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS <sup>1</sup>Hamburg 25 November 1776.

Invoice of Two Hundred and Forty Seven Barrels, Powder – shipped by Mr John Ross, on board the Brigg *Hoffnung*, John McKeever Master for Philadelphia, being by Order & on Account & risk of the American united Colonies & in part of a Contract, under date 5th February last <sup>2</sup> with Messrs Willing Morris & Co of Philadelphia, and said Mr Ross, and Consigned them as Pr Advice

132 Casks of Musket powder each		
94 lb 12408 lb neat a 9/-		MP 6979. . 8. .-
115. ditto Cannon ditto		
94 " 10810 lb a 8/-		" 5405. .-. .-
		MP 12384. . 8. .-
	Agio 23 pCt	" 2315. 13. .-
		Br m P 10068. 11. .-
Commission allowed J. Parish 2 pCt		201. . 6. .-
		Br m P 10270. . 1. .-

1. John Ross Invoice Book, vol. 1, 17, HSP. Invoice book contains entries of this date for gunlocks shipped to Willing, Morris & Co. and for gunpowder shipped to St. Eustatius.
2. "Congress . . . directed the Secret Committee to Renew the Contract which was done in Feby 1776. Mr John Ross of Philada Merchtn was half Owner of the Ship *Lion* & Consequently half Interested in the Contract tho' not named therein. To prevent further disappointments, he determined on a Voyage to Europe to prosecute this & other business. We purchased a fine Brig in which he went first to Madeira but not meeting a Market for her Cargo of flour he proceeded from thence to Bilboa w[h]ere he landed the same, not being able to obtain the Articles wanted, he proceeded from thence to Hamburg in ballast at this place he made his purchases & prepared the Brig and a Ship which followed him from Lisbon to receive the Goods. before they were put on board Informations were lodged with the British Minister that these were American vessels loading with Ammunition. That Minister required the Magistrates of Hamburg to make Seizure of them which they shamefully complied with, but this happening before the Goods were onboard, and Mr Ross having had some previous intimation, he got the property of the Vessells Covered by Newspapers so that they were acquitted. This transaction however put it out of Mr Ross's Power to ship the Goods he had bought, from that Port to America. He was therefore obliged to have them sent by Neutral Bottoms to other places in order finally to get them to this Country." Robert Morris's Account of his Contracts with the Continental Congress, Robert Morris Papers, HUL.

26 Nov.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO JOHN ROBINSON <sup>1</sup>

Sr

26th Novr 1776

Vice Adml Sr Jas Douglas Commanding Officer of His Majesty's Ships at Portsmouth having represented to my Lords Commrs of the Admty that all Ships bound to West Florida must go by the way of Jamaica as they cannot get through

the Gulph of Florida and without a Pilot cannot go through the Old Streights of Bahama and therefore proposed, that the Ship *Meredith* laden with Provisions for His Majts Forces in West Florida, which was to proceed under Convoy of the *Thames*, so far as their way lay together, may instead thereof, proceed under Convoy of His Majts Ship *Glasgow*, now under Orders to proceed to Jamaica And their Lordships having directed Sr James Douglass to give Orders for the said Ships proceeding under Convoy of the *Glasgow* instead of the *Thames* accordingly; I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you therewith, for the information of the Lords of the Treasury: And am &c:

P: S:

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 234.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

My Lord

26th Novr 1776.

Captain Douglas of the *Isis* having in his Letter of the 21th of last Month,<sup>2</sup> given my Lords Commissrs of the Admty an Account of the Success of His Majesty's Forces on the Lake Champlain & at the same time recommended to them the Gentlemen named in the inclosed Copy of the List which accompanied his Letter for their Gallant behaviour upon that Occasion; I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that they have promoted Captain [Thomas] Pringle of the *Lord Howe* Armed Vessel, to be Captain of the *Camel* of 24 Guns fitting out at Deptford, and Lieut [James Richard] Dacres to be commander of the *Sylph* Sloop fitting out at the same place, and that they are pleased to leave it to your Lordship to fill up the vacancies occasioned thereby in such manner as Your Lordship shall judge proper.

I do not trouble your Lordship with a Copy of Captn Douglas's Letter as he informed me that he was preparing to send to you by Express the particulars contained in it; but I have herein taken leave to enclose an impression of the Gazette in which a Copy of that, as well as of Sr Guy Carleton's dispatches upon the Subject, were printed & have the honor to be &c.

P: S:

By the *Thames* p Express at 1/2 past 12 at Night Duplicate sent 14 January by the Packet

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 237.

2. See Volume 6, 1340-45.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE <sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen

Paris 26th November 1776

This serves only to inclose and explain the within State of the Commerce of Leghorn, which was given me by the Envoy of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, a Gentleman of universal Knowledge and a warm friend to America, and indeed to all mankind; I have the honor of his acquaintance in an intimate degree, and having communicated to him a memoire setting forth the particular state of the Commerce of America, with the History of its rise and increase and its present importance; it being a copy of what I delivered this Court; he marked the articles in demand in general and those in particular as you will see in the inclosed, after

which he enumerates their articles for exportation which in my turn I marked and observed upon as before you.

I have only to add that the Grand Duke has taken off all duties on the american Commerce to give it encouragement. This indeed is done rather privately to prevent Complaints of other Powers of a seeming partiality; when I add to this, that it is agreed on all hands Ships of War may be purchased at Leghorn ready fitted for sea cheaper than in any port in Europe, I think a good acquaintance ought to be cultivated with this state. I have the Honor to be &c

Silas Deane

(Copy)

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, 26-27, NA.

**27 Nov.**

CHRISTOPHER D'OYLEY TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir,

Whitehall 27th Novr 1776.

I am directed by Lord George Germain to transmit to you the inclosed Copy of a Letter communicated to me by Mr Stanley, Secretary to the Commissioners of the Customs, and to acquaint you, for the Information of the Lords of the Admiralty, that there is reason to believe, from Intelligence received through other Channels, that a considerable Number of Armed Vessels belonging to the Rebels and destined for North America, are now taking in their Cargoes, not only at Nantes, but also in different Ports in Holland, and in the Northern Parts of Europe, and that those from the latter mentioned Places will most probably in pursuing their Voyage, to North America, shape their Course North of the British Isles.

1. PRO, Colonial Office, 5/125, 79.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE <sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen

Paris 27th November 1776

In a former Letter I mentioned a Naval Enterprize which might at first appear Romantic, but the more it is considered the less danger I shall be in of being taxed on that score. Admiral Montague lately returned from the Banks where the Fishermen have had a wretched season of it, in consequence of the american privateers. He left two small Sloops of War there of 14 and 16 guns. In common years they leave six or seven thousand of their Labourers or Fishermen there as in a Prison through the winter employed in taking of Seals, repairing of Boats, Stages &c these are unarmed and ever dissatisfied to the last Degree with their Situation; two Frigates arriving early in February would destroy the Fishery for one if not two years, and obtain an acquisition of a fine Body of Recruits for your Navy. I have conferred with some Persons here on the subject, who highly approve the enterprize, but I submit it to your opinion after urging dispatch in what ever is done or attempted on that subject.

The Resolution of the Court of Spain in the case of Captain [John] Lee at Bilboa gives every encouragement to adventurers in these Seas where the prizes are valuable, and where you have constantly Harbours at hand on the Coast of

France and Spain to repair to and refit in, and where constant and certain Intelligence can be had of the situation of the british ships of War as well as of Commerce; I need not add on a subject so plain and at the same time so important, but will only remind you that the Dutch, in the space of two or three years after their first Revolt from Spain, attacked the Spaniards so successfully and unexpectedly in every Quarter of the Globe, that the Treasures they obtained thereby enabled them to carry on the war. Let me repeat that if you empower me or any other Person here, you may obtain any number of Ships of War on Credit from Individuals on paying Interest 5 per Cent until paid. The King will probably have use for his, and besides to let this go would be the same as a Declaration of War, which in form at least will for some time be avoided.

I write on different subjects in different Letters as they rise in my mind, and leave you to use as you judge best my Sybil Leavey and am Gentlemen &c  
 Silas Deane

(Copy)

1. Papers CC (Letters from Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, 1776-79), 103, 28-29, NA.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH <sup>1</sup>

Secret No 113

Paris Novr 27th 1776.

My Lord As my Yesterdays Conversation with M de Vergennes was a long one, a particular account of it, would swell this Dispatch to too great a Size, I must therefore content myself with giving Your Lordship the Substance.

I began with telling him – that since we parted at Fontainebleau, I had received Letters from my Court, in which, I was enjoined to express the great satisfaction with which the King had received the positive assurances of Friendship, which his Excellency had given me, by his Most Xn Majesty's express order, and in his Name – To such assurances we gave entire credit, had a thorough dependance upon them, and had no doubt that they gave equal credit to our professions, which were as sincere as possible, and which I solemnly renewed, after he had made a handsome Compliment in answer to this; I went on to say, that we saw with surprize, and Regret, that notwithstanding these friendly intentions, they were going to take a Step, which had a very unfavourable appearance, and was of the greatest Importance to us, for the Reasons which I had given his Excy at large, in our last Conversation. I repeated those Reasons, as shortly as I could, but so as not to lessen their force, and omitted nothing my Lord, that tended to shew the Consequence to us, of a French fleet being sent to the West Indies, in the present critical Moment. I spoke of the General Appearance it carryed, the hopes the Rebels would conceive, of drawing advantage from it to that Trade, which they certainly carried on with the french sugar Islands, and which was as beneficial to them, as it was prejudicial to us – In a Word my Lord, and not to dwell upon the Arguments with which You yourself furnished me, I spoke as Strongly, and forcibly as I could, upon the Importance to us of this Expedition, if it did take place, and of the Attention which it must necessarily draw, I did not however drop the least Intimation, of what we should be forced to do on our part, but spoke of it, only as a Step which appeared to us, inconsistent with that friendship

which this Court professes for us, and on which we love to rely – A great part of his answer was the same in substance, with that which he gave me the last time I saw him. He said, that he as yet knew nothing positive as to the destination of this fleet – that the King his Master's final Resolution, with regard to it was not taken, unless it had been taken last night, which he did not believe, that if this small Squadron did go to the french West Indies, as was probable, there was nothing that could give us the least cause of Jealousy; that it was inconsiderable in itself, consisting only of six Ships, and four frigates, and would probably be divided into three parts, and stationed at st Domingo, Martinico, and Guada-loupe – that we had a great Naval force in North America – that Every Nation must think of it's own security, and defense, and that as to the Trade I had mentioned, it would as he had already observed to me, be checked, and not countenanced by this Fleet.

To this my Lord, I replied in general – that M du Chaffault's fleet would in Effect be a greater force than any we had in America, as I knew it was the opinion of the ablest Sailors, that six ships of the line, well conductd, as these would be, were more than a Match for any Number of Frigates, that could be brought[t] against them: He interrupted me here to say, that I might be very sure that France had no hostile Intention – I said I was convinced of this, and was the more astonished at this expedition, as I could not discover a sufficient motive for it, I added, that there were no arguments, which Ingenuity could not combat with Specious Reason, but that I always loved to deal frankly, and speak out, and therefore must say, that it did seem to me, totally impossible that so able a Ministry, as the present Ministry of france certainly was, should not see, should not be convinced in their own Minds, that a French fleet, sent to the West Indies in the present Moment, was an important, and a disagreeable Thing for Great Britain. Without discussing this, He so far changed the Subject as to say in his answer, that besides the Reasons he had given me, it was essential to the King his Masters dignity, and Honour, to prevent all Insults to his Ports, which had been notoriously insulted of late, on many occasions, by our Men of War, who when they were pursuing an enemy's Ship, followed it into a french Port, just as they would into Portsmouth, or Plymouth: He added, that they had made many little complaints of late, on no one of which they had as yet received Satisfaction – He said this My Lord, with a very firm, but not an Angry Tone – I expressed my surprize, and put him in mind, that this was the first time he had ever spoke to me upon the subject, that as I knew no particulars, I could only answer in General, that the King was too Jealous of his own Honour, not to respect that of every other Sovereign, that nothing could be more foreign to his Majesty's Intentions, than to offer the least Insult to france, nothing more positive, than the orders given to all our sea Officers, to respect her Pavillion and Territory, according to those known Laws which are universally received – He said, that he did believe those orders were given, but that they certainly were not obeyed, and added, that if a french officer dared to offer a similar Insult to our Ports, his Head would pay for it. He entered into no particulars, of the Violation of Territory he complains of, said that it was true, that he had never spoke upon the subject to me, that he had purposely avoided it as a disagreeable one, and had sent all those

Complaints through the french Minister, which was the natural channel – He then added, that he hoped M de Noailles had told your Lordship, as he was instructed, that the Attention France has to complain of every little disagreeable Incident as it arises, is a Proof of her sincere Desire, to preserve Peace, had we not that Intention said He, we should let these Grievances accumulate, put 'em all in a Bag, was his expression, and form a Mass, to be produced at once when they were wanted, to give a Colour to some unfriendly design. After I had answered in General Terms, that we should always be Ready to do Justice, and redress every Real Grievance; He changed the Subject a little, and said, you cannot expect us, to treat the Americans, with the same Rigour that You do, our Trading Vessels are forced to come near their Coast, in their way to, and from Europe, their privateers would if provoked, attack us, we should have nothing to gain in such Combats, and every thing to lose – To this I replied My Lord, that what I had expected, was the performance of that Declaration his Excellency gave me many months ago, “that the Americans should not be supplied, with Arms, or Ammunition,” I observed to him, that those orders had certainly been eluded in France, on more occasions than one, but had been totally neglected in the french West Indies, from which it was notorious, that the Rebels had received great supplies of this kind – I spoke of this as a thing past all doubt, and again observed to him, that a French fleet sent thither at this time, would certainly carry the appearance of favouring that Trade – He never would admit this, but after combating it as before, he repeated what he had said at the beginning of our Conversation, that he did not know, that the King his Master had fixt the destination of M du Chaffaults fleet (he said the Same thing to another foreign Minister yesterday Morning) He then myLord, hinted at our immense Preparations I told him that he knew the object of them, and that they were calculated only for our own Defense. I am persuaded answered he that they are more for ostentation than use, c'est moins pour L'Employ que pour L'étalage de vos Richesses was his Expression, I am likewise persuaded continued he, notwithstanding all the Intimations we receive to the contrary, that Your Professions are sincere, and Your Intentions pacific, Your Situation certainly does not call for a foreign War, so that all that is said tending to create an Alarm, does not affect me. – I answered, that the Picture he had drawn of his own Situation, and feelings, was an Exact Representation of ours, that we were persuaded, the present french Ministers, were too wise, not to know, and value, the blessings of Peace and therefore were not affected with those constant Rumours of War, which he well knew, were to be met with, in every Corner of Paris. – I purposely added, what was true, that that very morning, I had heard in the King's Antichamber, that M du Chaffaults departure was deferred for some little time, that his fleet might be augmented – he held up his hands at this, put me in Mind of what he had said to me upon his Honour, at Fontainebleau, and repeated the Same assertion, but then added, I do not Say what we may do in the Road of Brest; we may very probably have a Fleet there as you certainly have a very formidable one at Spithead. He said this with a forced Smile – I answered, that our Armament was considerable, and ought to be so, that whilst france was only preparing in her Ports, and putting good Locks to her Doors, we had not meddled with ours, but when she

began actually to arm, it was our Duty to take those precautions that Prudence dictates. I added that I never held one Language at Versailles, and another in England, but that I always had thought, and always should say, whenever I was called to give my opinion, – that a British Ministry who did not Put the Navy of England upon the most respectable footing, when our Neighbours were arming all around us, was highly culpable, I ended with saying, that I knew the Activity, and Wisdom of the present Ministers too well, not to be sure, that they never would incur that blame. I said this My Lord in the politest Manner, but with the Tone of a Man, who speaks from th[o]rough conviction – He answered, that his opinion agreed entirely with mine, that no wise Nation would rest her security, upon anything but her own Vigilance, and proper Attention to put herself in a posture of Defense, I credit entirely Your Professions, You I hope, equally credit ours, but La volonté de l'homme est ambulatoire, besides events arise in Politics, that force a change of Conduct, and for these Contingencies every wise Nation will be prepared: He ended with saying, as we do not credit what is said by your opposition, do not you Credit what You hear from les Detracteurs du Ministere

He seemed My Lord to intend that the Conversation should drop here, but as he had not answered me with regard to M du Chaffaults fleet, in the Manner I wished, I determined to return once more to the charge, and that I might give an air of Novelty to what I said, which would make a repetition of the Arguments I had used more attended to, it occurred to me, that I might take an advantage of his having repeatedly mentioned the Opposition; (one of the principal Members of which I had presented to him that Day) I therefore told him My Lord, that besides the real Mischief that would arise to us from the Destination of M du Chaffaults fleet, if it was what the public supposed, there was a great deal in the Alarm it would give, and the appearance it would carry. I asked him, what he as an English Minister would answer to a Speaker in opposition who should say – France sends a Considerable fleet to Her Islands; What force have you in yours? what precautions have you taken for their Defense? do you mean the french Fleet should go unobserved, with no british Squadron to watch its Motions? is our security then, to depend upon the Sincerity of a Rivals Professions? &c &c

I worked up those, and similar Topics as well as I could. My Lord as it struck me, that this was a way of saying Strong things, without the possibility of their carrying an Air of Menace, or Insult.

He smiled at some parts of this little speech, then combated my Arguments, with many he had used before, but said at last after a short Pause. “I will give the King my Master an account of our Conversation, as he has a sincere friendship for his Britannic Majesty. The uneasiness you have conceived at the Destination of this little fleet, will naturally weigh with Him. I do not at all know what his Resolution will be, but if he should determine, to leave his Ports in the West Indies, without a fleet to protect them from insult, I cannot but expect, that You my Lord, will be authorized to give, the most positive assurances from Your Court, that our Ports, and Territory, shall be respected as they ought.”

I answered, that I knew the most positive orders had been given, to all our Navy, and was persuaded they would be renewed.



If the Destination of this fleet should be changed, or its Departure deferred, which I am not yet sanguine enough to expect, In this case my Lord, I humbly hope that I shall be authorized to give the Assurances M de Vergennes desires; and indeed there seems to me every reason of Policy, for our being particularly attentive not to offer France any Insult, or give her the least just Cause of Complaint at this Time

I have this Moment received the Honour of Your Lordships Letter No 60: and am excessively happy to find that my Conduct has met with his Majestys gracious approbation I am with the greatest Truth and Respect My Lord [&c.] Stormont.

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 278-87.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Confidential

Paris Novr 27. 1776

My Lord I am very secretly informed that Spain who, as Your Lordship knows, has long favoured the American Rebels underhand is now preparing to assist them more than ever, It is Even not improbable that She will take an open and decided Part in their Favour. She likewise Meditates an attack upon Portugal. All this is done in Concert with this Court who chuses to keep behind the Curtain for the present but has agreed to assist Spain with Eleven Millions of Livres . . .

Mr Deane was at Versailles all Monday and Yesterday he has I am told obtained a promise of a french Vessel to carry to America a Number of officers, ammunition, Cloths &c but from what Port that Vessel is to sail, I have not yet been able to learn The Secret assistance the french Ministers give the Rebels is no longer a Mystery it is pretty well known to those who are at all informed, and is much blamed by sensible Men tho no friends to Great Britain They say that it is weak narrow Policy, and that what is done is either too much or too little. . . .

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 288-89.

28 Nov.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL JAMES YOUNG, ANTIGUA <sup>1</sup>

Sr

28th Novr 1776

The Earl of Suffolk, One of His Majts Principal Secretaries of State, having transmitted to my Lords Commrs of the Admty the Copy of a Memorial which he has received from Monsr de Hannahon the Danish Charge d'Affaires complaining of the Conduct of Captain Brine [Henry Bryne] of His Majesty's Ship the *Hind*, in the Road of Frederickstadt off one of the Danish West India Islands, and signified His Majesty's Pleasure, that immediate enquiry be made into the Complaint contained therein. I am commanded by their Lordships to send you herewith a Copy of the said Memorial and to signify their direction to you to make immediate Enquiry into the Matters therein complained of, and to report to them, by the very first opportunity, how the same shall appear. I am &c:

P. S.

By the *Glasgow* at Portsmouth

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 223-24.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Gentlemen

Paris November 28th 1776

Your favor of the 7th August last covering Copy of yours of the 8th July I received tho' the original never came to hand. – this Letter also inclosed the declaration of Independency with instructions to make it known to this and the other Powers of Europe, and I received it the 7th Instant, though the Vessel which brought it had but 38 days passage from Salem – this Letter was very far from relieving me, as it inclosed what had been circulated thro' Europe for two Months before, and my pretending to inform this Court would be only a matter of form, in consequence of your Orders which were expressed in the stile of any common affair – I certainly prefer, and must on all occasions, simplicity of stile as well as manners, but something is due to the dignity of old and powerful States, or if you please to their prejudices in favor of long accustomed form and etiquette, and as the United States of America by this, introduce themselves among the established Powers and rank with them, it must, of course be expected that at the first introduction or the announcing of it, some mode more formal, or if I may say respectful would have been made use of than simply two or three lines from the Committee of Congress in a Letter something more apparently authentic, not that either your power or the reality of your Letter could be doubted – I mention this as something deserving of serious consideration whether in your applications here and your powers and instructions of a Public nature it is not always proper to use a Seal. This is a very antient custom in all public and even private concerns of any consequence . . . As the Copy was dated the 8th of July I took occasion to observe that [“]the honorable Congress had taken the earliest opportunity of informing this Court of the declaration of their independency and that the variety of important affairs before the Congress with the critical situation of the Armies in their Neighbourhood and the obstructions of their Commerce had prevented that intelligence which had been wished for but the present serve to show the early and principal attention of the United States to this Court, and as their Independency was now in form declared, the queries I had formerly put in consequence of my first instructions might now be resolved, and I hoped favorably” – to this I was answered [“]unless France by a public acknowledgment of your Independency makes War on Great Britain in your favor what service can such acknowledgment be of to the United States? You are known here, our Ports are open, and free for your Commerce, and your Ships are protected in them, and greater indulgence allowed than to any other Nation – if France should be obliged to make war on England, it will be much more just and honorable in the Eyes of the World to make it on some other account; and if made at all it is the same thing to the United States of America and in one Important view better for them to have it originate from any other cause, as America will be under less immediate obligations – further, France has alliances and can not resolve a question which must perhaps involve her in a War without previously consulting them, meantime the United States can receive the same succors and assistance from France without as well as with such an open acknowledgment, perhaps much more advantageously” . . . inclosed I send you the size of Masts and Spars with the

price, which, if it will answer may be a certain article of remittance, as may other Naval Stores, but I dare not contract with the Marine as I have no Powers therefore, and am unacquainted with the rate at which they were usually exported to England – a wide field is opening as the American Commerce is to be free and I have had many applications from many parts on the subject tho' few are disposed to venture until the close of this Campaign, and if it is not decisive against us, our wants will be supplied another season at as cheap a rate as ever, but I trust never more on the old terms of long Credit. – I am well nigh harassed to death with applications of Officers to go out for America. Those I have engaged are I trust in general of the best Character, but that I should engage or rather take from the hands of some leading Men here some one or two in a number not so accomplished cannot be surprising, and may, considering my situation, be pardonable, but I have no suspicion of any such in my department of consequence – I have been offered Troops from Germany on the following general terms, Officers to recruit as for the service of France, and embark for St Domingo from Dunkirk, and by altering their rout land in the American States – The same has been proposed from Switzerland, to which I could give no encouragement, but submit it to your consideration in Congress whether if you can establish a Credit as I have before hinted it would not be well to purchase at Leghorn five or six stout Frigates which might at once transport some Companies of Swiss, a quantity of Stores and the whole to be defended by the Swiss Soldiers on their passage, or if you prefer Germans which I really do not, the Vessels might go from Dunkirk. I daily expect important advices from the North respecting Commerce at least having sent to the King of Prussia in consequence of a Memorandum he ordered his Agent here to show me, and to propose some queries to me, a state of the North American Commerce at large. . . . In expectation of your sending over Frigates to convoy your Ships and of your giving some instructions on what I have wrote you of operations in these Seas, I design being at Bordeaux in March when I shall be able to give you the needful directions in any such affair but at any rate send out a number of blank Commissions for Privateers to be fitted out in Europe under your flag, the prizes must finally be brought to you for condemnation, and the principal advantage will remain with you. . . . As to Sea Officers they are not so easily obtained, yet some good ones may be had and in particular two, one of whom I have already mentioned – the other is quite his equal, with some other advantages, he was first Lieutenant of a man of War round the World when Captain Cook sailed that Voyage and has since had a Ship, but wants to leave this for other service, where he may make a settlement and establish a family. These two Officers would engage a number of younger ones should they embark. I send herewith the Plans of one of them for the burning of Ships . . .

1. Laurens Collection, Group 30, SCHS.

29 Nov.

LORD WEYMOUTH TO LORD STORMONT<sup>1</sup>

(Private)

St James's 29th Novr 1776

His Excellency Lord Viscount Stormont

My Lord I am to confirm to Your Excellency by His Majesty's command, the

instructions given You by Lord Rochford for obtaining my means of pecuniary reward any important secret information whenever such an opportunity may offer.

In the present instance, if such a treaty has really been entered into by the Court of France, with the Congress; as stated in Your Excellency's letter to Me of the 20th Instant; a copy should be purchased if possible, at any price. And even if a copy can be procured of such a draught as has been made in concert by the French Ministers, with Deane, would be desirable even at some considerable expence. It is not however possible to mention to your Excellency what Sum it would be proper to give, as that must necessarily depend on the means by which it is obtained, and the rank of life of the Agent employed for that purpose, and His Majesty has no unwillingness to leave this matter wholly to the discretion of your Excellency who is so well apprised of the importance of such an acquisition if the authenticity can be well ascertained. I am &c.

Weymouth

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 272.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28 TO SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 30, 1776.

London, November 29.

The last letters from Lisbon mention, that a Provincial privateer of 14 guns besides swivels, and 160 men, is taken and carried into that port. She had taken two West Indiamen laden with sugar, but these letters do not mention their names.

SILAS DEANE TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Paris, November 29th 1776

. . . I should never have completed what I have but for the generous, and indefatigable and spirited exertions of Monsr Beaumarchais to whom the United States are on every account greatly indebted, more so than to any other Person on this side the Water, he is greatly in advance for Stores, Cloathing, and the like, and therefore am confident you will make him the earliest and most ample remittances . . .

A particular account of the Stores shipped may probably not be ready by this Vessel but may go by the next or some succeeding one as several will sail after this on the same errand. Let me by every Letter urge on you the sending in Season a quantity of Tobacco, of Rice, and of Flour or Wheat. These are articles which cannot fail and are capital ones, lesser are not to be omitted – Twenty thousand hogsheads of Tobacco are this instant wanted in France, besides the demand in other Kingdoms. . . . I have advised these stores being shipt for some of the New England Ports North East of Newport first, and if failing of making a Port there to stand for the Capes of Delaware or for Charlestown So Carolina as the most likely rout to avoid interception. – I cannot in a Letter do full justice to Monsr Beaumarchais for his great Address and assiduity in our Cause. I can only say he appears to have undertaken it on great and liberal principles, and has in the pursuit made it his own. – his interest and influence which are great have

been exerted to the utmost in the Cause of the United States, and I hope the consequences will equal his Wishes. . . .

1. Laurens Collection, Group 30, SCHS.

## 1 Dec. (Sunday)

### BEAUMARCHAIS TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Paris, December 1, 1776.

Gentlemen: With regard to me, gentlemen, my sincere attachment to your cause and my respectful esteem for your persons has not suffered me to hesitate and to wait till vessels loaded by you should arrive in this country with the produce of your own in exchange for our merchandise, but the faith of the powers of your commissioner (a duplicate of which he has left in the hands of our ministry) have procured from our manufactories all what I have thought might be useful to you in your present situation, and I have begun to send supplies to you by the ship that carries this letter, with a brief account of what it contains for your use, as I expect to send you my invoices in good order, attested and signed by M. [Silas] Deane, by another ship, that will carry you a fresh supply of ammunition, and the invoices of which I shall send by a third ship, and so for all the others.

But, gentlemen, however warm may be the zeal that animates me, my friends will never be sufficient to double and treble my advances, if on your side, you do not send me on my ships and on your own remittances in country produce in proportion as you receive my supplies.

What I call my ships, gentlemen, is some French vessels hired for freight, according to a bargain agreed to between a merchant and myself, in presence of M. Deane, for want of your own vessels, which we had been long expecting, but did not arrive. Here inclosed you have copy of the agreement.

Now, gentlemen, I beg you will send me my remittances either in excellent Virginia tobacco, or in indigo, rice, etc. My advances in this expedition must be soon followed by a second as considerable. It amounts to about one million tournois.

1. Wharton, ed., *Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence*, II, 209–10.

## 2 Dec.

### PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL RICHARD LORD HOWE <sup>1</sup>

My Lord,

[Admiralty Office] 2nd Decr 1776

Advice having been received that Monsr du Coudra[y], the person mentioned in the Intelligence transmitted to your Lordship in an order from my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, dated the 6th of last month, set out from Paris last Thursday for Havre, from whence he is soon to depart for North America (as is supposed) in a Frigate of 24 Guns; & it being probable, in case he should be destined for that Country, that he will endeavour to land at Boston or Martha's Vineyard; I am commanded by my Lords to acquaint you therewith, in addition to the before mentioned Intelligence, that your Lordship make take such

further Steps, in order to Intercept him and prevent his landing, as you shall judge proper agreeable to the directions contained in their Lordships said order. I have &c

P. Stephens

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/1333, LC Photocopy.

LORD GRANTHAM TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

No 62.

[Madrid] 2d December 1776.

By my last advices from Alicant I have learnt that a French vessel was arrived there which had been met on the 14th November, off the Rock of Lisbon, by a North American armed vessel, and forcibly obliged to take on board eleven Sailors, part of the crews belonging to two British ships taken on the 12th, about twenty five leagues to the westward of the said Rock. The pirate is a sloop called the *Union*, belonging to Cape Ann, mounting ten carriage guns, eight swivels and forty men, commanded by Isaac Soams, and had taken three other ships.<sup>2</sup> Incidents like these ought surely to convince every commercial nation of the necessity of preventing such interruptions to their trade.

1. Sparks Transcripts, Lord Grantham, I, 20, 21, HU.

2. Massachusetts privateer sloop *Union*, Captain Isaac Somes.

**3 Dec.**

“COPY OF A LETTER FROM MR. JAMES BIER, OF THE BRIG *Watson*,  
DATED DUNDALK, DEC. 3, 1776.”<sup>1</sup>

On the 2d of October, in lat. 41, long. 45, I was taken by an American ship of war, called the *Cabott*, a brig of 14 guns, commanded by Capt. Eleazer Hindman [Elisha Hinman], who had just before taken five large vessels. I was carried on board the privateer, where I applied to the Captain for leave to continue on board my own vessel, which he refused; however, after some conversation about privateering, he consulted his Officers, and then told me I might go on board. They took all my men, except the Captain, one boy, and a passenger, putting eight of their own men on board. We were to proceed for New London or Rhode Island. In about three weeks we got into soundings of Boston, but that night I had determined to retake her, having brought over to my party two of their people, by promising them 100 l. Accordingly, at eight o'clock, they sent me a pistol by the boy, on which I jumped on deck, clapped it to the prize-master's breast, and demanded him to surrender the vessel, which he complied with; at the same time the Captain and boy secured the Lieutenant of Marines in the cabin. We then secured the hatches till I got all the arms, which completed the business. I bore away for Halifax, but the wind being fair, stood on for Ireland, where I struck soundings in 27 days. We ran in here in a hard gale of wind, where we lie in safety, having received no damage, except one boat washed overboard, with studding-sails and some spare ropes.

J. B.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 14 to December 17, 1776.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL SIR JAMES DOUGLAS, PORTSMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

Sir

3 Decr 1776

The Earl of Suffolk having signified to my Lords Commrs of the Admty His Majts Pleasure that the Lieutenant & Twelve other Prisoners belonging to an American Arm'd Vessel call'd the *Independance*, who were brought to Portsmouth in His Majesty's Ship the *Pallas*, be kept in safe Custody 'til farther Order; I am commanded by their Lordships to signify their direction to you to cause them to be removed into the *Barfleur* and there kept in safe Custody until further orders accordingly. I am &c

P S

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 262.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30 TO TUESDAY,  
DECEMBER 3, 1776

London, December 3.

The ship *Speirs*, brought into Greenock, as formerly mentioned, by the mate and crew, after being taken by a Provincial privateer, was ensured at London: the underwriters have generously made them a present of 200 l. sterling.

SILAS DEANE TO JOHN JAY<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Dear Jay

Paris Decr 3d 1776

If my Letters arrive safe they will give you some Idea of my situation, – without Intelligence, without Orders, and without remittances, yet boldly plunging into Contracts, Engagements, & Negotiations, hourly hoping that something will arrive from America – by General Coudry I send 30,000 Fusils – 200 pc of Brass Cannon, Thirty Mortars, 4000 Tents, and Cloathing for 30,000 Men, with 200 Tons of Gunpowder, Lead, Balls &c, &c, by which you may judge we have some friends here – a War in Europe is inevitable; The Eyes of all are on you, and the fear of your giving up or Accommodating is the greatest Obstacle I have to Contend with – Mons Beaumarchais has been my Minister in effect, as this Court is extreme cautious, and I now Advise you to Attend Carefully to the Articles sent you, I could not examine them here, I was promised they should be good & at the lowest prices, & that from persons in such station that had I hesitated it might have ruined my affairs but as in so large a Contract there is room for imposition, my Advise is that you send back to me samples of the Articles sent you – Cannon, Powder, &c Mortars &c are articles known, but of the Cloths the Fusils &c by which any imposition may be detected – large remittances are Necessary for your Credit & The enormous price of Tobacco, of Rice, of Ham & many other Articles, gives you, an Opportunity of making Your remittances to very great Advantage, 20,000 HHds of Tobacco are wanted immediately for this Kingdom, and more for other parts of Europe – I have wrote you on several subjects some of which I will Attempt briefly to recapitulate Tho I have but a Drop of Ink having received none from your Brother – The distruction of the Newfoundland Fishery, may be effected, by Two or Three of your Frigates, sent there early in February,

and by that means a fatal blow given to G Britain I mean by distroying the Stages Boats &c & bringing away the People left there as Prisoners – Glasgow in Scotland, may be plundered & burnt with ease, as may Liverpool, by two or Three stout Frigates, which may find a shelter and protection in the ports of France & Spain afterwards – Blank Commissions are wanted here to cruise under your Flag against the British Commerce This is a Capital stroke & must bring on a War hasten them out I pray you – France, and Spain, are Friendly, & you will greatly oblige the Latter, by seizing the Portuguese Commerce, Wherever it is found – I have had overtures from the King of Prussia in the Commercial Way & have sent a person of great Confidence [to] his Court in person, with Letters of Introduction from his Agent here with whom I am on the best terms – A Loan may be Obtained, if you make punctual remittances for the sum now Advanced, for any sum at five Pct Interest perhaps for less – The Western Lands ought to be held up to View as an encouragement for your soldiers, especially Foreigners, and are a good fund to raise Money on – you may if you judge proper, have any number of German, & Swiss Troops, They have been Offered me but you know I have no power to treat – A Number of Frigates may be purchased at Leghorn, the Great Duke of Tuskany being zealously in favor of America, & doing all in his power to encourage its Commerce – Troubles are rising in Ireland & with a little assistance, much work may be cut out for G Britain there, by sending from hence a few Priests, a little Money, & plenty of Arms – Omnia Tentanda is my Motto, Therefore I hint they playing their own Game on them by spiriting up the Caribbs in St Vincents, & the Negroes in Jamaica to revolt – on all these subjects I have wrote to you – also on Various particulars of Commerce, Our Vessels have more Liberty in the ports of France, & Spain, & Tuscany, than the Vessels of any other Nation & that Openly – I presented the Declaration of independancy to this Court after it had indeed become an Old storey in every part of Europe, it was well received, but as you say you have Articles for Alliance under Consideration any resolution must be deferr'd until We know what they are – The want of Intelligence, has more than once well nigh ruined my affairs – pray be more Attentive to this important subject, or drop at once all Thoughts of a Foreign Connection – I must mention some Trifles – The Queen is fond of parade, & I believe wishes a War, & is our Friend, she loves riding on horsback, could you send me a fine Narragansett Horse or Two the present might be Money exceedingly well laid out – Rittenhouses Orery – or Arnolds Collection of Insects – a Phaeton of American make and a pair of Bay Horses – A few barrells of Apples – of Walnuts, of Butter Nutts &c would be great Curiosities here where everything American is gazed at and where the American Contest engrosses the Attention of all Ages, Rank & Sexes – had I Ten ships here I could fill them all with passingers for America – I hope the Officers sent will be Agreeable they were recommended by the Ministry here, and are at this instant really in their Army but this must be a secret, – do you want heavy Iron Cannon, Sea Officers of distinction or ships Your Special Orders will enable me to procure them – For the situation of Affairs, in England refer you to Mr [Nicholas] Rogers Aid De Camp to Mons du Coudry . . . do not forget, or omit, sending me blank Commissions for Privateers, under these, infinite damage may



be done, to the British Commerce, & as the prizes, must be sent to you, for Condemnation, the eventual profit, will remain with you . . .

1. Jay Papers, CUL.

PLIARNE & PENET TO NICHOLAS & JOHN BROWN <sup>1</sup>

Gentln

[Nantes] 3rd December 1776

Since writing the above <sup>2</sup> have heard the disagreeable news of an American Vessel being taken a going out of Bordeaux River, by an English frigate, who was laying in wait for her, One reports she is worth about Twenty thousand pounds Sterling, being loaded with Dry Goods, It is thought by most people here that information was given of her by some of our enemies who knew the particular time of her Sailing, as no one before heard of any frigate being in the Bay, We are much surprised to hear of so many American Vessells arriving at Bordeaux for two reasons, first the dangerous River they have to enter and mount, Second the great concealmt our enemies have to lie, in wait for them Vessells, almost at the mouth of the River; we think it one of the most dangerous ports in france, on account of the last reason just given, and we are much surprised to hear that near all of them Vessells adress themselves or are adressed to a certain Irish house there who had the name of being great Tory's, before they did any business for the Americans, Mr Dean has likewise put his Confidence in that house; who we surmise, have dispatched the Vessel taken, for Account of sd Mr Dean. It is thought here in general that our greatest Enemies in this place and elsewhere in france are the Irish, Cats, which makes us very carefull before any of them people -- <sup>3</sup>

We likewise can inform you that a very large fleet sailed from Cadix the 17th October last, but is not known as yet for where. There is also a small fleet sailed from Brest very lately, for the french West Indias, which things we hope will all turn out for the best advantage of the Americans -- we just now heard that there is an American privateer lying at the entrance of this River, with an English prize that she took off Bordeaux -- <sup>4</sup> We are in the mean time Gentlemen [&c.]

Pliarne Penet & Co

1. Nicholas Brown Papers, JCBL.

2. Pliarne & Penet to Nicholas & John Brown, November 30, 1776, Nicholas Brown Papers, JCBL.

3. The firm of Samuel & J. H. Delap. Remarks in this letter indicate jealousy of a rival commercial house.

4. Continental ship *Reprisal*, Captain Lambert Wickes.

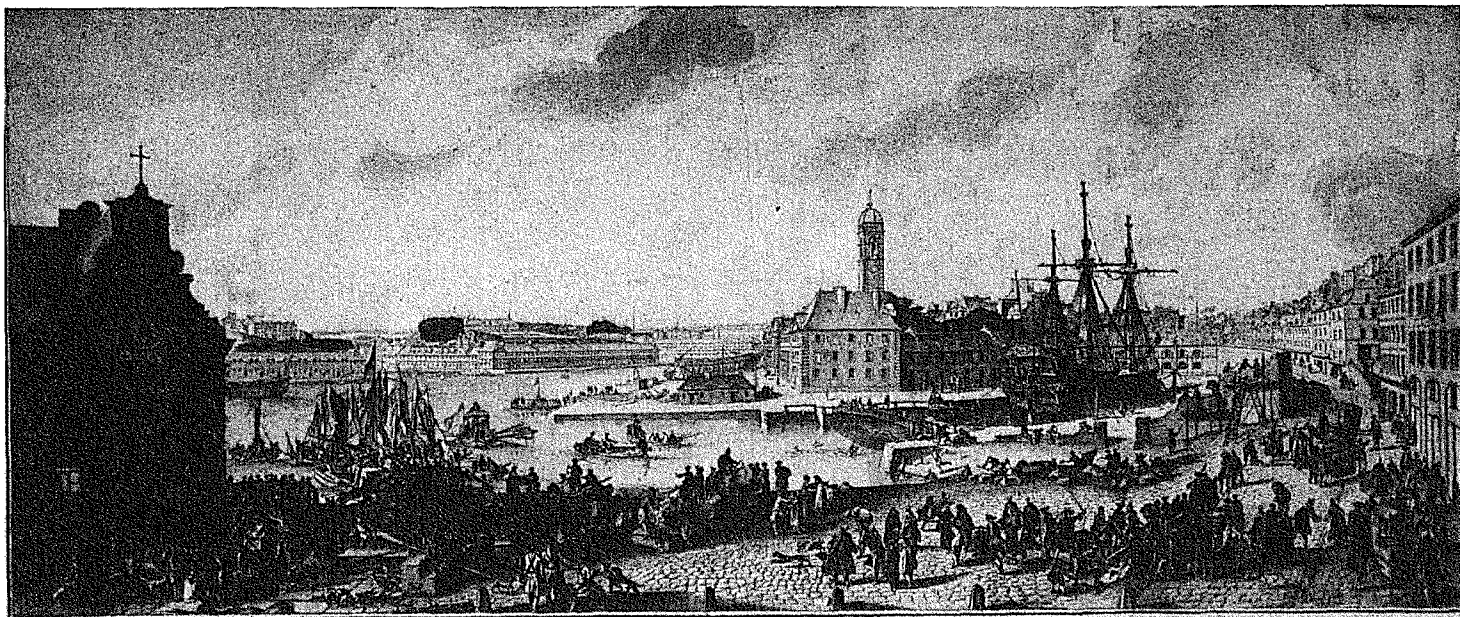
4 Dec.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRALS JAMES YOUNG AND CLARK GAYTON <sup>1</sup>

Sir

[Admiralty Office] 4th Decr

My Lords Commissioners of the Admty think it necessary that you should be informed (and you are to consider the same as most confidential and secret) that there is some reason to believe that a Squadron of Ships, consisting of six of the Line, and four Frigates, which have been for some time preparing at Brest, is intended to be sent to the West Indies & to be Stationed 3 at St Domingo & 3 at



EMBARQUEMENT AU

*Dedicé à l'Académie de*



PORT DE BREST

*Marine par Jean-Louis*

Martinique, at the same time, that it is no less necessary, in order to prevent alarm & to obviate every inconvenience which the appearance of this Squadron might occasion, that you should be informed that the Court of France has in the most express terms, disavowed all hostile Intentions and declares that the Sole object of that Armament is to protect the Commercial Interests of her Subjects from those Inconveniences to which they must be unavoidably exposed, during the Existence of the American Rebellion

Notwithstanding however this pacific declaration of the French Court the honour of this Nation & common Prudence render it expedient that we should be provided against all possible Events, and you may rest assured that if the French fleet sails, a British fleet of at least equal force, will soon sail for the Security of His Majesty's Islands.

I am therefore commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that it will be a necessary & useful Part of your duty, to be particularly attentive to the Motions of the French Armament & to signify their direction to you not only to take the earliest Opportunity of transmitting all material Intelligence together with your remarks thereupon to me for their Lords Information, but also to communicate the same with all possible expedition to His Majesty's other Governors within the Limits of your Commands, who have received the same Information, from Lord George Germaine, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, and similar directions with respect to communicating the same to you. I am &c

P. Stephens <sup>2</sup>

Vice Admiral Gayton	} By the Packet
Jamaica	
Vice Admiral Young	
Leeward Islands	

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/1333, LC Photocopy.

2. Vice Admiral Howe was also notified this date, PRO, Admiralty 2/1333, LC Photocopy.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO THE BRITISH NAVY BOARD <sup>1</sup>

Gentn

4th Decr 1776

Having communicated to my Lords Commrs of the Admty your Letter of the 30th past informing them that the *Yankee* Privateer being offered to you for sale, you directed the Deptford Officers to survey her, and report their opinion, whether she was fit to be purchased for His Majesty & including their Report thereupon for their Lordships Information by which it appears she is not a proper Vessel to be purchas'd for an Armed Vessel. I am commanded by their Lordships to signify their direction to you not to purchase her. I am &c:

P S.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 265.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3 TO THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 5, 1776

London, December 4.

The *Montague*, Blues, from Newfoundland to Bilboa, sailed the 1st of October, and was taken the next day by an American privateer.

The *Brown Hall*, Austin, from Port Medway, a missing ship, is arrived at Ramsgate, after being taken and plundered by the Americans.

A letter received from the Mate of a man of war belonging to Admiral Gayton's squadron at Jamaica, who at present commands a schooner of eight carriage guns (six pounders) and 30 men, says, "I am just returned to Port Royal harbour, from a cruise of three months off Cape Francois; have met with no success, but had a very near chance of being sunk, for in chasing an American snow, which ran into the above port for protection, I stood too far in after, and was fired at from the battery; yet, notwithstanding they fired several shot at us, not one hit our vessel."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO SILAS DEANE <sup>1</sup>

Auray in Brittany, 4 December 1776.

I have just arrived on board the '*Reprisal*,' Captain Wickes, a small man of war belonging to Congress. We lie in the bay of Quiberon, awaiting a favourable wind to go to Nantes. We left the Cape on the 29th October and have only taken 30 days from land to land. I staid on board three days after we anchored, hoping to be able to proceed to Nantes with the vessel; but, the wind continuing contrary, I have come here to proceed by land to that place.

Congress, in September, nominated you, and Mr [Thomas] Jefferson and me, to negotiate a treaty of commerce and of amity with the Court of France. Mr Jefferson, then in Virginia, declined; whereupon Mr Arthur Lee, at present in London, was nominated in his place. Our vessel has brought indigo, upon the account of Congress, worth about £3,000 sterling, which is to be at our orders for payment of our expenses. Congress has assigned us £7,000 sterling besides, for the same object, which the Committee will transmit as soon as possible. I am as near Paris here as I shall be at Nantes; but I am obliged to go there, to obtain money for my journey and to get my baggage, which remained on board ship; but I will try to be with you as soon as ever I can. I intend to preserve the incognito with regard to my character so far and until I know if the Court is willing to receive ministers of the United States. I have several letters from the Committee for you, which I do not send, because I know that they contain matters of consequence, and I am not sure of the safety of this conveyance. Moreover, as I reckon to take the post at Nantes, I imagine it will not make three or four days' difference. At sea we met with two brigantines, one Irish and the other English, which we captured and are bringing to Nantes.<sup>2</sup> I know not whether the Captain will obtain permission to sell them there, because that might possibly be contrary to existing treaties between the two crowns. They are worth about £ 4,000 sterling. We had a rough passage and I feel myself shaken by it; but I hope the fine air which I breathe on land will soon restore me, and that I shall be able to travel with speed, to join you in Paris and to find you there in good health.

P.S. It would be well done if you could by some safe way acquaint Mr Lee of his nomination. Perhaps the best way would be through the Department of

Foreign Affairs and the French Ambassador; that of the ordinary post would not be safe.

I beg you to obtain a lodging for me.<sup>3</sup>

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 597.

2. Brigantines *George* and *La Vigne*. William Bell Clark, *Lambert Wickes, Sea Raider and Diplomat* (New Haven, 1932), 98, 99.

3. Not knowing Deane's Paris address, Franklin sent this letter via Barbeau Dubourg, Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 598.

5 Dec.

RICHARD CHAMPION TO WILLING, MORRIS & Co.<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen

Bristol 5 Decr 1776.

The various Conveyances by which I wrote you with Accounts &c arrived, I hope safe, though I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you. I have the greatest hopes of it, because they were sent, before this unnatural War had arisen to the height which wholly has separated this Country from yours, and deprived us of an Empire, which was our Glory and our Boast. May God grant that the Authors of this War, whose tyrannical Behaviour have driven a brave People, jealous of their Rights, to the necessity of throwing off a Government, which had first deprived them of its Protection, meet with their just deserts! This is poor Satisfaction for the melancholy Scenes, which attend a civil War, but is, I fear, all that this Country can receive.

It is a melancholy Consideration, that all the Connexion we can now have with each other, is to solicit good offices in behalf of those who have the Misfortune to be taken Prisoners in this unhappy War. I have to entreat that in favour of Capt Isaac Pocock, who commands a Vessel belonging to me called the *Marquis of Rockingham*, if he should have the Misfortune to be taken. She is bound to the West Indies. As she could not be in time for the Convoy, and it will be a very great Inconvenience to me, not to have her in the West Indies, to bring home my remittances, I put a few Guns aboard her, as a means of defence only, for I can never consistent with the principles I have always professed, act offensively against a People supporting their Rights, and therefore can by no means think of taking a Letter of Marque. I solicit your friendship to procure the release of Capt Pocock and permit him to depart with the first ship for Statia or any port of the West Indies, he may want to go to. Any little Supplies of money you will be so good as to let him have, and I will repay it in the manner you shall chuse, in the West Indies I apprehend most convenient to you. If he is carried into any port of New England, he will send this to you, and you will be so good as to grant him your good offices.

If Capt Wm Innes Pocock of my *Snow Champion*, laden with Herrings from Gottenburgh to Statia, should have been also taken I beg the same indulgence to him.

I shall be always happy in having it in my power to render you Services for I truly am Gentlemen [&c.]

Rich Champion

[Endorsed at a later date by Captain Isaac Pocock]

I Pocock having the Misfortune of being taken by the *Sturdy Beggar* of Maryland,

has the good luck of being passenger in her for Martinico, therefore hopes he may get to Tortola in a few days – any favour which Messrs Willing Morris & Co may shew his Mate, Mr Thomas Good – I Pocock will Esteem a Service done himself, as his mate is deserving – I Pocock Cannot omit this opportunity of giving a public testimony that he is used on board the Privateer with the greatest Civility & has every Indulgence that Can possibly be shewn to any.<sup>2</sup>

1. Robert Morris Papers, HUL.

2. "The *Marquis of Rockingham*, Pocock, from Bristol to Tortola, is retaken, and carried into Antigua," *Public Advertiser*, London, May 5, 1777.

## 6 Dec.

### MARQUIS DE NOAILLES TO VERGENNES<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 6 December 1776

. . . Lord Suffolk stated to the Prince of Masseran [Masserano] that our intentions may not be turned toward war, but that England could not look upon a departure of our [Brest] Fleet for America without being perturbed; that they are persuaded that France will not at all support the insurgent Americans, but that the confidence these same Rebels will gain at the sight of foreign forces in their vicinity would only harden and prolong the unfortunate quarrels dividing the Homeland and the Colonies. . . .

The Fleet assigned to the West Indies must have departed last evening from Portsmouth outer harbor under escort of the frigate *Glasgow* and the sloops *Beaver*, *Fly*, and *Hornet*. The frigate *Thames* must have departed at the same time with the vessels destined for New York . . .<sup>2</sup>

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

2. The Ambassador's information about the sailings was correct. *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, December 13, 1776, reported: "This morning the following men of war sailed from Spithead, with all the outward bound ships under their convoy, viz, the *Glasgow*, *Hornet*, *Fly* and *Beaver*, for the West Indies; the *Worcester* with the ships bound to the Straits; and the *Thames*, with the outward bound, for New York, and, as the wind continues easterly it is expected they will get clear."

### "EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM EXETER, DEC. 6"<sup>1</sup>

The circumstances of the retaking of the *Elliot*, Squires, from Oporto, arrived in this port, deserves, I think, to be made public: – When the above vessel was made prize, the Provincials took out of her the master, a passenger, and five seamen, leaving only the mate and one hand more on board, and put in a prize-master and five others to navigate the vessel to Salem. The mate getting acquainted with one of the privateer's men (who is a Londoner), they agreed to retake the vessel, which they did in the night, and confining the prize-master and the other hands, brought the vessel safe into Topsham. What is extraordinary, all the weapons they had were a cutlass and an axe, though the Provincials had fire arms.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 10 to December 12, 1776.

**8 Dec. (Sunday)**

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM GOSPORT, DEC. 8”<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday a fire broke out in three different parts of the new rope-house in the Dock yard. It began about half after four in the afternoon, and raged with great violence till about nine o'clock, when it deadened a little, but was not quite extinguished till this morning.

The building is supposed to have been wilfully set on fire, as the men never work in it by candle-light, and had that day left off by half after two o'clock.

One of the carpenters was taken out of a window hanging by his leg and arm; and put under confinement on suspicion.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 7 to December 10, 1776.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen

Nantes, Dec. 8. 1776

After a short but rough Passage of 30 Days we anchor'd in Quiberon Bay, the Wind not suiting to enter the Loire. Capt Wicks did every thing in his Power to make the Voyage comfortable to me; and I was much pleas'd with what I saw of his Conduct as an Officer, when on suppos'd Occasions we made Preparation for Engagement, the good Order & Readiness with which it was done, being far beyond my expectation, and I believe equal to any thing of the kind in the best Ships of the King's Fleet. He seems to have also a very good Set of Officers under him. I hope they will all in good time be promoted. He met and took two Prizes, Brigantines, one belonging to Cork, laden with Staves, Pitch, Tar, Turpentine & Claret; the other to Hull, with a Cargo of Flaxseed and Brandy. The Captains have made some Propositions of Ransom, which perhaps may be accepted, as there is yet no Means of condemning them here, and they are scarce worth sending to America. The Ship is yet in Quiberon Bay with her Prizes. I came hither from thence 70 miles by Land. I am made extremely welcome here, where America has many Friends. As soon as I have recovered strength enough for the Journey, which I hope will be in a very few days, I shall set out for Paris. My letter to the President will inform you of some other Particulars. With great esteem, I have the honor to be [&c.]

B Franklin

P.S. Dec. 10. I have just learnt that 80 Pieces of the Cannon, all Brass, with Carriages, Traces, & every thing fit for immediate Service, were imbarc'd in a Frigate from Havre, wch is Sail'd; the rest were to go in another Frigate of 36 Guns.

1. Papers CC (Letters from Benjamin Franklin, 1776-88), 82, vol. 1, 9-11, NA.

**9 Dec.**

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN RICHARD R. BLIGH,  
H. M. SLOOP *Wasp*, WATERFORD<sup>1</sup>

By &c

Lord Viscount Weymouth one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, having transmitted to us a Copy of a Letter which he had received from the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland in which it is represented that it would be of particular service to the Trade of that Country if the Commanders of His Majesty's Sloops and Vessels were directed, when they sail, to take under their Convoy any Merchant Vessels bound for Great Britain that are ready to put to Sea; And Lord Weymouth having, at the same time, signified to us, His Majesty's Pleasure that we should give such orders as we should judge expedient for accommodating the Merchant Ships from Ireland to Great Britain with Convoy whenever it shall be consistent with His Majesty's Service in other respects; You are hereby required and directed, in pursuance of His Majesty's said Pleasure whenever you come from Ireland to Great Britain to take under your Convoy all such Merchant Ships and Vessels bound the same way and willing to accompany you, as may be ready to sail, and see them in Safety as far as your way and theirs may be together. Given &c. 9 Decr 1776.

Sandwich. J Buller. H. Palliser.

By &c P. S.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102,21.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM BRISTOL, DEC. 9”<sup>1</sup>

This day the cargo of the snow *Dickenson*, from Philadelphia, was sold (under a commission issued by the Court of Admiralty) at the Exchange coffee-House. 1345 barrels of American flour sold upon an average at about 13s. and 861 barrels of ditto damaged sold for 8s. to 10s. per hundred weight. About 1½ ton of American bees-wax was sold at ten guineas per cwt. About 44 boxes of spermaceti candles went very high, altho' they were very indifferent, unsizeable, and only fit for melting down. Near 200 boxes more, all of which either broken or caked together so as not be separated, were sold upon an average at about 22½ d. a pound; such being the infatuation of the buyers, that they bid a higher price for ordinary damaged candles than they might have had the very best for, perfectly well made, of the makers in Bath and Bristol.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 12 to December 14, 1776.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SPITHEAD, DEC. 9”<sup>1</sup>

Arrived this day from Quebec his Majesty's ship *Isis*, Commodore Douglas, with General Burgoyne, his Aids de Camp, Sir Francis Clerke, and Capt. Gardner, as also Mr. Alexander Davidson, and Mr. Thomas Ainslie, and bring accounts of our army having returned from Crown Point, to go into winter quarters at St. John's, Montreal, Chamblé, and Quebec. They also bring accounts of the rebels at Ticonderoga having put a 20 gun ship on the stocks, and are making great preparations for another engagement on Lake Champlain next spring. The *Isis* left Quebec the 8th of November, when General Carleton was expected there hourly. Sailed from Quebec at the same time the *Blonde* frigate, Captain Pownall, who is ordered to cruize on the Banks of Newfoundland for a few weeks. Left at Quebec the *Triton* frigate, the *Garland*, and the *Viper* sloop of war, which are to winter there, as are also about 20 transports. On the 7th inst. spoke with the *Thames*



ship of war, with 14 sail of transports under her convoy for New-York, off the Land's End, all well.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 10 to December 12, 1776.

MARQUIS DE GRIMALDI TO COUNT DE ARANDA <sup>1</sup>

Most Exc. Sir:

I have informed the King of the contents of your letter of the 22nd of last month and he is happy to learn that some assistance is on the way; for after the advantages which English arms have obtained in those parts the assistance may be even more urgent and necessary in order to encourage the insurgents and preserve them in the system they have adopted; the King and all his cabinet believe it is so important to ensure that the war is prolonged that a means is being contemplated here for us to furnish fresh assistance directly to the colonies in revolt; when the method has been resolved and determined you will be informed. May God keep you many years.

Madrid, 9 December, 1776

1. AHN, Estado, Legajo 4072, LC Photocopy.

**10 Dec.**

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO ALL FLAG AND COMMANDING OFFICERS <sup>1</sup>

By &c.

The King having been pleased, by his Order in Council of the 20th November, 1776, to order, require, prohibit, and command, That no Person or Persons whomsoever, (except the Master General, Lieutenant General, or Principal Officers of the Ordnance for His Majesty's Service) do at any Time during the Space of Three Months, to commence from the 23d day of the Month above mentioned, presume to transport into any Parts out of this Kingdom, or carry Coastwise, any Gunpowder, Saltpetre, or any Sort of Arms or Ammunition, or ship or lade any Gunpowder, Saltpetre, or any sort of Arms or Ammunition, on board any Ship or Vessel, in order to transporting the same beyond the Seas, or carrying the same Coastwise, except in the Cases comprized within his Majesty's Orders in Council of the 13th and 27th of October, and the 6th and 22d of November, 1775, of the 5th and 19th of February, and the 23d of August and 25th of September last, without Leave or Permission in that Behalf first obtained from His Majesty or His Privy Council, upon pain of incurring and suffering the respective Forfeitures and Penalties inflicted by an Act passed in the 29th Year of His late Majesty's Reign, entituled, "An Act to empower His Majesty to prohibit the Exportation of Saltpetre, and to enforce the Law for empowering His Majesty to prohibit the Exportation of Gunpowder, or any Sort of Arms or Ammunition; and also to empower His Majesty to restrain the carrying Coastwise of Saltpetre, Gunpowder, or any Sort of Arms or Ammunition;" We send you herewith a printed Copy of His Majesty's Said Order in Council of the 20th of November 1776, and do hereby strictly require and direct you to use your best Endeavours to intercept, seize, and bring into port, during the Time therein specified, all Ships and Vessels whatso-

ever having on board Gunpowder, Saltpetre, or any Sort of Arms or Ammunition, in order to transporting the same beyond the Seas, or carrying the same Coastwise, without Leave or Permission in that Behalf first obtained from His Majesty or His Privy Council, except in the Cases comprized in His Majesty's several other Orders in Council abovementioned, printed Copies of which are also sent you herewith; and also excepting such Ships and Vessels as shall be laden with Gunpowder, Saltpetre, Arms or Ammunition, for His Majesty's Service, by the Master-General, Lieutenant General, or Principal Officers of the Ordnance. Given &ca the 10th of December 1776.

Sandwich. J Buller. H. Palliser.

To the respective Flag Officers, Captains, and Commanders, of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels.

By &c PS.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 24-26.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 TO TUESDAY,  
DECEMBER 10, 1776

London, Dec. 10.

The *Nancy and Mary*, Lequest, arrived at Jersey, brings an account of her having been taken by an American privateer, on her passage from Newfoundland to Bilboa, who finding she could not spare any more men, having already taken several prizes, after plundering suffered her to depart.

The *James and Elizabeth*, Davidson, from Leith to Lisbon, loaded with wheat, is taken by an American privateer, and carried into some port in Spain.

CAPTAIN CHARLES DOUGLAS, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir

*Isis* Spithead December 10 1776

The Commander in Chief having by yesterday's post informed you of my Arrival here, with this His Majests Ship under my Command, and her Acting 2d Lieutenant Mr Stone, being (with his Consent) on the road with my farther Dispatches; I beg you to move My Lords Commissioners, to indulge me with leave of Absence for nine or ten Days, my private Affairs requiring my presence in London - In the mean time; and with regret; I find myself under the necessity of desiring, that you may be pleased to observe to the right honorable board, that with Amazement I have read in a Newspaper, the Copy of a letter from Captain [Thomas] Pringle of the *Lord Howe* (Armed Ship) late Senior Sea Officer on Lake Champlain, by me detached; dated at Crown Point October 16th whereby without either the license or knowledge of me his Commanding Officer, And by my Messenger too Lieutenant Dacres, he has presumed to trouble their Lordships with his Account of the late Actions with the Rebel Vessels.

As I conceive so ridiculous a Step, to be a breach of discipline so very enormous, as to be hitherto unprecedented in the Naval Annals of Great Britain; I farther request: that My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may in due time

be pleased to Order such public Cognizance thereof, to be taken, as the matter may deserve – which I confess leads me to suspect there having been some mystery, in the Lieutenants Schank, Butler & Starke, not having had sufficient time given them, for Writing to their Friends, after battle, previous to the Departure of Mr Dacres from Crown Point. I am Sir [&c.]

Ch<sup>s</sup> Douglas

P.S. From the Silence of Lieutenant Dacres on that head, on my sending him home; I presume he knew not what sort of matter Mr Pringle had made him the Bearer of.<sup>2</sup>

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/1706, 1, 86.

2. The Douglas and Pringle accounts were carried in the *London Gazette*, November 19 to November 23, 1776.

CERTIFICATE OF ELIAS SMITH, COMMANDER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS  
PRIVATEER BRIG *Washington*<sup>1</sup>

[At Sea] In lat. 43 N. and long. 12 W.

took Capt. John S. Cole, commander of the brigantine *Salisbury*, from St. Ender's, bound to St. Lucca; and he being an Englishman, according to order of Congress, robbed his vessel of the amount of one hundred and fifty pounds in specie, and vesselgear and stores, &c.

By Elias Smith, Commander, of the  
brigantine *Washington*.

*The 10th of Dec. 1776.*

1. *London Chronicle*, February 6 to February 8, 1777.

11 Dec.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Particular No 119

Paris Decr 11: 1776

I learnt Yesterday Evening, that the famous Doctor Franklin is arrived at Nantes, with his two grand Children; They came on board an American Privateer, which took several English Vessels in her Passage. Some People think that either some private Dissatisfaction or Despair of Success have brought him into this Country. I cannot but suspect that He comes charged with a secret Commission from the Congress, and as he is a subtle artful Man, and void of all Truth, He will in that Case use every Means to deceive, will avail himself of the Genl Ignorance of the French, to paint the Situation of the Rebels in the falsest Colours, and hold out every Lure to the Ministers, to draw them into an open support of that Cause. He has the advantage of several intimate Connexions here, and stands high in the General opinion. In a word My Lord, I look upon him as a dangerous Engine, and am very sorry that some English Frigate did not meet with Him by the Way.

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300, 382–84.

12 Dec.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN CHARLES DOUGLAS,  
H. M. S. *Isis*, SPITHEAD <sup>1</sup>

By &c.

You are hereby required and directed to repair with His Majesty's Ship under your Command into Portsmouth Harbour, where we have ordered her to be cleaned, graved, and refitted, stored for foreign Service, and her Provisions completed to Six Months of all Species except Beer, of which she is to have as much as she can conveniently stow, and to be equipped with wine or spirits in lieu of the remainder.

And you are strictly to observe the following Instructions.

You are to give a constant Attendance at the Ship, and to keep your Officers and Men together during the whole Time that she is in Harbour.

You are to use your utmost Diligence in getting out your Guns and Powder, & if necessary, your Stores, Provisions, and Ballast, or so much thereof as shall be necessary, and no more, and to leave no Part thereof to be done by the Officers of the Yard.

You are to use the like Diligence in getting in your Guns, Powder, Stores, and Provisions, (as also your Ballast, if you found it necessary to put it out) when the Ship is ready for it, and in putting her into a Condition to proceed on Service.

If you have any Men who you suspect will run away, you are to apply to Vice Admiral Sir James Douglas or the Commanding Officer for the time being of His Majesty's Ships at Portsmouth for their Security.

When the Ship is ready again in all Respects for the Sea, you are to return to Spithead and remain there until you receive further Order.

You are always to keep your Provisions, Stores, and Water compleat, til you proceed to Sea. Given &c 12th Decr 1776.

By &c. P.S.

Sandwich. H. Penton. H. Palliser.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 49-50.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10 TO THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 12, 1776

London, December 12.

The *Watson*, Bryson, from Jamaica, for Liverpool, which was taken by an American privateer, is retaken by the crew, and carried into Dundalk, in Ireland.

The *Friendship*, Shotten, from Quebec to Barcelona, is taken by the *Washington* privateer, about 7 leagues off Cape Finisterre.

JAMES HUTCHINSON TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN <sup>1</sup>

On board the Ship *Sally*

Dear Sir

Thursday morning [December 12, 1776] <sup>2</sup>

We are Just proceeding to sea with a fair Wind, which we hope may continue, and carry us safely out of the Bay of Biscay; – your Dispatches I received

from Mr Pennet and shall not fail to take Care of them should we arrive in Philadelphia, and on the other hand should We be so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of any of the Piratical Cruisers of Britain they shall be sunk – Present my Compliments to Mr Pennet tell him I shall ever remember his Civilities to me during my stay at Nantz – With wishes for your success & happiness I remain Dear Sir Yours &c

James Hutchinson

Dr Benjamin Franklin at Mr Gruels Nantz  
favoured by Mr Le Bourg

1. Franklin Papers, vol. 40.2, No. 165, APS.
2. Date is approximated. Franklin left for Paris on December 15.

### 13 Dec.

*The General Advertiser. Liverpool, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1776*

By a letter from Capt. John Forristal, of the brig *Dispatch*, belonging to Waterford, dated Lisbon, Oct. 22, we are informed, that the great bustle made both at London and Lisbon, about American privateers cruising off the latter, is principally calculated by the masters of the Dutch and French ships, in order to raise their freights, as scarce a ship of those nations arrives there but reports having seen one or more of them, although they remain invisible to two English frigates now cruising off there, and suffer our merchantmen to pass unmolested.

#### GIAMBATTISTA PIZZONI TO HIS GOVERNMENT IN VENICE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London 13 December 1776

. . . this Court [British] would have reason under the present circumstances to fear a French fleet of ten ships which by joining with the sea forces of the Colonies, and with other, Spanish war vessels now in the ports of Santo Domingo and the island of Cuba, would fittingly cause Great Britain to doubt the success of its own forces. . . .

1. Papers of the Senate, ASV.

#### DR. EDWARD BANCROFT TO SILAS DEANE <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

[London, December 13, 1776]

. . . This has been a day of Fasting & Prayer for the Subjugation of America – I have however in defiance of the Royal Proclamation been dining at Mr [Horace] Walpoles with some well disposed Friends & making merry. – I am however very uneasy at the Long delay of the Masts Spars & Lumber; as it certainly has given Administration an Opportunity of advising Ld Howe of the Matter, & preparing for intercepting it – & indeed you may be assured that it is no Secret here any more than in Paris where I hear it is a Topic of general Conversation: Letters from Ld Stormont were brought last evening which announce that Mr Du Coudra had Sailed with some others for America & that he is certainly to go by the circuitous way of St Domingo – I hope in God that his Lordship is mistaken respecting the latter part of his News. Genl Burgoyne is lately arived from Quebec which he left about the 9th of Novr he says that Carl[e]ton had discovered two

or three Provincial Vessels (which escaped after the late Action) drawn on Shore in a Secluded Bay & Covered over with Bushes & that he set fire to them – that he afterwards attempted Repair a part of Crown Point designing to Leave [Simon] Fraser with 4000 Troops to Winter there – that this project was afterwards abandoned & all the Troops brought back to Canada where they are gone into winter Quarters from Isle aux Noix to Quebec – that Carltons Fleet is all to be drawn on Shore for the Winter at Isle aux Noix, where some works are erected and a Garrison is left. I think however that the Provincials must be very negligent if they do not attack & burn the vessels when the Ice becomes sufficiently strong. – Burgoyne says that the Provincials had a Considerable Force on Lake George (consisting of two Bilanders of 14 Guns each, & three Schooners of 10 Guns each with several Gundoloes &c) & that they have so filled up one of the Narrows between the two Lakes, that it will be impossible for them to Transport their Vessels out of Lake Champlain into Lake George without taking them to pieces & reconstructing them afterwards. & indeed the impossibility of ever doing any thing against the Colonies by the way of Canada becomes every day more evident. All Kinds of Flesh Provision was becoming Scarce in Canada and there was but little prospect of the arrival of the Ships sent from hence & from Ireland. The *Richmond* Frigate with two transports was met in the mouth of the River St Lawrence endeavouring to get up but from the Ice and violence of the Northwest wind, there was no prospect of her being able to do it – one of the Transports was filled with Clothing for the Troops in Canada & several of them had bore away for Halifax particularly one commanded by a Capt Hamilton, which had on board 60000 Portugal Johannes for paying the Troops.

Administration here still flatter themselves that nothing is to be feared from France. They Pretend that the French Ministry have promised not to send any fleet to the West Indies Provided Great Britain will Solemnly engage not to increase her Force in that Quarter, & to recall & disband her Armaments as soon as the dispute with the Colonies is Settled. & as our Ministry are willing to enter into such Engagements they Confidently assert that the Brest Fleet under Mr du Chaffault, will not sail on its intended Expedition. I do not Credit these Pretences, but they may shew you upon what Grounds our great Folks are proceeding. . . .

1. Deane Papers, ConnHS.

CAPTAIN LAMBERT WICKES TO THE COMMITTEE OF SECRET CORRESPONDENCE <sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen,

Quiberon Bay 13th Decemr 1776

I take this opportunity to Inform you of my Safe Arrival in 29 Days, as from Cape Henlopen at Quiberon Bay, where I landed Doctor Franklin & his Suit in good health he has been very kindly received in France, as I am informed, but had no letter from him as yet, but expect one every Hour –

We have taken two Prizes on our passage both small Brigs, one from Bordoux loaded wth 15000 pipe and Bb Staves, 35 hhds Claret, Bound for Cork, the other from Rochfort, loaded wth 4000 Bushls Flaxseed & 63 hhds Cogniack Brandy bound for Hull, I have no Doubt but we shall be allowed to Sell our prizes here, as there has been 10 or a Dozen Merchants On board to purchase the two prizes, now in my possession, We have been Detained here this 15 Days, Waiting a Wind

to proceed to Nantz, & am in hopes of getting there soon, where I shall be able to give you a More full and Satisfactory Account of my reception and proceedings, I am inform'd that there is now 16 Sail line of Battle Ships & ten Friggates Man'd and fitted at Brest ready for Sea, but Cannot learn thier Distination, they also inform me, they are now fitting a Large Fleet of Ships in England But dont here of any More Soldiers raising for the American Service, I can form no Idea yet of my future proceedings as I shall proceed according to the Information I may hereafter receive, but shall take particular Care to give the Earliest Information of every thing in my Power, It is Reported that Capt [James] Anderson is Arrived at Nantz in the Ship *Success*, from Philadelphia. Our people is all Well and in good Spirits, from Gentlemen [&c.]

Lamb<sup>t</sup> Wickes

1. Papers CC (Letters addressed to Congress), 78, XXIII, 331-34, NA.

14 Dec.

VERGENNES TO MARQUIS DE NOAILLES<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Versailles 14 December 1776

. . . The Bill to authorize the [British] Admiralty to issue letters of marque to private ship owners who want to make raids on American ships has given us the same reaction as they have to you. The King and his counselors consider it as an act of desperation which will undoubtedly interfere with commerce of other nations and subject the general tranquility to the greatest dangers; I will explain it to M. Stormont in this sense in the first conference I have with him, and I shall not refrain from telling the Ambassador that the Bill in question was adopted by parliament, it could put us in a position of taking steps to protect our commerce from the rapacity of English shipowners. If British ministers should give occasion for an interview on the subject you will not keep from their own way of thinking and you will repeat the reflections and the fear which I propose to communicate to Lord Stormont. You will take care, sir, to express your thoughts with caution so that your proposals cannot be taken as threats or as a result of obstinacy. Moreover the English might modify their Bill in such a way as to take away any apprehension on the part of other nations. For example if they restrained their corsairs from running down Americans by forbidding them to visit or harrass ships of another flag when they are assured by inspection of the papers that they belong to the flag by which they are covered. . . .

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

15 Dec. (Sunday)

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PLYMOUTH, DEC. 15"<sup>1</sup>

Arrived his Majesty's ships *Blond* and *Cygnets*, from Newfoundland, with the following ships under their convoy, viz. the *George*, Baker; *Mermaid*, Cockland; *Margaretta*, Hunter; *Lord Howe*, —; and *Swan*, Deal; all from New York, with about 60 sail more that are gone for the Downs; and an American sloop that was cut out of Salem by William Cummings, and others, being part of the crew of the *Jenny* of Tynmouth, who was taken the 18th of September, by the *True*

*American* privateer, and carried in there. Several other ships are arrived here, names unknown.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 17 to December 19, 1776.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM WILLIAMS, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir

*Active* Hamoze 15 Decr 76.

I beg you will please acquaint my Lords of the Admiralty that His Majestys Ship the *Active* under my Command is this day arrived in the above port. I sailed from New York the 13th of last month with a Convoy of 130 Sail of Dutch and English ships, most of which run a head of us as we sail so very heavy, owing to a part of her false keel beat off and hanging loose as also the lower part of her gripe being beat off by being on shore Under the Guns on Sulivans Island and Striking on both the Carolina Bars; the *Fowey* Sailed with me but have not seen her these three weeks past, I have herewith sent a Letter addressed to you from Lord Howe. I am Sir [&c.]

W<sup>m</sup> Williams

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/2672, 10, 3.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH <sup>1</sup>

Most Confidential

Paris Sunday Morning

My Lord

Decr 15 1776

I have this Moment recd authentic Information that M. de Coudray and above a hundred french officers of Artillery and Light Troops sailed from Havre de Grace the 12th Inst on board a french Frigate called *L'amphitrite* Mounting Eighteen Guns. At least My Lord I know for certain that they were to sail on that day. A Chevalr Tort who is one of the officers on board and who has, he says a Conge for two Years from M. de St Germain wrote a Letter from Havre de Grace dated the 11th Instt in which there are these words Nous partons de mais pour Notre Destination:

as there seems to Me a possibility of this Ship being intercepted I thought it my Duty My Lord not to lose a Moment in giving You this authentic Information and have therefore despatched this Messenger and Have ordered Him to make the greatest Haste and take an Extraordinary Packet

I am persuaded that all the Papers of this frigate will shew that Her Destination is for St Domingo, but think it very probable that She will make directly for some port in North America.

I have some Reason to believe that Monsr de Viemonil a General officer in this Service of distinguished ability who was sent into Poland to assist the Confederates will be sent to North America to take the Command of the Rebel Army.

I am assured that Franklin who offers France the exclusive Trade of North America is much listend to and there are indeed but too many Indications of the insidious Designs of this Court and too much Reason to apprehend that in a few Months they will pull off the Mask and change these Secret Succours to the Rebels into open assistance.

M. Du chaffaults fleet is still in the Road of Brest, but I am authentically informed that Six More Ships of the Line are orderd to be armed immediately I



mean My Lord two besides the four I have already mentioned These two which are 74 Gun ships were put into Commission on Thursday last and the Command of them given to Messrs La Motte and Bougainville I am with great Truth & Respect My Lord [&c.]

Stormont

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300.

### 16 Dec.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO LIEUTENANT THOMAS GABORIAN,  
H. M. CUTTER *Sherborne*, PLYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

By &c

You are hereby required and directed to proceed forthwith in the Cutter you command to your former Station between Portland and the Lizard and cruize thereon agreeable to our Instructions of the 16th July last using your best endeavours to procure Men for His Majesty's Fleet; and governing yourself in the execution of that service by such parts of the printed Instructions (which accompany the Press Warrant you will receive herewith) as may relate thereto.

And whereas Lieut. William Clark is appointed to raise men at Dartmouth & Totness for the service of His Majesty's Fleet, and Lieut Thos Durell of His Majesty's Ship *Bienfaisant* hath been sent to the former of those places to raise men for that Ship; You are to repair frequently to Dartmouth, as well to enquire for orders, as to receive on board such men as may be procured by the said Lieutenants, And when you have got as many as the Cutter can conveniently carry you are to make the best of your way with them to Plymouth and dispose of them there as Vice Admiral Amherst or the Commanding Officer for the time being of His Majesty's Ships at that port shall direct; and have [having] so done, return to your said Station, and act in like manner until you receive further Order.

You are to victual all such Men as you may procure supernumerary to your Complement, or receive from the abovementioned Lieutenants, (during their Continuance on board) as the Cutter's Company; and bear them on a supernumerary List for Victuals accordingly. Given &c 16th Decr 1776.  
By &c. PS. Sandwich J Buller. H. Palliser

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 58-59.

### "EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM FALMOUTH, DEC. 16"<sup>1</sup>

Since my last arrived the *City of London*, a transport; from New York; the Captain of which says, that the *Harriot* packet-boat was arrived there, after an engagement with an American privateer, in which Captain Lee and seven men were killed, and nine wounded.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 19 to December 21, 1776.

2. Engagement was with the Massachusetts privateer schooner *True American*, Captain Daniel Hathorne. See Volume 6, 1395.

### 17 Dec.

GEORGE III TO LORD NORTH<sup>1</sup>

Lord North—I have the satisfaction of acquainting You that I have this instant received from Lord Sandwich an account that Captain Pownall of the

*Blonde* on his return from Canada met the *Active* Captain Williams off of Newfoundland who left New York on the 14th of Nov. who acquainted him that the Rebels had been forced to quit King's bridge, that they have no other post in the Province of New York except Fort Washington which Gen. Howe was preparing to attack; Pownall sends this on his arrival at Plymouth, as the *Active* is a slow Sailer she was [*sic*] will not arrive within a couple of days; Lord Sandwich has sent for another Captain who has brought letters from Lord Howe but they refer to those sent by the *Active* and do not mention any public events.

Queens House

Dec. 17th 1777  $\frac{m}{44}$  pt 4. P. M.

1. Fortescue, ed., *Correspondence of George III*, III, 408-09.

MARQUIS DE NOAILLES TO VERGENNES<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London 17 December 1776

. . . Lord North flattered himself that the most recent instructions sent to Gen. Howe would prevent any sort of involvement by America with other powers. Many persons assert that there is a willingness to permit the Americans to trade with other nations. But nobody yet dares to say that they are thinking of recognizing their independence. Nevertheless nothing would be more to the point, and be more advantageous to the Americans than general permission to trade. For the restrictive laws which the homeland enforced on them were always America's essential complaint. . . .

Three officers were arrested yesterday in London for having impressed sailors very close to the Stock Exchange. As they refused to post bail bond they were jailed. There you have the first example of resistance by civil authority since impressment began in the city against the orders of municipal officers. . . .

1. AMAE, *Correspondance Politique, Angleterre*, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 TO TUESDAY,  
DECEMBER 17, 1776

London, December 17.

The brig *Elizabeth*, William Butson master, laden with wines from Oporto for Chepstow, was taken on the 20th of November by the *Washington* privateer, Elias Smith commander, mounting 12 carriage guns, 6 swivels, and 77 men. The privateer had taken a few days before a ship from Cowes for Halifax, with provisions for the King's troops; and one from Barcelona, with wheat, the 25th, within three leagues of Viana. They took Capt. Pennell from Newfoundland for that port with fish, and the following morning put the four masters with the 16 men and boys on board a Dutch hoye, bound from Oporto to Rouen, who landed them all the 2d instant at Barfleur in France.

JACQUES GRUEL TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Nantes, December 17, 1776

I have just learned of the arrival in the bay of the frigate *Reprisal*, Captain Wickes. Mr. [Robert] Harris <sup>2</sup> came up to see me and left with me three letters including herewith which I am taking the liberty to send to you. Mr. [Nathan] Rumsey sold at Quiberon the cargoes and the prizes.<sup>3</sup> The *Reprisal* had on board only twenty-two puncheons of *eau de vie*, for the rest had been sold. Mr. Rumsey will render an account. Mr. Harris told me he is here only during a four days' leave. On his arrival I took great care to learn the cost of the transactions at Quiberon relative to the sale of the two prizes. I sent on board the *Reprisal* to get the indigo and you will see the care I took. Fortunately the frigate has only need of water.

1. Franklin Papers, vol. 6, No. 126, APS.

2. First lieutenant of the *Reprisal*.

3. Lord Stormont naturally lodged a strong protest with Vergennes about the seizure of these prizes. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 1392.

18 Dec.

PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL JOHN MONTAGU <sup>1</sup>

Sir

18h December 1776

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having received a Petition from George Murray and others, late belonging to the *Nancy* of London John Cowen Master, representing that she being taken by an American Privatier, they were put on board the *Molly*, which had also been taken by her, and which they recovered, and carried her to Trinity in Newfoundland but soon after His Majesty's Sloop *Penguin* arrived, claimed the said Ship *Molly* as her Prize, & received the Salvage, and they the Petitioners were not paid one penny for retaking her, and therefore praying for Relief I am commanded by their Lordships to send you the said Petition herewith and to signify their direction to you to report to them a state of this Case if it came under your Cognizance while you was at Newfoundland; And with your Report you will please to return the said Petition to &c

Vice Admiral Montagu, Town

P:S:

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 324-25.

LORD SANDWICH TO MAJOR GENERAL HENRY CLINTON <sup>1</sup>

Sir

Admiralty Dec: 18. 1776

I am exceedingly obliged to you for the favour of your letter, which brought us the first particulars of what had lately passed at New York; for as the *Fowey* which has the dispatches on board is not yet arrived, we were totall̄y in the dark about the motions of the armies, the Captain of the *Active* not having told us a

single word of the state of things at the time of his sailing; & I think I never remember more impatience than there has been for some time on this subject.

You will have received your leave of absence before this reaches you, therefore I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you in town I am with great truth & regard [&c.]

Sandwich

1. Sir Henry Clinton Papers, CL.

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PORTSMOUTH, DEC. 18.”<sup>1</sup>

This day arrived here the *Fowey* man of war, from New York. She has brought some dispatches from Lord Howe, among which, we hear, are the letters sent by General Washington to the Congress at Philadelphia, which were intercepted on the road, and brought to General Howe.

1. *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser and Mercantile Chronicle*, December 27, 1776.

BARON DE KALB TO SILAS DEANE<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Havre 18 December 1776.

. . . I sent you in my last news of the departure of the *Amphitrite* on Saturday the 14th at midday. She might have left sooner if M. Du Coudray had not had many letters to write, which detained him from 10 o'clock at night when he went on board, and made her lose several hours' favourable wind. As nothing has been heard of her since, it is to be hoped that she has got out of the Channel. It is very lucky that she has left; for two days later she could not have done so, an order of the Court having arrived on Monday at 10 o'clock at night to detain her until further orders; but she was under weigh. The *Romain* is detained by the same order and if M. Beaumarchais does not have it revoked we may yet stay a long time here. I suppose that M. Monthieu will propose to you, in case these difficulties should continue, to charter here, for 8 or 10 louis, a bark to take to Nantes the officers who are waiting in order to embark them in the vessel which is there ready and which cannot be subject to the same countermand having no artillery on board, which could prevent its departure. If you order me to embark at Nantes, I will forward my baggage and will proceed thither post by way of Paris; but just as you please.

I was not able to impart to M. Du Coudray the unfavourable opinion which has been conveyed to you of the muskets, because he had left. But if it is well founded, as I fear it is, it should prove a monstrous rascality on the part of some one or perhaps of several persons. It is to be feared also that some of the carriages of the train of artillery are not worth the freight. M. Monthieu has agreed with me, or rather has avowed to me, that the shovels and other implements of that kind are not worth the freight. He says so perhaps because it was not he who supplied them, for I have not seen any of them. I only see much jealousy on all sides.

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 605.

**19 Dec.**PHILIP STEPHENS TO VICE ADMIRAL SIR JAMES DOUGLAS, PORTSMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

Sir

19 Decr 1776

Captn [George] Montagu of the *Fowey* having informd my Lords Comms of the Admty that he retook the *Wm.* Transport that had been taken by a Rebel Privatier, & that he has Nine Rebel Prisoners on board the Ship under his Command who he took out of the said Transport; I am commanded by their Lordships to signify their direction to you, to cause the said Rebel Prisoners to be secured on board one of the Ships at Spithead until farther orders letting their Lordships know in which Ships they are secured. I am &c

P S

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 327.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN WALTER GRIFFITH,  
H. M. S. *Nonsuch*, PLYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

You are hereby required and directed to put to Sea in the Ship you command with the very first opportunity of Wind and Weather and proceed & cruise off Cape Finisterre from 5 to 20 Leagues N W for the Protection of the Trade of His Majesty's Subjects, and to use your best endeavours to intercept, seize or destroy any Cruizers or other Vessels belonging to the Rebellious Colonies of No America, which you may be able to come up with.

You are to continue on the above Service, for the Space of one Month after your arrival off Cape Finisterre, and then return to Plymouth Sound for farther Orders; sending us an Account of your Arrival and Proceedings. Given &c  
19th Decr 1776.

By &amp;c PS.

Sandwich. Palmerston H. Palliser

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 65-66.

**20 Dec.**LORD WEYMOUTH TO LORD STORMONT<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

(most confidential)

St James's 20th Decr 1776

The sailing of M. de Coudray, and of the officers who accompany Him cannot be prevented, unless We had Sufficient proofs to produce that their destination is for the continent of America. The taking a Frigate of War would be Such an act of Hostility, as nothing could justify, but the most irrefragable evidence of the want of truth in the professions of the French King's Ministers; more especially as Your Excellency believes that the capture of the Ship would furnish no papers that would indicate any other destination than to the Islands.

The state of the French Navy, and that of their finances are strong circumstances to incline them to preserve a Peace that is so essentially necessary to Them at

this moment. The means they have used to prevent a breach between Portugal and Spain would seem to confirm their desire of avoiding a war; and the clear and precise declarations They have so often made, exclude Them from a reasonable pretence for interrupting the tranquillity of Europe. Yet My Lord His Majesty is aware that specious appearances of great wealth from an exclusive trade to America; The certainty of the Support of Spain if They require it; and the flattering hopes of recovering what They lost in the last war, may induce Them to disclaim the ties of solemn declarations, and They will not find this Country unprepared.

The *Fowey* is arrived but brings no dispatches to Government. The facts stated to your Excellency in my letter of the 18th are confirmed by many private letters; but this Ship with the *Active* was sent to convoy the Transports to Europe, and General Howe was engaged in the pursuit of the Rebel army. . . .

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300.

*Public Ledger*, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1776

London, Decr 20.

The immense Trade which the Congress is now carrying on with France, is by no means a secret to our Cabinet, but administration are resolved not to make any remonstrance upon that head, having adopted an easier and more effectual plan to defeat the designs of that subtle court, without giving the least cause for any bickering between them and us at so critical a moment. In consequence of this determination, proper measures are already taken to intercept, and make prizes of the American ships now loading at Nantz and other French ports, and so turn the intended injury to a national advantage.<sup>1</sup>

1. A clipping of this newspaper item is in the William Lee Folder, VHS.

**21 Dec.**

LORD SANDWICH TO WILLIAM KNOX<sup>1</sup>

Sir

I read your letter with some anxiety till I came to the last line of it, which told me that the young man you wish to introduce into the Marines was 19 years of age: had he been under 15 or more than 21, I could not have gratified my inclination to oblige you; but as he is of the proper age you may be assured that I shall have particular pleasure in recommending him to his Majesty for a commission, which I shall do without delay I am [&c.]

Admiralty Dec: 21. 1776

Sandwich

1. William Knox Papers, CL.

INVOICE OF GUNPOWDER FOR ST. EUSTATIUS ON ACCOUNT OF THE  
CONTINENTAL CONGRESS<sup>1</sup>

Hamburg 21st December 1776

Invoice of 128 Casks of Powder, shipped Currt at Amsterdam in the *Adriaan & Jan*, Capt Wessell Diedr Miller for St Eustatia, consigned by Order of Mr John Ross to Robert and Cornelius Stevenson, these being by Order & on Account & risk of the American United Colonies, and in part of a Contract dated 5 February last, made for them with Messrs Willing Morris & Co and the said Shipper, consigned as Pr advice Vitz.

78 Barrels of Musket powder, each 90 lb F 7020 lb			
17 ditto Cannon Ditto " 90 " G 1530 "			
33 half ditto Musket Ditto " 45 " F 1485 "			
		10035 lb	
	a 35 £ pr 100 lb		
		£ 3512..5.-	
	off 1 pCt	35..2.-	£3477..3.-
	<u>Charges</u>		
To 95 Barrels		£ 95..-.-	
" 33 half Barrels		" 21..9.-	
" Brokerage		" 14.13.-	
" Licence from the Admiralty for shipping		" 14.12.-	
" Recognition at the West-India Co		" 70..-.-	
" Passport & seald Bills of Lading at the West-India Co.		" 6..2.-	
" Boat hire		" 12.16.-	234.12.-
To Messrs Larwood & Van Hassell & Co their Commission 2 pCt			74..5.-
		Ct £	3786..-.-
	Exchange 6 pCt	Br mP	4286..1.-
Brokerage of Exchange 1 pr Mille	Br mP	4..6.-	
Postage	"	4..8.-	8.14.-
		Br mP	4294.15.-
Commission allow'd John Parish a 2 pCt.			85.14.-
		Br M P	4380.13.- <sup>2</sup>

1. John Ross Invoice Book, vol. 1, 17, HSP.

2. There is also an invoice the same date for 53 casks of saltpeter shipped to Philadelphia on the account of Congress, John Ross Invoice Book, vol. 1, 18, HSP.

JACQUES GRUEL TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Nantes, 21 December 1776

The thirty-five casks of indigo have just arrived here. I shall have them placed in storage until you have given me your orders. Next week I expect your trunks which Mr. Wilckes [Lambert Wickes] will have delivered to me by a confidential agent. I shall take excellent care of them.

Mr. Wilckes did me the honor to dine at my house yesterday. We decided together that he should not remain very long in the river. He needs certain supplies which I shall send to him on Monday. I gave him the two pieces of gold which you left in my charge. I likewise sent on board the two casks of wine for the crew as you requested me to do. . . . I am with respect, Sir [&c.]

J. Gruel

1. Franklin Papers, vol. 4, No. 130, APS.

**23 Dec.**PHILIP STEPHENS TO COMMODORE JAMES GAMBIER, PORTSMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

Sir

23 Decr 1776

I have communicated to my Lords Commrs of the Admty your Letter of the 21st inst informing them that the *Jonge Catherina* a Foreign Transport late arrived at Spithead from New York, was on the 12 boarded by a Boat belonging to a Large Armed Sloop from Boston commanded by a Spaniard but on her Master shewing him an Amsterdam Pass from Eustatia to St Ubes he left them; And that the Master of the said Ship hath represented to you that the *Fowey* her Convoy, being on the 11 inst so far a head that he cou'd but just see her from the Mast head, he, in order not to lose the Convoy cut away a studding sail which he therefore desires to be allowed for and in return, I am to acquaint you that the Navy Board are inform'd thereof that they may do what they shall judge proper in the Case.<sup>2</sup>

Their Lordships farther direct me to acquaint you that, for the reason you give they approve of your having hired Craft to assist in clearing Nine Foreign Transports which are arrived in Portsmouth Harbour in Order to their being discharged the sooner from the Service. I am &c

P S

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 341-42.

2. PRO, Admiralty 2/553, 345-46.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN JOHN CARTER ALLEN,  
H. M. S. *Albion*, PLYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

By the Commissioners for Executing  
the Office of Lord High Admiral of  
Great Britain & Ireland &c. and of all  
His Majesty's Plantations &c.

In pursuance of His Majesty's Order in Council dated the 20th day of December 1776. We do hereby Impower and Direct you to Impress, or cause to be impressed, so many Seamen, Seafaring Men, and Persons whose Occupations &



Callings are to work in Vessels and Boats upon Rivers, as shall be necessary either to Man His Majesty's Ship under your Command, or any other of His Majesty's Ships, giving unto each Man so Impressed One Shilling for Prest Money. And, in the Execution hereof you are to take Care; that neither yourself, nor any Officer authorized by you, do demand or receive any Money, Gratuity, Reward, or other Consideration whatsoever for the Sparing, Exchanging, or Discharging any Person or Persons Impressed or to be Impressed, as you will answer it at your Peril. You are not to intrust any Person with the Execution of this Warrant but a Commission Officer, and to insert his Name and Office in the Deputation on the other Side hereof, and set your Hand & Seal thereto. This Warrant to continue in Force 'til the 31st Day of December 1777. And, in the due Execution thereof, all Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, Bailiffs, Constables, Headboroughs, and all other His Majesty's Officers and Subjects whom it may concern, are hereby required to be aiding & assisting unto you, and those employed by you, as they tender His Majesty's Service, and will answer the contrary at their Perils. Given under our Hands, and the Seal of the Office of Admiralty, the Twenty third Day of December 1776

By &c P S.

Sandwich J Buller Palmerston

[Enclosure]

I do hereby Depute \_\_\_\_\_ belonging to His Majesty's \_\_\_\_\_ under my Command, to impress Seamen, Seafaring Men, and Persons whose Occupations and Callings are to work in Vessels and Boats upon Rivers, according to the Tenor of this Warrant. In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this \_\_\_\_\_ Day of 177 [blank]

[Endorsed] The like Press Warrants sent to him & to the other Captains and Commanders of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels under mentioned, in number & to the places against each exprest; vizt <sup>2</sup>

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 90-92. This order appears to have become essential after a year of volunteer recruiting had failed to produce the required number of men. The order book contains many instructions to officers to set up recruiting offices in all the principal seaports of the kingdom; apparently with inadequate results. This order to Captain Allen of the *Albion* is printed in full in the order book because, alphabetically, the *Albion* led the list of British Naval vessels in home ports.
2. The list totals sixty; from *Albion*, *Ardent*, *Augusta*, *Active*, *Ariadne* and *Alderney*, to *Worcester*, *Wolf*, *Weazle* and *Wasp*. Similar orders went to eight cutters, twenty-two tenders and sixty-nine captains and lieutenants on recruiting duty, PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 92-94, 96, 97, 99-102.

"EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PORTSMOUTH, DEC. 23" <sup>1</sup>

Arrived here the *Ardent* man of war, Lord Mulgrave, from the Downs; also the *Fox* man of war, [Patrick] Fotheringham, from Newfoundland, but last from Lisbon, from whence he brought home passengers Capt Agnew, and the crew of an armed sloop, in the service of Government, but acting under a commission from the Captain of the *Pallas* man of war, which ship had been taken by a Portuguese man of war, supposing her to have been an American privateer, and carried her to the Brazils, from whence Capt Agnew and his crew were sent prisoners to Lisbon,

and were confined all together in the common goal, but on a demand being made for them by the Captain of the *Fox*, they were immediately deliveerd up. There were in the Bay of Cadiz 12 sail of the line and eight frigates, ready for sea. Likewise arrived several transports from New York and Quebec.

1. *Whitehall Evening Post*, December 24 to December 26, 1776.

AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS IN FRANCE TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

Sir

Paris, Dec. 23. 1776

We beg Leave to acquaint your Excellency, that we are appointed and fully impowered by the Congress of the United States of America, to propose and negotiate a Treaty of Amity and Commerce between France and the said States.—The just and generous Treatment their Trading Ships have received, by a free Admission into the Ports of this Kingdom, with other Considerations of Respect, has induced the Congress to make this Offer first to France. We request an Audience of your Excellency wherein we may have an Opportunity of presenting our Credentials; and we flatter ourselves, that the Propositions we are instructed to make, are such as will not be found unacceptable.

With the greatest Regard, we have the Honour to be, Your Excellency's  
[&c.]

B Franklin Silas Deane Arthur Lee

1. Stevens, ed., *Facsimiles*, No. 606.

24 Dec.

JOURNAL OF SAMUEL CUTLER, MASSACHUSETTS PRIVATEER BRIG *Dalton* <sup>1</sup>

Dec. 24 [1776]. In latitude 44 No., long. 14 West. Light Breeze. At 2 P. M. saw a sail. Beat to quarters. At 10 P. M. she gave us a gun, Then another. Ordered us to surrender, which we thought best, as she proves to be the *Raisnable*, of 64 guns, Thomas Fitzherbert, They boarded us sword in hand, and sent us all on board the ship without suffering us to take our clothes. All except the captain, 2 lieutenants, master, surgeon, capt. marines, 1 prize master, myself and 2 boys were indiscriminately turned down in the cable tier to sleep on the bare cables, as Capt. Fitzherbert would not suffer them to bring their clothes, but let his own people rob us of what they thought proper.

1. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Boston, XXXII, 42–44. Cutler was captain's clerk on board the *Dalton*, Eleazer Johnson commanding.

JOURNAL OF CHARLES HERBERT, MASSACHUSETTS PRIVATEER BRIG *Dalton* <sup>1</sup>

[December 24, 1776]

The brig *Dalton* sailed from Newburyport, November 15th, 1776, and from Portsmouth, on the 26th of the same month, and on the 24th of December following, about nine o'clock in the evening, we were taken by the *Reasonable*, man-of-war, of sixty-four guns. As her cruise was over, she was bound to Plymouth, England. The first lieutenant of the ship was the first man that boarded us, and he ordered us all on board the ship as fast as the boats could carry us, and would give us no time to collect our clothes, promising us, however, upon his word and honor,

that we should have them all sent on board the next day. Some of our company trusted to this assurance, but I thought it not best to do the like. I was stationed upon the main-top when we were taken, and had not so good an opportunity to save my clothes, as those below; yet I saved more than any of the foremast hands; for as soon as I found that we were taken, I made all speed from the top down to my chest. I broke it open and shifted myself from head to foot — putting on two shirts, a pair of drawers and breeches, and trowsers over them; two or three jackets, and a pair of new shoes, and then filled my bosom and pockets as full as I could well carry. Afterwards, I found it was well for me that I did so; for when the clothes were brought on board, we found that all the best of them had been culled out, and nothing but a few rags and a dozen old blankets were sent to us.

After we came on board, we were ordered upon the quarterdeck, and from there down into the cable-tier, where we found very disagreeable lodgings, having nothing but the bare cable to lay upon, and that very uneven. Besides this, we were almost suffocated with heat. Being, however, very much fatigued, I slept about two hours, as soundly as if I had been upon a bed of down. When I awoke I crawled aft upon the cable, where was the sentinel, and spent the remainder of the night in conversation with him.

1. Richard Livesey, ed., *A Relic of the Revolution* (Boston, 1847), 17–19.

WILLIAM KNOX TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir,

Whitehall 24th Decr 1776.

It appearing by the Representation of the Naval Officer onboard the *Lord Amherst* Ordnance Transport, now at Portsmouth, (Copy of which is enclosed) that the said Ship is so well armed & manned, & in all respects so capable of defending herself against any Naval Force of the Rebels which there is any probability she may meet with, that Lord George Germain thinks it unnecessary to detain her for Convoy, especially as the Stores she has onboard are much wanted at the Places of her Destination; and I have accordingly, by His Lordship's Directions, acquainted the Board of Ordnance that she is to proceed immediately to Sea without Convoy: And altho' the *Lord Townshend* is also a stout Ship, and there would be but little Hazard of her meeting with any Rebel Vessels of superior Force; nevertheless, as there can be no immediate Want of her Stores at New York, & a Convoy will sail for that Place in a short time, Lord George Germain thinks it proper for her to wait for it; and I have, by His Lordship's Directions acquainted the Board of Ordnance that she is to do so; of which you will be pleased to inform the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

His Lordship has further directed me to desire you will acquaint their Lordships, that, understanding the *Lord Amherst* is engaged by the Board of Ordnance for Eighteen Months, and conceiving she may be usefully employed in the West Indies, after she has delivered her Stores, either in Cruizing, or as a Convoy to the homeward bound Ships from Jamaica, or Pensacola; I have by his Lordship's Directions desired the Board of Ordnance to instruct the Master to apply to Rear Admiral Gayton, before his Departure from Jamaica, for Orders for his further Proceeding, after he shall have delivered the Stores at Pensacola, and to direct

him to obey such Orders as he shall receive accordingly; of which you will likewise be pleased to acquaint their Lordships, and to move them to send Rear Adml Gayton such Instructions, as their Lordships shall think proper respecting the said Ship. I am &ca.

Will<sup>m</sup> Knox

1. PRO, Colonial Office, 5/125, 89.

NATHAN RUMSEY TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Honorable Sir

Nantes 24th Decemr 1776.

Upon my arrival here from Auray, I had the Honor of receiving your's of the 15th Inst. the Contents of wch shall be fully and punctually observed. Mr Delamain who loaded the Prize from rochefort and was part owner, is in Nantes; has spoke to me relative to the Vessel and Cargo, which last he says was his property and says he cannot conceive that Cap. Wicks can by any means detain french property – He has this day made a Declaration in the Admiralty office against his Cap. Cap. Wicks, and Penet & Rumsey, a Copy of which Mr Gruel sends you by this post. – I have refered Delamain wholly to Cap. Wickes for his Satisfaction, & Wicks is apprised to give that Satisfaction to no person but such as are authorised from Court, but least any unexpected Difficulties should arise Cap. Wickes is ready to sail at a half hour's warning. – I doubt not, sir, but your presence at Court will quickly decide these Affairs in our favor.

1. Franklin Papers, vol. 4, No. 135, APS.

DECLARATION OF JAMES PRATCHELL, MASTER OF THE PRIZE BRIG *La Vigne* <sup>1</sup>

On 24 December 1776 [Nantes]

Appeared Mr James Pratchell former master of the brig *LaVigne*, of Hull, England, 150 tons burden, at present in this city, who declared to us that he had embarked at Rochefort in all 5 pipes, 47 puncheons, and 11 casks of brandy, 6 casks of wine, 1024 bags of flax-seed, and various other articles, which were placed on board his vessel there by Messrs. Ranson and de la Main, Hennessy, and Saul, and Hebre de St. Clement and Co., merchants of Rochefort, and P. Prioux Son and Co., destined for Hull, England; that he left Rochefort with the said merchandize on 22 November last, that on the 27th of the said month of November, being at that time 16 leagues to the S. W of Belisle, he fell in with a British-American vessel which sent her boat with an officer and several sailors to board him, that they asked to see his papers, bills of lading, &c., which the declarant showed to them, and after inspection the said officer of the North American vessel re-entered his boat in order to return to his vessel with declarant; after which he returned on board the said vessel of the declarant and took with him the second officer of the said brig, *La Vigne*, and 4 men of her crew and conducted them on board his own vessel, leaving on board two officers and 4 men of the crew and they set sail together; that they anchored the next day in the Palais de Belisle, but that contrary winds having compelled them to put out the next day in search of

Quiberon, he learned that it was the ship *Reprisal*, from Philadelphia, commanded by Captain Lambert Wickes, armed with 16 guns, 128 men, and fitted out by the American Congress, and that Mr. Francklin was on board; that during their sojourn at Quiberon he noticed that Mr. Rumsey, who had come from Nantes, was on board the North American ship, that he, the declarant, does not know what they have done with his vessel, that he knows and saw that at Quiberon they removed 21 small casks of brandy from his ship and placed them on board the said North American vessel, and that he learned later that they had sold the remainder of his cargo to private parties of Basse Bretagne; that all his clothes and those of his crew were left on board the said vessels, that he did not know if they will return them to him, that otherwise he was pleased with the treatment and humanity of the said Captain Lambert Wilckes, that they arrived at Painboeuf on the 18th of this month on board the said American vessel, the captain of which gave him his liberty.

[Endorsed] Statement 24 December 1776.

1. Franklin Papers, vol. 53, pt. 1, No. 27, APS.

JOSÉ DE GÁLVEZ TO BERNARDO DE GÁLVEZ, GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA <sup>1</sup>

The King has been apprised of how much information Your Excellency has provided in documents for Dispatches numbers 181 and 184 of the 7th and 30th of September, concerning the American Englishmen's intentions – supported by General Charles Lee, a major general and second in command of their military, and commander-in-chief of the Southern District, and by his agent Mr. Gibson – which, in general terms, are to establish regular trade with us, and to learn whether, in the event that they should capture Pensacola, as they intend to do, His Majesty would deign to recognize the seizure; the reply which Your Lordship gave to General Lee concerning these matters has won Royal approval, and His Majesty commands me to advise your Lordship in strictest confidence that should the Americans persist in their proposed plan to seize Pensacola and the other English installations on the right bank of the river, Your Lordship should make known to them with utmost discretion and secrecy that the King will rejoice if they succeed; and that once their independence is assured, the relinquishment of Pensacola, which they have promised Spain, can be taken up.

In order to help accomplish both ends, Your Lordship will continue to receive by way of Havana or by any other possible means, assistance in the form of arms, munitions, clothes and chinchona bark which the English colonists need, and Your Lordship will have available the most effective and secret means to have these supplies delivered secretly making it appear that they are being sold by private merchants; to which end the appropriate confidential instructions will be sent to you, as well as a merchant who will serve as a decoy.

By this same post similar confidential instructions are being sent to the Governor of Havana, advising him that in the monthly mail and by means of merchantmen he will receive various supplies, arms and other items which he must send on to Your Lordship without delay; and that he must also immediately send

you whatever surplus powder he has in the magazine of the factory in Mexico, and whatever surplus muskets he has in his own magazine, with the assurance that they will be promptly replaced.

I am informing Your Lordship of all this by order of His Majesty for your knowledge and guidance, charging you especially to take advantage of as many opportunities as may present themselves to continue to send news concerning this important affair so that I may transmit it to His Majesty.

Madrid 24 December 1776

1. AGI, Cuba, Legajo 174, LC Typescript.

## 25 Dec.

### “EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM EXETER DEC. 25.”<sup>1</sup>

This day arrived here, in his way to Liverpool, Capt. Ashburne, who landed at Plymouth on Sunday last. His vessel, the *Isaac*, from Tortola, was taken by the *Warren* privateer, and carried into Salem,<sup>2</sup> which place he left so late as the 25th of November last. . . . He also says, that the Captains and men of such vessels as have been taken by the Provincials, have been paid their wages to the time of their vessels being condemned, but that the day before he sailed, an order was issued, that neither Captains or men belonging to the prizes should be paid their wages as heretofore, or be permitted to return to England.

1. *London Chronicle*, December 31 to January 2, 1777.

2. See Volume 6.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN PHILIP CARTERET,  
H. M. SLOOP *Druid*, CORK<sup>1</sup>

You are hereby required & directed to take His Majesty's Armed Vessel the *Kent* under your Command, her Commander being directed to follow your Orders; And, the taking under your convoy all such Trade bound to the West Indies, as may be at Cork ready to sail, you are to put to sea with them, the very first opportunity of wind and weather, and make the best of your way, consistent with their security, towards the places of their destination, & having seen to Barbadoes such part of the said Trade as may be bound thither, you are to proceed with the remainder to Antigua, where you are to deliver to Vice Admiral Young Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels at Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, the inclosed packet addressed to him, and to follow his orders for your further proceedings.

But in case the Vice Admiral shall not be there you are then to direct Captain [Joseph] Tathwell to make the best of his way to Jamaica with the Trade bound to that place, and having seen them thither, to deliver to Vice Admiral Gayton Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships employed at and about that Island, the inclosed packet addressed to him, and to follow his Orders for his further proceedings, And you are immediately after Captain Tathwell's sailing from Antigua, to proceed in quest of Vice Admiral Young wherever he may be, and upon joining

him to deliver the packet which is addressed to him, and to follow his Orders, as above directed. Given &c the 25th December 1776.

Sandwich J Buller H Palliser

By &c PS.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 106-07.

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM GARNIER,  
H. M. S. *Southampton*, PLYMOUTH <sup>1</sup>

You are hereby required and directed to put to Sea in the Ship you command with the very first opportunity of Wind and Weather, and proceed to Cape Ortegale; and, after making that Cape, you are to cruize North from it, between the Latitude of 45° and 47° for the protection of the Trade of His Majesty's Subjects, and to use your best endeavours to intercept, seize or destroy any Cruizers or other Vessels belonging to the rebellious Colonies of North America which you may be able to come up with.

You are to continue on the above Station, 'til it may be proper for you to leave it so as to arrive at Cork by the 6th of February next, at which time you are to take care to be at that port, from whence you are to send us an account of your arrival and proceedings, and where you are to use the utmost dispatch in completing your provisions and Stores to the proportion mentioned in our order to you of the 17th of October last, and having so done hold yourself in constant readiness for sailing. Given &c the 25th December 1776.

Sandwich J Buller H. Palliser.

By &c PS.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/102, 111-12.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 TO THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 26, 1776

London, December 25.

One of the richest transports sent to America this year, is taken and carried into Boston. She was commanded by Capt. Bell, and was laden with 16,000 suits of cloaths for the army in Canada; 30,000 shirts, 30,000 pairs of shoes, 30,000 pairs of stockings, &c. &c. all for the same; valued at upwards of 80,000 l. sterling.<sup>1</sup> This loss will be severely felt by the army in Canada; but it is a lucky circumstance for the contractors. The *Union*, that sailed some time ago for Quebec, with 70,000 l. in specie, and a large quantity of camp equipage, could not get up the river St Lawrence; and has put into Halifax, where she must remain till next spring. The want of this vessel also, must prove likewise a severe loss to the army in Canada.

1. The *Mellish*, Captain Joseph Stevenson; not a Captain Bell.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R.N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir

*Pallas*, Portsmo Harbor 25th Decr 1776

In answer to your letter of the 23d instant relative to the Evidences against Mr Willm Platt <sup>2</sup> having made their escape, I beg you will be pleased to acquaint

their Lordships that I intended to send them on board a Guard Ship before we went into the Harbor, it was late in the Evening when the Pilot came on board and we had no Oppertunity, the Men had been detained a long time and turn'd from Ship to Ship, I therefore thought it rather hard to put them in Irons as they had always behaved remarkably well and I had not the least reason to suppose they intended to get away, I believe they made their Escape in the Night. The *Philippa*, [Richard] Maitland, the Merchant Ship they were taken out of is now in the River I apprehend it would not be difficult for him to procure Evidences. I did not give them leave to go ashore, nor do I think they had leave from any of the Officers. I am Sir [&c.]

W. Cornwallis

[On verso] 27 Decr Send Copy to Mr. Eden for the E. of Suffolks informn in conseqe. of Lord Weymouths Lre of the —

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/1611, 3, 35.
2. Ebenezer Smith Platt, mistakenly called William Platt by Vice Admiral Clark Gayton, had been sent to England in the *Pallas* to stand trial. His accuser, Captain Maitland, charged Platt with having been a leader in the pillaging of his ship of a cargo of gunpowder at Savannah in 1775. Three witnesses were also brought to England in the *Pallas*. See previous volumes in this series.

“A LETTER FROM ROUEN, DATED DEC. 25”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Beaumarchis is now at Havre, fitting out three vessels with clothes, guns, bullets, &c. for the Americans; one of them sailed 12 days ago, and has on board some French officers, engineers, gunners, &c. There are 200 more people to follow in the other two ships; they are bound for St. Domingo. There are two English frigates cruizing off Havre, supposed to be waiting for the sailing of the two last; they cannot touch them, but it is imagined they will follow them.

1. *London Chronicle*, January 2 to January 4, 1777.

**27 Dec.**

*The General Advertiser. Liverpool*, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1776

This morning upwards of four thousand ship letters from New York and other parts of America, which had been brought over in the *Fowey* man of war, and transports, lately arrived, were delivered out at the General Post Office.

*Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser and Mercantile Chronicle*, FRIDAY,  
DECEMBER 27, 1776

A letter from an officer on board his Majesty's ship *Milford*, stationed in America, says, “It is astonishing what great success our frigate has met with in taking prizes; it is computed our foremast men will share upwards of 140 l. each.[”]

New York abounds now with prizes brought in by the cruisers, and prize goods sell at a great rate; so that the captors are likely to get a good deal of money.



MARQUIS DE NOAILLES TO VERGENNES <sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

London, 27 December 1776

. . . I had an opportunity to see Mylord Sandwich Sunday past. He did me the honor of coming to dinner, and I found the proper time to ask him if it were true that when Parliament reconvenes there would be a Bill to give commissions to privateers operating against Americans. Mylord Sandwich confirmed that there is such a Bill, and this is how he explained it.

The future enactment to grant private commissions has only the object of individual usefulness for English trade, without inconvenience to that of other nations. It is not really a matter of having privateers. It is proposed only to authorize arming of merchant vessels whenever they have cargo, to assure a safe voyage between ports. Without this they would go to sea only in convoy, which would be extremely costly for the State: further, the Government itself being unable to tend to all the needs of merchant shipping, commerce would necessarily suffer in several respects. There is no other remedy but to encourage private shippers to protect their own interests. However this encouragement cannot truly be effective unless the captures will belong to those who take them rather than under present conditions, where those made by private individuals not commissioned are for the benefit of the King and the Admiralty. Therefore to establish a more just order, and so that the risks are not all one-sided and the advantages all on the other side, merchant vessels only will be granted commissions which will allow them to provide for their own defense, with the added attraction of captures for their own profit. . . .

1. AMAE, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, vol. 519, LC Photocopy.

*Whitehall Evening Post*, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26 TO SATURDAY,  
DECEMBER 28, 1776

London, December 27.

The following is a list of the ships and vessels taken by the rebels, and carried into different ports in Massachusetts Bay, in New England:

**Ships.** The *Christian*, Le Sized, from Hayfield; the *Clarke*, a transport, from St. Lucia; the *Child*, from Jamaica to Bristol; the *Betty*, Archdeacon, from Honduras; the *Marshal*, Lowley, from Barbadoes; the *Sarah and Elizabeth*, Foot, from Jamaica to London; the *Nancy*, Cowen, a transport; the *Success*, Bell, from Jamaica to Bristol; the *Alfred*, Calender, from Jamaica; the *Liveoak*, Duncan, from Honduras; the *New Westmoreland*, from Jamaica to London; the *Hero*, Harford, from Jamaica to Quebec; the *Three Friends*, Bower, to —; the *Millham*, Johnson, from —; the *St. George*, Bedgood, a transport; the *Three Friends*, Russell, from St. Eustatia to Ireland.

**Brigs.** The *Nabby*, Vesper, from Nova Scotia; the *Swallow*, Griffiths, from Tobago to Bristol; the *Betsy*, Dalmasey, a transport; the *Lady Jane*, Taylor, from Grenada; the *Lovely Nelly*, Sheridan, to —; the *Fanny*, Toakley, from Virginia; the *General Wolfe*, Wilson, from Jamaica to Dublin; the *John*, Wallace, from Grenada to London; the *Maria*, Nicholas, to —; the *Generous Friends*, Hill, a transport; the *Lord Lifford*, Jones, a transport; the *Nancy*, Crooker, to —; the

*Dolphin*, Dennison, to —; a brig, supposed to be the *Lively*, Martindale; the *James*, Baker, retaken; the *Hero*, Perkins, for —.

Sloops. The *Lord Howe*, Coffin, to Newfoundland; the *Halifax*, M'George, from ditto; the *Industry*, Farnham; the *Peggy*, Bradford, from Baltimore; the —, Gardner; the *Endeavour*, Tatchell, from Newfoundland; the *Elizabeth*, Ludlow; the *Beaver*, Phillips; the *Dolphin*, Carleton; the *Argo*, Cockran; the *Frederick*, Castall; the *Spermaceti*, Pease; the *Britannia*, Mills, from Jamaica.

Schooners. The *Molly*, Buchannan; the *Eagle*, —; the *Sally*, Vaspy; the *White Oak*, Dean; the *Polly*, Bassett; the *Swan*, Puppel; the *Lively*, Holmes; the *Roebuck*, White; the *Deborah*, Hendrick, from Jamaica: the *Pecary*, Atkins; the *Prosperity*, Beale; the *Dragon*, Nallon, from Dominica; the *Sally*, Noble; the *Kelly and Nancy*, Reodret; the *Frederick*, Reynolds; the *Charming Ann*, Jones; the *Mary*, Mathews; the *Sally* armed schooner; and *Diligence*, ditto; in the whole 66.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM WILLIAMS, R. N., TO PHILIP STEPHENS <sup>1</sup>

Sir,

I have this Minuet received yours of the 24th setting forth their Lordships Direction to send to your board Lord Howe's Orders for bringing home the Convoy of Dutch & English Merchant Ships, together with a list of their Numbers, which I have Inclos'd herein as I am desired to be very particular when, and the reasons why, that Part of the Convoy left us, I therefore judge it Most Adviseable to send up my Journal for their Lordships Inspection, which will point Out to them the reason of Many Of Our Convoy leaving us, and by Which their Lordships Plainly will See was Occasion'd by their Paying so little or no Attention to Any Signals Made by me, and I hope their Lordships will allow its not in the power of two of His Majts ships to keep so large a Convoy together against their Inclinations. I am sir [&c.]

W<sup>m</sup> Williams

N. B. My Journal and Lord Howe's Orders are this Minute Lodg'd in the Commissioners Office

Active Plymo. Dock 27th Decem. 1776. 4. P. M.

N. B. The Journal herein mentioned put with the Monthly Journals.

1. PRO, Admiralty 1/2672, 10, 7.

**28 Dec.**

*London Chronicle*, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26 TO SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1776

London [December 28].

His Majesty's ship *Fowey* lately arrived from New York, is ordered round to Chatham, where she is to be repaired and fitted out for sea for the same station.

Yesterday Captain Douglas, just arrived from America, was introduced to his Majesty at St. James's by General Burgoyne, and most graciously received.

Yesterday a press-gang attempted to press some of the runners of the different gaols in Southwark, and others, when a battle ensued, in which, it is said, some lives were lost, and several persons wounded.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R.N., TO THE NAVY COMMISSIONERS<sup>1</sup>

Gentn

I find there is no Sky light in the Steerage of His Majesty's Ship *Isis* under my Command & it is so exceedingly dark there is no seeing to do any thing in it – I do not know a two deck Ship with a Poop with out a Sky light, & imagine as she was built by Contract it was omitted by Mistake Therefore hope you will be pleased to order the Builder of this Port to fit one for the same as in other Ships.

I am Gentn [&amp;c.]

*Isis* 28 Decr 1776 Portsmo harbourW Cornwallis<sup>2</sup>

[Copy]

1. Captain William Cornwallis' Letter Book, NYHS.

2. The Commissioners responded favorably on December 31 to Captain Cornwallis' plea for a skylight, Captain William Cornwallis' Letter Book, NYHS.

LORD STORMONT TO LORD WEYMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Duplicate of No 128

Paris Decr 28th 1776

Most secret

I have authentic intelligence, that there are at Present, at Nantes, the following American Ships, viz the Ship that brought franklin, mounting sixteen Guns. A fine Brig mounting the same Number, a Merchant ship, that is waiting to take cloaths, and ammunication, Another of two hundred Tons, called the *William and Mary*, that is just arrived, and brought Rice, and Tobacco, and means to load with cloaths, arms and Powder, for the Rebel army, but it will be some time before her loading is Ready.

My informer, who seems Zealous in our Cause, is persuaded, that a frigate stationed off Nantes, would easily take all these American Vessels . . .

1. PRO, State Papers, 78/300.

REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF CAPTAIN FRANCIS DE MONTEIL<sup>1</sup>

[Versailles] 28 December 1776

M. de Monteil, commanding the frigate *la Renommée* stationed at the Mole St. Nicolas, reports on what happened and what he did from the beginning of his cruise until 1 October last. The following details are found in his correspondence and the documents attached thereto.

On 5 September, M. de Monteil encounters the English frigate *Squirrel* chasing an American schooner near the coast.<sup>2</sup> He sends information to the Commanding Officer (Captain [Stair] Douglas) to the effect that he will oppose any form of hostility against the ships which are within reach of the Mole. This statement is not opposed. The English frigate abandons her pursuit of the schooner and sails away from the coast.

On the 14th of this same month of September, M. de Monteil was anchored in the harbour of the mole in order to unload stores which *la Renommée* had taken

on in Port au Prince. At six o'clock in the morning, he hears a few shots fired successively between the Tortue [Turtle] and the North point. He gets under way in haste and sees the boat of the English frigate *Squirrel* approaching an American schooner near land. He fires his gun in order to enforce his colors; but the schooner is too far away to be protected by him and falls into the hands of the enemy which takes her and disappears. Then, M. de Monteil receives on board his ship the Insurgent Captain who had escaped in his boat with three sailors, takes his statement and sails towards Jamaica in the hope to intercept and capture the Schooner. He finally decides to go and ask for the restitution of the captured vessel, convinced that celerity would add weight to this request, and sends the boat *Victor* in order to inform M. D'Ennery.

On the 17th, *la Renommée* puts into the road of Port Royal (in Jamaica). M. Gayton, Admiral, was in the country. M. de Monteil sends his Lieutenant, M. de la Voltiere, to him in order to claim the American schooner which had been brought to the harbor. The Admiral declares that the capture was justified on pretext that the North point had neither displayed the flag nor fired in order to enforce the colors, and that the schooner had been discovered and seized within a reasonable distance; he ends his reply saying that it is not within his power to return the schooner and that he can only inform his Court. Furthermore, he criticizes the word protection used in M. de Monteil's letter, saying that it is contrary to the assurance of neutrality given by the French Court. This word truly meant sanctuary and this explanation was found satisfactory. Moreover, M. de Monteil has received many marks of courtesy on the part of the Admiral and all the English officers and he appears to be convinced that the schooner is sequestered and that she will be returned if we insist.

These facts present three points worthy of examination: the manoeuvre towards the English frigate *Squirrel* by M. de Monteil on 5 September, the pursuit and the plan to recapture the American schooner seized on the 14th of the same month, the trip to Jamaica in order to claim the said schooner.

The instructions given to the Commanders of the frigates stationed in the Colonies, and which were known to M. de Monteil, stipulate that in the event that some Insurgent vessel or any other neutral vessel having sailed from the European or American ports and chased by English frigates, would come and request the protection of the King's flag, the said Commanders would not tolerate that these vessels be captured or visited; but the same instructions give express orders to the effect that they are not to approach the aforementioned vessels and to wait without favoring their manoeuvres until they are close enough to request the flag's protection.

In view of such positive provisions, M. de Monteil contravened his instructions by sailing toward the boat pursued by the English frigate *Squirrel* on 5 September. However, this manoeuvre could be justified by one clause of the same instructions which specifies that Commanders will maintain their cruise at fairly good distances in order to keep the English frigates away and to prevent that they come too close to the French Islands, and it seems that at the time when M. de Monteil went toward the insurgent boat and declared to Captain Douglas that he would oppose any form of hostility, the English frigate was very close to the coast of the Mole. Moreover, this declaration was deemed fair by the English officer who sailed away,

and in this respect, M. de Monteil can be blamed only for displaying a somewhat too active zeal.

The same cannot be said with regard to the event that took place on 14 September. M. de Monteil himself declares that the flag was not displayed at the point of the mole and that the guns had not been fired in order to enforce the protection of the coast. He further admits that he could not manoeuvre fast enough in order to protect the boat pursued by the English frigate. After this double confession, it is surprising that he conceived and put into effect his plan to go after the captured vessel and to seize it. Had his plan been as successful as he had expected, he would have committed without doubt the most formal act of hostility and compromised the nation. In spite of his declaration to the effect that the vessel was seized within one mile of the coast against the respect due to the King's possessions, distances have not been determined among nations and when protection is not enforced by the display of the flag or by the gun of some fort or ship, the sea is completely free outside the roads and coves whose sanctuary cannot be violated. Furthermore, assuming that distances had been determined there would have been ground only for a claim, not the recapture of the vessel, which, again, would have been an act of violence and a clearly marked form of hostility.

After his more than careless pursuit, M. de Monteil committed another fault equally serious when he went to Jamaica in order to ask for the return of the captured vessel. He should not have left his station without express orders, and assuming that the claim was justified, only the Governor should have made it. Active protection was the object of M. de Monteil's mission; thus, he disregarded the King's orders by leaving his station and he failed in his duty to the Governor's authority by taking upon himself the responsibility of a measure which did not concern him.

Moreover, M. de Monteil behaved well in Jamaica and the form of his request would deserve some praise if the request itself were not inconsiderate. The English Admiral's reply was also fair and reasonable. It is not deemed necessary to carry any further M. de Monteil's request which compromised this officer only.

It must also be noticed that M. de Monteil pretends in his correspondence that he was authorized to act on his own. This pretention is against all principles and would present the greatest inconveniences; the interests of the nation would then be entrusted to each officer commanding a frigate or a schooner and the variety of opinions would cause contradictory undertakings. It is the Governor's responsibility only to defend the interests of the nation with respect to the Colony where he is in command. The Commanding officers of the frigates can only act on the spur of the moment in order to stop illegal actions and outside this eventuality they must merely report what they see and learn.

By order of the Minister a dispatch was sent to M. de Monteil on 28 December 1776 commanding him to discontinue his cruise and one to M. d'Ennery to acquaint him with the orders given.

1. AN, Marine, B<sup>4</sup>, 128, LC Photocopy.

2. See Volume 6.

**29 Dec. (Sunday)**

“EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN AT FLORENCE IN ITALY, TO HIS FRIEND IN BIRMINGHAM, DATED DECEMBER 29, 1776.”<sup>1</sup>

We took Shipping at Lisbon the 6th inst. for Leghorn, being in number 35 Souls, including Passengers. We had not sailed above 14 Hours before we were attacked by an American Privateer, carrying 18 Ten-pounders, 12 Swivels, and 90 Men. I forgot to mention that our Vessel was from Dartmouth, called the *Indian Queen*, and was making a trading Voyage up the Straits; she had only 24 Hands, the rest were Passengers. Our Captain (M’Pherson) a bold and resolute Scotchman, would give them Battle, though the Numbers were so unequal. After an Engagement of Three Quarters of an Hour, our Vessel struck, having seven killed and nine wounded, and her Rigging much shattered: The Americans behaved with great Humanity to us, and set us on Shore within 15 Miles of Gibraltar; to which Place we travelled on Foot, and sailed the next Day (9th) in the *Charming Molly* for Venice, which Place we reached, after a quick but stormy Passage, the 16th instant, all well.

1. *Public Advertiser*, London, January 22, 1777.

**30 Dec.**

LORDS COMMISSIONERS, ADMIRALTY, TO CAPTAIN CHARLES HOPE,  
H. M. SLOOP, *Weazle*, SPITHEAD<sup>1</sup>

You are hereby required and directed to make enquiry at Spithead for the *Fox* Storeship, belonging to the African Company, bound to Cape Coast Castle, and also for any other Ships or Vessels bound to the Coast of Africa, and taking them under your Convoy, put to Sea with the very first opportunity of Wind and Weather, and make the best of your way to the said Coast; proceeding in the first place to Senegambia, and having conducted such of them as are bound to Senegal off the bar of that place, run down the Coast and see the remainder, if any, as near to the places of their respective destinations as may be necessary for their Security, until you arrive at Cape Coast Castle, where you are to leave the *Fox* Store Ship, and then proceed and cruize between Cape La Ho [Lahou] and Whidah [Widah] for the protection of the Trade of His Majesty’s Subjects, using your best endeavours to take or destroy any Cruizers, or other Ship’s or Vessels belonging to the Rebellious Colonies of No America which you may be able to come up with.

You are to continue on that Station til the Arrival of His Majesty’s Ship *Pallas*, or til your provisions shall be so far expended as to make it necessary for you to quit it, and then you are to repair to Princes Island, or the Island of St. Thomas, for a supply of wood and water; and having taken the same on board, make the best of your way with such Captures as you may have made to Antigua, or wherever else you may learn that Vice Admiral Young Commander in Chief of His Majesty’s Ships at Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands shall be, and delivering to

him the packet you will receive herewith, put yourself under his Command and follow his Orders for your further proceedings.

Given &c the 30th December. 1776

By &c P.S.

Sandwich J. Buller H. Palliser.

1. PRO, Admiralty 2/101, 128-29.

NAVY COMMISSIONERS TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS, R. N.<sup>1</sup>

Sir  
Navy Office 30 Decr 1776  
Observing upon the examination of your Accounts for the *Pallas* between the 26th. September 1775 and the 26 Septr 1776 the following expence of Stores Viz

1776 July Lost in the *Mary* Schooner Prize she having got on Shore in Attempt to come out of Port Antonio harbour by which she was lost. Viz

Hawser of 47 Inch	one No.
	Seventy one fm

	Cwt	qr.	lb	
Anchor of	4.	2.	0	One No.
Bouy Wood				One.
Rope of 4 Inch Seventeen Fm				
Foretop mast stay sail				One No

We acquaint you that according to the rules of the Navy it is not in our Power to Allow that Expence in your Account the Vessel not belonging to the King that they were lost in and that the Value thereof must therefore be paid the same as if the Stores had been supplied to any Merchant Ship We are [&c.]

M Suckling J Williams George Marsh

Honble Captn Cornwallis in Town

1. Captain William Cornwallis' Letter Book, NYHS.

*London Gazette*, MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1776. EXTRAORDINARY

Admiralty-Office, December 30, 1776.

By Letters received from Vice Admiral Young, Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships at the Leeward Islands, dated the 30th of September, and from Vice Admiral Gayton, Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Ships at Jamaica, dated the 4th of November last, it appears, that the Cruizers of the former had taken 12 Vessels belonging to His Majesty's Rebellious Colonies since the 24th of July, and that the Cruizers of the latter had, since the 8th of October, taken 8 Vessels belonging to the said Colonies, making in the Whole 56 Vessels taken by the Cruizers from Jamaica.

GABRIEL DE SARTINE TO ADMIRAL LOUIS CHARLES DU CHAFFAULT<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Versailles, 30 Dec 1776

. . . H. M. recommends very expressly to them [captains in the Admiral's Fleet], in case they are in a position to grant the protection of his Ensign to some Insurgent

Vessel, to conduct themselves so as not to appear at all favorable to the Insurgents, and to limit themselves to preventing lack of respect due the King's Ensign, whenever these vessels which must not be led by the frigates have come close through their own maneuvers to request protection and refuge. . . .

1. AN, Marine, B<sup>4</sup>, 134, LC Photocopy.

### 31 Dec.

#### DIARY OF JOHN BRAGG, WHITEHAVEN, ENGLAND <sup>1</sup>

[Whitehaven, December 31] a Violent press for Seamen at the close of the year 1776 they having been first offerd five pounds advance by the King & also the farther sum of two Guineas by the Gentlemen of Whit[e]haven, a large fleet of Men of Warr put into Comission & very great preparations for Warr, against America or any that may presume to Espouse their Cause.

1. WPL.

#### LORD NORTH TO GEORGE III <sup>1</sup>

Lord North has received the honour of his Majesty's note. Lord Sandwich, who is just gone to London, has in his possession a letter sent last night from Bushy, which Lord North received from Mr. Robinson. It is from *L'Orient*, & confirms the report of the French Frigates being appointed to convoy the American Ships out of the Bay. From hence it appears that there is such a report in France, & that it is believed by others than Mr Wentworth. As the intelligence sent by this Gentleman is not of the most pleasant kind, Lord North is sorry to recollect that, as he was the first, so he has always been the most important, & truest informer we have had. Almost every thing that he has told us from the first fitting out of the *Amphitrite* at Havre has been confirm'd, either by Van Zant, or Leesjournal[?], or the papers deliver'd by Hynson, or by some event. In the present instance, He relates what he receives from others, & Lord North believes truly; Perhaps he may himself be deceived. However, in one of the most material points the convoy intended for the ships bound to America is confirm'd by the letter in Lord Sandwich's hands, which was sent to Mr Robinson by Mr Jonsson a merchant in the City, who has no correspondance or connexion with Mr Wentworth or his friends. As this is a case to which the orders given to Commodore Hood will not apply Lord Sandwich intends to take the opinion of the Cabinet upon it tomorrow.

Bushy Park. Decr 31

1. Fortescue, ed., *Correspondence of George III*, III, 410-11.

#### LORD WEYMOUTH TO LORD GRANTHAM <sup>1</sup>

No 28.

[St. James's] 31st December 1776.

It has been represented to me that the brig *Dorothy*, laden with fish from Newfoundland, was taken by the *Washington* privateer.<sup>2</sup> The master put the captain and the whole crew aboard a Dutch vessel, and carried the brig into Bilboa, and endeavoured to pass for the master of the vessel, in order to dispose of the cargo. I am to signify to Your Excellency His Majesty's pleasure that you demand





*A. Ramsay pinx.*

*W. Woollett sculp.*

*GEORGE THE THIRD,*  
*King of Great Britain &c. &c. &c.*

of His Catholic Majesty's Ministers that the vessel be delivered to the owner thereof, since no court of judicature can allow its condemnation as a legal prize.

There is no principle in the law of nations more firmly established than this, "That every captor who is not provided with a commission granted by a supreme authority, is deemed a pirate and should be treated as such. This Supreme authority can only exist in a sovereign state whose political existence is admitted and acknowledged by other Sovereigns." It is not to be doubted from the known justice and exalted sentiments of His Catholic Majesty, that he will give the speediest orders for the release of this vessel

1. Sparks Transcripts, Lord Grantham, I, 22, HU.

2. Massachusetts privateer brigantine *Washington*, Captain Elias Smith.

NATHAN RUMSEY TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN<sup>1</sup>

[Extract]

Honorable Sir

Nantes 31st Decemr 76.

I have the pleasure of informing you of the Arrival of a Brig Yesterday in the Loire loaded with Tobacco from George Town on Sassafras River in Maryland – in her comes passenger Mr Robert Maise of Philada who has been with me to day – She left the Capes of Virginia the 15th Novemr . . . inclosed is a Letter which Mr Maise put into my hands. – Since your Departure from hence is also arrived Cap. [Peter] Young of Philada & another Vessel from Plymouth, on Acct of Congress, the Cap. & Sailors of wch last have forsaken her & are going to England. She is consigned to Mr Schweighauser, & he is in Doubt how to act. – It would give me pleasure Mr [Thomas] Morris was here – Mr Gruel speaks no english & I am prodigiously hurried, without any Directions or powers to act – a Dutch Transport is lately arrived – an English officer passenger put in her I conjecture to prolong the freight – the officer has protested against the Cap. here for not proceeding on his Voyage & insists he shall not stir untill Government have discharged him here – he fears Cap. Wickes will take the Vessel going out. . . .

1. Franklin Papers, vol. 4, No. 141, APS.