

Excerpt from

Waldo, Albigeance. "Valley Froge, 1777-1778. Diary of Surgeion Aligence Waldo, of the Connecticut Line." *Pennsylvania Magaine of History and Biogrpahy* 21, 299-323 (October 1897).

December 14. Prisoners & Deserters are continually coming in. The Army which has been surprisingly healthy hitherto, now begins to grow sickly from the continued fatiques they have suffered this Campaign. Yet they still show a spirit of Alacrity & Contentment not to be expected from so young Troops. I am Sick—discontented—and out of humour. Poor food—hard lodging—Cold Weather—fatigue—Nasty Cloaths—nasty Cookery-- V o m i t half my time—smoak'd out of my senses—the Devil's in't—I can't Endure it—Why are we sent here to starve and Freeze—What sweet Felicities have I left at home; a charming Wife—pretty Children—Good Beds—good food—good Cookery—all agreeable—all harmonious. Here all Confusion—smoke & Cold—hunger & filthyness—A pox on my bad luck. There comes a bowl of beef soup—full of burnt leaves and dirt, sickish enough to make a Hector spue—away with it Boys—I'll live like the Chameleon upon Air. Poh! Poh! crys Patience with me—you talk like a fool. Your being sick Covers your mind with a Melanchollic Gloom, which makes everything about you appear gloomy. See the poor Soldier, when in health—with what cheerfulness he meets his foes and encounters every hardship—if barefoot, he labours thro' the Mud & Cold with a Song in his mouth extolling War & Washington—if his food be bad, he eats it notwithstanding with seeming content—blesses God for a good Stomach and Whistles it into digestion. But harkee Patience, a moment—There comes a Soldier, his bare feet are seen thro' his worn out Shoes, his legs nearly naked from the tatter'd remains of an only pair of stockings, his Breeches not sufficient to cover his nakedness, his Shirt hanging in Strings, his hair dishevel'd, his face meagre; his whole appearance pictures a person forsaken & discouraged. He comes, and crys with an air of wretchedness & despair, I am Sick, my feet lame, my legs are sere, my body cover'd with this tormenting Itch—my Cloaths are worn out, my Constitution is broken, my former Activity is exhausted by fatigue hunger & cold, I fail fast I shall soon be no more! and all the reward I shall get will be "Poor Will is dead." People who live at home in Luxury and Ease, quietly possessing their habitations, Enjoying their Wives & Families in peace, have very faint Idea of the unpleasing sensations, and continual Anxiety t h e m a n endures who is in a Camp, and is the husband and parent of an agreeable family. These same People are willing we should suffer every thing for their Benefit & advantage, and yet are the first to Condemn us for not doing more!!

Excerpts from

Joseph Plumb Martin. *Ordinary Courage: The Revolutionary War Adventures of Joseph Plumb Martin*. Edited by James Kirby Martin. Second Edition. New York: Brandywine Press, 1999.

Campaign of 1777

Our batteries were nothing more than old spars and timber laid up in parallel lines and filled between with mud and dirt. The British batteries in the course of the day would nearly level our works; and we were, like the beaver, obliged to repair our dams in the night. During the whole night at intervals of a quarter or half an hour, the enemy would let off all their pieces, and although we had sentinels to watch them and at every flash of their guns to cry, "a shot," upon hearing which everyone endeavored to take care of himself, yet they would ever and anon, in spite of all our precautions, cut up some of us. . . . I will here just mention one thing which will show the apathy of our people at this time. We had, as I mentioned before, a 32-pound cannon in the fort, but had not a single shot for it, I hr British also had one in their battery upon the Hospital Point, which, ,as I said before, raked the fort, or rather it was so fixed as to rake the parade in front of the bar-racks, the only place we could pass up and down the fort. The artillery officers offered a gill of rum for each shot fired from that piece, which the soldiers would procure. I have seen from 20 to 50 men standing on the parade waiting with impatience the coming of the shot, which would of-ten be seized before its motion had fully ceased and conveyed off to our gun to be sent back again to its former owners. When the lucky fellow who had caught it had swallowed his rum, he would return to wait for another, exulting that he had been more lucky or more dexterous than his fellows.

We continued here, suffering cold, hunger, and other miseries till the 14th day of November. . . .

I hobbled on as well as I could; the rain and traveling of the troops and baggage had converted the road into perfect mortar, and it was extremely difficult for me to make headway. I worried [wearied] on, how-ever, till sometime in the afternoon when I went into a house where I procured a piece of a buckwheat slapjack. With this little refreshment I proceeded on and just before night overtook the troops. We continued our march until sometime after dark, when we arrived in the vicinity of

the main army. We again turned into a wood for the night; the leaves and ground were as wet as water could make them; it was then foggy and the water dropping from the trees like a shower. We endeavored to get fire by flashing powder on the leaves, but this and every other expedient that we could employ failing, we were forced by our (id master, Necessity, to lay down and sleep if we could, with three others as our constant companions, Fatigue, Hunger, and Cold.

Next morning we joined the grand army near Philadelphia, and the heavy baggage being sent back to the rear of the army, we were obliged to put us up huts by laying up poles and covering them with leaves, a capital shelter from winter storms. Here we continued to fast; indeed we kept a continual Lent as faithfully as ever any of the most rigorous of the Roman Catholics did. But there was this exception; we had no fish or eggs or any other substitute for our commons. Ours was a real fast and, depend upon it, we were sufficiently mortified.

About this time the whole British army left the *city*, came out, and encamped, or rather lay, on Chestnut Hill in our immediate neighbor-hood. We hourly expected an attack from them; we had a commanding position and were very sensible of it. We were kept constantly on the alert, and wished nothing more than to have them engage us, for we were sure of giving them a drubbing, being in excellent fighting trim, as we were starved and as cross and ill-natured as curs. The British, however, thought better of the matter, and, after several days maneuvering on the hill, very civilly walked off into Philadelphia again.

Starvation seemed to be entailed upon the army and every animal connected with it. The oxen, brought from New England for draught, all died, and the southern horses fared no better; even the wild animals that had any concern with us suffered. A poor little squirrel, who had the ill luck to get cut off from the woods and fixing himself on a tree standing alone and surrounded by several of the soldier's huts, sat upon the tree till he starved to death and fell off the tree. He, however, got rid of his misery soon. He did not live to starve by piecemeal six or seven years. . . .

Soon after the British had quit their position on Chestnut Hill, we left this place, and after marching and countermarching hack and for-ward some days, we crossed the Schuylkill on a cold, rainy, and snowy night upon a bridge of wagons set end to end and joined together by boards and planks. And after a few days more maneuvering we at last settled down at a place called "the Gulf" (so named on account of a remarkable chasm in the hills); and here we encamped some time, and here we had liked to have encamped forever — for starvation here *rioted* in its glory. . . .

While we lay here, there was a Continental thanksgiving ordered by Congress; and as the army had all the cause in the world to be particularly thankful, if not for being well off, at least that it was no worse, we were ordered to participate in it. We had nothing to eat for two or three days previous, except what the trees of the fields and forests afforded us. But we must now have what Congress said—a sumptuous thanksgiving to close the year of high living we had now nearly seen brought to a close. Well, to add something extraordinary to our present stock of provisions, our country, ever mindful of its suffering army, opened her sympathizing heart so wide upon this occasion as to give us something to make the world stare. And what do you think it was,

reader? Guess. You cannot guess, be you as much of a Yankee as you will. I will tell you: It gave each and every man *half a gill* of rice and a *tablespoonful* of vinegar!!

After we had made sure of this extraordinary superabundant donation, we were ordered out to attend a meeting and hear a sermon delivered upon the happy occasion. We accordingly went, for we could not help it. . . . I remember the text, like an attentive lad at church. I can *still* remember that it was this, "And the soldiers said unto him, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, nor accuse anyone falsely." The preacher ought to have added the remainder of the sentence to have made it complete: "And be content with your wages." But that would not do, it would be too apropos; however, he heard it as soon as the service was over, it was shouted from a hundred tongues. . . .

The army was now not only starved but naked. The greatest part were not only shirtless and barefoot but destitute of all other clothing, especially blankets. I procured a small piece of raw cowhide and made my-self a pair of moccasins, which kept my feet (while they lasted) from the frozen ground, although as I well remember the hard edges so galled my ankles while on a march that it was with much difficulty and pain that I could wear them afterwards; but the only alternative I had was to endure this inconvenience or to go barefoot, as hundreds of my companions had to, till they might be tracked by their blood upon the rough frozen ground. But hunger, nakedness, and sore shins were not the only difficulties we had at that time to encounter; we had hard duty to perform and little or no strength to perform it with.

The army continued at and near the Gulf for some days, after which we marched for the Valley Forge in order to take up our winter quarters. We were now in a truly forlorn condition — no clothing, no provisions, and as disheartened as need be. We arrived, however, at our destination a few days before Christmas.-' Our prospect was indeed dreary. In our miserable condition, to go into the wild woods and build us habitations to *stay* (not to *live*) in, in such a weak, starved, and naked condition, was appalling in the highest degree, especially to New Englanders, unaccustomed to such kind of hardships at home. However, there was no remedy, no alternative but this or dispersion, hut dispersion, I believe, was not thought of—at least I did not think of It. We had engaged in the defense of our injured country and were willing, nay, we were determined to persevere as long as such hardships were altogether intolerable. I had experienced what I thought sufficient of the hardships of a military life the year before (although nothing in comparison to what I had suffered the present campaign) . . . ; but we were now absolutely in danger of perishing, and that too in the midst of a plentiful country. We then had but little and often nothing to eat for days together; but now we had nothing and saw no likelihood of any betterment of our condition. Had there fallen deep snows (and it was the time of year to expect them) or even heavy and long rainstorms, the whole *army* must inevitably have perished. Or had the enemy, strong and well provided as he then was, thought fit to pursue us, our poor emaciated carcasses must have "strewed the plain." But a kind and holy Providence took more notice and better care of us than did the country in whose service we were wearing away our lives by piecemeal.

We arrived at the Valley Forge in the evening. It was dark; there was no water to be found, and I was perishing with thirst. I searched for water till I

was weary and came to my tent without finding any; fatigue and thirst, joined with hunger, almost made me desperate. I felt at that instant as if I would have taken victuals or drink from the best friend I had on earth by force. I am not writing fiction, all are sober realities. Just after I arrived at my tent, two soldiers whom I did not know passed by; they had some water in their canteens which they told me they had found a good distance off, but could not direct me to the place as it was very dark. I tried to beg a draught of water from them, but they were as rigid as Arabs. At length I persuaded them to sell me a drink for three pence, Pennsylvania currency, which was every cent of property I could then call my own, so great was the necessity I was then reduced to.

I lay here two nights and one day and had not a morsel of anything to eat all the time, save half of a small pumpkin, which I cooked by placing it upon a rock, the skin side uppermost, and making a fire upon it. By the lives of others; massacred by his own countrymen, who ought to have been fighting in the common cause of the country instead of murdering him.

Campaign of 1780

[What follows is an invaluable account of the Connecticut line mutiny of May 25, 1780. The primary spark was a winter's worth of inadequate provisions, especially food, a reflection of yet another breakdown in the Continental army's supply system reminiscent of the Valley Forge days. Even more serious mutinies were yet to come, particularly the uprisings of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey lines in January 1781.]

We left Westfield about the 25th of May and went to Basking Ridge to our old winter cantonments. We did not reoccupy the huts which we built, but some others that the troops had left, upon what account I have forgotten. Here the monster Hunger still attended us. He was not to be shaken off by any efforts we could use, for here was the old story of starving, as rife as ever. We had entertained some hopes that when we had left the lines and joined the main army, we should fare a little better, but we found that there was no betterment in the case. For several days after we rejoined the army, we got a little must bread and a little beef about every other day, but this lasted only a short time and then we got nothing at all. The men were now exasperated beyond endurance; they could not stand it any longer; they saw no other alternative but to starve to death, or break up the army, give all up, and go home. This was a hard matter for the soldiers to think upon. They were truly patriotic; they loved their country, and they had already suffered everything short of death in its cause; and now, after such extreme hardships to give up all was too much, but to starve to death was too much also. What was to be done? Here was the army starved and naked, and there their country sitting still and expecting the army to do notable things while fainting from sheer starvation. All things considered,

the army was not to be blamed. Reader, suffer what we did and you will say so too.

We had borne as long as human nature could endure, and to bear longer we considered folly. Accordingly, one pleasant day the men spent the most of their time upon the parade growling like soreheaded dogs. At evening roll call they began to show their dissatisfaction by snapping at the officers and acting contrary to their orders. After their dismissal from the parade, the officers went as usual to their quarters, except the adjutant, who happened to remain, giving details for next day's duty to the orderly sergeants, or some other business, when the men (none of whom had left the parade) began to make him sensible that they had something in train. He said something that did not altogether accord with the soldiers' ideas of propriety, one of the men retorted: the adjutant called him a mutinous rascal, or some such epithet, and then left the parade. This man, then stamping the butt of his musket upon 'he ground, as much as to say, I am in a passion, called out, "Who will parade with me?" The whole regiment immediately fell in and formed.

We had made no plans for our future operations, but while we were consulting how to proceed, the 4th Regiment, which lay on our left, formed and came and paraded with us. We now concluded to go in a body to the other two regiments that belonged to our brigade and induce them to join with us. These regiments lay 40 or 50 rods in front of us, with a brook and bushes between. We did not wish to have anyone in particular to command, lest he might be singled out for a court martial to exercise its demency upon; we therefore gave directions to the drummers to give certain signals on the drums; at the first signal we shouldered our arms, at the second we faced, at the third we began our march to join with the other two regiments, and went off with music playing.

By this time our officers had obtained knowledge of our military maneuvering, and some of them had run across the brook by a nearer way than we had taken (it being now quite dark) and informed the officers of those regiments of our approach and supposed intentions. The officers ordered their men to parade as quick as possible *without* arms. When that was done, they stationed a camp guard, that happened to be near at hand, between the men and their huts, which prevented them from entering and taking their arms, which they were very anxious to do. Colonel Meigs of the 6th Regiment exerted himself to prevent his men from obtaining their arms until he received a severe wound in his side by a bayonet in the scuffle, which cooled his courage at the time. He said he had always considered himself the soldier's friend and thought the soldiers regarded him as such, but had reason now to conclude he might be mistaken. Colonel Meigs was truly an excellent man and a brave officer. The man, whoever he was that wounded him, doubtless had no particular grudge against him; it was dark and the wound was given, it is probable, altogether unintentionally. . . .

When we found the officers had been too crafty for us, we returned with grumbling instead of music, the officers following in the rear growling in concert. One of the men in the rear calling out, "Halt in front," the officers seized upon him like wolves on a sheep and dragged him out of the ranks, intending to make an example of him for being a "mutinous rascal"; but the bayonets of the men pointing at their breasts, as thick as hatchel teeth, compelled them quickly to

relinquish their hold of him.

"A tool with long, sharp iron teeth used to separate the coarse from the fibrous strands of flax and hemp. We marched back to our own parade and then formed again. The officers now began to coax us to disperse to our quarters, but that had no more effect upon us than their threats. One of them slipped away into the bushes, and after a short time returned, counterfeiting to have come directly from headquarters. Said he, "There is good news for you, boys, there has just arrived a large drove of cattle for the army." But this piece of finesse would not avail. All the answer he received for his labor was, "Go and butcher them," or some such slight expression.

The lieutenant colonel of the 4th Regiment now came on to the parade. He could persuade *his* men, he said, to go peaceably to their quarters. After a good deal of palaver he ordered them to shoulder their arms, but the men taking no notice of him or his order he fell into a violent passion, threatening them with the bitterest punishment if they did not immediately obey his orders. After spending a whole quiver of the arrows of his rhetoric, he again ordered them to shoulder their arms, but he met with the same success that he did at the first trial. He therefore gave up the contest as hopeless and left us and walked off to his quarters, chewing the cud of resentment all the way, and how much longer I neither knew nor cared. The rest of the officers, after they found that they were likely to meet with no better success than the colonel, walked off likewise to their huts.

While we were under arms, the Pennsylvania troops, who lay not far from us, were ordered under arms and marched off their parades upon, as they were told, a secret expedition. They had surrounded us, unknown to either us or themselves (except the officers). At length . . . they inquired of some of the stragglers, what was going on among the Yankees? Being informed that they had mutinied on account of the scarcity of provisions, "Let us join them," said they, "let us join the Yankees; they are good fellows, and have no notion of lying here like fools and starving." Their officers needed no further hinting; the troops were quickly ordered back to their quarters from fear that they would join in the same song with the Yankees. We knew nothing of all this for some time afterwards.

After our officers had left us to our own option, we dispersed to our huts and laid by our arms of our own accord but the worm of hunger gnawing so keen kept us from being entirely quiet. We therefore still kept upon the parade in groups, venting our spleen at our country and government, then at our officers, and then at ourselves for our imbecility in staying there and starving in detail for an ungrateful people who did not care what became of us, so they could enjoy themselves while we were keeping a cruel enemy from them.

While we were thus venting our gall against we knew not who, Colonel Stewart of the Pennsylvania line, with two or three other officers of that line, came to us and questioned us respecting our unsoldierlike conduct (as he termed it). We told him he needed not to be informed of the cause of our present conduct, but that we had borne till we considered further forbearance pusillanimity; that the times, instead of mending, were growing worse; and finally that we were

determined not to bear or forbear much longer. We were unwilling to desert the cause of our country, when in distress; that we knew her cause involved our own; but what signified our perishing in the act of saving her, when that very act would inevitably destroy us, and she must finally perish with us.

"Why do you not go to your officers," said he, "and complain in a regular manner?" We told him we had repeatedly complained to them, but they would not hear us. "Your officers," said he, "are gentlemen; they *will* attend to you. I know them; they cannot refuse to hear you. "But," said he, "your officers suffer as much as you do. We all suffer. The officers have no money to purchase supplies with any more than the private men have, and if there is nothing in the public store we must fare as hard as you. I have no other resources than you have to depend upon; I had not a sixpence to purchase a partridge that was offered me the other day. Besides," said he, "you know not how much you injure your own characters by such conduct. You Connecticut troops have won immortal honor to yourselves the winter past by your perseverance, patience, and bravery, and now you are shaking it off at your heels. But I will go and see your officers, and talk with them myself." He went, but what the result was I never knew. This Colonel Stewart was an excellent officer, much beloved and respected by the troops of the line he belonged to. He possessed great personal beauty; the Philadelphia ladies styled him *the Irish Beauty*.

Our stir did us some good in the end, for we had provisions directly after, so we had no great cause for complaint for some time.

a few days after set off with himself, and I have never heard of him since. I hope he did well, for he was a worthy young man.

Soon after this an order was issued that all who had but four months to serve should, after they had cut two cords of wood near the garrison for firewood, be discharged. Accordingly, I cut my two cords of wood and obtained an honorable discharge, which the other man might have done if he had not been so hasty in his determination.

I now bid a final farewell to the service. I had obtained my settlement certificates and sold some of them, and purchased some decent clothing, and then set off from West Point. I went into the Highlands where I accidentally came across an old messmate, who had been at work there ever since he had left the army in June last, and, as it appeared, was on a courting expedition. I stopped a few days with him and worked at the farming business; I got acquainted with the people here, who were chiefly Dutch, and as winter was approaching and my friend recommended me to them, I agreed to teach a school among them. A fit person! I knew but little and they less, if possible. 'Like people, like priest.' However, I stayed and had a school of from 20 to 30 pupils, and probably I gave them satisfaction. If I did not, it was all one; I never heard anything to the contrary. Anyhow, they wished me to stay and settle with them.

When the spring opened I bid my Dutch friends adieu and set my face to the eastward, and made no material halt till I arrived in the now state of Maine in the year 1784, where I have remained ever since, and where I expect to remain so long as I remain in existence, and here at last to rest my warworn weary limbs. And here I would make an end of my tedious narrative, but that I deem it necessary to make a few short observations relative to what I have said, or a sort of recapitulation of some of the things which I have mentioned.

When those who engaged to serve during the war enlisted, they were promised a hundred acres of land each, which was to be in their own or the adjoining states. When the country had drained the last drop of service it could screw out of the poor soldiers, they were turned adrift like old worn-out horses, and nothing said about land to pasture them upon. Congress did, indeed, appropriate lands under the denomination of "Soldiers' lands," in Ohio state, or some state, or a future state; but no care was taken that the soldiers should get them. No agents were appointed to see that the poor fellows ever got possession of their lands; no one ever took the least care about it, except a pack of speculators who were driving about the country like so many evil spirits, endeavoring to pluck the last feather from the soldiers. The soldiers were ignorant of the ways and means to obtain their bounty lands, and there was no one appointed to inform them. The truth was, none cared for them; the country was served, and faithfully served, and that was all that was deemed necessary. It was, soldiers, look to yourselves, we want no more of you. I hope

I shall one day find land enough to lay my bones in. If I chance to die in a civilized country, none will deny me that. A dead body never begs a grave; thanks for that.

They were likewise promised the following articles of clothing per year. One uniform coat, a woolen and a linen waistcoat, four shirts, four pair of shoes, four pair of stockings, a pair of woolen and a pair of linen overalls, a hat or a leather cap, a stock for the neck, a hunting shirt, a pair of shoe buckles, and a blanket. Ample clothing, says the reader; and ample clothing, say I. But what did we ever realize of all this ample store—why, perhaps a coat (we generally did get that) and one or two shirts, the same of shoes and stockings, and, indeed, the same may be said of every other article of clothing—a few dribbled out in a regiment two or three times in a year, never getting a whole suit at a time, and all of the poorest quality; and blankets of thin baize [woolen material], thin enough to have straws shot through without discommoding the threads. How often have I had to lie whole stormy, cold nights in a wood, on a field, or a bleak hill with such blankets and other clothing like them, with nothing but the canopy of the heavens to cover me. All this too in the heart of winter when a New England farmer, if his cattle had been in my situation, would not have slept a wink from sheer anxiety for them. And if I stepped into a house to warm me when passing, wet to the skin and almost dead with cold, hunger, and fatigue, what scornful looks and hard words have I experienced.

Almost every one has heard of the soldiers of the Revolution being tracked by the blood of their feet on the frozen ground. This is literally true; and the thousandth part of their sufferings has not, nor ever will be told. That the country was young and poor at that time, I am willing to allow; but young people are generally modest, especially females. Now, I think the country (although of the feminine gender, for we say 'she' and 'her' of it) showed but little modesty at the time alluded to, for she appeared to think her soldiers had no private parts; for on our march from the Valley Forge, through the Jerseys, and at the boasted Battle of Monmouth, a fourth part of the troops had not a scrip of anything but their ragged shirt flaps to cover their nakedness, and were obliged to remain so long after. I had picked up a few articles of light clothing during the past winter, while among the Pennsylvania farmers, or I should have been in the same predicament. "Rub and go" was always the Revolutionary soldier's motto.

As to provision of victuals, I have said a great deal already, but 10 times as much might be said and not get to the end of the chapter. When we engaged in the service we were promised the following articles for a ration: One pound of good and wholesome fresh or salt beef, or three fourths of a pound of good salt pork, a pound of good flour, soft or hard bread, a quart of salt to every hundred pounds of fresh beef, a quart of

vinegar to a hundred rations, a gill of rum, brandy, or whiskey per day, some little soap and candles, I have forgot how much, for I had so little of these two articles that I never knew the quantity. And as to the article of vinegar, I do not recollect of ever having any except a spoonful at the famous rice and vinegar thanksgiving in Pennsylvania in the year 1777.

But we never received what was allowed us. Oftentimes have I gone one, two, three, and even four days without a morsel, unless the fields or forests might chance to afford enough to prevent absolute starvation. Often when I have picked the last grain from the bones of my scanty morsel, have I ate the very bones, as much of them as possibly could be eaten, and then have had to perform some hard and fatiguing duty when my stomach has been as craving as it was before I had eaten anything at all. . . . When General Washington told Congress, "The soldiers eat every kind of horse fodder but hay," he might have gone a little farther and told them that they eat considerable hog's fodder and not a trifle of dog's, when they could get it to eat.

We were also promised six dollars and two thirds a month, to be paid us monthly, and how did we fare in this particular? Why, as we did in every other. I received the six dollars and two thirds, till (if I remember rightly) the month of August, 1777, when paying ceased. And what was six dollars and sixty-seven cents of this "Continental currency," as it was called, worth? It was scarcely enough to procure a man a dinner. Government was ashamed to tantalize the soldiers any longer with such trash, and wisely gave it up for its own credit. I received one month's pay in specie while on the march to Virginia, in the year 1781, and except that I never received any pay worth the name while I belonged to the army.⁵ Had I been paid as I was promised to be at my engaging in the service, I needed not to have suffered as I did, nor would I have done it; there was enough in the country, and money would have procured it if I had had it. It is provoking to think of it. The country was rigorous in exacting my compliance to *my* engagements to a punctilio, but equally careless in performing her contracts with me; and why so? One reason was because she had all the power in her own hands, and I had none. Such things ought not to be.

⁵When Martin first enlisted in 1776, he received the standard bounty of £3 plus a cash allotment to pay for his military accoutrements, including his musket. His monthly wages for 1776 were finally forthcoming in August 1777. At this juncture, Continental dollars were still holding some of their face value, but their plunge toward worthlessness was already well under way. During the spring of 1779 the Connecticut Assembly, in response to the near mutiny in January of the states's two Continental brigades, came up with funds to help offset arrearages in back pay. These paper notes were collapsing in value even as the soldiers received them. Whether Martin ever collected any other wages due him, except for his month's payment in specie, remains unclear. If he and his comrades did, such payments would have been in essentially worthless paper currency anyway.

The poor soldiers had hardships enough to endure without having to starve; the least that could be done was to give them something to eat. "The laborer is worthy of his meat" at least, and he ought to have it for his employer's interest, if nothing more. But as I said, there were other hardships to grapple with. How many times have I had to lie down like a dumb animal in the field and bear "the pelting of the pitiless storm," cruel enough in warm weather, but how much more so in the heart of winter. Could I have had the benefit of a little fire, it would have been deemed a luxury. But when snow or rain would fall so heavy that it was impossible to keep a spark of fire alive, to have to weather out a long, wet, cold, tedious night in the depth of winter with scarcely clothes enough to keep one from freezing instantly, how discouraging it must be I leave to my reader to judge.

It is fatiguing, almost beyond belief, to those that never experienced it, to be obliged to march 24 to 48 hours (as very many times I have had to) and often more, night and day without rest or sleep, wishing and hoping that some wood or village I could see ahead might prove a short resting place, when, alas, I came to it almost tired off my legs, it proved no resting place for me. How often have I envied the very swine their happiness, when I have heard them quarreling in their warm dry sties, when I was wet to the skin and wished in vain for that indulgence. And even in dry, warm weather, I have often been so beat out with long and tedious marching that I have fallen asleep while walking the road, and not been sensible of it till I have jostled against someone in the same situation; and when permitted to stop and have the superlative happiness to roll myself in my blanket and drop down on the ground in the bushes, briars, thorns, or thistles, and get an hour or two's sleep, O! how exhilarating.

Fighting the enemy is the great scarecrow to people unacquainted with the duties of an army. To see the fire and smoke, to hear the din of cannon and musketry and the whistling of shot; they cannot bear the sight or hearing of this. They would like the service in an army tolerably well but for the fighting part of it. I never was killed in the army; I never was wounded but once; I never was a prisoner with the enemy; but I have seen many that have undergone all these; and I have many times run the risk of all of them myself. But, reader, believe me, for I tell a solemn truth, that I have felt more anxiety, undergone more fatigue and hardships, suffered more every way, in performing one of those tedious marches than ever I did in fighting the hottest battle I was ever engaged in, with the anticipation of all the other calamities I have mentioned added to it.

It has been said by some that ought to have been better employed that the Revolutionary army was needless; that the militia were competent for all that the crisis required. That there was then and now is in the militia as brave and as good men as were ever in any army since the cre-

ation, I am ready and willing to allow, but there are many among them too, I hope the citizen soldiers will be as ready to allow, who are not so good as regulars, and I affirm that the militia would not have answered so well as standing troops for the following reason among many others. They would not have endured the sufferings the army did; they would have considered themselves (as in reality they were and are) free citizens, not bound by any cords that were not of their own manufacturing, and when the hardships of fatigue, starvation, cold, and nakedness, which I have just mentioned, begun to seize upon them in such awful array as they did on us, they would have instantly quitted the service in disgust, and who would blame them? I am sure I could hardly find it in my heart to do it.

That the militia did good and great service in that war, as well as in the last, on particular occasions, I well know, for I have fought by their side, but still I insist that they would not have answered the end so well as regular soldiers, unless they were very different people from what I believe and know them to be, as well as I wish to know. Upon every exigency they would have been to be collected, and what would the enemy have been doing in the meantime? The regulars were there, and there obliged to be; we could not go away when we pleased without exposing ourselves to military punishment; and we had trouble enough to undergo without that.

It was likewise said at that time that the army was idle, did nothing but lounge about from one station to another, eating the country's bread and wearing her clothing without rendering her any essential service (and I wonder they did not add spending the country's money, too, it would have been quite as consistent as the other charges). You ought to drive on, said they, you are competent for the business; rid the country at once of her invaders. Poor simple souls! It was very easy for them to build castles in the air, but they had not felt the difficulty of making them stand there. It was easier with them taking whole armies in a warm room and by a good fire than enduring the hardships of one cold winter's night upon a bleak hill without clothing or victuals.

If the Revolutionary army was really such an useless appendage to the cause, such a nuisance as it was then and has since been said to be, why was it not broken up at once; why were we not sent off home and obliged to maintain ourselves? Surely it would have been as well for us soldiers, and, according to the reckoning of those wiseacres, it would have been *much* better for the country to have done it than for us to have been eating so much provisions, and wearing out so much clothing, when our services were worse than useless. We could have made as good militia men as though we had never seen an army at all. We should, in case we had been discharged from the army, have saved the country a world of

expense, as they said; and I say, we should have saved ourselves a world of trouble in having our constitutions broken down and our joints dislocated by trotting after Bellona's car.⁶

But the poor old decrepit soldiers, after all that has been said to discourage them, have found friends in the community, and I trust there are many, very many, that are sensible of the usefulness of that suffering army, although perhaps all their voices have not been so loud in its praise as the voice of slander has been against it. President Monroe was the first of all our presidents, except President Washington, who ever uttered a syllable in the "old soldiers'" favor. President Washington urged the country to do something for them and not to forget their hard services, but President Monroe⁷ told them how to act; he had been a soldier himself in the darkest period of the war, that point of it that emphatically "tried men's souls," was wounded, and knew what soldiers suffered. His good intentions being seconded by some Revolutionary officers then in Congress, brought about a system by which, aided by our present worthy Vice President,⁸ then Secretary at War, heaven bless him, many of the poor men who had spent their youthful, and, consequently, their best days in the hard service of their country, have been enabled to eke out the fag end of their lives a little too high for the groveling hand of envy or the long arm of poverty to reach.

Many murmur now at the apparent good fortune of the poor sol-

⁶Bellona was the goddess of war in Roman mythology. The car refers to Bellona's chariot.

⁷James Monroe of Virginia, the nation's fifth president (1817-25), had initially enlisted as a company-grade officer in Virginia's 3rd regiment during September 1775. He was wounded at Trenton but went on to fight in several major battles before retiring from the service in November 1778. He became a law student of Thomas Jefferson and later held a number of prominent diplomatic and cabinet-level posts before acceding to the presidency. Monroe championed the adoption of pension legislation to assist aging, poverty-stricken veterans, and he gladly signed the Revolutionary War Pension Act of 1818 into law. To be eligible, claimants had to have served in the Continental army for at least nine months, and they also had to demonstrate their straitened financial circumstances. Rank-and-file soldiers were to receive \$96 and officers \$240 per year.

In Monroe's mind the country owed such compensation to soldiers and officers who had suffered and endured so much in the making of the nation. Martin certainly thought so. He quickly applied for a pension, declaring that he had virtually nothing in the way of an estate or income. Martin began receiving payments of \$8 a month in April 1818. From his perspective he was at last obtaining the pay so long due him as a Continental soldier.

⁸John C. Calhoun of South Carolina was Vice President under Andrew Jackson in 1830, the year in which Martin's narrative first appeared in print. Calhoun earlier had served as Secretary of War (1817-25) in the cabinet of James Monroe. An ardent nationalist at this time, he was a firm supporter of the Pension Act of 1818, and he also staunchly advocated a central role for professionally-trained soldiers, as opposed to militia, in providing for the nation's defense. Calhoun's position particularly appealed to Martin, who felt indignation whenever friends and neighbors claimed that the Revolution could have been won by militia troops alone. Calhoun in his subsequent political career became the South's leading proponent of states' rights in defense of the institution of slavery.

diers. Many I have myself seen, vile enough to say that they never deserved such favor from the country. The only wish I would bestow upon such hardhearted wretches is, that they might be compelled to go through just such sufferings and privations as that army did; and then if they did not sing a different tune, I should miss my guess.

But I really hope these people will not go beside themselves. Those men whom they wish to die on a dunghill, men who if they had not ventured their lives in battle and faced poverty, disease, and death for their country to gain and maintain that Independence and liberty, in the sunny beams of which they, like reptiles, are basking, they would, many or the most of them, be this moment in as much need of help and succor as ever the most indigent soldier was before he experienced his country's beneficence.

The soldiers consider it cruel to be thus vilified, and it is cruel as the grave to any man, when he knows his own rectitude of conduct, to have his hard services not only debased and underrated, but scandalized and vilified. But the Revolutionary soldiers are not the only people that endure obloquy; others as meritorious and perhaps more deserving than they are forced to submit to ungenerous treatment.

But if the old Revolutionary Pensioners are really an eyesore, a grief of mind, to any man or set of men (and I know they are), let me tell them that if they will exercise a very little patience, a few years longer will put all of them beyond the power of troubling them, for they will soon be "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

And now I think it is time to draw to a close (and so say I, says the reader). In truth, when I began this narrative, I thought a very few pages would contain it, but as occurrences returned to my memory and one thing brought another to mind I could not stop, for as soon as I had let one thought through my mind, another would step up and ask for admittance. And now, dear reader, if any such should be found, I will come to a close and trespass upon your time no longer. . . . But if you have been really desirous to hear a part, and a part only of the hardships of some of that army that achieved our Independence, I can say I am sorry you have not had an abler pen than mine to give you the requisite information.

To conclude. Whoever has the patience to follow me to the end of this rhapsody, I will confess that I think he must have almost as great a share of perseverance in reading it as I had to go through the hardships and dangers it records. And now, kind reader, I bid you a cordial and long farewell.

*Through much fatigue and many dangers past,
The warworn soldier's braved his way at last.*