



Detail of *Portrait of Col. Carl Aemil Ulrich von Donop*

Portrait Source: Wikimedia Commons

42nd Highlanders Assigned to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop's Brigade New Jersey, Dec. 13 – 31, 1776

Draft Letter from Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sir William Howe to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop Assigning the 42nd Regt. to His Brigade, Trenton, Dec. 13, 1776

Sir

You are to command the Troops to be Canton'd at Trenton, Burdenton & Burlington, to report & receive orders from M.G. [Maj. Gen. James] Grant at Brunswick & to communicate with B.G. [Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander] Lesslie at Prince Town.

A Batt. of Hessian Grenadiers, fifty Yagers ~~with~~ the 42nd Reg^t. & twenty Dragoons to be stationed at Trenton with two Hessian & two British three Pounders. The Dragoons to be relieved once a Week from Prince Town.

Three Batts. of Hessian Grenadiers, a Detach^{mt}. of Yagers with six Hessian three Pounders & if you please two British eighteen Pounders ~~to be posted~~ to take Post at Burdenton.

The Brigade of [Col. Johann von] Rhall with six Hessian three Pounders & four British Eighteen Pounders to ~~garrison~~ form the Garrison of Burlington. You will fix such other Posts as shall appear to be necessary to secure the Communication of your Cantonment.

~~You will~~ Order the Farmers to give ~~in~~ exact Lists of their Cattle, Grain & Forrage out of which You will please to form Magazines for subsisting the Troops for which Capt. [Thomas] Gamble A.D.Q.M. [Asst. Dep. Quarter Master] Gen^l. will give receipts, who is to remain under your Orders. During the Winter, & what [words crossed out, illegible] will be paid for by the Commissary Gen^l. you ~~will~~ of course will take care that the Issues do not exceed the Rations allowed to the Troops.

The Troops to supply themselves with Fire wood & Candles for which they will receive an allowance from the Barrack M^r. [Master] Gen^l. axes wedges & Cross Cut Saws shall be sent from Brunswick, who will in like manner make an allowance for Barrack Utencills if they are not delivered.

Any Quantity of Salt Provision or Flour exceeding what may be thought necessary for the use of a Private Family is to be considered as a Rebel Store, be seized for the Crown & issued to the Troops as a saving to the Public.

Rum & Salt shall be sent immediately for the Troops under your Command. But if a Quantity of Both or of either was to be found in your Neighbourhood acquaint M.G. Grant of it immediately to save the Trouble & Expence of Carriage.

Be so good as to reduce the number of your Officers Horses as much as you can & ~~and~~ dismiss ~~your~~ as many of the Waggon belonging to the different Regts. as possible. You can secure waggons in the Country in case of a march, & can hire them occasionally when you have use for them, by giving Receipts for the number of Days they are employed for which the Farmers will be paid by the Q. Mr. Gen^l.

Artillery in the Jerseys

14 Six [six-pounders]
2 Howitzers

Distribution

two 3s & two Sixes	Burlington
two 3s	Maidenhead
Four Sixes	Princetown
Two 3s	Kingstown
Six Sixes & 2 Hows.	Brunswick
Two Sixes	Millstone
Two 3s	Newark – from 33 rd Regt.

Source: Unsigned, undated draft, c-December, 1776 in the *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle*, Scotland; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, Miscellany, 1776. Transcribed by Todd Braisted. The letter was also published in *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 316-317.

General Order Congratulating Lt. Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis and His Troops, Including the 42nd Highlanders, for the Successful Pursuit of the Rebel Army From Fort Lee to the Delaware River and Ordering the Regiments into Winter Quarters, New Jersey, Dec. 14, 1776

Head Quarters Dec. 14th 1776.

The Campaign having closed with the Pursuit of the Enemies' Army near, ninety Miles, by Lieut.-Gen. [Charles Earl] Cornwallis's Corps, much to the Honour of his Lordship and the Officers and Soldiers under his Command, The Approach of Winter putting a Stop to any further Progress, the Troops will immediately march into Quarters and hold themselves in Readiness to assemble on the shortest Notice.

The Commander-in-Chief calls upon the Commanding Officers of Corps to exert themselves in preserving the greatest Regularity and strictest Discipline in their respective Quarters, particularly attending to the Protection of the Inhabitants and their Property in their several Districts.

Source: "The Kemble Papers: Vol. I, 1773-1789 in *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1883*, Publication Fund Series, Printed for the Society, New York, 1884, Google Books.



Detail from "Plan of the operations of General Washington, against the Kings troops in New Jersey, from the 26th, of December, 1776, to the 3d. January 1777," by William Faden, 1777

Map Source and Note: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Div.
Trenton is located about 7-8 miles north on the Delaware River.

**Letter from Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander Leslie Reports
42nd Regt. Sent to Blackhorse (now Columbus), New Jersey, Dec. 14-16, 1776**

Bordentown 16th day December 1776

Sir: —

In accordance with the orders of His Excellency, the General-in-Chief I am instructed to communicate with you from time to time. You know without doubt already that I have been assigned to Trenton, Bordentown and Burlington for winter quarters, with that of [Hessian] Colonel [Johann] Rall and the 42^d British Regiment. On the 14th inst. I commenced the march to this place leaving the brigade of Rall with twenty dragoons and fifty Yagers at Trenton. I made a post at Bordentown with the two batteries of von Linsingen and von Minnigerode, pushing the 42^d Regiment with the battalion of von Block on to Black Horse. I am waiting with impatience the arrival of the [Hessian] Grenadier Battalion Koehler which will bring with them six eighteen pounders, after which I will take possession of Burlington, where there are according to reports eight or ten [rebel cannon] gondolas. We will see what resistance they will make to our heavy artillery. Two boats had anchored on the river two miles above me. I have taken the two six pounders of the 42^d regiment and I was constructing two batteries to place them in when the boats hastily left their anchorage last evening. Some one informed me yesterday that a party of rebels were behind me pillaging the loyalists and not being able to pass Black Horse they marched to Mount Holly and Moorestown to join [Rebel] General [Israel] Putnam, who must be between Hopping's and Cooper's Creek with 3000 men. I sent out a detachment of 100 men who will push on to Mount Holly to find out the truth of all reports and to reconnoiter the country on that side. The bearer of

this letter is one of my Quarter Masters whom I send to New York with some wagons and to get money and clothing for my men. I beg you, Sir, to furnish an escort to New Brunswick.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Yours etc.

Donop

To General Leslie, Princeton.

P. S. The patrol above mentioned has just returned not having seen anything of the enemy. Near the bridge between Mount Holly and Moorestown they found a quantity of cannon ball, iron etc., which they threw into the water. According to the opinion of the inhabitants, General Putnam must be at Cooper's Creek with 4000 men and must be busy in transporting stores. You know better than I if the news is true that Washington has crossed the Delaware at Vessel's Ferry- with a large corps to join the corps of Lee.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 318-319.



Portrait of Lt. Gen. Johann Ewald, Danish Army, 1835, C. A. Jensen, after a drawing by H. J. Aldenrath

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons

Hessian Jäger Capt. Johann Ewald's Account of British Quarters near Bordentown, New Jersey, Dec. 14 and 19, 1776

... on the 14th... [Hessian] Colonel [Carl von] Donop took up his quarters in Bordentown together with the Grenadier Battalion Minnigerode. The Battalion von Linsing was billeted on the plantation along the road from Bordentown to Crosswicks. [Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Stirling occupied Black Horse with the 42^d Scottish regiment and the hessian grenadier Battalion Block, which covered the left flank of the army...

[Lt. Gen. Charles] Lord Cornwallis took up his quarters at Brunswick with his brigade, the [Maj. Gen. James] Grant Brigade, and the [1st and 2nd Bns.] English grenadiers. [Brig.] General [Alexander] Leslie with his brigade received quarters at Princetown, the [1st and 2nd Bns.] light infantry occupied Maidenhead and Kingston, and the regiment of dragoons was distributed in and around Princetown.

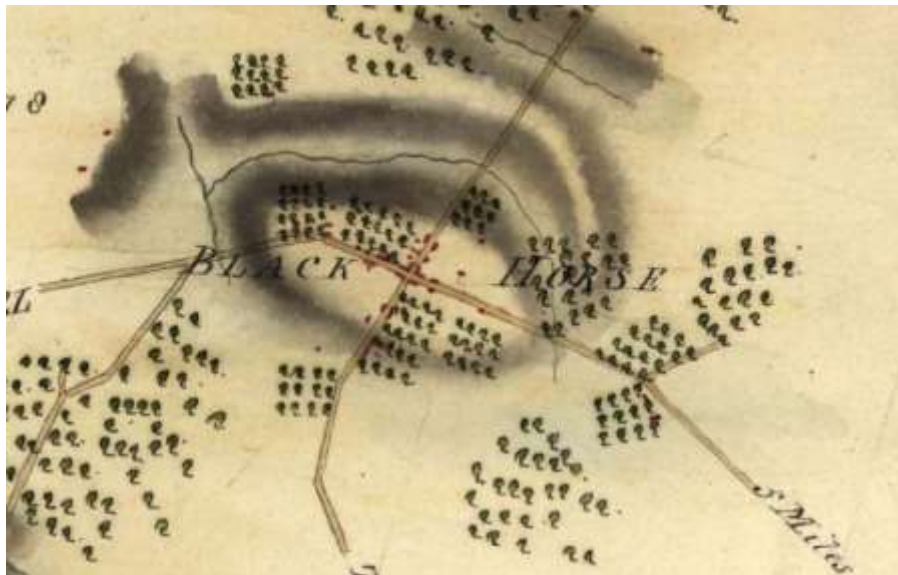
On the 19th Colonel Donop ordered me to accompany him to Black Horse to inspect the cordon of the left wing. The colonel took along Captain [Friedrich Henrich] Lorey with twelve mounted jägers, and officer and thirty Scots, and Colonel Stirling to reconnoiter the area of Mount Holly. We arrived at the village unhindered, where we obtained information that [Rebel] Colonel [Samuel] Griffin with two thousand men was stationed at Eayrestown [Ayrstown], seven miles from Mount Holly. At eight o'clock in the evening we arrived back at Bordentown.

Source and Note: *Diary of the American War, A Hessian Journal, Captain Johann Ewald, Field Jäger Corps*, Trans. and Ed. Justin P. Tustin, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1979, pp. 31-34. The 3rd Brit. Gren. Bn. with the 42nd Gren. Co. was on the Rhode Island expedition.

Journal of Lt. Henry Stirke (10th Lt. Inf. Co.) Records the 1st Lt. Infantry Battalion, Including Capt. Hon. George Mackenzie's 42nd Lt. Inf. Co., Taking up Winter Quarters, Pennington and Princeton, New Jersey, Dec. 14 – 15, 1776

14th We march'd to Pennytown. All the army now in motion, going into Winter Quarters...
15th The 1st and 2^d Battalions of Light Infantry, arriv'd at Prince Town; appointed for their Winter Quarters....

Source and Note: "A British Officer's Revolutionary War Journal, 1776 – 1778," Ed. S. Sydney Bradford in *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Baltimore, June 1961, p. 166. Capt. Charles Graham's 42nd Grenadier Company was still in Rhode Island at this time.



Black Horse, 1778, by John Hills

Map Source: *Sketch of Haddonfield, March 1778. Sketch of the roads from Pennyhill to Black Horse through Mount Holly*, Lib. of Congress, Geography and Map Div.

Memorial to Lt. Col. Thomas Stirling, 42nd Regt., Describing Attachment to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop's Brigade and March to Black Horse (now Columbus), New Jersey, dated approximately Dec. 16, 1776

Memorial

L^t Col: Stirling 42^d Reg^t ...

the 16th Dec^r they marched to Black Horse w^t [Hessian Grenadier] Battⁿ Block an open valley five mile f^m Bordenton 7 from Burlington and 8 from Mount Holly which lyes on Rancokas Creek 7 Miles up f^m where it falls in to Delaware here we were to remain untill 4 Iron 18 p^{ts} were to be brought up f^m South Amboy w^t [with] which a battery was to be formed at Burlington to beat off 13 row Gallies w^t on 24 p^r in each which lay in Delaware opposite to the town which lyes upon a Dead flat & was formerly surrounded by the tide but two banks being thrown up keeps it out...

Source: "Short account of the movements and engagements of the two battalions of the 42nd from 22nd August to 16th December 1776" BWRA 0398 Stirling Papers /5, Archives, Regimental Headquarters, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) Balhousie Castle.

**Excerpt of Report from Col. Carl von Donop to Maj. Gen. James Grant
that the 42nd Regt. and a Battalion of Hessian Grenadiers were Ordered to
Black Horse (now Columbus), New Jersey, Dec. 16, 1776**

Bordentown, 16th of Dec. 1776.

Sir:

Hearing that the heavy artillery is coming I have posted myself here with the [Hessian] battalions von Linsingen and von Minnigerode, having ordered the 42^d Regiment and the von Block [Hessian Grenadier] Battalion to Black Horse and its neighborhood. From there the chasseurs will make a patrol to Mount Holly and Burlington. It will soon appear what resistance these marauders will make when the six heavy pieces of artillery are discharged at them, for they will destroy all before them. For this purpose I have had the [42nd] regiment of [Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Sterling and the battalion von Block to make eight hundred fascines and I will send them along with the artillery so that I can construct a battery in one night. Two vessels have gone up above me and have anchored a little less than two miles above here. I am now engaged in making two batteries here from which to attack them. For this work I have taken the two six pounders of Lieutenant Colonel Sterling's regiment until two eighteen pounders arrive to take their place. People have warned me that there is a rebel party of 300 mounted men wandering around here and pillaging the Tories and, because they cannot pass Black Horse, they will return by Mount Holly and Moorestown, passing between Hoppin's and Cooper's Creeks where [rebel Maj.] General [Israel] Putnam is said to have placed an effective force of 3000 men. I will detach today to oppose them 200 men with a few horse which will push toward Mount Holly and get the exact truth of this report. They will reconnoitre the country on this side. I am not very well and but for that I would go myself...

And to believe me, with much esteem, Sir,

Your most humble and most ob't ser't,

C. Donop.

P. S. As the houses here are built very poorly and as the greater part of the inhabitants have carried away their beds it will be necessary for the men to lie on straw beds upon the ground, otherwise they will perish with the cold.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 320-321.

**Letter from Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to Maj. Gen. James Grant
Reporting the Situation in His Brigade Area, Bordentown, Dec. 18, 1776**

Sir:

Bordentown, December 18, 1776.

I have this moment received your letter of the 17th instant. Since I had the honour to advise you that there were 4000 of the enemy at Cooper's Creek the best report I can obtain reduces the number to 500. I do not care to take the trouble to march with all my force for these gentlemen will not wait for me. I believe however that it would be a good thing to establish a post at Mount Holly and to push on from there, and place a guard at the bridge between that place and Moorestown. From thence we could send out patrols to Rancocas Creek and then with troops around Busseltown. I could send patrols to Burlington. You will see by the map which I send you that I will then be able to get information of the enemy on both my flanks and at the same time deprive them of the plan of making a descent from Rancocas Creek. There is another report concerning the rebels which I get from Mr. Smith, and a messenger just from the General-in-Chief reports the same thing from Philadelphia. This man informs me that they are hard at work fortifying the city but a man residing there has assured me that from the way they are doing it the

work will not be finished in two years. Yesterday he passed Cooper's Creek where there are two battalions, one of which was marching toward Haddonfield and the other stationed there had destroyed the bridge over the creek. At this place on the 16th instant Captain [Friedrich Heinrich von] Loray of my [Jäger] chasseurs claims to have thrown into the water a quantity of cannon balls. There is more news from [Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Sterling [42nd Regt.] which reached me yesterday. I have also the honor to send you a letter which I took from Captain Henry a rebel officer. Lieutenant Delahunty is quartered in a house in the country two miles from here because his wife is sick. I cannot tell you then, my General, what he has been able to find out but as he will pass here to-morrow I will find out everything. I have just sent back the above mentioned rebel officer, he assuring me that he will leave the army as soon as we get in possession of Philadelphia and not serve again with the troops of Pennsylvania. I believe you have judged correctly of the movements of the enemy at Vessel's Ferry, but the six dragoons, of whom five have returned met 100 rebels, who while retreating fired rapidly on them, killed a horse, and wounded a dragoon. [Hessian] Colonel [Johann] Rall expects to make a search for them today with a detachment of yagers and dragoons. You will oblige me, my General, to give me from time to time some of the information you receive.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your obt. ser't.

Donop

N. B. The messenger who brought me the news from Philadelphia, which I had the honor to send you has told me that he was sent by order of General [Sir William] Howe to take a letter to a resident of Philadelphia. This resident had requested him to receive his reply by word of mouth, that he would do everything in his power to organize a fleet of war vessels in the Delaware river. The messenger also states that he had been promised a gratuitous gift of a commission. I desire to know from you how much ought to be given him. Also, you will oblige me, General, to let me know if I may send some men into the country to give me the news of the enemy and if I will be repaid the money which I will be obliged to give them. There are two of them on their way to Cooper's Creek and Gloucester from whom I expect news today or tomorrow.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 324-326.



Detail of Mezzotint of Gen. Sir William Howe, Nov. 1777, by Richard Purcell

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons, from the *Anne S. K. Brown Military History Collection*, Brown Univ.

Excerpt of a Letter No. 36 from Gen. Sir William Howe, Commander-in-Chief, North America, to Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the American Department, Reporting the Exchange of 42nd Regt. Officers, Dec. 18, 1776

N^o 36

New York 18th Decem^r 1776

My Lord...

The Exchange of Prisoners by Agreement with M^r [George] Washington, has not been so generally complied with, as I had reason to expect, But the Officers and Men of the 7th & 26th Reg^{ts} are mostly returned, and several of those of the 42^d [Capt. John Smith and Lt. Robert Franklin] & 71st, Lieutenant Colonel [Archibald] Campbell with most of the Officers and Men taken with him are still detained, which may make it necessary for me to send an Officer purposely to remonstrate upon the Injustice of this Delay.

I have the Honor to be Your Lordship's
most faithful, and most Obedient Servant

W. Howe

Right Honb^{le} Lord George Germain
&^c &^c &^c

Source and Note: *Records of the British Colonial Office Class 5, Part 5: The American Revolution, 1772-1784*, Ed. Randolph Boehm, University Publications Inc., Frederick, MD, 1972, pp. 14-15 from TNA, *Colonial Office, Sec. of State, Military Dispatches, 1776-1777* at CO 5/94. Capt. Smith and Lt. Franklin were captured sailing to America on the transport *Oxford*.

Excerpts of Letter No. 38 (Separate) from Gen. Sir William Howe, Commander-in-Chief, North America, to Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the American Department, Describing Plans for the 1777 Campaign, Dec. 20, 1776

New York 20 December, 1776

My Lord, in my separate letter by the [16-gun sloop *HMS*] Tamar, No. 32 I Mentioned my ideas for the several operations in the course of the ensuing campaign and proposed a defensive Corps in Jersey for the early part of the year; but the opinions of people being much changed in Pennsylvania and their minds in general from the late progress of the Army disposed to peace, in which sentiment they would be confirmed by our getting possession of Philadelphia, I am from this consideration fully persuaded the principal Army should act offensively on that side where the Enemy's chief strength will certainly be collected.

By this change the offensive plan towards Boston must be deferred, until the proposed reinforcements arrive from Europe, that there may be a Corps to act defensively upon the lower part of Hudson's River to cover Jersey on that side as well as to facilitate in some degree the approach of the Army from Canada.

The arrangement I would humbly propose for the execution of this plan is that only 2000 Men should remain at Rhode Island with a proper number of ships, 4000 Men on York Island and posts adjacent, and 3000 on Hudson's River; which will leave about 10,000 Men for Pennsylvania, concluding on a rough computation that the extent of our strength at the opening of the campaign will not exceed 19,000 Men.

But as these operations, perhaps of the last importance to the nation, may depend upon the exigencies of the moment, I request your Lordship to point out any general plans that may be thought most advisable both with respect to the present strength of the Army and on the event of reinforcements, remarking the periods of time in which these troops may be expected...

[Rebel Maj.] General [Charles] Lee, being considered in the light of a deserter, is kept a close prisoner but I do not bring him to trial as a doubt has arose whether by a public resignation of his half-pay prior to his entry into the rebel Army he is still amenable to the military law as a deserter, upon which point I shall wait for information; and if the decision should be for trial upon this ground, I beg to have

the judges' opinions to lay before the court. Deserters are excluded in my agreement with the Enemy for the exchange of prisoners. ..

Signed.

Source: *Documents of the American Revolution, Vol. XII, Transcripts 1776*, pp. 268-269 from TNA, *Colonial Office: Sec. of State, Military Dispatches* at CO5/94, f. 20.

Extract of Letter from Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sir William Howe to Maj. Gen. James Grant, Reporting on the Overall Army Situation, New York, Dec. 20, 1776

N. York Dec^r. 20th
friday

Thanks to you my Dear General for y^r. letter, Reports & papers of yesterday, rec^d. here this morning.

The Grend^r. Hessⁿ. battⁿ. would have embarked this morning had not y^e badness of weather prevented it, but I hope they may proceed with y^e Cannon tomorrow to Amboy & here they will remain for your orders for y^e disembarkation at S. Amboy when you hear [Col. Carl von] Donop is ready to meet them, which should [rebel Gen. Israel] Putnam be on this side y^e Delaware, may be a necessary precaution for their safe arrival at Burlington. I wish Donop may march against Putnam, being confident he would rout him if he could catch him.

I much approve of [Lt. Col. Charles] Mawhoods situation & y^e 40th & as soon as you can get a Provincial Corps of sufficient strength, you will place them at Boundbrook, or in y^e neighbourhood of it as you may judge most expedient.

I imagine y^e reason you have not heard of [Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander] Leslie is, that I hear he fell in with a Party of Rebels, y^e Day I left you, between Wethersfield & Springfield; That he had 4 or 5 men wounded & y^e Rebels lost considerably in proportion.

Waiting for men, he did not march from his post on y^e Amboy road, until noon. I found him there & hurried him off.

Rum, Salt &c. has been sent to Amboy some days past by [Lt. Col. and D.Q.M.G. William] Shirreffs report to me.

The utmost saving in y^e article of waggons must be made, & as you have very properly directed, there should be none kept in y^e Cantonments where they may be readily got in case of a sudden march, nor should there be more than is absolutely necessary in y^e Q. M. Gs. case, y^e Provincial waggons being sufficient. I should hope for y^e removal of Stores & provisions from Quarter to Quarter. Clark shall be sent to you immediately & you will give him such directions as you think proper respecting his train &c. I have ordered all y^e horses to be sent to you in his department & any of y^e waggons more in proportion to y^e horses.

The Implements for wood cutting are sent & you will be so good to order ye strictest care to be taken of them, & that the reg^{ts}. & Corps will be charged with what is not returned when called for...

Adieu my D^r. Gen^l.

Ever Y^{rs}.

W Howe

So Cold I can hardly hold y^e pen.

M.G. Grant

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland*; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776. Transcribed by Todd Braisted.

Extract of Letter from Rebel Financier Robert Morris to Silas Deane, Reporting that the Advancement of the 42nd Regt. and Hessians has Forced Congress to Move to Baltimore; Philadelphia, Dec. 20, 1776

Dear Sir

Philadelphia, Decemb^r 20th 1776

It is with a heavy heart I sit down to write to you, as the late unfortunate turn of American Affairs, leaves no room for joy in the mind of any true friend of our Country. – I am now the only member of Congress left in this City...

In this perplexing situation of things Congress were informed this day sev[']- night [a week ago] that an advanced Party of Hessians & Highlanders had taken Possession of Burlington; that they were pushing for Coopers Ferry (opposite this City) & that they had the means of Crossing it: There were no Troops to oppose them, our whole force both by Land & water, being above; it was therefore deemed unsafe for Congress to remain here, and it was absolutely necessary that they should be in a place of Safety where they could deliberate freely & without interruption : they therefore last Saturday adjourned to Baltimore, where they are now sitting...

Rob^t Morris

Source and Note: Stevens, ed. *Facsimilies*, No. 1397 in *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, Vol. Vol. 7, pp. 529-533. Morris is incorrect in that the 42nd Regt. did not occupy Burlington due to the expected exposure to the rebel row galleys.



Maj. Gen. James Grant of Ballindalloch

Portrait Source: Wikipedia

Excerpt of Letter from Maj. Gen. James Grant to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop Regarding Uncertain Schedule for Shipment of 18-pounder Cannon, Brunswick, Dec. 21, 1776.

Brunswick Dec. 21st 1776.

Sir...

I have not heard from the General so can say nothing about your 18 pounders which I am as anxious about as you can be.

[Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Sterling [42nd Regt.] not less so, in order to get into Quarters...

I have the honour to be with much esteem, Sir,

Your most obed[']t & most h[']ble servant
James Grant.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 329-330.

Report from Col. Carl von Donop to Hessian Commander Lt. Gen. Wilhelm von Knyphausen, on Rebel Attack on 42nd Highlanders' Guard Post, Rancocas (also Petticoat) Bridge, New Jersey,

Dec 21, 1776.

Quarters at Allentown December 27th 1776.

Sir:

...On the 21st instant I received word from Colonel [Henrich von] Block at Black Horse, where his [Hessian Grenadier] battalion was posted with the 42nd Regiment, that a party of rebels had marched into Mount Holly, and that as yet he had been unable to ascertain its real strength, some reporting it two and some four thousand strong. I informed Colonel Rall immediately and advised him to be on his guard because while I believed the enemy would attack me, they might also make a demonstration against him. I arranged my plans so that I felt safe in case of a surprise and the next morning went myself to Black Horse. I found the enemy had all except a few patrols moved out no farther than the meeting house this side of Mount Holly. Immediately on my return to Bordentown the alarm guns which I had ordered, were discharged at three o'clock in the afternoon by the two battalions at the Black Horse and by the [Grenadier] battalion von Linsingen lying between Black Horse and Bordentown. I informed Colonel [Johann] Rall immediately and returned instantly to Black Horse. I found my men all under arms because as soon as I had left four or five hundred rebels had attacked the picket at Rancocas bridge, but effected nothing but the withdrawal of the twelve Scottish soldiers and their sergeant Captain von Eshwege who was quartered with his company in a house near came to their assistance and a picket of grenadiers that was stationed just beyond him and the rebels did not move a step further... At the attack on Rancocas bridge Captain von Eshwege's company had two and the guard of Scotsmen two slightly wounded men...

I am Your Excellency's ser't &c

Donop.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 398-400.

Excerpt of Hessian Fusilier Regiment Von Lossberg Journal Describes Attack on 42nd Highlanders' Guard Post, Rancocas (also Petticoat) Bridge, New Jersey, Dec. 21, 1776

Mr. [Benjamin] Towne,

Enclosed you have a translation of part of a Hessian journal found at Trenton, in December last; you may depend upon its being genuine, and may insert it in your Evening Post, of you think proper.

DECEMBER, 13th, 1776.

WE marched to Trenton and joined out two regiments of Rall and Kniphausen, in order to take up a sort of winter quarters, which are wretched enough. This town consists of about one hundred houses, of which many are mean and little, and it is easy to conceive how ill it must accommodate three regiments. The inhabitants, like those at Princeton, are almost all fled, so that we occupy bare walls. The Delaware, which is here about two ells [36 inches] deep, separates us and the rebels...

The 23d [Col. Carl] Count Donop wrote to us from Bordentown, desiring us to be on our guard, for that he was certain of being attacked.

The 24th [21st] the enemy actually attacked our grenadiers last night, but without success, two [42nd] Highlanders and a grenadier were wounded. We have not slept one night in peace since we came to this place. The troops have lain on their arms every night, but they can endure it no longer...

Source and Notes: *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia), July 7, 1777, p. 394. This journal is likely referring to a 500-man force of rebels who attacked the 42nd Regt. guard post at Rancocas or Petticoat Bridge on Dec. 21.

Excerpt of Letter from Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to Maj. Gen. James Grant, Regarding Cancelled Attack on Rebel Force under Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam, Bordentown, Dec. 21, 1776

Bordentown, 21st of December 1776.

Sir:

Following my report of the 18th instant I have the honour to announce to you that although I had resolved to pay a visit to Mr. [Rebel Gen. Israel] Putnam at Cooper's Creek, I have now changed my mind after having gone out day before yesterday with Colonels [Justus Henrich] von Block and [Lt. Col. Thomas] Sterling [42nd Regt.] and a patrol to Mount Holly. I learned there that there was a large quantity of provisions on this side of the Delaware river. I concluded that at present it would not be worth while to weary the troops so much by making this march. The bridges have all been destroyed and the troops would have to make a long detour and march over marshy roads.

Donop.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 331.

Letter from Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to Maj. Gen. James Grant, With Attached Messages from Lt. Col. Thomas Stirling, 42nd Regt., Regarding Enemy Situation, Bordentown, Dec. 21, 1776

I await with impatience the arrival of the [Hessian] Koehler battalion with the heavy artillery, because I am not able to take possession of Burlington before they arrive, and as long as the galleys are in the neighbourhood. I had intended to post a battalion at Mount Holly but since I have myself seen the situation I have changed my mind not finding it proper to do so for the reason that dense woods are adjacent and there is high ground on the side of Moorestown and Haddonfield. But as soon as the Koehler battalion arrives I will post a considerable detachment there with some horse so that my left flank will be properly guarded. There is a great scarcity of houses to accommodate the troops in order that they may not be exposed to annoyance by the enemy. It would however be easy for the brigades to be quartered in the country behind me... At the same time I have the honor to send you the documents No. 1, 2 & 3 received from Colonel Sterling and you will see by No. 4 that the situation is changed again today. If the enemy approaches still nearer it will be of advantage to me. I will go as I had intended yesterday morning and attack them on the road, between Black Horse and Slabtown [Jacksonville, Burlington County], which is half way between Black Horse and Mount Holly. He cannot march by our right flank without encountering another body of men on the road from New Mill to Trenton. In this case if it is attempted I would be obliged to use the troops of Sterling [42nd Regt.], von Block and von Linsingen and keep open the communication with Rall and hold the drawbridge at Crosswicks Creek. Therefore I send you, my General, such directions as you may think proper to give to Lieutenant-Colonel Koehler in case he is marching with the heavy artillery on the road from South Amboy to Moorestown, for on this road he runs the risk of falling into the hands of the enemy.

(This letter was unsigned.)



Detail of Portrait of Maj. Gen. Sir Thomas Stirling after Benjamin West, said to be by Stirling's batman

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons, from the Black Watch Castle & Museum.

Lieutenant Colonel Sterling to Colonel von Donop.

I.

Sir:

A gentleman of Credit is just come who informs me that 1000 of the rebels were certainly at Mountholly and they were to be at one o'clock at Slabtown and that 2000 more were in the rear to support them which he heard came in to Mountholly this morning. He likewise heard that Washington proposed to send over 1000 or 1500 men at Donks Ferry, which is 3 miles from Burlington on this Side of Rancocas Creek, to make a conjunction with the above. Col. Block has ordered out 3 Companys that are at Hancock's bridge and Busseltown.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obed't servant
Tho^s. Sterling.

2 oclock Saturday [Dec. 21]

II.

Sir:

Colonel [Justus Henrich von] Block has just now communicated your Letter to me, wherein you do me the honour to know my opinion, the Rebels without Doubt mean to beat up our Quarters and drive us from hence from their approaching so near us. I am therefore of opinion, if it is necessary to keep their country for the winter that we should not wait to be attacked but so soon as we are certain, that a Body of them is at Slabtown, which I believe is now the Case, that you Sir with the Troops at Burdentown should come here and attack them before they have time to extend themselves so as to surround us or to form a Plan to drive us from hence. I am confident we are a Match for them were their numbers as strong as we hear (3000 men). I suppose Colonel [Johann Rall] Raille will send a Battalion to occupy Burdentown in your absense.

I have the honour to be Sir, Your most obed't h'ble servant
Thos. Sterling

Blackhorse

½ past 4 o'clock Saturday 21st Dec. 1776.

Intelligence by Mr. Haines, a Burlington County loyalist

II.

Bazilla Haines sent out to procure Intelligence on the 21st of Dec. 1776 arrived at Mount holly in the night and lodged in the Rebel camp there. Was informed they had only two Field pieces, which he thinks were three pounders as he perceived them at the church. That all the Troops were drawn up in his view, that he walked round them and thinks there were not above eight hundred, near one half Boys and all of them militia, a very few Pennsylvanians excepted. That he knew a great many of them, who came from Gloucester, Egg Harbour, Penns Neck and Cohansey. They were commanded by Col. [Samuel] Griffin.

Source and Note: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 333-337. The 42nd Regt. was assigned at this time to the command of Hessian Col. Carl Von Donop. Lt. Col. Justus Henrich von Block was the commander of a Hessian Grenadier Bn. assigned to Col. Donop's command.



Col. Samuel Griffin, by Gilbert Stewart

Picture Source: *Findagrave.com*, from Dr. Ferdinand Campbell Stewart, Philadelphia

**Report on Location of the British and Hessian Forces at Black Horse (now Columbus) from Rebel
Col. Samuel Griffin to Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam, Mount Holly, New Jersey, Dec. 21, 1776**

Head Quarters Mount Holly, }
21st Dec, 1776. }

Hon'ble Sir,

This will be presented you by Mr. _____ who has the Charge of a very notorious Enemy to America and a deserter of Maj. Meutzer's. I hope they will be properly secured, the former has been in my opinion, in the character of a Spy. We arrived at this Place yesterday about 3 o'clock.

The Enemy abandoned it about 10 in the Morn'g, to all appearance in great confusion, leaving their Beef, &c., & Fires burning; we made a forced march to come up with them, but the Scoundrels in this Country had give them information of our advancing.

They are now at the Black Horse, from this 7 Miles, we are not 600 strong, they at least 700, with 3 Field pieces, and from every acc^t expect a Reinforcement. I expect a Reinforcement this Even^g of 200 men; if they arrive, I hope to bring them to action To-morrow morn'g: this is a very dangerous Post, & cant be held without a large Reinforcement.

I am with the greatest respect,
Y^r mo. obed^t,
Sam^l. Griffin.

Directed.

To the Hon'ble Israel Putnam, Esq^r.,
Maj^r General in the Service of the American States.
Favored by Mr. Kennard.

Source and Note: *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. V, Ed. Samuel Hazard, Joseph Severns & Co., Philadelphia, 1853, Google Books, p. 127. The British troops at Black Horse included the 42nd Highlanders.



Lt. Gen. Hon. Alexander Leslie c-1787-1792

Portrait Source: *A Series of Original Portraits and character Etchings by the Late John Kay, Miniature Painter, Edinburgh*, Vol. II, Part I, Hugh Paton, Carver and Gilder, Edinburgh, 1838, Google Books, following p. 78.

Note from Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander Leslie to Hessian Col. Johann Rall Advising Him the 1st Lt. Infantry Battalion (With Capt. Hon George Mackenzie's 42nd Lt. Infantry Company) Will Move to Trenton, New Jersey, Dec. 22, 1776

Princeton one o'Clock morning.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Letter at 12 o'Clock last night. I've ordered the first L. Infantry to be at Trenton tomorrow at 10 o'clock and I take the 2^d L^t. Inf. and 300 men of the 2^d Brigade to Maidenhead to be in the Way if wanted.

I wish you success and am

Sir your most obed^t and h^{ble} servant
A. Leslie.

Today. I've mentioned the movement to [Maj.] General [James] Grant.

Source: *Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 339.



Col. Johann Rall, from Sketch by John Trumbull

Picture Source: Wikipedia, from *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, William S. Stryker, 1898

**Notification from Hessian Col. Johann Rall to Col. Carl von Donop of
Return of the 1st Lt. Infantry Battalion, Trenton, New Jersey, Dec. 22, 176**

Sir:

[Brig.] General [Hon. Alexander] Leslie sent to-day the First Battalion of Light Infantry to Trenton. He thought that a battalion of my command had marched from here. As there were no more attacks on this post I have sent the battalion back. A letter from [Maj.] General [James] Grant is enclosed. He has also written me and what makes me pleased is that he knows the strength of the enemy thirty miles off, better than we do here. He writes me the enemy are naked, hungry and very weak and that it is not necessary to place troops at Maiden head.

Rall.

Trenton 22nd of December 1776.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 70



Col. Joseph Reed

Portrait Source: *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed*, Vol. I, William B. Reed, Lindsay and Blakiston, Philadelphia, 1847, Google Books, frontispiece.

**Situation Report from Rebel Col. Joseph Reed to Gen. George Washington,
Bristol, Pennsylvania, Dec. 22, 1776**

Bristol 22^d December 1776.

Dear Sir...

[Rebel] Colonel [Samuel] Griffin has advanced up the Jerseys with six hundred men as far as Mount Holly, within seven miles of their headquarters at the Black Horse [now Columbus]. He has written over here for two pieces of artillery and two or three hundred volunteers, as he expected an attack very soon. The spirits of the militia here are very high; they are all for supporting him. Colonel [John] Cadwalader and the gentlemen here all agree, that they should be indulged. We can either give him a strong reinforcement, or make a separate attack; the latter bids fairest for producing the greatest and best efforts. It is therefore determined, to make all possible preparation today; and, no event happening to change our measures, the main body here will cross the river tomorrow morning and attack their post between this and the Black Horse, proceeding from thence either to the Black Horse or the Square, where about two hundred men are posted, as things shall turn out with Griffin. If they should not attack Griffin as he expects, it is probable both our parties may advance to the Black Horse, should success attend the intermediate attempt. If they should collect their force and march against Griffin, our attack will have the best efforts in preventing their sending troops on that errand, or breaking up their quarters and coming in upon their rear, which we must endeavour to do in order to free Griffin...

I am with the greatest respect and regard, dear sir

Your obedient and affectionate humble servant

Joseph Reed.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 339-340. Bristol is located on the Delaware River opposite to Burlington, New Jersey.

**Rebel Adj. Gen. Joseph Reed's Account of the Diversionary Skirmish
with the 42nd Regt. and Hessians, Mt. Holly, Dec. 22-23, 1776**

Here we ought to take a View of the Enemy at Borden Town & Mount Holly & also of our own Force at Philadelphia, Bristol & the lower Parts of New Jersey. Previous to the Attack of Trenton [rebel] Col. [Samuel] Griffin had pass'd over to New Jersey with 2 Companies of Virginia Troops & was join'd by the Jersey Militia so as to make his Numbers about 500. Gen^l [Israel] Puttnam was at Philad^a receiv^g

the Pennsylv. Militia & collecting what he could from the Counties of Gloucester Salem & Cumberl^d in West Jersey.

The Adj^t Gen^l of the Continental Army (Col. Reed) cross'd the River at Burlington & went at night to M^t Holly to see what Force Col. Griffin had & what Assistance the Attack then meditated on the Enemy's Cantonm^{ts} [at Trenton] could derive from him, but he found Col. Griffin in bad Health & was inform'd that his Force was too weak to be depended on either in Numbers or Discipline, that all he expected was to make a Division & draw the Notice of the Enemy before whom he proposed to retire if they should advance in any Force. The Adj. Gen^l returned that Night to Bristol & informed Gen. [George] Washington by Letter of these Circumstances. This Manoeuvre tho' perfectly accidental had a happy Effect as it drew off Count [Col. Carl von] Donop who then commanded at Bordentown with his whole Force to M^t Holly which he entered a few Days after & accordingly Col. Griffin retir'd skirmishing with the Enemy a few Miles with little loss on either side & bringing off his Artillery with him.

Source: "General Joseph Reed's Narrative of the Movements of the American Army in the Neighborhood of Trenton in the Winter of 1776-1777," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1884, Google Books, p. 392.

**Overall Army Situation Report from Commander-in-Chief Gen.
Sir William Howe to Maj. Gen. James Grant, New York, Dec. 23, 1776**

N. York Monday Dec^r. 23^d

My D^r. Sir

The enclosed being in answer to M^r. [rebel Maj. Gen. Charles] Lee's letter to my brother [Adm. Richard, Viscount Howe] you will be so good to direct y^e delivery of it _ and to let him know that all letters directed to L^d. Howe & to myself from him should be sealed & are not to be perused by y^e. off^r. upon duty w^t. him.

Nothing new_ [Rear Adm. Molyneux] Shuldham will sail in a few days_ We have no Stoves, but I have ordered barrack stores to make you as comfortable as y^e situation of y^e troops will admit_ Part of y^e 7th & y^e 26th embark tomorrow for Fort Lee in their way to their quarters _ about one hund^d men of y^e latter & 200 of y^e former – an other hundred will join y^e 26th as soon as armed. There will then be 200 men at each place_ Great complaints of y^e insufficiency of horses at Aquaquacence [Brig. Gen. Sir William] Erskine must settle his Bodies.

By y^r report I had heard of [Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander] Lesslies skirmish & pursuit of y^e Rascals, I was in hopes he had given them a trimming w^h might have kept them quiet for y^e winter_

Pray make my Comp^{ts}. to Lieu^t. [Joseph] Bunbury of y^e 49th Gren^{drs}. I have got a Fusee [light musket] here made after ye pattern of those in y^e Company, w^h I beg to present to him to replace that he lost at Boston, or will send it by any opportunity I may hear of_

Adieu my D^r. Gen^l. & honor me with y^e acceptance of a pair of warm gloves to wear over another pair.

Y^{rs} &c. *W Howe*

I have got Y^{rs}. of y^e 19th & wish no alteration to be made in y^e Princetown quarters, but as soon as we may get our Prisoners of y^e 71st, I shall be glad to advance a Corps to Springfield_

We must have only one Gen: Hospital for y^e present in Jersey & that at Amboy; Bruce will attend it as Physician.

I know not if M^r. Clark &c &c &c has yet joined you _but he has orders to attend at Brunswick_ y^r. plan for [Hessian Col. Carl von] Donop's intelligence is very proper_ There can be no objection to Lee having his Servant, but he must be watched respecting y^e conveyance of letters_

M.G. Grant

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle*, Scotland; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776, pp. 16-17. Transcribed by Todd Braisted.

Letter New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop, Regarding Supplies for His Corps, Brunswick, Dec. 23, 1776

Brunswick 23^d Dec. 1776.

Sir:

The heavy Artillery is at Amboy with your fourth Battalion Grenadiers. Sir W^m. Erskine is gone to put them in motion, he is to acquaint me when every thing is ready and you shall be informed what Day they march that you may make a move to cover them.

We are all in a great Favour at home. His Majesty has ordered Spruce Beer to be issued to the Troops without any stoppage, if we cannot get spruce, we must contrive to make small Beer, a Brewer here has undertaken to serve the Troops, at Ten shilling Currency for a Quarter Cask, containing thirty four Gallons, that will amount nearly to a penny Currency for a Quart to each man a Day, will you be kind enough to inform me if you can get any Body to undertake it upon the same terms.

I am anxious to get the Waggons I mentioned to you. We cannot depend upon the navigation of the river Rariton and without Waggons from your District I shall not be able to keep you and [Brig.] Gen. [Hon. Alexander] Leslie's Corps supplied.

Be so good as to leave as much of the Country upon your right as you can to Gen. Leslie as I have directed him not to take any Forage in the country from Princeton to this place.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obed^t, hobble servant

James Grant.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 70-72.



Detail showing Mount Holly from "Sketch of Haddonfield, March 1778. Sketch of the roads from Pennyhill to Black Horse through Mount Holly," by Lt. John Hill

Map Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Div.

Report from Col. Carl von Donop to Hessian Commander Gen. Wilhelm von Knyphausen, on a Skirmish Involving the 42nd Highland Regt., Mt. Holly, New Jersey, Dec. 23, 1776.

Quarters at Allentown December 27th 1776.

Sir:

...On the 21st instant I received word from Colonel [Henrich von] Block at Black Horse, where his [Hessian Grenadier] battalion was posted with the 42nd Regiment, that a party of rebels had marched into Mount Holly, and that as yet he had been unable to ascertain its real strength, some reporting it two and some four thousand strong... In order to rid myself of these unpleasant guests I went next morning with the 42nd Regiment, the two [Hessian Grenadier] battalions Block and von Linsengen directly to Mount Holly. I met a few hundred men at the meeting house but after firing a few shots they ran away and the whole party took the road to Moorestown. They were about a thousand men strong and under the command of [rebel] Colonel [Samuel] Griffin. It was the fault of one of my patrols that I did not get on them as I wished, for the patrol went against my direction too far in advance. I had no wounded or dead men, but the rebels had three caused by my artillery fire although but a few shots were fired... The battalion von Linsengen then marched back again to their former quarters, Mansfield Square, in order to be near Bordentown, and the other two battalions remained at Mount Holly to gather food and forage for the stores at Bordentown...

I am Your Excellency's ser't &c

Donop.

Source and Note: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 398-400. The action at Mount Holly is sometimes referred to as the Battle of Iron Works Hill.

Hessian Jäger Capt. Johann Ewald's Account Col. Donop's Attack on Mount Holly, New Jersey, Dec. 23 – 24, 1776

On the morning of the 23^d at five o'clock [Hessian] Colonel [Carl von] Donop set out toward Mount Holly with the 42^d Regiment of Scots, the two [Hessian] grenadier battalions, Linsing and Block, the twelve mounted jägers under Captain [Friedrich Henrich] Lorey, and my jäger company. I formed the advanced guard, supported by Captain Lorey and a company of Scots.

In the wood behind Slabtown we ran into an enemy party which took a new position at a Quaker church lying on a hill at the end of the wood, behind which the entire enemy corps was deployed. The colonel [von Donop] immediately ordered the [Hessian grenadier] Linsing Battalion to attack the hill on which the church stood. The [Hessian grenadier] Block battalion was ordered to the left, and the jägers, with four companies of Scots under [Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Stirling, moved to the right through the woods to cut off the enemy from Mount Holly or to gain mastery of the bridge across the Rancocas Creek, which intersects this town.

The enemy, discovering this movement, withdrew in the greatest disorder through Mount Holly and across the bridge after the [Hessian] grenadiers had taken possession of the church. Since the jägers and Scots pressed close behind them, a part sought to throw themselves into the houses near the bridge, but they were soon dislodged by the fieldpieces. However, the greater part of the enemy gained the wood lying beyond the town, through which the highway ran to Philadelphia, and by which the enemy saved himself. The jägers and Scots pursued the enemy for several miles through the woods, but he made no further stand. Almost two hundred men were captured, two cannon seized, and somewhat over one hundred men may well have been killed on both sides.

The entire corps under Colonel Donop took up quarters in the town...

Early on the morning of the 24th I was sent out with twenty jägers and fifty Scots to reconnoiter the road to Moorestown as far as the Long Bridge [over southwest branch of Rancocas Creek] to learn if it was occupied by the enemy or destroyed. The road there consisted of a succession of defiles through a thick wood. Toward ten o'clock I arrived unhindered at the bridge and found that it was ruined. Presently a few shots came from the other side where the Americans were hidden in several houses,

through which a Scotsman was killed. I deployed the jägers along the crook to answer the enemy with brisk rifle fire and to reconnoiter the area more closely, after which I withdrew and rendered my report.

Source and Note: *Diary of the American War, A Hessian Journal, Captain Johann Ewald, Field Jäger Corps*, Trans. and Ed. Justin P. Tustin, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1979, pp. 38-39. The “four companies of Scots” was likely Maj. William Murray’s 1st Bn., 42nd Regt.



Detail of Painting of Gen. George Washington at Princeton by Charles Willson Peale, 1784

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons, from *Princeton Univ. Art Museum*

Order from Rebel Gen. George Washington to Col. Joseph Reed to Conduct Diversionary Attacks on Hessian Col. Carl von Donop’s Positions, “Camp Above the Falls of Trenton,” Dec. 23, 1776

23 December 1776

Dear Sir:

[Camp Above the Falls of Trenton]

The bearer is sent down to know whether your plan was attempted last night and if not to inform you, that Christmas-day at night, one hour before day is the time fixed upon for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven’s sake keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us, our numbers, sorry am I to say, being less than I had any conception of: but necessity, dire necessity, will, nay must, justify an attempt. Prepare, and, in concert with [rebel Col. Samuel] Griffin, attack as many of their posts as you possibly can with a prospect of success: the more we can attack at the same instant, the more confusion we shall spread and greater good will result from it. If I had not been fully convinced before of the enemy’s designs, I have now ample testimony of their intentions to attack Philadelphia, so soon as the ice will afford the means of conveyance...

I am, dear Sir, Your most obedient servant
Go. Washington

Source and Note: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 342. Other Washington Correspondence in the Lib. of Congress Washington papers from Dec. 22-24, 1776 was issued from “Camp Above the Falls of Trenton.”

Letter from Commander-in-Chief Gen. Sir William Howe to New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant, Discussing Army Activities, New York, Dec. 24, 1776

N. York tuesday Dec^r. 24th [1776]

My D^r. Gen^l

I am sorry to hear by y^{rs}. of y^e 22^d of y^e loss of y^e light Dragoon Patrols_ I think you will find it necessary to establish particular days on w^h you will send Parties to preserve y^e communication between y^r Posts, & unless upon urgent occasions no Travellers to pass but on those days.

Be so good to send to [Hessian Col. Johann] Rhall, That I do not by any means approve of sending Cannon w^l Small Detachments, it has so much y^e appearance of an inferiority on our part_ He has wrote to me for 45,000 Cartridges to complete his brigade, but does not say to what number_ You will therefore be so good to order y^e cartridge deficiency to be enquired into & furnish him as you see fit, but he should have a caution to prevent waste.

In [Hessian Col. Carl von] Donop's move against [rebel Maj. Gen. Israel] Putnam, the consequent movements appear proper; but believe I see y^e least occasion for that of y^e 5th Reg^t by [Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander] Lesslie_

With respect to a post at Springfield; Could it be accomplished without taking from Princetown, it would be proper_ but would not have Lesslie's post weakened_ And Springfield should be strong.

If we could get a body of Provincials sufficient to occupy Newbridge & Hackensac & by that means to remove y^e 7th & 26th to Aquaquacencac & Newark, the 71st with two pieces of Cannon & a Troop of Dragoons might be in security at Springfield, but untill this change can be made, I fear we must submit to y^e inconveniences we now suffer from y^e great extent of our Cantonments.

In y^e mean while if you can carry into execution an expedition against Morristown w^h a prospect of surprise, I have not a doubt of its having a desirable Effect_ & I think ye mode you propose likely to succeed. Some little diversion might be made abt. ye same time by a party from ye 46th towards Springfield, to return to their quarters y^e day y^e other detachments march.

Capt. Paine returns this day to Amboy, Spraight having been ill for some time, Pain was here to forward everything to y^e Jersies.

You mention a demand for Medicines for y^e Regimental Chests. I will speak to [Purveyor Jonathan] Mallet upon it, but I rather think y^e Surgeons ask what they have no right to, apprehending they were supplied plentifully at y^e opening y^e Campaign.

All other Demands, Artificers excepted, w^h are not to be had, are ordered & I believe sent

With respect to regimental Hospitals – The Reg^{ts}. were so well supplied at Boston, that they must have sufficient Stores in their possession for that use –

If y^e Waldeckers cannot defend Themselves against Straggling Parties, I know not where to put them in security –

Y^e plan of Intelligence is, I hope, good, but you will be cautious of course in Meeting these Rascals that may betray you. However by comparing their Accounts with those from other quarters; you will probably get at y^e truth. Putting down their names being dangerous, & counterfeit of their Seals, in your possession would equally answer to their signing their intelligence.

Adieu Y^{rs}. Entirely

W Howe

I find I am wrong in respect to what I have said upon y^e articles of Medicines_ They are to send returns of what they want to M^r. Mallett & they will be sent_

M.G. Grant

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle*, Scotland; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776. Transcribed by Todd Braisted.



Battle of Trenton

Picture Source: *U.S. Army, Center of Military History, "Soldiers of the American Revolution" art series.*

Intelligence Report Discusses Rebel Attack, Trenton, New Jersey Dec. 25-26, 1776

Intelligence

[Rebel Gen. George] Washington commanded himself the 26th a Body of four thousand Men, which passed the River seven or eight miles above Trenton. [Maj. Gen. William Alexander] Lord Stirling – [John] Sullivan – [Nathanael] Green & [Arthur St. Clair] Sinclair were with him. [Brig.] Gen^l. [James Ewing] Youan was to have commanded another Division – which was to have landed between Trenton & Burdenton _ but was prevented by the Ice from crossing the River_

They intend to renew the Attack upon Prince Town in two or three Days _ they are pressed in time, as their Men absolutely refuse to enlist again notwithstanding their late Success _ a Battalion went off in a Body two or three Days ago _ they offered them any money to keep them, but they would not stay upon any Account whatever _ they were all New England men & the Men who are to go off in a few days are of the same Country_

[Maj.] General [William] Heath is expected from one of the New England Governments with three Battalions of continental Troops to reinforce Colonel Wynd in Morris County they are to remain in the Jerseys_

General Washingtons Head Quarters is removed to New Town about twelve Miles from Trenton across the River

The Rebels only lost only three men. [Hessian Col. Johann] Rall is wounded not dangerously _ several of the Officers wounded. they had about thirty killed. They were surprised & surrounded before they knew any thing of the matter. they had them all in Pensilvania before Sun Rise the same Day. have sent them to Lancaster amongst their Country Men in hopes of enlisting them. They have thirteen hundred Stand of Arms – and nine hundred Prisoners.

Washington is to pass the River at the same Place they did before _ Putnam with the Militia opposite to Philadelphia & Gen^l. Youan betwixt Trenton & Bordenton_

They have got some Light Dragoons from Virginia They have a scheme of raising men for four months but meet with no Success_

All the Row Gallies on Account of the Ice are ordered to Baltimore.

Heath will come the same way that Lee did through Sussex They expect to make us quit the Jerseys before the Winter is over

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle*, Scotland; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776, pp. 38-39. Transcribed by Todd Braisted.

Letter from Lt. Col. Thomas Stirling, 42nd Regt., to his Brother, Sir William Stirling of Ardoch, Describing His Assignment to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop's Brigade and the Defeat of Hessian Col. John Rall's Brigade, Trenton, Dec. 26, 1776

New York, Jan^y 10th 1777

I received your letter of 18th Sep^r a few days ago giving me the accounts of our Mother's death. She has had poor Woman her full share of Life, and barring one great Misfortune, without many of the severe trials that Parents undergo who has had so many children.

I wrote you a letter intended to be sent by Keppendaris but he missed his passage & I find it went by the Packet, this goes by him as he is determined to take first opportunity.

Our Reg^t has had a severe time of it as we have been in the field ever since, our Rapidity in going through the Jerseys has only been the means of our losing it almost as rapidly, we despised our enemy, too much and drew a line of Cantonements in that Province that extended near a hundred miles, never dreaming the Rebels would have the courage to attempt anything against us; the consequence has shown us our mistake, the Rebels crossed the Delaware River a few miles above Trenton in considerable force – attacked a Brigade of Hessians in that town commanded by Colonel [Johann] Ralle consisting of 3 Reg^{ts} (1200 men) on the 26th Dec^r, surprised them and killed about 20 men and took 900 Prisoners. This obliged another Brigade of Hessians and our Reg^t which the General [Sir William Howe] had attached to these Foreigners to retire for fear of being cut off to Princeton where [Brig.] Gen^l [Hon. Alexander] Leslie commanded, this threw all of West Jersey into their Power and Washington threatened attacking us there...

Source: NRS, *Papers of the Family of Stirling Home Drummond Moray of Abercairny* at GD 24/1/458/6. Stirling's mother, was the former Anne Gordon, daughter of Adm. Thomas Gordon (a native of Aberdeen, Admiral of the Russian Baltic Squadron and Governor of Kronstadt).

Report from Col. Carl von Donop to Hessian Commander Gen. Wilhelm von Knyphausen on the Defeat of Col. Johann Rall's Brigade, Trenton, Dec. 25, 1776.

Quarters at Allentown December 27th 1776.

Sir:

Perhaps your excellency has been already informed of the unpleasant affair which happened to the Rall brigade, but I think it my duty to report to you... There was nothing in Colonel Rall's reports, and more especially in the communications from [Maj.] General [James] Grant to fear at Trenton. The following morning I regret to say proved the contrary. Lieutenant Colonel [Friedrich Ludwig] von Minnigerode reported to me that he had heard by a messenger that the rebels had surprised the Rall brigade this morning at Trenton between eight and nine o'clock and that they were ten to twelve thousand strong. Soon after this Lieutenant Colonel von Minnigerode sent an officer to me saying the report of the surprise at Trenton had been confirmed by many who had escaped from there. I went immediately back to Black Horse, reinforced the command at the Crosswicks bridge so as to keep open the way to Princeton. According to all the reports of the men who escaped from Trenton and the statements of patrols I had sent in that direction, the whole Rall brigade has been lost and many thousand rebels are in their quarters. I did not think it advisable for me to remain any longer in so dangerous a situation, surrounded on all sides by the enemy and cut off from all communication with Princeton. I was also assured that a large part of the rebels had turned to Princeton and I had not the slightest word from [Brig.] General [Hon. Alexander] Leslie. My ammunition had run low, only about nine cartridges to a cannon and very

little indeed for the fire-locks. Even if I had thought proper to face all attacks from the enemy in my dangerous position, to remain in Bordentown and wait for a doubtful success I would not dare to do it on account of the shortage of ammunition. Therefore after due consideration I withdrew to Allentown which is twelve English miles from Princeton and informed General Leslie of this fact. This place is so situated that I can push through from here or in one day if necessary resume my former position. I have brought all my baggage along, but I am sorry I am compelled to leave about twenty sick and wounded at Bordentown, with a stock of provisions and forage. Some of the men were not able to be carried and the wagons were too scarce to carry the rations, which will therefore I fear fall into the hands of the rebels. I have organized all the escaped men from the Rall brigade and made up a force of two hundred and ninety-two men, including the command at the drawbridge of one Captain, three officers and one hundred men. Lieutenant von Grothausen with fifty yagers who had his command at Trenton, with a detachment of light infantry and dragoons, except one yager who was killed and one sick soldier, escaped from the fight. Colonel Rall it is said is mortally wounded and so is Major von Dechow. Lieutenant Colonel Bretthauer and many of the officers have been wounded, some of them killed. I could not find anything more definite than this. All the cannon and flags of the brigade are lost and the prisoners taken amount to seven hundred men.

I am Your Excellency's ser't &c
 Donop.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 398-400.



Detail showing "Sketch of Allen's Town" from "Sketch of the road from Black Horse to Crosswick. Sketch of Allen's Town," 1778, by Lt. John Hill

Map Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Div.

Orders from New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop, to Position his Brigade (including the 42nd Highlanders) in Allentown; Brunswick, Dec. 27, 1776

Brunswick 27th Dec 1776

Sir:

[Hessian] Colonel [Johann] Rall's Defeat [at Trenton, N. J.] is a most unfortunate business. I did not think that all the Rebels in America would have taken that Brigade Prisoners — one must not judge rashly of People who have been unfortunate but if you had been there and had found yourself overpowered by numbers, if I am not mistaken, you would have contrived to retreat across the bridge to Bordenton — the Light Dragoons, Light Infantry and it appears from your letter to [Brig.] General [Hon. Alexander] Leslie that 200 Hessians did so. After all that has happened if I was with you, your Grenadiers and Yagers I should not be afraid of an attack from [rebel Gen. George] Washington's Army, which is almost naked and does not exceed 8000 men including Lee's, Gates's and Arnold's Corps. I have sent an express to General [Sir William] Howe and till I receive his commands about the future Arrangement of our cantonments, I must beg of you to remain at Allentown, or if that should not be practicable, for I don't know the place, you must crowd into Princetown, Maidenhead, Cranbury and Kingston.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obed't h'ble servant
James Grant.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 400-401.

Letter from Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander Leslie to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop Regarding Remaining in Allentown with his Brigade (including the 42nd Regt.), Princeton, Dec. 27, 1776

Sir:

I am honoured with yours by Captain Gamble. I am exceedingly sorry for Colonel [Johann] Rall and his Brigade.

I have informed General [James] Grant of your being at Allentown this day and told him that I had desired you would remain at Allentown, untill you heard further. I have begged of him to let me know his pleasure in regard to your motions without loss of time. We are told the Rebels crossed over the river and carried their Prisoners with them yesterday. I have about 50 Hessians of Rall's here and 3 officers.

I am with Respect, Sir,

Your most obed't h'ble servant
A. Leslie

P. Town Dec. 27th 1776 4 afternoon.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 424.

**Orders from Commander-on-Chief Gen. Sir William Howe to New Jersey
Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant to Reposition the 42nd Regt. to Bound Brook,
After the Defeat of Col. Johann Rall's Hessian Brigade, New York, Dec. 27, 1776**

N. York Dec^r. 27th

My Dear Sir

[Col. Johann] Rall's defeat [at Trenton], is a business highly malapropos considering y^e State of y^e people of Pensilvania are now in_ The consequence, I apprehend must be to draw back [Col. Carl von] Donop's Corps to Princetown, & y^e Princetown Troops to retire behind y^e Rariton, I think, to Pluckemin & Morristown if you see no objection to their being in those two places_ The fourth battⁿ. of Hess: Grend^{ns}. to join Donop at Princetown with y^e Debris of Rall & y^e 42^d to be at Bound brook & neighbourhood if quarters can be found for them_ To accomplish this move, [Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander] Lesslie must move on to Newtown to receive Donop y^e day before he retires & you will detach two Batt^{ns}. viz one of Grend^{ns}. & one of y^e Guards to Princetown to cooperate in this Movement_ I think one of Lesslie's Batt^{ns}. may halt & remain at Maidenhead y^e same day & others march to Newtown & retire with

Lesslie upon his falling back to them_ The heavy Cannon may be landed & remain at Amboy for y^e present_

I can see no other means of Acting in consequence of Rall's surprise, for that I apprehend it must have been & we must give up y^e advantages of possessing Burlington in which I include y^e possession of y^e County of Monmouth_ No doubt Trentown was an abominably exposed Post, but I could not believe y^e brigade could have been defeated in y^e manner reported.

Adieu my D^r. Gen^l. & take y^e measures, (w^h. I am confident will prove good) as you may be inclined by circumstances_ Suppose you should communicate with Donop in Person upon any possibility without too much risk of keeping Burlington & communication Notwithstanding This Coup_ But I confess I do not see how it can be prudently done? We may possibly Take a trip there when y^e frost is fixed_

If quarters for y^e Second Battⁿ. of L. Inf^y. could be found between Brunswick & S. Amboy it might contribute to keep off Parties on that side & to cover y^e Inhabitants bringing their provisions to y^e market.

[Sir William Howe]

M. Gen: Grant

Source and Note: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle*, Scotland; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776, pp. 27-29. Transcribed initially by Todd Braisted. The 42nd Regt. ended up on Princeton rather than Bound Brook.

**Letter from Brig. Gen. Alexander Hon. Leslie to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop
Reporting Rebel Positions, Princeton, Dec. 28, 1776**

Princetown, Saturday morning 2 o'clock.

Sir:

About 1400 of the Rebels landed at Trenton yesterday and went to Pennington about 3 o'clock in the afternoon from thence they intended for Rockyhill there to be met by the Jersey Troops and they and another party were to attack the Troops here, in consequence of this I must beg of you to march the Troops under your command to this Place without Loss of time, which I shall inform General Grant of.

I've the honour to be Sir

Your most obedt h'ble servant

To Col. Donop.

A. Leslie.

Source and Notes: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 424. Pennington is about nine miles north of Trenton and Rocky Hill Borough is about four miles north-northeast of Princeton.

**Note from Brig. Gen. Alexander Leslie to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop,
Urging Von Donop to Join Him, Princeton, Dec. 28, 1776**

II.

Princetown 5 o'clock Saturday morning

Sir:

I sent off two Dragoons at 2 o'clock this morning to inform you of two separate Bodies of the rebels intending to attack this Place in consequence of which I beg you will march the Troops under your command without Loss of Time to this Place. I suppose you will order back the heavy Guns that are on the Road from South Amboy to Burlington.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obed't h'ble servant
Alex. Leslie.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 425.



Detail showing Allentown from "Plan of the operations of General Washington, against the Kings troops in New Jersey, from the 26th, of December, 1776, to the 3d. January 1777," by William Faden

Map Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Div.

Letter from Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander Leslie Regarding the Positioning of Von Donop's Brigade (Including the 42nd Regt.), Allentown, Dec. 28, 1776

Sir:

I was fortunate in receiving your communication of this morning at eight o'clock and I will set all in motion, although the news of yesterday from Trenton does not inform me about the 1400 men which according to your information have marched toward Pennington to join the Jersey Troops at Rocky Hill.

Donop

Colonel

Allentown 28th Dec 1776.

Will you have the kindness to advise me whether I ought in marching to join you with all my force or whether I ought to stop some on the way or post some of them here.

Source and Note: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 236. The original letter was written in French. Allentown is located about ten miles east of Trenton.

Orders from New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to Move His Brigade to Princeton, and for the 42nd Regt. to Follow the Next Day, Brunswick, Dec. 28, 1776

Brunswick 28th Dec 1776.

Sir:

You will please to march the Troops under your command to Princetown where the General has ordered me to station the Hessian Grenadiers, Yagers and remains of Rall's Brigade.

You will please to inform [Brig.] General [Hon. Alexander] Leslie when you intend to march and as nearly as you can judge about the hour you expect to arrive at Princetown. I have desired him to send a Patrol of the two Battalions of Light Infantry towards Trenton, when you move as he is upon your arrival at Princetown to order a part of his Corps to march to Kingston or Six Mile Run, the 2nd Division to march the day after which [Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Sterling is to follow with the 42nd Reg't.

I have ordered Kohlers Bat. of Hessian Grenadiers to march tomorrow from Amboy, if no accident prevents their complying with this order, they will be at Princetown the 30th.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obed't servant
James Grant.

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, p. 425.

**Order from Gen. Sir William Howe, Commander-in-Chief, North America, to New Jersey
Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant to Remove British Troops, Including the 42nd Regt. from
Hessian Col. Carl von Donop's Brigade, New York, Dec. 28, 1776**

N. York Dec^r. 28th

My D^f. General

I got y^e. letter by y^e Cap^t. of Kniphausen last night about Eleven_ It has been a most wretched business_ Much Misconduct on y^e part of [Col. Johann] Rall according to some particulars that have been reported_

In my letter of yesterday, I did not mention particularly y^e L [Light]. Dragoons at Princetown_ but they must move back w^t. [Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander] Lesslies & it is to be considered whether [Col. Carl von] Donops brigade & Rall's debris will satisfy him at Princetown, as entre nous, I do not wish he should have any british if it can be properly avoided _ but no time must be lost for his moving from Bordentown & for y^e 4th Battⁿ. of Grend^{rs}. Hess: to march to Princetown.

Make such alterations, as shall seem most proper in y^e present exigency of affairs & believe that I will be perfectly satisfied._ the Posts most forward should make Breastworks in y^e streets of their Cantonment & take such other precautions for their particular defence as y^e comdg. Off^{rs}. shall judge necessary & must have discretionary orders to support each other en cas de l'attaque_

Ammunition shall be sent _ but pray give directions that y^e daily guards load with loose powder & ball, which may be readily drawn & will preserve y^e Cartridges Entire_

The Troops being in Cantonments at Morristown, a battalion of y^e 71st [Highland Regt.] might be spared from Newark for Springfield.

Adieu
WHowe

The Tide won't wait_
Merry Christmas to you notwithstanding all our disasters.

M.G. Grant

Source and Note: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland*; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776, pp. 33-35. Transcribed initially by Todd Braisted and edited by Paul Pace. Gen. Howe's comment that Donop should not command "*British*" refers directly to the 42nd Highlanders who were originally quite upset about being assigned to Donop's Hessian brigade.

**Letter from New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant to Hessian Col. Carl von Donop,
Regarding the Positioning of his Brigade and the Removal of the 42nd Highlanders from his
Command, Brunswick, Dec. 28, 1776**

Brunswick 28th Dec 1776.

Sir:

You wished some time ago to be stationed at Princetown and it is to be hoped you will find it agreeable Winterquarters. Your Grenadiers and Yagers have been much fatigued. I am sorry to hear you have so many sick and that my Friend Colonel [Justus Henrich von] Block is of the number. I flatter myself that under your care they will all recover soon and have no doubt if they should make an attempt on your cantonment that those Rebel Gentlemen would have reason to repent it.

You will be kind enough to form Magazines for the subsistence of the Troops under your command agreeable to the General's Instruction at Trenton.

I have wrote to the General for a supply of ammunition for your three pounders and the Troops. Powder and Ball shall be sent and you will be so good as to order Cartridges to be made, when you are furnished with the materials, in the mean time I have desired General Leslie to let you have all he can spare before he leaves you.

It is not in my Power to leave [Lt.] Colonel [Thomas] Sterling [42nd Regt.] with you, but I have ordered him not to march till Kohler's Reg't arrives at Princetown, they are to disembark to-morrow morning at Amboy and are to join you as soon as possible.

You shall have a State of our new Cantonments as soon as fixed. I had the honour to receive your Letter by Mr. Henry, who sets out in the morning and I am Sir,

Your most obed't servant
James Grant

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 425-426. The "von Block" Hessian Grenadier battalion was composed of the grenadier companies from the Infanterie Regiments von Donop, Prinz Carl, Trumbach, and Wutginau.

Letter from Gen. Sir William Howe, Commander-in-Chief, North America, to Maj. Gen. James Grant, Regarding the Stationing of the 42nd Regt. at Bound Brook, New Jersey, New York, Dec. 29, 1776

N. York Dec^r. 29th

My D^r. Sir

Eleven o'clock

I have just now received y^r. letter of yesterdays date_ The field guns should continue with y^e Troops to which They are attach'd_ The light Dragoons to be removed from Princetown_

For some days past There has been 100,000 Cartridges at Amboy exclusive of y^e 40,000 you allude to, all at y^r. disposal, & having ordered long ago ammunition for y^e field guns as well british as Hessians conclude it is at Amboy.

Having heard y^e: prov: train horses are without Shoes, I beg of you to give a severe reprimand to M^r. Clark who has had directions to attend y^r orders_

With respect to your plan of Cantonments, From y^e panick That appears to have taken hold of our friend [Col. Carl von] Donop by his leaving his sick, I much doubt if he will be satisfied w^t. his Quota of troops at Princetown & that mode we wish you to communicate with him.

I do not like to give up Hackensac, Newbridge & Aquaquenac untill [Loyalist Brig. Gen. Cortland] Skinners Corps [New Jersey Volunteers] can take those posts, When I think there would be no objection to y^r. plan, except that it appears necessary to occupy Westfield of w^h. you have not taken notice in y^e distribution_

My intentions in desiring you to possess Morristown were to give protection to y^e next County in which I am told there are many well affected Inhabitants & it seems to cover all y^e country between that & Newark, as y^e Rebels could not remain between those two places, occupied by us. Upon y^e whole, I think we must possess Springfield & Westfield with y^e 2^d. brigade & y^e 42^d. in about Bound brook_ The other posts of y^r. Disposition to take place_

The troops should have orders to put their Cantonments in some state of defence by Breastworks w^h. I apprehend was not done by [Col. Johan von] Rall [at Trenton]. The 46th regt. (by y^e way) should remain at Spanktown_ Keeping a guard of 30 men in some convenient house upon y^e road to Elizabethtown & make a breastwork, for its defence_

This regt. in case of alarm at Amboy must have orders to march thither w^h. y^e Dragoons, leaving a part of both for y^e defence of their baggage_

[Brig. Gen. Sir William] Erskine is just arrived & will return for Brunswick tomorrow.

Most Entirely Y^{rs}.

WHowe

M. G. Grant

There must be something repeated by you for y^e Comd^g. Off^{rs}. to support each other in case of attack at their own discretion_

The next attempt we shall expect to hear of will be an attack upon the pretty M^{rs}. Barton's house_

Source and Note: James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776, pp. 36 - 38. Transcribed by Todd Braisted. Bound Brook is about 35 miles north of Trenton and ten miles east of Piscataway (now Edison), where the regiment spent the winter.

Letter from Hessian Col. Carl von Donop to New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant Discussing the Impact of Removing Lt. Col. Thomas Stirling, 42nd Regt., from His Brigade, Princeton, Dec. 29, 1776

Princetown 29th Dec. 1776

Sir:

This morning at six o'clock Lieutenant Henry brought your reply to me of yesterday in which you seem to place much confidence in me. I am very much obliged, my General, and I hope that you will never be mistaken if the occasion presents itself. This is what appears to be my actual situation and I confess to you that I am somewhat embarrassed, finding myself alone after the departure of Colonel Sterling. He was a reliable man and one able to interpret for me. I am now obliged to guess the meaning of your letters by the sense of the paragraphs, not being able to understand your language fully. Thus I am obliged to exercise much ingenuity in deciphering your orders... The two six pounders which belong to the 42nd Regiment please give orders whether or not they are to remain with me. I desire very much that [Brig.] General [Hon. Alexander] Leslie should march as 400 men slept last night in the open air. You can imagine what must happen to my men. All sick.

I am, with the greatest consideration Sir,

your most h'ble serv't

Donop

Source: *The Battles of Trenton and Princeton*, by William S. Stryker, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1898, pp. 426-427.

Note from Brig. Gen. Hon. Alexander Leslie to Capt. Bumford to Give Message to New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant, Princeton, Dec. 30, 1776

Bumford

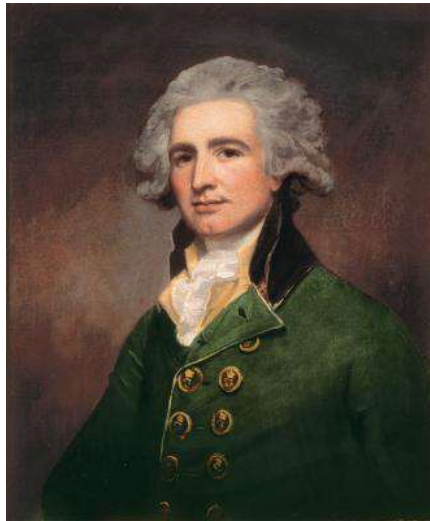
You'll inform [Maj.] Gen^l: [James] Grant on your Arrival, that we expect him every hour, I've sent him three Expresses but I fear they may have fallen into the Enemy's hands.

A. Leslie

P: Town
30th Dec^r. at Noon

[Docketed]
Cap. Bumford
on his March
to Brunswick

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland*; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, Miscellany, 1776. Transcribed by Todd Braisted. There is no Capt. Bumford shown in the Army List of 1776.



Portrait of Col. Robert Abercromby, by George Romney, 1788

Picture Source: Wikimedia Commons, from *Art Gallery of South Australia*

Letter from Lt. Col. Robert Abercromby, 1st Lt. Infantry Battalion (Including Capt. Hon. George Mackenzie's 42nd Lt. Infantry Company), to Maj. Gen. James Grant, Reporting Location of the Rebel Army, Princeton, Dec. 30, 1776

Princeton Dec^r. 30th. Noon
1776

Sir

By desire of [Brig] Gen^l. [Hon. Alexander] Lesslie I am to inform you that M^r. [rebel Gen. George] Washington, with his whole Army, amounting to 12 or 15,000, landed last Night at Trenton and the Ferry above & that [Gen. Israel] Putnam, with 4,000 & four Pieces of Canon, advances by Crosswicks, part of his Army was there last Night.

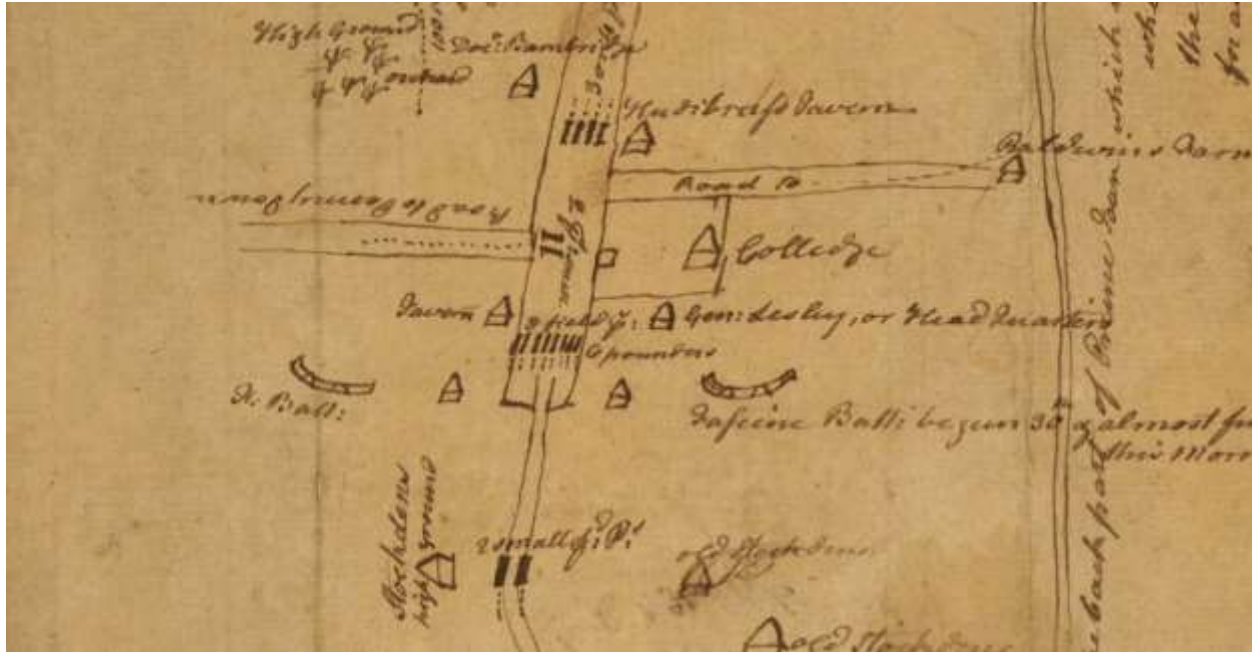
So that the General expects a Visit hourly & wishes much to see you. I have the Honor to be y^r. most ob^t. Servant
Rob^t. Abercromby

1 OClock _ We have just heard of the Rebel Patroles within 2 miles – and a Patrole of Cavallrie & Infantry are just Order'd to drive them back _____

[Address]
Major General Grant
Brunswick

Since this letter was sealed, a man is arriv'd from near Allen town, where the Rebels are said to be in Number 5000 _ they give not they mean to march toward Brunswick _ [illeg.] yesterday, collecting flour, & baking it – for that purpose _ Patroles Advance'd from Prince this morning 5 Miles___

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland*; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, December, 1776, pp. 41-43. Transcribed by Todd Braisted.



Detail of Princeton Defenses from Reconnaissance Map titled "Plan of Princeton, Dec. 31, 1776" by Rebel Brig. Gen. John Cadwalader

Map Source: Library of Congress Geography and Map Div.

Report of Enemy Attack on the Pickets from Lt. Alexander Robertson, 43rd Regt. and Asst. Dep. Qr. Master Gen., to New Jersey Commander Maj. Gen. James Grant, Princeton, Dec. 30, 1776

Sir

I am ordered by [Brig.] Gen^l. [Hon. Alexander] Leslie to acquaint you that the Enemy have attacked the Picquets, & we are told they are coming on, therefore He begs you will come here immediately.

Have the Hon^r. to be Sir

Your most ob^t.

Servt.

A. Robertson

A D Q M Gen^l.

Prince Town 1 oClock

[December 30, 1776.]

Source: *James Grant Papers of Ballindalloch Castle, Scotland*; Library of Congress Microcopy, Reel 36, Army Career Series, Correspondence, Miscellany, 1776. Transcribed by Todd Braisted.

Hessian Jäger Capt. Johann Ewald's Account of a Planned Attack on the 42nd Highlanders, Near Princeton, New Jersey Dec. 31, 1776

On the 31st, two hours before daylight, the entire army stood to arms on the heights around Princetown, since the enemy had strengthened his position at Maidenhead and we had information that [Rebel Gen. George] Washington would attack.

In the evening around ten o'clock an American officer was taken prisoner by a Scottish patrol. This man had sneaked through the outpost and posed as an English adjutant at a Scottish post, from which he demanded the password on an excuse he had forgotten it, having been sent off by [Lt. Gen. Charles] Lord Cornwallis to look for the Americans. But the Scots did not like his story, and held him securely until one of their patrols arrived, to whom they delivered him.

When he was brought to Lord Cornwallis, he immediately identified himself and his mission. he was a major of riflemen, who intended to make a surprise attack on the [42nd] Scottish regiment as soon as he had succeeded in learning the password.

Source: *Diary of the American War, A Hessian Journal, Captain Johann Ewald, Field Jäger Corps*, Trans. and Ed. Justin P. Tustin, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1979, p. 45.

News Account of Highlanders Being Used as Light Infantry, London, Dec. 31, 1776

LONDON...

Dec. 31... The light infantry under [Brig.] General [Hon. Alexander] Leslie, and the 42d and the 71st Highlanders, who are used as light-infantry, have, as the custom of war is, the heaviest part of the duty. The 71st are mostly broke to pieces, one half of them [approx. 500 of 2000 privates] were taken in their passage out to America, and half of the remainder have fallen in the field. They are new raised men, and very indifferently disciplined, but fight with very great intrepidity.

Source: *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), Feb. 23, 1777, p. 2.

Scottish Newspaper Explains Highland Troops' Description of American Rebels only as "cowardly rascals," Edinburgh, Jan. 1, 1777

EDINBURGH...

A correspondent, who has frequent intercourse, by letters, with the officers of the Highland regiments at present serving in America, informs us, that nothing displeases the common men of that corps so much as to hear the provincials called *Rebels*. On a former occasion [1745 Jacobite Rebellion] many of them were dignified with that appellation. They then fought bravely, in what they thought was a just cause. The Americans will scarce fight at all, though they pretend their cause is equally just. The Highlanders, therefore, conceive themselves highly affronted, when the designation of *Rebel* is applied to an American. They think it involves in it a tacit reflection against themselves, as if they were *cowards* as well as rebels. Of this they can by no means admit, and consequently will allow the Americans no other title than that of *cowardly rascals*.

Source and Note: *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh), Jan. 1, 1777, p. 3. The average age of the 42nd Highlanders in their regimental review at Waterford, Ireland in May 1775 was 26.5 years. Only 17 soldiers in this review were over the age of 45 (making them at least 15 at the end of the rebellion). Accordingly the average Black Watch soldier was born years after the end of the '45 Jacobite rebellion and only a very few would have been old enough to personally feel the disgust referenced in the above article. More than likely the offense felt for of the use of the term "*rebel*" reflected the feelings of the soldiers' fathers and grandfathers who served the Jacobite cause.