

THOMSON

THOMSON: (*Reading*) "To the Honorable Congress, John Hancock, President. Dear Sir: It is with grave apprehension that I have learned this day of the sailing, from Halifax, Nova Scotia, of a considerable force of British troops in the company of foreign mercenaries and under the command of General Sir William Howe. There can be no doubt that their destination is New York, for to take and hold this city and the Hudson Valley beyond would serve to separate New England from the other colonies permitting both sections to be crushed in turn. Sadly, I see no way of stopping them at the present time as my army is absolutely falling apart, my military chest is totally exhausted, my Commissary General has strained his credit to the last, my Quartermaster has no food, no arms, no ammunition, and my troops are in a state of near mutiny! I pray God some relief arrives before the armada but fear it will not. Y'r ob'd't—"

(*Drum roll*)

"G. Washington."

(*During the brief silence that follows, THOMSON shrugs and files the dispatch*)

THOMSON: "The Continental soldier is as nothing ever seen in this, or any other, century; he is a misfit, ignorant of hygiene, destructive, disorderly and totally disrespectful of rank. Only this last is understandable as there is an incredible reek of stupidity amongst the officers. The situation is most desperate at the New Jersey Training Ground in New Brunswick where every able-bodied whore—*whore*—in the Colonies has assembled. There are constant reports of drunkenness, desertion, foul language, naked bathing in the Raritan River, and an epidemic of the French disease. I have declared the town 'off-limits' to all military personnel—with the exception of officers. I beseech the Congress to dispatch the War Committee to this place in the hope of restoring some of the order and discipline we need to survive. Y'r ob'd't—(*Drum roll*)—G. Washington."