



Weathering the War

ELIZABETH MINER

The primary concern of the soldiers of the Continental Army were surviving the elements and exposure as opposed to surviving the attack from the British.

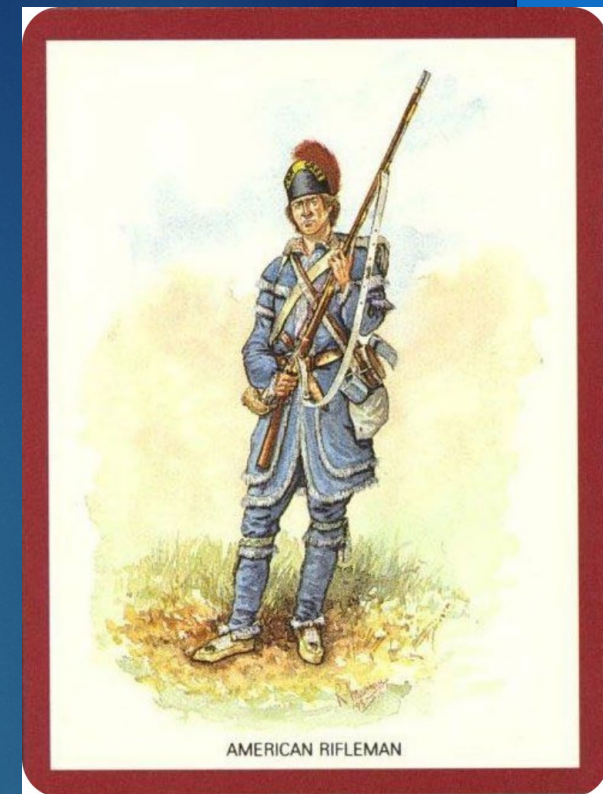
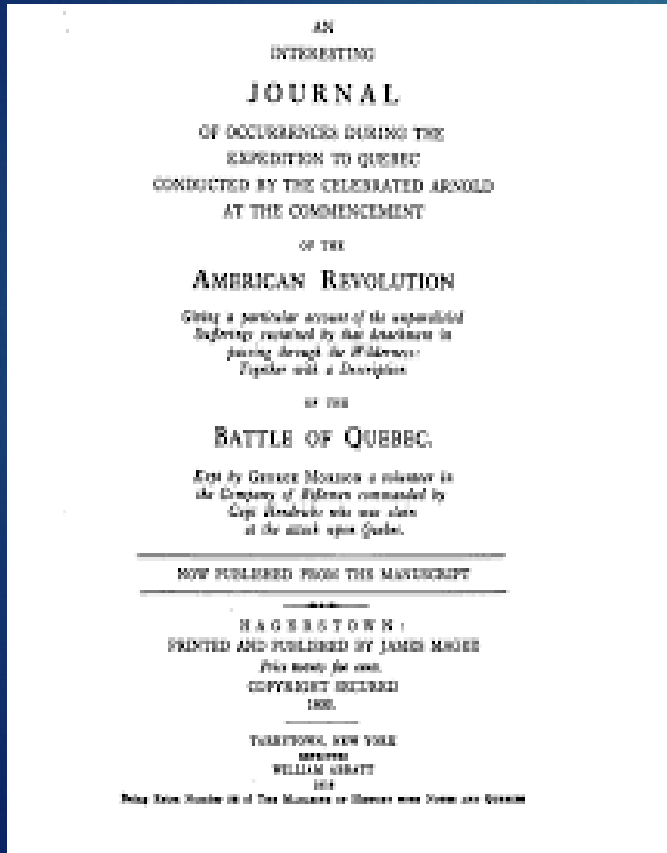
“There comes a Soldier; his bare feet are seen thro' his worn-out Shoes his legs nearly naked from the tatter'd remains of an only pair of stockings, his Breeches not sufficient to cover his nakedness, his Shirt hanging in strips, his hair disheveled, his face meagre, his whole appearance pictures a person forsaken and discouraged. He comes, and cries with an air of wretchedness and despair, 'I am Sick, my feet lame, my legs are sore, my body cover'd with this tormenting itch, my Cloaths are worn out, my Constitution is broken, my former Activity is exhausted by fatigue, hunger, and Cold. I fail fast I shall soon be no more'.” - Albigence Waldo



Men on the March: The Bonds of Brothers

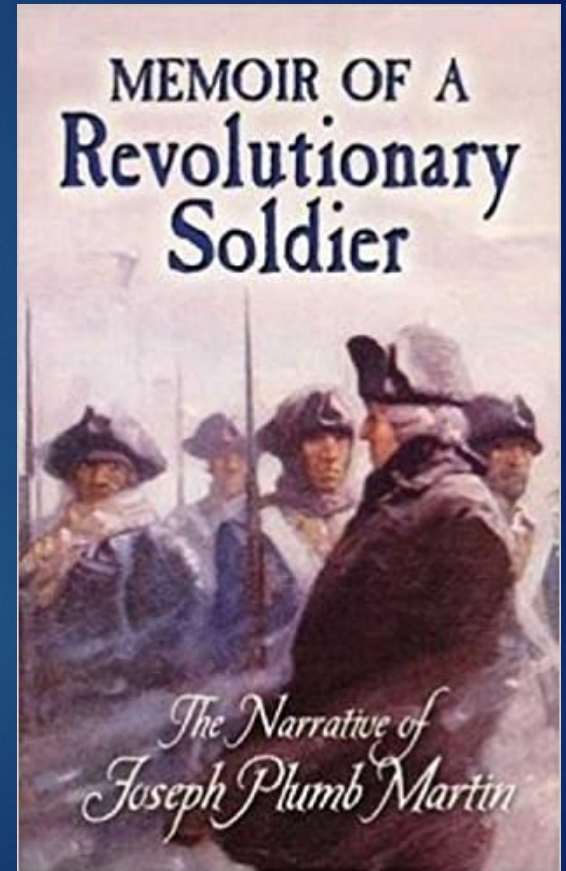


“The universal weakness that prevailed over every man increased hourly ... and the cold penetrating through our death-like frames made our situation completely wretched” – Private George Morison (29)



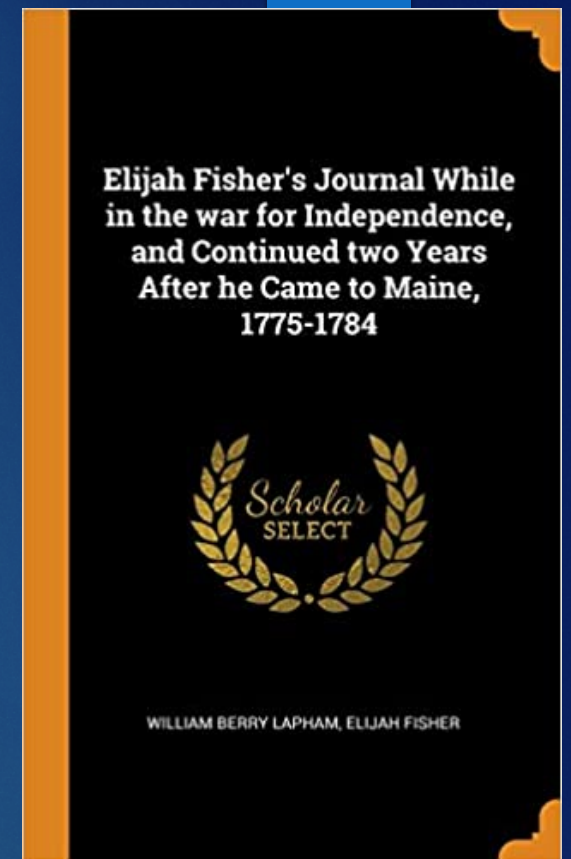
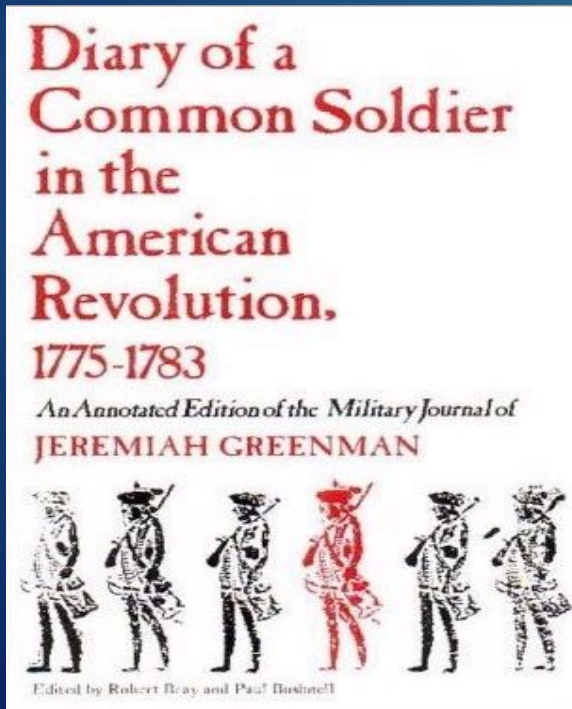
“Coming to the brow of those awful hills [a soldier] making a halt as if calculating whether their strength was sufficient for the descent; at last, he casts his eyes to the adjacent hill and sees his comrades clambering up among the snow and rocks.” – George Morison (30).

“Their whole time is spent ... watching, starving, and in cold weather, freezing and sickness. If they get any chance to rest, it must be in the woods or fields, under the side of a fence, in an orchard or in any other place but a comfortable one- lying on the cold and often wet ground, and, perhaps before the eyes can even be closed with a moments sleep, alarmed and compelled to stand under arms for an hour or two, or to receive an attack from the enemy; and when permitted again to endeavor to rest, called upon immediately to remove some four or five miles to seek some other place” – Joseph Plumb Martin (39)



“1 or 2 men draped dead with heat wen marchin” – Jeremiah Greenman (76).

“This morn about 5 o'clock very cold and raining turn'd out ... Very wet and cold. Marcht all day in ye rain.” – Jereimah Greenman (87).



“At twelve at night, we come into a wood and had order to bild ourselves shelter to brake of the storm and make ourselves as comfortable as we could.” – Elijah Fisher (7).

To Suffering in Stagnation: Encampments, Shortages, and the Drudgery of Winter

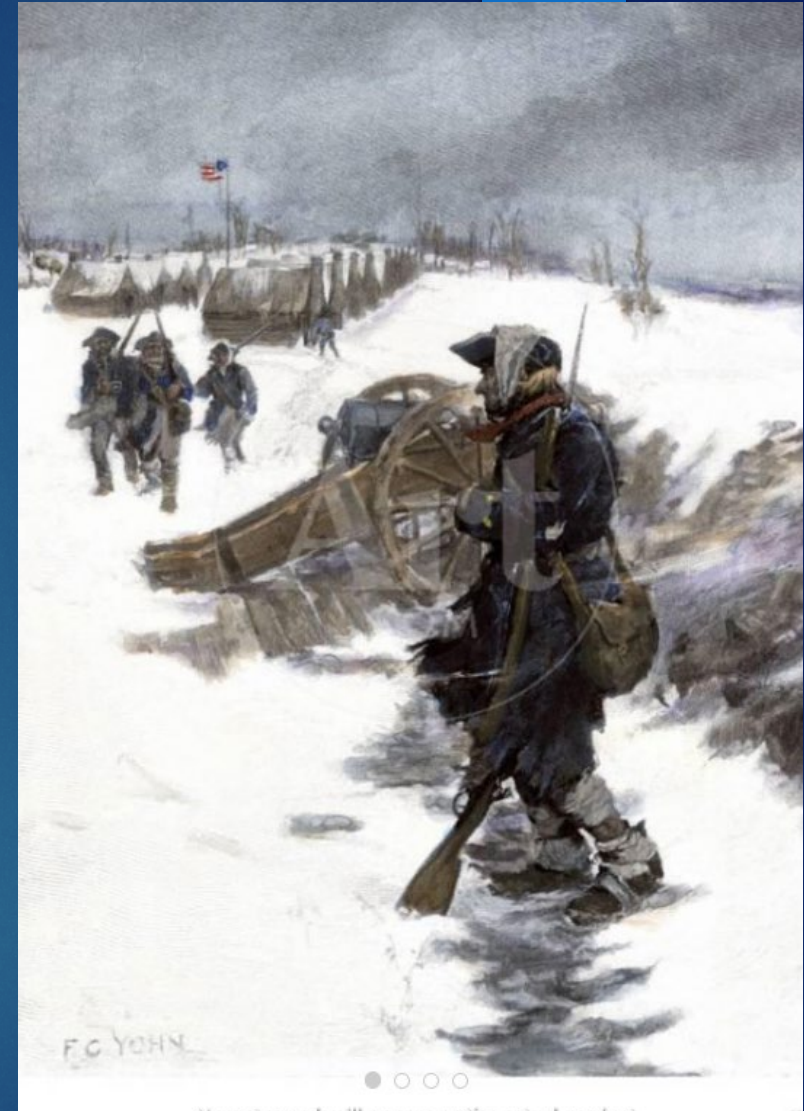


VALLEY FORGE, 1777-1778.

DIARY OF SURGEON ALBIGENCE WALDO, OF THE CONNECTICUT LINE.

[Dr. Albigen^{ce} Waldo was born February 27, 1750, at Pomfret, Connecticut. His medical preceptor was Dr. John Spaulding, of Canterbury. During the Revolution he served as clerk in Captain Samuel McClelland's Woodstock company, in the "Lexington Alarm;" July 6, 1775, was commissioned surgeon's mate of the Eighth Connecticut Regiment, Colonel Jedediah Huntington, but, owing to ill health, was discharged in September following. On December 14, 1776, the Connecticut Committee of War commissioned him chief surgeon of the armed ship "Oliver Cromwell." He was next commissioned surgeon (January 1, 1777) of the First Connecticut Infantry Regiment of the Line, and served while it was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Prentice and Colonel Josiah Starr, and attached to Huntington's brigade of McDougall's division. This regiment was raised largely in New London County, Connecticut, and took the field in the spring at Peekskill, New York, where it remained until ordered by Washington to join the army in Pennsylvania in September of 1777. In the battle of Germantown the regiment was engaged on the left flank, and suffered some loss in killed, wounded, and missing. Ill health again compelled Surgeon Waldo to retire from the service, and he resigned October 1, 1779. He died January 29, 1794. His last lineal descendant, Charles A. Waldo, died in Florida in December of 1896.

We print Surgeon Waldo's diary from the manuscript kindly contributed by Mr. Amos Perry, of the Rhode Island Historical Society; the annotations are by the ED. PENNA. MAC.]



"I am Sick, discontented, and out of humour. Poor food, hard lodging, cold Weather, fatigue, nasty clothes, rusty cookery, Vomit half my time, smok'd out of my senses ... I can't endure it, why are we sent here to starve and Freeze. Here all Confusion, smoke and cold, hunger and filrhyness"" – Albigen^{ce} Waldo (306).

"On the Late Snow-Storm". Boston
Gazette, 27 Januray, 1783

Pray don't forget the soldiers bold,
With WASHINGTON the brave,
Who are exp. fed to the cold,
AMERICA, to save.



MEMENTO EDITOR & SONS,
*By inserting the following, you'll much oblige one
of your customers.*

On the late Snow-Storm.

*Now all the gay beauties of Summer are past,
And stern grinning Winter advances at last.*

BRIGHT flakes of snow compose the storm,
Whilst Boreas whistles round ;
Stern Winter in her native form,
Is in the parlour found.

I make no doubt but many are glad
To see the visiter come ;
While other some, are very sad,
Who have no food at home.

But such as are increas'd in wealth,
Have riches laid in store ;
May drink around each others health,
But still forget the poor.

Pray don't forget the soldiers bold,
With WASHINGTON the brave,
Who are exp. fed to the cold,
AMERICA, to save.

Who has emerg'd into the field,
To save our bleeding land ;
His warlike sword he now doth wield
In his victorious hand.

"A Humble Petition of Want and Misery". New Jersey Gazette, 12 February, 1780.

The humble PETITION of WANT and MISERY.

Addressed to all Christian Readers.

WHILE thro' the drear of frost and snow,
Shivering and shaking now we go,

O cast a tender eye!

For this good and your wealth was giv'n:
You are the delegates of Heav'n
To stop the heart-felt sigh!

While cloth'd in fur you stand elate,
You cannot feel the wretched state;
You cannot form our woe;
Yet must each sympathetic breast
When once it hears how we're distress'd
And how forlorn we go.

When cold and hunger both prevail,
And both with equal force assail,
To wound a mortal frame,
Bring to each mind a horrid view,
A scene as horrid as 'tis true,
And almost wants a name.

The parent hears his offspring cry,
The children watch the parent's eye,
And catch the falling tear;
Then echo back each dismal groan,
Till soon one universal moan
Of sorrow rends the air.

Tho' worthless objects may be found,
Who justly feel the piercing wound,
Yet be the fault their own;
Leave them to Heav'n, while you dispense
Those blessings you've receiv'd from theace,
And gain th' immortal crown.

How many pray'rs you'll then obtain,
How many blessings not in vain,
Or undeserv'd bestow'd:
From morn to night, from day to day,
Poor WANT and MISERY will pray,
To bless the great and good.

When cold and hunger both prevail,
And both with equal force assail,
To wound a mortal frame,
Bring to each mind a horrid view,
A scene as horrid as 'tis true,
And almost wants a name.

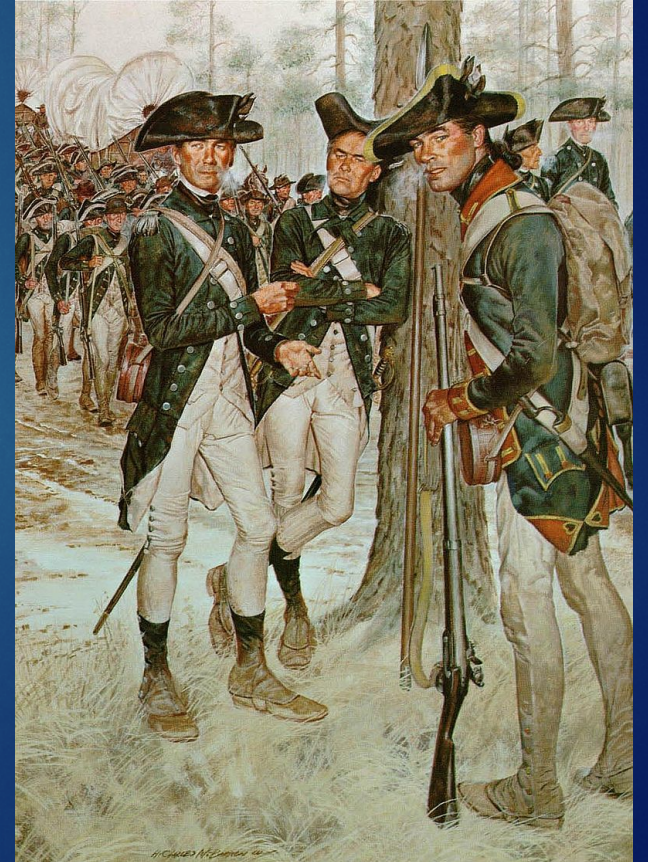
"At one time it snowed for the greater part of four days successively and there fell as many feet deep of snow." Martin, Memoir of a Revolutionary Soldier."

"I do solemnly declare that I did not put a single morsel of victuals into my mouth for four days and as many nights, except a little black birch bark which I gnawed of a stick of wood if that can be called victuals ... saw several of the men roast their old shoes" – Joseph Plum Martin (97).

“There was a spell of soft still weather, there not being wind enough for several days to dispel the smoke caused by the fires in camp.”

“I was not able to open them for several hours together.”

“Any hogsty was preferable to [the] tents to sleep in” —
Joseph Plumb Martin (42).



Weakening the Body: How Exposure and Depravations led to Illness and Death



“Broke out with the smallpox ... were carried three miles out in the country out of the camp,” Caleb Haskell (88).



“I had the canopy of heaven for my hospital and the ground for my hammock. I found a spot where the dry leaves had collected between the knolls; I made up a bed of these and nestled in it, having no other friend present but the sun to smile upon me. I had nothing to eat or drink, not even water, and was unable to go after any myself” – Joseph Pumb Martin (37).



“They died like rotten sheep” – John Greenwood

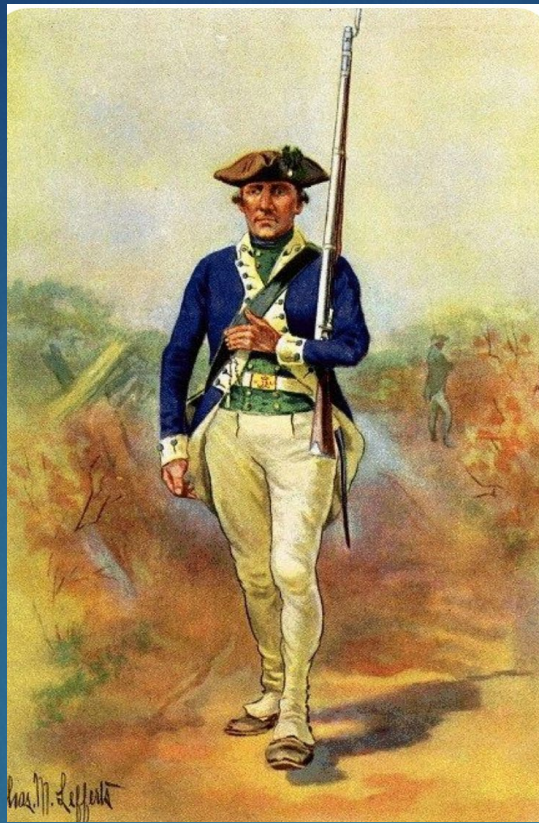


“An ox's milt, which had escaped the hogs and dogs ... with eyes overflowing with tears, at parting with what [he] had thought to be a friend,” – Joseph Plumb Martin (42-43).



"I was in such a tack of Pain I could not sleep a Nights nor rest a Days"
- Elijah Fisher (5).

"Quart of ginn and ten dashes f mustard seed and a hand full o horserdish roots and steep them together and take a glass of that Every morning" —
Elijah Fisher



"He must die and [that]
his disease was
occasioned by extreme
exposure in the army" —
Justus Bellamy pension
report.



Thank you!