

avoided, individual prisoners began to lag and desert that day.²¹ The carelessness of the guard, many of them already bored with their tedious duties and anxious to return to their homes, probably accounted for this loss. Aware of the situation, Lawson warned Washington in a letter written that night from Camp Drinking Spring, that he could not guarantee against escapes.²²

During the four succeeding days no further significant disorders occurred and the column pressed steadily forward, in an effort to stay within their time schedule.²³ As they moved through the country beyond New Kent Court House and into Hanover County, changes began to appear in the terrain, increasing rises in the road breaking the monotony of the Tidewater flatlands. Occasional tobacco fields pierced the woodland beside the road. On October 26, as they passed to the left of New Castle, a steady autumn rain began to fall, staying with them until they were well beyond the valley of the Pamunkey River. This change in the weather made the march by day more disagreeable; by night, with only the trees to shelter them from the elements, their camp fires were very little comfort.²⁴ Dry wood became a problem and in search of it the prisoners were not above destroying private property. Apparently

²¹ Doehla, Tagebuch, 160.

²² Letter from Lawson to Washington, October 24, 1781, in Washington Papers.

²³ Governor Nelson, in planning provision stations for the column, allowed one week for them to travel from Yorktown to Fredericksburg. Letter from Nelson to the Commissary at Fredericksburg, October 21, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 564.

²⁴ Doehla, Tagebuch, 160-161.

the escort condoned their behaviour for one of the British officers wrote in his journal that

our guards were . . . called backwoodsmen, between whom and the inhabitants of the lowers parts there existed no cordiality; and at night when we halted, they not only allowed but even encouraged our men to pull down and make fires of the fence-rails, as we had been accustomed to do when we had arms in our hands; and when a proprietor complained they only laughed at him. They did not scruple also to let us make free with a turnip field.²⁵

Finally, after a week's journey, the weary troops saw the blue haze of the valley of the Rappahannock River, which indicated that they were nearing the little town of Fredericksburg situated on the river's west bank. They were destined to spend three days near the town before continuing on to Winchester or Frederick, depending upon their assignments.

The evening and night of October 29 was spent in a glade one and one-half miles south of the town. Here they received provisions and money, the latter for the first time. Despite the rain, which had begun anew, many visited the neighboring farms to purchase poultry and vegetables, these being a welcome supplement to the coarse muffins baked from the commissary's corn meal.²⁶ On the following morning the main body of the troops were joined by the Gloucester garrison which had come up under the command of Colonel West.²⁷ In the afternoon of

²⁵Graham, ed., Memoir of General Graham, 66.

²⁶Doehla, Tagebuch, 161; "Popp's Journal," 249.

²⁷West delivered approximately 1,000 prisoners to Lawson at Fredericksburg. Journal of Baron von Glosen, I, 381. The militiamen of the former's command, whose terms of enlistment (3 months) had expired, here stacked their arms. The remainder were instructed to join Lawson's command. Letter from Nelson to Lawson, October 20, 1781, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 88; letter from Weedon to Nelson, October 20, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 560.

the same day the whole body of troops moved through Fredericksburg and two miles beyond to a new camp-site on the bank of the Rappahannock. This being the half-way mark on their long trek, the prisoners were permitted a day of rest.²⁸

Early Thursday morning, November 1, the column waded through the chilling waters of the river, crossing to Falmouth on the opposite bank.²⁹ This accomplished without mishap they advanced rapidly along the Potomac Path, the main public road leading to the north. Now the route followed by the troops was frequently broken by small fresh water streams, all easily forded despite the continuous rain. Where they encountered bog-land, the lead companies felled trees to keep the sloughs of mud from hindering the men's progress. By nightfall they reached a point slightly west of the little port town of Dumfries.³⁰

On Friday morning the prisoners turned off the main highway, following the pine-covered ridge above the freshes feeding Powell's and Neabsco Creeks. This change was probably ordered to avoid the

²⁸Doehla, Tagebuch, 161-163.

²⁹Ibid., 163.

³⁰The condition of the roads in this section of Virginia were a constant subject of complaint during the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century. Good descriptions of the roads followed by the prisoners will be found in Francois Jean Marquis de Chastellux, Travels in North-America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782 by the Marquis de Chastellux, trans. George Grieve (London, 1787), II, 3-11; Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784, trans. and ed. Alfred J. Morrison (Philadelphia, 1911) II, 46 and 78; Isaac Weld, Travels through the States of North America ... 1795, 1796, and 1797 (3rd ed.; London, 1800), I, 91.

deep gorge of Occoquan Creek and to take full advantage of the shelter offered by the trees.³¹ During the day the column came to Fairfax Court House and at this point the body of troops destined for Maryland was separated from the full company.³² Also, anticipating a shortage of quarters at Winchester,³³ Lawson left about one hundred of the English troops in care of the local militia.³⁴

After a night's rest the Maryland-bound prisoners continued northward until they intersected the wagon trail along the west bank of the Potomac River. They then followed this route west, past Leesburg, and north to Noland's Ferry, at which point they were transported across the river to where the Maryland Militia waited to conduct them to Frederick.³⁵

³¹None of the soldiers' journals identify landmarks above Stafford County before the arrival at Fairfax Court House. The route suggested in the text is assumed after examining the wagon routes of the period, west of the Potomac Path, and in consideration of the time that was spent in reaching Fairfax Court House.

³²Doehla, *Tagebuch*, 163; "Popp's Journal," 250. Washington's instructions for the disposal of the prisoners were as follows: at Fort Frederick, Md.: the Hessian regiments Bose, 271, and Prince Hereditaire, 425; all Yagers, 68; British Light Infantry, 594; Seventeenth Foot, 205; Thirty-third Foot, 225; Seventy-first Foot, 242; Eightieth Foot, 588; Tarleton's British Legion, 192, and the North Carolina Volunteers, 114. At Winchester: the two regiments of Anspachers, 948; the Royal Artillery, 193; the Brigade of Guards, 467; Twenty-third Foot, 205; Forty-third Foot, 307; Seventy-sixth Foot, 628; the Queen's Rangers, 245, and 33 Pioneers and Guides. Thus 2924 men were destined for Maryland and 3029 for the latter post. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Writings of Washington*, XXIII, 263n. Washington obviously took his figures from Commissary Durie's return. Hence the above figures include not only those under Lawson's escort but the sick and wounded expected to join them later.

³³Cf. below, 49-50.

³⁴Doehla, *Tagebuch*, 163.

³⁵Cf. McAllister, *Virginia Militia*, 39, 98, 145 and 162.

The troops to be confined at Winchester turned westward toward their destination and that evening camped within sight of the upper ranges of the Blue Ridge Mountains.³⁶ On Sunday morning, November 4th, the column moved up and through Ashby's Gap;³⁷ by afternoon they had descended to the Shenandoah River in the valley below the mountains. Despite the weather, by now quite cold, the prisoners and their escort again had to wade through icy waters, carrying their shoes and stockings. In some places the water reached the upper bodies of those on foot and the swift current constantly threatened to unbalance them. The officers made use of their horses but, as the river frequently closed over the animals' backs, even this did not keep them totally dry. Once on the other side, the men were immediately on their way, moving rapidly to ward off chills.³⁸

On Monday evening, November 5, after a sixteen day journey covering nearly two hundred and forty miles, the column finally reached Winchester. They passed through the town and four miles beyond to the site of Old Fort Frederick, a relict of the French and Indian War.

³⁶Doehla, Tagebuch, 163.

³⁷Here occurred an incident that has become one of the most amusing anecdotes regarding the prisoners. As the column approached the Gap, several of the British officers rode ahead and stopped at a tavern kept by Mrs. Ashby (Ashby's Tavern still stands near Paris, to the north of U.S. Highway 50). Captain Graham, one of the officers has left the following account:

"... I asked Mrs. Ashley [Ashby] if she could give two or three of us anything to eat. She stared at my uniform, saying — 'A militiaman, I guess.' 'No,' was my reply. 'Continental mayhap;' to which I also replied in the negative. 'Oho!' said she, 'I see you are one of the sarpints, one of ould Wallace's [Cornwallis] men; well now, I have two sons, one was at the catching of Johnny Burgoyne, and the other at that of you; and next year they are both going to catch Clinton at New York; but you shall be treated kindly, my mother came from the ould country.'"

Graham, ed., Memoir of General Graham, 66-67.

³⁸Doehla, Tagebuch, 163-164.

There, in what was called the New Frederick Barracks³⁹ and within the stockade surrounding, they were quartered. This was destined to be their home until the following January, when they were moved to facilitate the distribution of provisions. The winter weeks at Winchester, between November 5, 1781, and mid-January, 1782, were filled with hardships and many of the men did not live to move again.⁴⁰

³⁹The New Frederick Barracks had been built in the spring of 1780 to shelter units of the Convention Army shifted from Charlottesville, and elsewhere, on the approach of Cornwallis from the south. Alexander Wall, The Story of the Convention Army 1777-1782, Reprinted from the New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin (October, 1927), 29; letter of Colonel Joseph Holmes to Governor Nelson, October 26, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 569-570; Samuel Kercheval, A History of the Valley of Virginia (4th ed.; Strasburg, Va., 1925), 143.

⁴⁰Doehla, Tagebuch, 164-171.

CHAPTER III

THE EVACUATION OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED

While the main body of the British Army was enroute to their places of confinement, two groups of their comrades continued on at the scene of the recent siege. The larger of the two groups was composed of the sick and wounded who had been unable to leave on October 21. In addition, detachments of the Twenty-third and the Eightieth Regiments remained to provide adequate hospital facilities on Gloucester Point. The latter completed their duties by Sunday, the twenty-eighth, and departed for Winchester on the following morning.¹

Though the British invalids were originally interned at Gloucester, it was not the intention of the Americans that they should remain there. Washington was anxious to return northward before the winter snows and needed his full command in the event that Clinton moved from New York. Further, the Yorktown-Williamsburg locale had been chosen as the site of Rochambeau's winter encampment. Certainly the French could not be burdened with prisoners that the Articles of Capitulation had proclaimed to be the responsibility of the Americans. With these things in mind, and cognizant of the independence of the

¹Graham, ed., Memoir of General Graham, 71; Ross, ed., Memoirs ... of Admiral Lord de Saumarez, II, 341; Major Rowland Broughton-Mainwaring, ed., Historical Record of the Royal Welch Fusiliers Late the Twenty-Third Regiment (London, 1889), 106. There is no record of the route followed by these men, or of the escort, if any, which accompanied them.

local militia,² Washington made arrangements to move as many of the troops as possible before he left the area.

The problem confronting the American commander was not one easily resolved. The most logical inland base to which the prisoners might be moved was Fredericksburg, a week's march away and over roads which were by this time virtually impassable. Despite this, Washington issued orders that all those able to march must be prepared to leave by no later than November 4. At the same time, he wrote to Rochambeau, requesting small craft to move the stretcher patients.³

In keeping with the first part of Washington's plan, and in obedience to orders issued by him, detachments of Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt's Second New York Regiment⁴ were posted at Yorktown to receive the convalescents on the morning of November 5.⁵ The number brought

²On October 22, Nelson requested the County Lieutenant of Gloucester to provide a militia guard for the hospital. Letter from Nelson to the County Lieutenant of Gloucester, October 22, 1781, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 91. However, as late as November 24, no militiamen had reported. H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia (Richmond, 1932), II, 403. In the meantime Washington had assigned troops of the Second Maryland Regiment, whose enlistment terms prevented their being ordered south, to this duty. Instructions to Captain William Dent Beall, November 4, 1781, Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, XXXIII, 330-331.

³Letter from Count de Rochambeau to Count de Grasse, October 28, 1781, in MS letterbook marked "1781 1782 1783", in Rochambeau Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, p. 178. (Hereafter cited as Rochambeau Papers).

⁴Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt, "Autobiography of Philip Van Cortlandt, Brigadier General in the Continental Army," Magazine of American History, II (May, 1878), 295-296.

Almon W. Lauber, ed., Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, 1778-1780; Second New York Regiment, 1780-1783 (Albany, N.Y., 1932), 765.

over from Gloucester was about four hundred and sixty, both British and German. Following virtually the same route traveled by the column under General Lawson,⁶ Cortlandt set out for Fredericksburg on the fourth, arriving there on the eleventh. Here the prisoners were received by a militia guard under General Weedon.⁷ Washington's instructions were for the men to remain at this point until they had recuperated sufficiently to rejoin their regiments. For some of the prisoners their stay must have been a brief one as Doehla reports that the first convoy of convalescents arrived in Winchester on November 20.⁸

After the first contingent of convalescents marched northward to Fredericksburg, there still remained about 1300 sick and wounded at Gloucester, using buildings needed by the French for winter quarters. Washington's plan for these men was that they were to be transported to Todd's Bridge by water, and from there overland to Fredericksburg or Hobb's Hole (now Tappahannock) where they might embark for Fredericksburg by water. He had designated about 300 Maryland Continentals, whose enlistments expired in December, to remain behind to assist in the removal of the patients. The Marylanders were to be relieved at Fredericksburg by militiamen under General Weedon.⁹ This plan, however, could not be

⁶The column stopped at Williamsburg, Bird's Tavern, New Kent C.H., Newcastle, Hanover C.H., New Market, and Spotswood's Plantation. Ibid., 765.

⁷Letter from Washington to Nelson, November 3, 1781, Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, XXIII, 325-326.

⁸Doehla, Tagebuch, 166.

⁹Letter from Washington to Nelson, November 3, 1781, Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, XXIII, 325-326.

immediately realized as there were no small craft available in which to transport the men. All the American vessels were being employed to move the Continental Army up the Chesapeake. The French, too, were faced with a shortage of shipping, due to the embarkation of St. Simon's troops for the West Indies. As a result of these circumstances no additional prisoners left Gloucester before Washington's departure from Yorktown on November 5.¹⁰

The responsibility for removing the invalids now fell on Thomas Durie, the American Deputy Commissary of Prisoners. From the manner in which he handled the task, he must have regarded the assignment as a disagreeable one and one of which he was anxious to be rid. Though he succeeded in relieving, to some extent, the housing shortage which confronted the French, in doing so, he managed to create new problems for both Rochambeau and the Virginia government.

On November 6 Durie received an analyzed report showing the exact status of the Gloucester Hospital.¹¹ From it he learned that there remained a total of 1387 men, of whom 609 were considered entirely too ill to be moved. This meant that 778 could be evacuated as soon as transportation became available, and Nelson had promised boats.¹² If the latter arrived promptly the detachment of Marylanders would still be available as escorts.

¹⁰William S. Baker, Itinerary of General Washington from June 15, 1775 to December 23, 1783. (Philadelphia, 1892), 247.

¹¹Report of Present State of Sick, and Wounded, belonging to the General and Regimental Hospitals, at Gloucester, November 6, 1781, [signed by] Alexr Grant, Surgeon and Field Inspector, in Washington Papers.

¹²Letter from Rochambeau to Nelson, November 6, 1781, Rochambeau Papers, p. 181.

In light of subsequent events Durie must have feared a premature departure of the Continentals or else he decided that the number of boats sent by Nelson would be insufficient for his purposes. After waiting only three days, he ordered 350 of the sick men to proceed on foot to Todd's Bridge, fifty miles away. The arrival of the boats on the evening of these men's departure made it possible to embark 250 more prisoners on Saturday, November 10. Then, after making arrangements for an additional 160 men to proceed up the York and Mattaponi Rivers on November 13, Durie moved his quarters to Williamsburg where, on November 14, he reported his activities at Gloucester and requested the Virginia Government to provide conveyances to transfer the prisoners from Todd's Bridge to Fredericksburg. In addition, he stated that the more than 500 invalids who still remained at Gloucester were to be secured by a detachment from Rochambeau's army, with the understanding that these prisoners would be removed by the local militia as soon as it became evident that to do so would not endanger their lives.¹³

With the above accomplished, the Continental Commissary evidently considered his obligations in the Yorktown area fulfilled. His next report, dated November 17 from near Fredericksburg, informed the Governor that 400 of the prisoners had already arrived at Todd's Bridge with the rest of those coming by water expected at any hour. Unfortunately, nearly 100 of those who had been ordered to march had been unable to come farther than Williamsburg. Since they could not be provided for

¹³Letter from Durie to Lieutenant Governor Jameson, November 14, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 598.

there, they received orders to proceed to Hanover Court House and from there to Todd's Bridge.¹⁴ Upon issuing these final instructions Durie left Virginia to rejoin Washington's command.¹⁵

At the time of his departure, the task of removing the remaining prisoners from the Tidewater area was not only incomplete but had actually entered what was to be its most trying phase for the provincial authorities. Durie's mishandling of his obligations was by no means completely to blame for this chaos which arose primarily from the failure of the local officials to cooperate fully with Washington and Nelson.

Among the men who departed from Yorktown on October 21, there were many who were actually unfit to make the march but too proud to stay behind. On the road some of these soon tired and began to lag. Others, in their determination to keep up, retarded the advance of the column and had to be weeded out by the militia guards. Thus it was that within the first week of the march about two hundred and forty disabled prisoners were left in the vicinity of Newcastle and Hanover Town, subject to the supervision of the local authorities.¹⁶

The disabled men were to remain in Hanover County until they could withstand the rigors of the march to Winchester or be transferred

¹⁴Abstract of letter from Durie to Nelson, *ibid.*, II, 607.

¹⁵Letter from Rochambeau to Nelson, November 21, 1781, Rochambeau Papers, p. 185.

¹⁶Letter from Colonel John Syme to Colonel William Davies, November 4, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 577.

to Fredericksburg. During their stay in the county they were to be guarded by the local militia under Colonel John Syme. Such an arrangement would have been satisfactory but for the ill-equipped state of the militia. On November 4, more than a week after the passage of Lawson's column, Colonel Syme reported to Colonel William Davies, chairman of the Virginia Board of War, that he had been unable to get arms and ammunition for the guards. Furthermore, that due to the scarcity of wagons, he had been forced to use ox-carts to transport the invalids.¹⁷

Syme's report, stating the inadequacies of the local militia to cope with the burden thrust upon them, was a prelude to the stream of complaints that soon reached Richmond. On November 6, representations were made in the General Assembly to the effect that the prisoners at large in Hanover County were an annoying factor in that community. Some roved about at will while twenty or more, who were too ill to move, had established themselves in a barn near Hanover Town where they remained without guards or adequate provisions for their health.¹⁸ On November 15, Fortunatus Crutchfield, a resident of Hanover Town, reported the presence of 157 British prisoners, in the small Pamunkey port who were not only unguarded but without a responsible officer of their own. Crutchfield stated that most of them were able to march and that he was afraid many would escape.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., II, 577.

¹⁸Letter from George Webb to Colonel William Davies, November 6, 1781, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 95.

¹⁹Letter from Crutchfield to Syme, November 15, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 601.

The complaints of the people of Hanover resulted in a renewed attempt by Colonel Davies to provide armed escorts to remove the prisoners to Fredericksburg. After learning that he could expect little help from the Hanover militia, he turned to the county lieutenants of adjacent counties. The response from them was equally unsatisfactory. Though the people constantly protested the presence of the prisoners, they were reluctant to help remove them.²⁰ Meanwhile the results of Durie's hasty action were beginning to complicate Davies's problems.

On November 22, a physician of Hanover Town reported that some French officers had delivered the stragglers from Williamsburg a few days before at New Castle. Shortly afterwards they proceeded to Hanover Town so that on the twenty-second there were no less than two hundred unguarded prisoners in the latter town. The doctor's letter went on to say that despite their freedom he had heard no complaints of their behavior in the neighborhood.²¹ His good opinion of the British troops was not shared by all of the local inhabitants.

Another letter from Hanover Town, dated November 25, reported that the prisoners were "daily committing some wanton destruction either on public or private property." The total number of men was

²⁰In response to Davies' request, Joseph Hickman said that most of the men of King William County had been in service since Leslie's invasion and that he felt that they should be excused, but if they must serve he would call up fifty men, providing Davies furnished arms and ammunition. See abstract of his letter to Davies, *ibid.*, II, 615.

²¹Letter from Doctor G. Wilson to Davies, November 22, 1781, *ibid.*, 618.

given as 213, of whom seventy-eight were those recently brought up from Williamsburg. According to Kirkpatrick, the writer, the prisoners did as they pleased. Specifically the irate citizen informed Davies that the troops had broken open a warehouse and removed several barrels of flour, that they had burned three empty buildings, and that in search of firewood they had pulled down all the fencing within a half mile of the town as well as a large part of the paling surrounding the gardens.²²

While the people of Hanover Town attempted to resolve their difficulties, their neighbors at Ayletts and Todd's Bridge were in an equally unhappy state. However, the latter seem to have been more successful in finding a solution to their problems. Apparently all but 189 of the prisoners which Commissary Durie had ordered brought through Todd's Bridge were immediately moved from that point to Fredericksburg.²³ Most of them continued under the escort of the Maryland Continentals. Others followed under militia guard from King and Queen County. On November 22, Major Richard Claiborne, the State Militia Officer assigned to supervise the operations at Todd's Bridge, was informed that only about one hundred prisoners then remained at that Mattaponi River base. The local official charged with their removal reported that his work had been delayed by the scarcity of wagons and that he objected to any continued impressment of his neighbors' carts and teams.²⁴ The writer

²²Letter from A. Kirkpatrick to Davies, November 25, 1781, *ibid.*, 623.

²³Abstract of letter from Colonel William Lyne to Davies, December 8, 1781, *ibid.*, 645.

²⁴Abstract of letter from Reuben Turner to Major [Richard] Claiborne, November 22, 1781, *ibid.*, 618.

must have had the courage of his convictions, for two weeks later, on December 8, Colonel William Lyne notified Davies that from eighty to ninety disabled prisoners still remained at Todd's Bridge.²⁵

The foregoing events occurred in the final weeks of Thomas Nelson's term as Governor, a period during which he was ill and largely dependent upon his lieutenants for the proper administration of the state's affairs. Though they were admittedly handicapped by the reluctance of the populace to cooperate, it seems that they might have been more successful had they approached the people in a sterner manner. On December 13, Benjamin Harrison succeeded Nelson and thereafter there was an immediate improvement in the evacuation of the prisoners northward.

Governor Harrison first directed his attention to the problem in Hanover County. His letter to the County Lieutenant, dated December 11, charged that the officer's past neglect of his duties merited reprehension, since such conduct was "highly injurious to the American cause and to this State in particular." Colonel Syme was instructed to order the immediate collection and removal of prisoners to Fredericksburg. Enroute the officer commanding their escort was to take with him any stragglers found in the counties through which he passed.²⁶ The latter order was undoubtedly predicated upon reports that many of the prisoners, in order to obtain food, had taken employment with families in the area. One escaped prisoner, who passed through this region in late November,

²⁵Abstract of letter from Lyne to Davies, December 8, 1781, ibid., 645.

²⁶Letter from Governor Harrison to the County Lieutenant of Hanover, December 11, 1781, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 109.

recorded in his journal that he was presented with numerous opportunities to remain in the area as a laborer and that he saw above forty British troops who were working for the inhabitants.²⁷

On December 15 Colonel Thomas Lomax, a member of the State Council, informed the Governor that between fifty and one hundred British troops were working in Caroline County.²⁸ Harrison ordered that county's militia officers to assemble the prisoners in one group and to arrange for their removal to Fredericksburg.²⁹ The response to these instructions was prompt³⁰ and after the beginning of 1782 no further complaints of annoyance by prisoners were reported.

At Todd's Bridge, Harrison's attempts to relieve the position of the prisoner's required more time. Colonel William Lyne's letter to Colonel Davies, on December 8, described many of the men as "having the Flux" and in danger of death due to the lack of proper shelter and food.³¹ Lyne suggested that they be transported to the hospital at

²⁷Lamb, Journal, 390-391.

²⁸Letter from Lomax to Harrison, December 15, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 659.

²⁹Order from Harrison to Davies, n.d., ibid. Harrison's instructions were written on the back of the letter cited above, hence they must have been issued after December 15.

³⁰Abstract of letter from Colonel A[nthony] Thornton to Davies, December 24, 1781, ibid., 669.

³¹Letter from Lyne to Davies, December 8, 1781, ibid., 645.

Hanover Town.³² The Governor must have decided against Lyne's suggestion since the invalids were still at Todd's Bridge on January 7.³³ However, during that week Harrison ordered wagons to carry them to Fredericksburg,³⁴ and by January 9 the prisoners were enroute there.³⁵ With this operation underway, the only British troops who remained at large above Williamsburg were a small number employed on scattered farms. They went unmolested until May of 1782, when in response to a Congressional resolution, Harrison ordered them collected and sent to join their regiments in confinement.³⁶

The activities described above were not too unlike those which transpired at Gloucester during the same period, though the latter were more localized. At the time of Commissary Durie's departure in November, 1781, more than five hundred British and German invalids remained at Gloucester under the supervision of the French. The prisoners were not adequately supplied with provisions,³⁷ and Rochambeau, distressed over their

³² Hanover Town was ravaged by Cornwallis' troops during the summer of 1781. Later, during the siege of Yorktown, British prisoners were temporarily quartered there. Following the capitulation some of the town's buildings served as a hospital station for wounded militiamen and disabled prisoners.

³³ Abstract of letter from Benjamin Green, Acting Deputy Quartermaster, to Harrison, January 7, 1782, ibid., III, 9.

³⁴ Letter from Harrison to the County Lieutenants of King William and King and Queen Counties, January 8, 1782, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 122-123.

³⁵ Abstract of letter from Major Claiborne to Harrison, January 9, 1782, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, III, 12.

³⁶ Letter from Harrison to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, May 6, 1782, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 219.

³⁷ Letter from Rochambeau to Nelson, November 21, 1781, Rochambeau Papers, p. 185.

circumstances, attempted to evacuate them to Fredericksburg. On November 21, he sent two hundred of those able to travel by water to Fredericksburg.³⁸ Apparently this did not include all of the convalescents since David Ross, in a letter to Colonel Davies dated November 22, complained that many of the prisoners were recovered and were escaping. He stated that there existed no guard to prevent the latter.³⁹

Ross's adverse report of the conditions at Gloucester soon reached the ears of Colonel Joseph Holmes, a conscientious officer to whom Washington had assigned the internment camp at Winchester. Holmes informed Governor Harrison that the existence of such conditions was in direct violation of Washington's orders to remove the prisoners inland as rapidly as possible.⁴⁰ The Governor reacted immediately. His letter to the County Lieutenant of Gloucester, dated December 11, chastised the officer for his failure to properly execute earlier instructions and directed him "to order the strictest search" throughout the county for stragglers. The prisoners discovered, including those employed by local inhabitants, were to be forwarded to Fredericksburg under a militia escort.⁴¹ The removal of these prisoners left to be evacuated only those bedridden at Gloucester.

³⁸Letter from David Ross to Nelson, November 21, 1781, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, II, 616.

³⁹Letter from Ross to Davies, November 22, 1781, in ibid., 617; Letter from John Robertson to Davies, December 7, 1781, ibid., 642.

⁴⁰Letter from Colonel Joseph Holmes to Harrison, December 8, 1781, ibid., 643.

⁴¹Letter from Harrison to the County Lieutenant of Gloucester, December 11, 1781, Official Letters of the Governors, III, 108.

As the Virginia Militia was exerting considerable effort to collect the scattered stragglers and escapes, at Yorktown Rochambeau was planning to free himself of the invalids who remained in the hospital. From the nature of the extant official records, he exchanged those who survived the winter for captured Frenchmen. The largest shipment of convalescents used in this manner left Yorktown on February 20, 1782, to be exchanged for French soldiers and sailors captured on the French cutter, Alerte, and the prize sloop, Bonetta.⁴² Rochambeau described the eighty British and German prisoners he sent to New York as "disabled and sick, most of them not in condition to serve any longer."⁴³ This exchange of prisoners, though not sanctioned by any cartel between the hostile armies, was approved by Washington and Congress.⁴⁴ The negotiations were not completed until August, 1782, by which time some talk of peace was already being voiced in London and Paris.

⁴²On her return from New York in November, 1781, Rochambeau dispatched the Bonetta to France with a load of sick and wounded French soldiers and sailors. Letter from Rochambeau to De Grasse, December 26, 1781, in photocopies of MS in Ministère de la Guerre, Paris, Correspondence, Vol. 3734, French Photostats, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, p. 179. The Bonetta was apparently recaptured by the British fleet during her crossing.

⁴³Letter from Rochambeau to Washington, February 19, 1782, ibid., p. 184; cf. Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal Institution of Great Britain (London, 1906), II, 396.

⁴⁴Washington was undoubtedly more than willing since, in addition to French prisoners, the exchanges resulted in the release of the Chevalier de Laumoy, one of the Continental Army's best Engineers. Colonel de Laumoy had been taken prisoner at the fall of Charleston, S.C., in 1780. Letters from Washington to the Secretary at War and to Rochambeau, August 16, 1782, in Fitzpatrick, ed, Writings of Washington, XXV, 26-28.