

## Health and Medicine Selections

Great Britain. War Office. Out-letters: Secretary at War: American Letter Books (WO4/273-276, 987-988)

(HIL-MICL G7W3S4A5O9)

Based on a perusal of the supplemental volumes, 987-988, Secretaries Ellis and Barrington made it very clear by their orders and directives that the health and welfare of the soldiers were very important. As written by Barrington to Commander-in-Chief, Gage in 1765, "Health and preservation of men are objects of such great importance that I am convinced you will go to farthest limits of your instructions in making provisions for them . . ." Even so, these records indicate much of the Secretary's correspondence was related to the health of soldiers, particularly in Florida and the islands in the West Indies, wherein the records indicate there was much sickness.

The records contain many irregularities which concerned the Secretary, as realised in his responses, as follows:

1. Staffing, as seen in the Secretary's response – "extraordinary number of mates ordered for the island...hope the necessity of it decreases as they are better accommodated and more enured to climate" (p 28, see also pp 137, 109, 62, 9)
2. Medicines, and the "great want" of to the Secretary's surprise as adequate amounts were shipped (see also pp 188, 137, 109, 9, 81).
3. Returns submitted to the Secretary of the state of the regiment which indicated to him "losses suffered considerable and alarming." (p 62)

Also included in these two volumes are the following:

1. List of staff proposed for service in North America 1765, with additional allowances. Herein is included data from the different posts as to their contingencies of medical staff, for example, surgeon major, mates, and apothecary (e.g. p 143).

2. The organisation of health care and hospitals, for example, in the Inspector General of Hospital's letter to the Secretary (p 9). This letter gives insight into the issues he considers responsible for the health of troops: "impossible to relieve the sick if they are ill lodged or recover convalescents without proper diet and refreshments....fresh provisions are necessary and moderate wine."(See also pp 62, 81, 9, 109 for other explanations given for sickness.)
3. List of mates in Florida, with their names and pay advance, total pay is found in (p32).
4. Invalids and plans for dealing with (p137).
5. Shortages in medicines and provisions highlight in these records the issues related to transportation, storage and procurement and the roles personnel played in the logistical chain.
6. Hospital for sick soldiers -incurable due to climate (p 178).
7. Appointments, vacancies.
8. Hospital accounts and procedures of (p 290).

The other volumes do include similar types of material relating to hospitals, as indicated briefly in *Guide to the Materials for American History, to 1783* (HIL-MICGDL E188 .A52 vol. 2).