

## **Health and Medicine in In-letters: America and West Indies (WO1/1-13)**

Volumes 1 (1756-63), 6 (1764-65), and 10 (1776-80) contain examples of the kinds of documents related to health and medicine in these records. They include the following:

**Hospitals** - 1) returns and lists provide data about its overall structure, staffing details such as names and situations, and distribution and include documents such as: *List of officers of his Majesty's Hospitals serving in North America*, (vol. 1, pp 211, 413); *Return of staff officers and mates of his majesty's hospital at New York* (vol. 10, p293); *General Return of staff....Hospital at Albany*, data includes those admitted, discharged, died and totals (vol. 10. p. 385); and *Distribution of officers of the Hospital in America* (vol. 6, p 65). 2) Hospitals - accounts and expenses give costs. but also details of necessities for the running of the institution, ex. nurse, clerk, bedding, etc., and includes: *Estimate of expenses attending hospital stores at New York*, with notes (vol. 6, p 313); also see p 585 for Quebec with a note which indicates *no mention is made of rent of hospital which is at present in the Hotel Dieu; Estimate of annual expense in time of peace of several depts...* includes hospital charges (vol 6, @p. 340); and *Examination into the Hessian hospital accounts* (vol 10, p 551). 3) Hospitals - orders: General Howe's orders respecting Hessian Hospitals (vol. 10, p 435);

**Inspector General of Hospitals' orders** - medicines for foreign troops (vol. 10, p129), and stoppages of men in the general hospital (vol. 10, p 157).

**Staffing** - requests from members for resignations, pay raises, promotions, and leaves of absence gives insight about their situation and history, often times it relates to their health, and the doctor's note for care in another climate. (Vol. 1, pp 477, 640, 663, 727, 796; vol. 6, p 465; vol. 10, pp 73, 218, 371, 609, and 119 - *List of Leave Absences* with reasons. Other issues noted in correspondence: staff shortages with explanations due often to ill health/death, and discrepancies and issues related to appointments (vol. 1, pp 295, 333, 681,727). In lists of staff for regiments and garrisons, are found medical staff, for ex., *List of General and Staff Officers....in the colonies*, 1778, includes medical staff by role and name (vol. 10, p 599). In many lists (returns) data can include: place at, promotions organised by regiment, duties, allowances, numbers of in that role, and pay. (vol. 1, pp 98, 203, 427; vol 10. p 369).

**Supplies and relationship to health** - lack of provisions and medicines and the distress due to want of (vol. 1, pp 13, 477, 727, 885; vol. 6 pp 61, 221, 375); provisions and accommodations, ex. candles, wood, oil, sheets (vol. 1, p 125, 609), clothing (vol. 1 after p 125, 609), barracks, fresh produce. Specific documents include: *Instructions to Barrack masters at Forts and Posts* gives a very good picture of what was expected for the living conditions of a soldier (vol. 10, p 270); *Rules and Regulations in all Forts and Posts...for the Southern Dept* gives a very detailed account of the expectation of a soldier's living conditions, in which it states *As many soldiers as*

*can be put without inconvenience or prejudice to their health, are to be lodged in a room....(Vol. 6, p 425); List of works which must be undertaken by Commander in Chief and which will not admit delay, Engineers Dept in which it is stated, At St. Augustine and Pensacola the troops have no places to lodge in and places assigned to them open to the wind, rain, and without chimneys. The barracks are so bad that the troops are at present in a miserable condition. (vol. 6, after p 335)*

**Health** - Letters indicating conditions of garrison, for example, *great sickness prevails* (vol. 10, p 164); Lists or returns, for ex. *Return of serjeants, corporals...turned over to the 62nd Regiment* which indicates whether the privates were in hospital, sick or small pox (vol. 1, p before 203); Sickness - see above, as well as letters describing serious disorders affecting the soldiers and the explanations for it: *extreme heat, troubles with bilious fever and being crowded in despicable, confined huts of the garrison, there being no proper lodgings, want of hospital, followed by jail or hospital fever and soon communicated to inhabitants; or very unhealthy situated in wet soil near confuse of fresh and salt waters* (vol 6, p 668); Invalids (vol. 1, pp 65, 95, 333).