

Instructions by General Gates to General Arnold

Orders and Instructions for the Hon. BENEDICT ARNOLD, Esq., Brigadier-General in the Army of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA.

Upon your arrival at *Crown Point*, you will proceed, with the Fleet of the *United States* under your command, down *Lake Champlain*, to the narrow pass of the Lake made by the *Split Rock*, or to the other narrow approach down the Lake, made by *Isle-aux-Tetes* and the opposite shore. You will station the fleet in the best manner to maintain the possession of those passes, according as your judgment shall determine, cautiously avoiding to place the vessels in a manner which might unnecessarily expose them to the enemy's heavy artillery from the shore. You will most religiously observe that it is my positive order that you do not command the fleet to sail below the pass of the *Isle-aux-Tetes*, above mentioned, incessantly reflecting, that the preventing the enemy's invasion of our country is the ultimate end of the important command with which you are now intrusted. It is a defensive war we are carrying on, therefore no wanton risk or unnecessary display of the power of the fleet is at any time to influence your conduct. Should the enemy come up the Lake, and attempt to force their way through the pass you are stationed to defend, in that case you will act with such cool, determined valour, as will give them reason to repent their temerity. But if, contrary to my hope and expectation, their fleet should have so increased as to force an entrance into the upper part of the Lake, then, after you shall have discovered the insufficiency of every effort to retard their progress, you will, in the best manner you can, retire with your squadron to *Ticonderoga*. Every vessel in the fleet being furnished with a batteau, you will have it in your power to keep out scout-boats at night, and occasionally to annoy the enemy's small craft. In the daytime your boats can act, when opportunity offers, under cover of the cannon of your fleet.

As the most honourable the Congress of the United States rest a great dependance on your wise and prudent conduct in the management of this fleet, you will on no account detach yourself from it, upon the lesser services above mentioned. A resolute but judicious defence of the northern entrance into this side of the Continent, is the momentous part which is committed to your courage and abilities. I doubt not you will secure it from further invasion.

As I am entirely unacquainted with Marine affairs, I shall not presume to give any directions respecting the duty and discipline of the seamen and marines on board the fleet.

I have traced the great outline of that service which your country expects from the rank and character you have acquired. I have, as is my duty, fixed the limits beyond which you are not to go. But you must communicate that restriction to nobody. I wish, on the contrary, that words occasionally dropped from you, with that prudence which excludes every sort of affectation, and which, I believe, you possess, may, together with all your motions, induce our own people to conclude it is our real intention to invade the enemy, which, after all, may happen. It will keep up their spirits without affecting your reputation, whatever may be the event.

It only remains for me to recommend you to the protection of that Power upon whose mercy we place our hopes of freedom her, and of happiness hereafter. You will frequently report the state and situation of your fleet, and of every interesting occurrence.

Given at *Ticonderoga*, this 7th day of August, 1776

HORATIO GATES, *Major General*
