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## **(American Revolution) [Diary of grenadier Wilhelm Philipp Ludwig Beuschel during his lengthy tour in the American Revolution.]**

**Stock#:** 74491  
**Map Maker:** Beuschel  
**Date:** 1777 -1797  
**Place:** v.p.  
**Color:** (See Description)  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 6.5 x 8 inches (journal)  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

***A Lengthy and Dramatic Journal of a German Soldier in the American Revolution. With an Extensive Account of Frontline Combat at the Battle of Yorktown, and Elsewhere. Unpublished in English.***

This is the strikingly comprehensive manuscript journal of grenadier Wilhelm Philipp Ludwig Beuschel (1747-1826) from Marktsteft in Lower Franconia, who participated in the American Revolution from 1777 to 1781. Beuschel spent much time on the bloody frontlines of the war, and the journal is a treasure trove of granular information regarding combat in important battles (Short Hills, Newport, Yorktown, etc.) However, it is perhaps most valuable as a holistic account of one man's personal experience of the American Revolution; from marching away from his wife in Germany (who gave birth to their daughter two days after he left), to the long transatlantic voyage to New York, its extensive records of regimental movements, accounts of major figures in the war (George Washington, Rochambeau, Cornwallis, etc.), detail about his time as a prisoner of war after Yorktown, and his later service upon his return to Europe, the diary gives a vivid picture of the daily life of an infantryman during the war, as well as the procedural conduct of the conflict.

### **Selections from the Journal**

The journal is extremely detailed - and sometimes graphic - in its depiction of the violence and privations of the war. Below are select passages, translated from German, that give a sense of the diarist's experiences and capacity for description.

After opening with a short autobiography, Beuschel's journey begins, and almost immediately the main concern is preventing desertion before the regiment had left the Continent:



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*February 28th, 1777 [Friday]. That day we marched according to a given route on Muckendorf and Streitberg, in the former was the staff, grenadier and captain von Beust company. The other companies had their quarters in Streitberg. / 3 / We arrived very late and very tired because of the rising winter weather. Care was taken so that both places were manned by police officers and land militia and diligently patrolled by the hussars to prevent deserters.*

...

*March 10th [Monday] people were allowed to go into the country and to cook. But when they were supposed to get into the ships first, a revolt arose that lasted from 1 until 5 a.m. - but which finally came back to reason through sensible negotiations. Our riflemen now received orders to bring back those who had escaped from both regiments. Both were fired upon and some lost their lives and were wounded. Quite a few also deserted. Of the Grenadier-Kompagnie: Kaufstein, Bach, Fischmann, Müller and Schmidt deserted.*

Beuschel's account of reaching America in the British flotilla is quite immersive. When he and his comrades reach the Colonies, they disembark at Staten Island:

*On June 5th [Thursday] / 37 / the anchors were lifted early and we sailed to Staten Island. We were deparchiert and set up camps on the hill to the right hand side, so that our right wing was to New York, the front was en parade and on the land to the right was the English regiment No. 27. The regiment of Eyb camped a mile to the left on Upper Ferre, where the mail for New York goes. We found three entrenchments in front of our camp, one of them on the left wing was on a very high mountain, and had the strongest barrier for an hour. Our riflemen were situated in between these entrenchments. A regiment of English stood in the middle on the island opposite Amboy. The Rangers had occupied the pass to Elisabethtown. Because of nightfall, not all of the props could be removed from the ship. So most of them had to camp out in the open - but it was good weather. There was nothing to be had in terms of food - there was also nothing to be had for cash. I came straight to the Piquet with Lieutenant von Streit. In the morning the lieutenant sent his servant to get something for breakfast. He came back with two quart or Maas milk and a white bread, from 3 to 3 1/2 pound, which he bought in the Waldeck bakery (Nota: vom Fürsten Waldeck stund, also a regiment on the island) for 18 Stuber or 49 X. For a quart of milk, however, he had paid six stubbers or fifteen times. My share of breakfast was 37 1/2 X our money.*

The troops are on edge, as they are constantly at risk from American incursions from New Jersey. In short order, the Ansbach troops are in combat, and Beuschel gives us an account of the Battle of Short Hills:



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*On June 23rd [Monday] our two regiments were presented to General Howe. General Washington, who was the head of the American army, realized that we were going to leave Jersey and cross the Kills River, which separates Staten Island from Jersey. He was now approaching with part of his army in order to alarm us while we were trying to cross, and he had already*

*attacked our outposts on June 25th [Wednesday], which held up bravely. So it was very necessary to push back the enemy. That is why General Howe*

*attacked the enemy in two columns on June 26th [Thursday]. During this expedition, our two grenadier companies were under the command of Captain von Seitz, who presented a battalion. The grenadier captain von Ercker, who commanded the Ansbach grenadiers, had an annoyance with Lieutenant and Brigade Adjutant von Wöllward, so that both took up their swords and Herr Hauptmann got a wound on his head and therefore had to stay behind on the expedition. He was replaced by Captain von Ellrodt. / 41 / The enemy was attacked at dawn and, after a number of hours, was forced to give way. We followed them closely, and they sat down for various times, yet they repoussed just as often and three cannons were taken from them. We took around 80 prisoners and counted around 300 dead in scattered places. The march that day went as far as Westfield, twenty-four English miles from Amboy. The enemies profited from the night time and withdrew to the mountains where they could not be approached. A stop was made at noon. I caught a calf, probably about 200 pounds, and loaded it onto the company car. As we stopped at night, I took it from the car and peeled off the skin. I gave a quarter of the back to my three gentlemen officers; I kept half a quarter for myself and a number of comrades. I gave the rest to the company. General von Knyphausen commanded the column. He therefore gave two fine oxen to the two companies, one of which was immediately slaughtered and distributed among the company. So people cooked very late at night. The heat was very intense during the day and the stiff suit made it worse. This made us very sick and those who stayed behind could be found before night. Several English soldiers who went to the water were driven back by rifle shots and one was lying dead on the spot. A detachment went there and took those who were hiding in a church, namely an officer and 30 commoners, prisoners. Other than that, the night was very calm.*

Shortly thereafter the Battle of Staten Island occurs, and Beuschel recounts it thusly:

*August 24th [Sunday]. An American corps of 2000 men landed. They came over from Elisabethtown, ambushed the Rangers, and advanced as far as Richmond and the center of the island. The von Waldeck regiment hit them hard. This regiment had its bakery not far from the Teckersferry. Five Moors were caught there by the enemies. They took her to a small sloop; they should be brought*



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*across the river. Alone a schooner of twelve six-pound cannons discovered them and they shot at them, so that the boat leaked and perished - but they were rescued from the schooner by barges. The 52nd English regiment was sent on to the Waldeckers. Both regiments roamed the whole island. But our regiment occupied the line and the entrenchments in front of it. The honor of going before the enemy would have been ours before the Waldeckers. Most of the officers, non-commissioned officers and the commoners alone were sick in New York and in the hospital on the island. The disease was Diarre and a hot illness, so that by the end of September we had 78 deaths. I was also ill with this disease, but came back from the hospital on the twelfth and was on duty for the first time today. The peasants on the island were all good royalists. They were also provided with rifles and weapons. They excelled on this occasion and showed how good they were for their king. They made most of the prisoners. They shot and cut down a great many. / 44 / So the Americans paid dearly for this visit they made to us. Less than 1,000 men came across the water again. Twenty officers, including a colonel or colonel, two majors, and then 270 commons, were made prisoners. Our officers did the officers much honor. This unsuccessful strike gave them all respect for this island and we had the quietest days from that time on. But there is also a curious strike to be mentioned, namely the Americans quietly crossed the river near Elisabethtown, surrounded the ranger Piquet, bypassed the corps, which was not far from Teckersferry, stabbed many of them until the alarm was finally raised. The Rangers hid as best they could; at half past four we were supposed to review with General Campel and Waldeck was just about to go to the drill. The Americans who had entered our entrapment before us saw that everything was ready and believed that they had been betrayed and stopped. A ranger who had dispersed came just in time and brought the news, whereupon the regiments marched at once. Had these of course been regular soldiers who had understood the king's trade, it would have been very easy to stab us in our tents at three o'clock in the morning. So they were rewarded for their visits as much as those that are thought to be dispensable. This negligence made the Rangers more cautious and better on their guard.*

Many smaller skirmishes that have not left much of a trace in the historical record are described in detail.

Beuschel arrives near Philadelphia in the aftermath of the Battle of Fort Mifflin:

*On November 27th [Thursday] at seven o'clock in the morning, four regiments were simultaneously shipped across the Delaware to large flag pots, where 70 to 80 men went up with sacks and bags. Last came the Scots and the light infantry with the riflemen; The Americans took advantage of this and attacked them - but did no harm to them. Our people stuck behind the houses and did not let them close. The frigate anchored there tipped the scales. It fired several times and with such good success that two of her dragoons split in the middle with a bullet and gave the world the eternal*



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*good night. When everything was over-ship, we marched through the city to Philadelphia with a flying flag and a sounding game. We moved into the barracks in front of the city. Here we made big eyes, because you couldn't get anything for your money. The merchants' shops were closed for fear of losing their stock. The commanding general Sir William Howe, who sailed with the fleet from Staten Island on July 16th, landed with the fleet at Chesapeake Bay, went with his army to Brandewinehül, gave the Americans a patie which was to the advantage of the English which opened the way to Philadelphia. The general sat down in such a way that he drew a line from the Delaware to / 58 / to the Schullküll River, provided those with twelve entrenchments, but had a Flesche laid between each of them so that one redoubt could second the others. He therefore remained lying still in this entrenched line because of the intense heat. I also believe that he was more likely to have been forced to lie still. Even though he possessed the city, the passage on the Delaware River was still not open and he saw himself from the front and back more enclosed than he was free. Fort Mud Island is an island four hours below Philadelphia on the Delaware River and lies between Chester and the city. Fort Rettbank was built in Jersey. Under this was the great Fort Pelling Port; the ships could not get away, the Americans had sunk ships from Mund Fort across the river, and provided them with strong iron rods in front and behind, which were made in the shape of an arrow in front and which the English called Cheveaux de Frick. They had also pulled a strong chain across the river and this made it impossible for ships to get through. If the army wanted to have food, it had to be done by sinking enemy ships. The three forts were still heavily stocked with artillery of 32 and 24 pound cannons. In order to open the passage on the river, our corps had to do this coming from New York. The Americans, however, were very polite and, as soon as we arrived, they made the most beautiful spot for us. In Eyland the ships did it and with these two forts / 59 / in our possession, the chain was taken out of the water and a number of sunk ships were brought up with great effort and expense, thereby clearing shipping to Redbank.*

*This fort [Fort Mifflin] was at a corner and had 17 galleys to cover it, each of which could second each other in case of need.*

Which blends into a description of the Battle of Red Bank:

*In the month of October the Hessian colonel von Donopp was transferred to New Jersey with all of the Hessian grenadier battalions, the Mirbach regiment and 200 riflemen, with the order to take Redbank by storming it. The First Division warships, anchored under Pellingsport off Chester, commanded a sufficient number of oar-galleys, which go very easily and not deep into the water and can be rowed by sailors under the deck, to support the attack and to attack the enemy. Herr Obrist thought it was too bold alone and undertook the attack without waiting for the galleys. It was so*



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*successful that he conquered the fort, but could not stay there long either. The enemy galleys contracted and made a terrible fire of their maws so that it was impossible to maintain the fort. He himself, Herr Obrist, was fatally wounded. 22 of his best officers along with 280 NCOs and commoners were already dead in the fort. The Americans attacked the new one on the land side, so that the new commander of this corps felt compelled to retten, but had to leave the injured and dead behind in the fort. Towards evening Herr Obrist died and was buried in the fort with the greatest honors; the American commander had him buried according to military practice and gave him a funeral oration himself and praised the bravery of this hero and thereby admonished his officers, non-commissioned officers, and commons to each other to reflect this and, like this, to prefer honor to life. / 60 / So we arrived in Philadelphia that day. It is one of the largest and most beautiful cities and is located in Pennsylvania. Is built according to the latest style. The houses are four and six stories high and built of bricks. Six main streets run through the city from start to finish and the cross streets are laid out in the same way. The city has no walls or gates because it is still being enlarged every day. The Fleiser Bank, which is certainly half an hour long, goes through a Kreuzstrasse in the middle of the city. If one wanted to go through the city at that time, one should go very well forwards, if one should be finished in three quarters of an hour. At that time the number of houses was calculated at 6574 - not counting the warehouses - and that is also a considerable number. The public buildings are currently three English episcopal churches, four Presbyterians, a Scottish so-called sect church, a Quaker church, and two German Lutheran churches, one of which was turned into a hospital for the sick and injured. Then a schoolhouse with a tower, a Reformed Church, a Moravian Brother Church and a mile below the town a Swedish Lutheran Church, two Catholic prayer houses, four Quaker assemblies, also the high school, the Court House or town house, the old Court house, in which the Assembly or district administrator gathers, the Provincial Hospital, the Werk - und Zuchthaus or the Chell. It is one of the most beautiful buildings and is similar to that of Bayreuth and was only built in 1775, / 61 / to keep the English and German prisoners in it. But the contrarium showed up and we guarded the American prisoners inside. But we still had to stay there overnight when the peace was made. At the beginning of the war, the bells were removed from the towers both here and across the country and used to cast the cannons. The inhabitants are of different classes according to their religion, as can be seen from the description of the churches. Mostly German is spoken and you can meet people from all parts of Germany. Trade is very strong in peacetime, with the two navigable waters, the Delaware below and the Schuylkill above the city, contributing greatly.*

Frequent asides about discipline and the nature of war are included:

*January 12th [Monday] an English soldier, who raped a girl to the point that she died, was hanged*



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*today...*

*On June 7th [Sunday] a spy was caught wearing women's clothes. It was an enemy colonel. The packhand Reiß from the Seyboth Grenadier Company from Seitz also deserted. Tonight we also received orders to be ready to march.*

The Ansbach forces spend much time moving around in the vicinity of New York City at this time:

*On June 20th [Saturday] at ten o'clock in the morning, the anchors were raised by a signal shot from the admiral's ship and immediately moved. As soon as the shot was fired, we saw the way in which judgments are carried out on the warships. Two sailors who had stolen a Man of War were hanged in the following way: They stood on the deck, had the ropes around their necks, which were fastened to the middle double tappet, ready. As soon as the signal shot was fired, they were thrown overboard and remained hanging freely on both sides of the crossbar of the middle mast above the water.*

*The man of war on which this execution was going on was called Emmerant. We drove into the Nelckly River or Ist [East] River and arrived at Halels-Gow at two o'clock at noon. We were immediately debarked, with a great misfortune taking place. The Fouriers were the first to go out into the country with their Fourier rifles to mark out the camp. A lad of the captain of Molitor's company by the name of Teufel was a little careless and missed the bott and fell into the water. Unfortunately, it was packed like this: rifle, bag with 60 cartridges, his snap sack, the tent boiler, a bottle. He got up in half a minute and yelled for help. Several of the sailors who stood on the masts to untie the sails jumped down from there into the water, which may have been twenty fathoms. They swam into the bottom like fish to help. Alone it was in vain. So we debarked and moved into the camp at Halets-Gow on Long Island, which was struck at the parade. / 71 / We had to endure extraordinary heat and the biggest gnats, which the English call mesqueters, would not let us rest in the tents even at night. We enjoyed fishing in the idle hours, mainly we caught a great many and large eels, including turtles, which the English call Dortel [turtles]. Long Island is one of the most beautiful islands. The inhabitants are mostly Dutch and very good people. The country has the most beautiful and fertile soil, which the inhabitants divided into the most beautiful plantations. It is also crossed by a number of small rivers, where you can drive with nice Schlupps, but only when the tide comes.*

From Long Island, they travel to Newport, Rhode Island, about which an immense amount is written. Many pages are spent talking about the preparations of defenses, small skirmishes, and the movement of enemy forces, until the Battle of Newport finally breaks out:



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*On August 29th [Saturday] / 85 / at daybreak we saw the enemy camp broken up. The 22nd Regiment and the Braunische Corps, then we two Ansbach regiments, the Hessen Chasseur and the von Pinau Regiment received swift orders to follow the enemy. The second regiment and the Praunische Corps marched through to the right to the Facklands Ferry. Our regiment had the left wing, the Voit regiment had the middle together with the Pinau regiment. After a march of two hours we met the enemy, which was attacked very bravely and made to give way. A Hessian captain, whose name I have forgotten, was shot immediately in the first attack. He commanded the Closem. So the clatter and the goings-on went so far that our regiment was already under the cannons of a hill. Our Colonel also showed a desire to storm them. It would have been dangerous in itself. We had no regiment to the Securs and the Americans bypassed us with 6,000 men. So we withdrew again and occupied a hill where a Flesche was. The 22nd Regiment and the Praunisch Corps had it even harder than we did. At Facklands Ferry they encountered 6,000 Americans, who were quietly there in the camp and were not notified by their rescuers. These were attacked by the English and made to give way. Yes, the English lost a cannon in the first attack. This, too, had to be taken from the enemy again. So this corps tried to get us in the flank or in the rear. The 22nd regiment lost 154 men dead and injured. So we had to maintain this place for six full hours. The enemy now attacked us to drive us out of the Flesche. With 3000 men. Our people alone were too bitter about this and sought revenge for their many hardships. They attacked the enemy like grim lions and the officers and NCOs had enough to do to hold them back. However, the enemy came for the third time. The fireworker Friderizi, who was not too favorable to Herr Obrist, asked for permission, since an American was constantly riding around at a distance of 40 paces - it could be an adjutant or even a general himself - / 86 / to shoot whichever he was allowed to shoot. He aimed his cannon and he took the shot next to his horse, for which he received the mercy of the colonel. Since it was too hard for our cannons, Herr Obrist had this reported to the commanding general and we received two more from a Hessian regiment, of which the fireworks were immediately blown. The three attacks they made on us cost them a lot of people. They therefore left us satisfied - but the cannoning continued and we lay absent-minded outside the Flesche. A single bullet hit it and shot three men at once. We stayed until ten o'clock in the night, when we were finally replaced by the Hessian Hereditary Prince Regiment and withdrew to the other regiments.*

After the battle they stay on in Rhode Island through the winter, which was extremely trying:

*We started a very sad year, the commission fleet stayed away. Therefore a great need arose among us as well as among the inhabitants. We had to eat bread for 28 days from Habermehl, which was completely rotten. But neither can it be compared with the kind of flour that is made in Germany. It was only crushed and God knows how many years old and reserved for hunger. You couldn't make*





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*bread from it at all, but just as it came into the oven, it melted and you got bread that was bitter as bile and sour as sourdough. It was even more pitiful among the inhabitants. They didn't even have this either and had General Prescott give them over 300 passports to use them. went to the enemy side. Most of them went to Pristol and Proffidenze. The lack of wood was such that trees didn't grow on the island anyway and had to be brought from other islands in peacetime that we had to attack the ferries, an evil that was remedied afterwards. Alone, where should food come from, since the island was drained and none of its residents had anything. I'm adding here what all the money was worth, if one could have it. But also note the weight, measure and monetary value. One pound was 24 pounds by our weight. The shilling is sterling. But a Stüber is 2 1/2 cruisers.*

Finally, in October of 1779, they are evacuated from Rhode Island along with the rest of the British forces:

*On October 25th [Monday] at 10 o'clock in the morning, the tents of all regiments were torn down and taken to ships. At two o'clock all regiments were barricaded and at five o'clock they left and anchored at Princeton Point. The warship Silberrill had the right barrier guard and therefore remained at anchor behind us.*

From there they return to Manhattan. Beuschel notes General Clinton's expedition to Savannah.

The Ansbach troops are again engaged in skirmishes around northern New Jersey and Staten Island with forces under the command of George Washington:

*On December 19th [1779, Sunday] it should be added: our regiments gave the command to Paulus Hook, whose situation has already been described. It lies just above the city of New York in the province of Jersey and was occupied by strong commandos. General Washington withdrew with his army into Jersey, very close to Paulus Hook, occupied the mountains, and sent very strong patrols to us as far as the outermost barrier. The command therefore had to be reinforced; everything was in the greatest order. He had experiments made several times at night, but each time he found us ready. When he saw that his work was in vain and that his desertion hit, which was not at all surprising since his army lacked all kinds of mounting pieces, he retreated to Moritztown on*

*January 6th, 1780 [Thursday], but thought to disturb Staten Island on his retreat and, where possible, to inflict a setback on the crew there. He therefore had several generals with 6,000 men march across the frozen river at Amboy and had everything stolen from the inhabitants of Staten Island. The English garrison on the island at that time consisted of two English regiments, the Hine Hessen regiment, the Rangers and a FreiCorps. These were in earth huts. They also knew nothing about the transition of the Americans and were in peace. The enemy therefore drew up in the*



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*greatest silence of the night and tried to attack them. The piquets alone made noise and the crew withdrew to the redoubts. They were held by the Plogat enemy, at dawn, but gave the signal by means of three powerful cannons and with the raising of the red and white flags. / 121 / As soon as this was noticed in New York, the commanding General von Knyphausen gave the order as quickly as possible to the regiments to send 100 men on command immediately. They were embarked within an hour. But it was impossible to get away because of the strong ice. The order was therefore sent to the regiments standing on Long Island, which could get there quite easily on the seaside. The light horse, or light dragoon, came up behind the enemy and caused a terrible bloodbath. They cut down everything they got. On the other hand, those lying in the jumps soon noticed that Secours had arrived. They therefore got ready to advance. They took away the enemy's artillery and gave very few quarters. So there were very few prisoners - but more dead were taken; many were not found until long afterwards. Everything was quiet again now. Only the cold bothered us. The desertion became so great among the enemy that on some days nine to 20 men left, which they would not have done in summer time. It was something to look at. No skirt, only torn Goller, without stockings and shoes and the pants completely torn; so they came.*

Accounts of small skirmishes follow, including an attack across the Hudson River, the Attack on Young's House, etc. And a strange incident revolving around an (in)famous dead German soldier takes place:

*In July General von Knyphausen made a command of about 6,000 men on Jersey. The troops were disembarked at Staten Island and went over the one bridge over the river, which was built behind the island at Elisabethtown, and made camps in front of the town. They advanced the second day. Where it was a bit heated, the riflemen advanced up to an hour before Springfield. But they could not advance because of the number of enemies. Here the deserving Jaeger Lieutenant Ebenauer lost his life. He was all too well known by the enemies. He was buried immediately. At our rescue rate, the commanding general of the Americans came to this place from Washington, had him dug up and said, "Since I have learned so much about this officer and I have not been able to see him alive, let him see me dead." He regretted his youth and had him buried again.*

Beuschel participates in the Battle of Springfield and includes an extensive account of the action there.

In May of 1781, Beuschel and his comrades embark for Virginia to reinforce Cornwallis's army. They land at Portsmouth, Virginia, where forces are coalescing before moving north.

Upon reaching Virginia, Beuschel recounts the torture and execution of a black man for apparently poisoning several wells:



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*On July 10th [Tuesday, 1781] a negro of several 70 years of age was caught who had been bribed by the enemies to poison the wells. In the south of the city there were 2,000 negroes who were with us to work. In the bushes by these there was a good well where we had to fetch our water to drink. The villain was caught in this one. Ten to twelve of his comrades had already drunk from it that morning. They died instantly on the spot. In the city he already had / 132 / two and in Nortrock, where our hospital was, he had poisoned one, so that three of the King's Guard died from it. He was tied naked to a tree or stake at the main watch and was beaten with a whip with buttons every hour: But it didn't help: He wasn't forced to confess. But as soon as this place was left, he was burned on this stake.*

He comments on the situation in Yorktown as the British troops began to group there:

*[August 3, 1781] Little York is in Old Virginia. It consisted of about 100 houses, had a single Reformed Church, and most of the male residents had fled. It's very high on the bank. In general, the area is very beautiful and fertile. We camped in line just outside the city; General Cornwallis made his headquarters at the end of town in a very fine house which was just the center of the line. We found a lot of melons in the field, which were very good for cooling down.*

Beuschel's coverage of the Yorktown Siege goes on for pages, noting the changes in the strategic situation on practically a daily basis, and, as the battle draws on, listing more and more casualties among his ranks:

*On October 10th [Wednesday] the enemy dug a rampart on their right wing, which went into our flank and which turned out to be very dangerous for us. The right foot of a grenadier named Niezel von Kulmbach from the company was shot off.*

*On the evening of October 12th [Friday] this battery was already heard. It had eight 32-pounders. Grenadier Dörrer's right leg was shot off.*

As the battle of Yorktown progresses, the situation worsens and Beuschel's account revolves around the brutality of trench warfare. On October 13, he writes:

*We ventured out into the open and did not go into the trench. It was now of course very dangerous - but you could avoid the bullets and howitzers rather than in the trench. So we arrived there happily with God's help. I was shocked when I saw everything so disarranged. / 139 / We didn't recognize anyone - everything was covered in dust and mud. A grenadier named Pühlman had s.v. [with all due respect] the right buttock shot off, another grenadier Schnellein hit a piece of pommon [cannonball] on the chest that he immediately fell dead. The right leg of a musketeer from the*



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### (American Revolution) [Diary of grenadier Wilhelm Philipp Ludwig Beuschel during his lengthy tour in the American Revolution.]

*regiment was shot off, a Hessian corporal smashed into many pieces along with two common men. It blew an Ansbacher into many thousands of pieces. The barrel of his rifle lay hard on the trench, except for the bulwark, which I brought in and brought with me to the regiment. In short, the command had nine dead and six severely injured in 24 hours.*

On the 17th, Beuschel recounts how they have suffered two catastrophes:

*That night the beautiful warship, the Caron, was burned, and our largest powder magazine was also gone to shame by the negligence of an officer who himself was blown up. The guards that stood in front of him were from the von Voit regiment. They could only be found in pieces: here an arm, there a leg and in the third place a number of intestines. That night we had quite a break from the shooting, but it started again on October 18th in the morning. **We believed that all hell had come to this place to devour us.***

They run out of ammunition on the 18th and are notified that Cornwallis has surrendered. Beuschel includes much detail about his experience as a prisoner of war. By October 22nd, the prisoners are marched through Williamsburg of which he says: "To Williamsburg, a beautiful place. At the time it had 200 houses and a beautiful church; the French had their large hospital and bakery there."

Beuschel and his comrades seem unbothered by their long captivity spent in Winchester, Virginia, which he describes in detail. On April 23, 1783, they celebrate the Treaty of Paris:

*On the night of April 23rd [1783, Wednesday], fireworks were set off by Artillery Lieutenant Hofmann of our artillery when we learned that peace had been made in England and that the Americans had been declared independent.*

Beuschel leaves the United States by way of Lancaster, Philadelphia, Trenton, Elizabethtown, Staten Island, and Long Island. Upon arrival at Staten Island, he remarks: "We were beside ourselves with joy and we constantly believed on the march that we were not yet completely free. But here we were completely free." He includes an account of the trip back across the Atlantic, which is quite dramatic. He eventually makes his way back home to his family, finds he has been promoted, and concludes that section of the journal with a happy ending.

### **Personalities Encountered and Described**

Beuschel mentions the following figures: George Washington (5 times); General Howe (6 times); Lord Cornwallis (7 times); General Clinton (8 times); and numerous more minor officers, as well as very many



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### **(American Revolution) [Diary of grenadier Wilhelm Philipp Ludwig Beuschel during his lengthy tour in the American Revolution.]**

German officers.

#### **Structure of the Journal**

Pages 1-165 relate to the American Revolution or his time as a prisoner of war after Cornwallis's defeat. A second section of the diary (pages 167-204), with the 2 pen drawings, then deals with the deployment of the Ansbach-Bayreuth troops in 1787-93 in the Netherlands, again as part of a mercenary endeavor. Approximately 24 leaves of the manuscript come from another hand and contain an overview of Beuschel's family history from 1812-1910; accordingly, Wilhelm Beuschel lived until 1826, at the end of his life as a "Kreißbereiter" (mounted police officer) in Bayreuth.

The journal appears to be a contemporary (i.e., 1780s and '90s) consolidation of daily diary entries by Beuschel.

The second volume includes the basic list from Hauptmann von Seitz Löbl. Grenadier-Compagnie Bayreuth .. 1777 from the end of March [sic] of the same to America, to the first of March of the same .. 1783. This is an extremely valuable resource in its own right, containing considerable amount of data on individual soldiers in America during the Revolution.

#### **Publication of the Journal**

The journal was transcribed and published in its original German in 2018 under the title *Das Tagebuch des Wilhelm Philipp Ludwig Beuschel: Erlebnisse aus dem Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg 1777-1783*. That book appears as volume one in *Monographien zur Geschichte Oberfrankens* (Monographs on the History of Upper Franconia). **It has never been translated into English until now.** We commissioned a complete translation of the journal, which is available upon request.

#### **The Soldiers of Ansbach-Bayreuth in the American Revolution**

In the popular consciousness, "Hessian" has become synonymous with the German troops who participated in the American Revolution. However, Hessians were far from the only German soldiers to participate in the war. Other principalities within Germany also "leased" troops to the British Army for deployment in America.

Margrave Carl Alexander von Ansbach-Bayreuth (1736-1806) saw the "leasing" of his soldiers to the British Army as an opportunity to free his small state from its high tax debts. During the War of Independence, he delivered a total of almost 2,400 men to support British troops to America. The first



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Frankish subsidiary regiments were shipped across the Atlantic to Staten Island in 1777 and from there added to the British Army near New York, as part of which they took part in various battles of the northern campaign. Later they participated in the decisive battle of Yorktown in 1781, which ended in defeat for the British general Cornwallis and in 1783 led to the recognition of America's independence by the British crown.

**Provenance**

Ketterer Kunst Auctions, Munich, Lot 43, May 31, 2021. The volumes were exported from Germany with all appropriate export license paperwork, which is available upon request.

**Detailed Condition:**

2 volumes. Volume I: Octavo. Modern full leather. German-language manuscript. 306 pages on 18th-century laid paper, after page 210 the leaves are bound upside down. Two pen illustrations including one map (of an area in Western Europe). (Margins slightly browned, overall in good condition.) Volume II: Octavo. 18th-century full calf, housed in a contemporary cardboard slipcase. German-language manuscript. 112 leaves.