

The situation of the army was now very critical. The new works, along with those others which it was evident would now be speedily constructed on some of the neighbouring hills, would command the town, a considerable part of the harbour, of the beach, from whence an embarkation must take place in the event of a retreat, and rendered the communication between the troops in the works at Boston Neck, and the main body, difficult and dangerous.

In these circumstances no alternative remained, but to abandon the town, or dislodge the enemy and destroy the new works. General Howe, with his usual spirit and resolution, adopted the latter, and took the necessary measures for the embarkation of that very evening of five regiments, with the light infantry and grenadiers, upon a service, which the whole army must of course been ultimately engaged in. This design was frustrated by the intervention of a dreadful storm at night, which rendered the embarkation impracticable, and thereby probably prevented the loss of a great number of brave men, if not of the whole army.

It is not, however, to be wondered at, that with a high sense of the British military honour, as well as of his own, the General should hazard much, rather than submit to the indignity of abandoning the town. He commanded a force, which he knew had been considered and represented here, as sufficient to look down all opposition in America; and which, in reality, with respect to the number of regiments, if not of men, the excellency of the troops, and character of the officers, and the powerful artillery which they possessed, would have been deemed respectable in any country, and dangerous by any enemy. With such troops to give up that town which had been the original cause of the war; and the constant object of contention since its commencement,