

the enemy. On September 27 he wrote Washington:

I last Night threw myself into this Garrison where I am so to inform your excellency that I find everything in the utmost Confusion, not as many Cartouches as will last one day & the very necessary Cartouches for the Black Horns not sufficient for an Hour, 60 centries (sic) & Militia are all the Artillery Men in the fort, the provisions almost out. The Militia refus'd Obedience to Capt. Treat & have underwent no sort of training.

Smith's task clearly would not be an easy one, but throughout the month of October he exerted himself to the utmost to fortify and defend Ft. Mifflin against constant British attacks. Due to his tremendous efforts, the fort did not fall during October, but continued to be a stubborn rebel stronghold that not even the largest of the British gunboats could dislodge.

Finally, on October 30 another weary man, John Hancock, president of Congress for over two years, tendered his resignation to the members and addressed them in the following words:

Gentlemen: Friday last compleated two years and five months since you did me the honour of electing me to fill this chair....My health being much impaired, I find some relxation absolutely necessary after such constant application; I must therefore request your indulgence for leave of my departure, gentlemen, without expressing my thanks for the civility and politeness I have experienced from you. It is impossible to mention this without heartfelt pleasure....May every happiness, gentlemen, attend you, both as members of this house and as individuals; and I pray heaven, that unanimity and perseverance may go hand in hand in this house; and that every thing which may tend to distract or divide your councils be forever banished.

Wise words from a man well experienced in the problems of dealing with a Congress that was often divided, and although October 1777 would prove a decisive turning point in America's quest for independence, the war was far from over