

RESPONSE TO APPEAL OF MAGISTRATES OF DETROIT

War Department 8th August 1799

Gentlemen I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your representation relative to the conduct of the Military Commandant at Detroit

I can assure you it is the wish of Government to preserve to the Civil Authority its rights every where throughout the Territory of the United States and in no instance to countenance encroachments upon those rights by the Military

That the conduct of the Commandant at Detroit may undergo a regular and due Investigation, I shall refer your remonstrance to Major General Alexander Hamilton, who I have no doubt, will take proper measures to ensure in future a perfect propriety of Conduct in the Military

I have however to observe that a Military Commandant has not only authority, but that it is particularly enjoined upon him to restrain the Soldiary in whatever may lead to Insubordination, endanger a Garrison or prove injur[i]ous to themselves, that with these views he may prevent a too Frequent Intercourse, with the Citizens inhabiting at or near his post, which by affording opportunities of intemperance would produce the worst of consequences, and that generally he has a right to give & enforce on his men under his command such orders as are necessary to their well being and the good of the Service.

I enclose a Copy of the rules and articles for the better Government of the troops of the United States, to which is Annex'd several Military laws, among these: "An Act for the better Organizing the troops of the United States and for other purposes passed 3rd March last.

The 4th Section of this Act you will observe provides an exemption from personal Arrests for any debt or Contract, for all non-comissioned officers, privates and Musicians who are and shall be inlisted & extends the same provision to the Militia or other Corps who may at any time be in the Actual service of the United States.

To prevent this law from Operating Injuriously to the Citizens it will be incumbent upon them to avoid giving Credit to Soldiers I am &c