

**TNA: PRO SP 63/90/1***Grey to Walsingham, 1 March 1581/2*

This letter of direction and request commends Captain Robert Collam to Walsingham, and asks him to write to John Norris, to expedite the plan of allowing Collam to lead a group of soldiers from Ireland to the Low Countries. It demonstrates the military and logistical links between events in Ireland and in the Netherlands, and also an attempt to resolve the consequences of the discharge of soldiers earlier that year (on which see below). It also provides another example of Grey attempting to smooth his way with the Privy Council and the Queen by working through his chief sympathetic contact at court, Sir Francis Walsingham.

Both the text of the letter, including the subscription, and the address are in Spenser's characteristic secretary hand; Grey has added his familiar signature. The endorsement is in a later hand, presumably added during filing of the letter in London.

**Address and Endorsement**

To the Honorable my  
 especiall good frend  
 Sir Fraunces Walsin-  
 gham Knight Chief  
 Secretary to her Maiesty.

1 Marche 1581  
 The Lord Gray.  
 To writt to mr Norris  
 to giue entertainment to  
 the soldiors that are  
 sent out of the realm  
 into Ireland

**Text**

Sir Having bene aduertized from Anthony Brabazon now in the absence of Sir Nicholas Malbey last Gouvernour of that Province, that vpon the late discharges here made, he doubted that diverse Soldieres of this countrey birth now out of pay, & stragling to & fro, would enter into some bad Accion, & raise some new broile no lesse daungerous then the first, the which some of them by speaches had also given out, And having in that respect commended vnto me one Robert Colom, who hath here long tyme served as an Officer to diverse Capteins & is knowen to bee a tall Soldier & an honest man the which desyred that he might be licensed to carry ouer with him into the lowe countrey ij or iij<sup>c</sup> of those Soldieres as he could levy them; I therevpon tooke advisement with the rest of the Councell here, who very well liked of the mocion, & esteemed yt for very good service to ridde the Countrey of a sort of such daungerous impes which considering the weakenes of her Maiesties forces here now left, were hable & like to have attempted some mischievous entreprise.

Wherevpon we have consented to license him to transport ij or iij<sup>C</sup> or more of them, yf he may, the same being no charge of accoumpt vnto her Maiesty save onely the victelling of ij<sup>C</sup> of them for xij or xiiij daies, vntill they shall arrive there, which cometh not to above l<sup>li</sup>. the which we thinck well bestowed, to save happily otherwise many fifties. This I have thought good to signify vnto yow, to th'end yt may be made knowen vnto the rest, & withall to desyre you, to write vnto\* Mr Iohn Norice favorably in the said Collom & his companies behalf, (like as my self also have already doen) that he will yield them such good countenance & enterteynement as he there\* may. The which not doubting but they will deserve, for the present I comitt you to god. Dublin primo Martij. / 1581./

Youres euer most assured,

Arthur Grey

## † Textual notes

\* *after vnto]* 'you' deleted.

†

\* *there]* Inserted above the line.

## Annotations

**the late . . . made]** Grey had begun to arouse considerable frustration at the cost of the Irish service (accompanied by accusations that lands and properties obtained from attainted rebels were being bestowed upon his servants and supporters, instead of being used to pay for these costs); between November 1581 and January 1581/2, Elizabeth gave order for numerous bands of soldiers to be discharged from service, in order to reduce these costs. A letter of Grey's to Elizabeth of 25 January 1581/2 speaks of a letter that he had received from her, dated 12 December 1581, 'touching the reducing of your forces here to 3000, & cassing of the rest': it has been 'entred into', he writes, while rebuffing accusations of financial misconduct, '& order taken for yt, as by a Book herewith sent to your Highnes sayd Secretary in particulare may appeare' (SP 63/88/39; the book, a calendar of the bands discharged, survives as 63/88/40/1). As other letters of the time make clear, though (see SP 63/88/2, *supra*), the discharge created problems of its own, not least the need to pay wages to the discharged soldiers; in Galway, as in Dublin, many of the discharged soldiers found themselves stranded, and the Irish Council both feared for their welfare, and worried that their misery might lead to disorder.

**some bad Accion]** Grey also wrote to the Privy Council on 3 January 1582, to say that unless his Treasurer, Henry Wallop, were to default on money borrowed on credit, the financial restrictions enforced upon him would lead to discontent among the discharged troops and 'a hazard of mutinie & disorder' (SP 63/88/2, *supra*).

**Robert Colom]** Robert Collam, his name also variously spelled Colom and Collom, had been part of the army in Ireland since at least November 1580, when Nicholas Malby reported to Wallop about an action in which he was involved, where various rebels were slain (SP 63/78/80/2). On 27 February 1582, Edward Waterhous reported to Walsingham that Collum and 200 Irish soldiers had embarked at Galway to assist Norris (SP 63/89/53). On 10 September, Nicholas Malby advised Burghley that a delivery of corn and victual had been made to Collam at Galway (SP 63/95/25). He is mentioned in reports from Ireland in February 1583 (SP 63/99/50 and 63/99/74).

**tall]** Courageous, valiant (*OED*, *a.* 3).