Who Was Benedict Arnold?

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage. The words listed have multiple meanings. Find the meaning of each word in the dictionary. Use the context to choose the best definition for each word.

Though he was a brilliant general, Benedict Arnold will forever be remembered as the most famous traitor in American history. Born in Connecticut to a fairly wealthy family, his father’s bad business decisions caused the family to go deeply into debt and his father became an alcoholic. Arnold dropped out of school and joined the Connecticut militia when he was 15, serving in the Seven Years War. After his parents died, Arnold became a pharmacist, building a successful business, and eventually partnering to buy three trading ships with a friend. They set up a profitable business importing goods from the West Indies, and his business caused Arnold to travel frequently. He married and had children, though his wife died 8 years later.

About the same time, the American Revolution was brewing. Arnold was chosen to command a company of Connecticut Guards and they joined the revolution following the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Thus began Arnold’s very successful military career, seizing several British forts, which he afterwards commanded. But the Continental Congress sent Benjamin Hinman to relieve Arnold of command, and Arnold began to feel unappreciated. Though he was promoted to Brigadier General, he was passed over for other promotions and became more and more resentful. His problems deepened when he wasn’t given credit for his part in the Battle of Saratoga because he wasn’t getting along with Major General Horatio Gates.

Arnold became extremely bitter towards the Continental Congress, so when he was appointed as commander of the fort at West Point in New York, he offered to give it to the British in exchange for a great deal of money. When he was found out, he changed sides, and began to fight for the British. He commanded British forces in a few minor battles, but then the British withdrew from America, a decision that Arnold viewed with contempt. Nonetheless, unable to remain in America, he returned to England with the British forces where his military career was lackluster; again he was often passed over for promotions, because he was not trusted. Like his father, he made unwise business decisions and died penniless.

1. brilliant: __________________________
2. brewing: __________________________
3. relieve: ___________________________
4. deepened: __________________________
5. credit: ___________________________