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Camp before Camden. April 22^d 1781 101

Sir

In my last I informed your Excellency of Lord Cornwallis's precipitate retreat from deep river of the situation of our Army for want of provisions and of the Virginia Militia's time of service having expired, which reduced our numbers greatly inferior to the enemy's. Finding that I had not a force to pursue them further and that our Army could not be subsisted either on the route the enemy had marched or in the lower Country I thought it most advisable to push my operations into South Carolina to revive the expiring hopes of the people; to divide with the enemy the supplies of the Country of which they had the entire Command to break up their little posts of communication and if possible oblige Lord Cornwallis to return to the State for their protection. This last was the great object of the movement and had we a force to prosecute the plan I persuaded myself it would take effect but for want of which the matter remains doubtful. Upwards of five months have I been in this department with nothing

nothing but the scattered remains of a routed
Army except the addition of Col Lee's Legion and
a couple of small detachments from Virginia
amounting to little more than a regiment and
those without discipline or even Officers to com-
mand them. In this situation with extem-
porary aid of militia we have been struggling
with a very unequal force under every possible
disadvantage and surrounded with every kind
of distress. —

We have run every hazard and been
exposed to every danger not only of being beaten
but of being totally ruined. I have been anxiously
waiting for succor but the prospect appears to
me to be remote except the temporary aid of Mili-
tia which is too precarious and uncertain to
commence any serious offensive operations upon.

The more I enquire into the natural strength
of North and South Carolina either to form or
support an Army the more I am persuaded
they have been greatly overrated. More of the
Inhabitants appear in the King's interest than
in ours and the Country is so extensive and
thinly inhabited that it is not easy either to draw
any considerable force together or subsist them
where,

when collated. The militia in our interest can do little more than keep Tories in subjection and in many places not that.

These States were in a better condition to make exertions last campaign than this the well affected last year spent their time and ^{their} substance in fruitless exertions, and finding themselves unequal to the conflict and their families being exposed and in distress hundreds and hundreds of the best whigs have left the country. Last year it was full of resources; this it is almost totally exhausted and the little produce that remains lies so remote and the means of transportation so difficult to command that it is next to an impossibility to collect it. —

The enemy have got a firmer footing in the Southern States than is generally expected, Camden, Ninety six, and Augusta cover all the fertile parts of South Carolina and Georgia and they are laying waste the country above them which will effectually secure those posts as no army can be

be subsisted in the Neighbourhood to operate
against them. Below they have a great
many intermediate posts of communica-
tion for the purpose of seeing the Country
and commanding its supplies. Nor can
I see how we are to reduce these capital posts
but with a superior army in the field. I
wish Congress not to be deceived respecting
the situation of things in the Southern de-
partment and therefore I hope they will
excuse the freedom I take. If more effectual
support cannot be given than has been or as
I can see any prospect of I am very apprehen-
sive that the enemy will hold their ground
not only of the Sea ports but the interior Coun-
try. The conflict may continue for some time
longer, and General Sumpter and Marion
deserve great credit for their exertions and
perseverance but their endeavours rather serve
to keep the contest alive than lay a foundation
for the recovery of the States. —

We began our march from deep River on
the 7th and arrived in the Neighbourhood
of Camden on the 19th all the Country ~~that~~
through

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through which we past is disaffected and the same guards and escorts were necessary to collect provisions and forage as if in an open and avowed enemies country—

On our arrival at Camden we took post at Log Town about a half a mile in front of their works which upon reconnoitering were found to be much stronger than had been represented and the Garrison much larger. The Town is upon a plain covered on two sides by the River Watow and Nine turbutt the other two sides by chains of strong redoubts all nearly of the same size and independant of each other. Our force was too small either to invest the town or storm the works which obliged us to take a position at a little distance from it. —

Before we began our march from deep River I detached Lieut. Col. Lee with his legion and part of the second Maryland Regiment to join General Marion to invest the enemy's posts of communication upon the Santee and one of their posts is now invested called fort Watson and must fall if not relieved

relieved by a detachment of ^{Lord} Cornwallis's Army -
I have been greatly disappointed in the force
I expected to operate with me. Fifteen hundred
of Virginia Militia were called for immedi-
ately after the battle of Guilford having this
present movement in contemplation at the time
and the State gave an order for a greater num-
ber than was required but the busy season
of the year and the great distance they have
to march prevents their coming to our assistance
in time if not in force. Genl Sumpter also
engaged to have a thousand men in the field
by the 10th to operate with us but the difficulty
of collecting the militia from the disagreea-
ble situation of their families has prevented
their embodying yet in any considerable
force. These disappointments lay us under
many disadvantages to say nothing worse.
The country is extremely difficult to operate
in being much cut to pieces by deep creeks
and impassable swamps; and many parts
are covered with such heavy timber and thick
under brush as exposes any army and
particularly detachments to frequent surprises. The

The service has been so severe that it will be absolutely necessary to give the Army some relaxation soon and therefore I lament the delay which is occasioned at this time for want of sufficient force to invest all the enemys posts of communication. —

Our numbers are so reduced by the different actions and skirmishes which have happened and by the fatigue and hardships of the service that we have but the shadow of an Army remaining and this we are obliged to divide to push our operations to any effect tho' it is attended with danger and may prove our ruin. —

I am extremely mortified at the disappointment which happened in Virginia in the plan of cooperation against Portsmouth between our good Ally and the Marquis de la Fayette. Success there would have given us a great relief here and I am persuaded that nothing can recover this Country out of the hands of the enemy but a similar plan in the Southern States. At present the enemy have a full possession of Georgia and almost the whole of South Carolina

as they can wish. The last accounts I
had from Lord Cornwallis he lay at Wil-
mington and his army it was said was
getting very sickly. —

I have the honor to be
Math. Greene

His Excellency

President of Congress

Copy of Gen. Greene's Letter
of the 22^d April 1781