

Marquis de Lafayette to Nathanael Greene
August 25, 1781

Camp Near Rufin's Ferry [Va.] August 25h 1781

My Dear General

Your letter By Col Moriss Has Safely Come to Hand. I am truly UnHappy to Hear Many of My Late Letters Have MisCarried. It is Very Distressing to think that our Correspondence is So Unsafe. This time I Have only the Way of Expresses to Make Use of, But Hope in a few days to write By an officer Going to the Southward. In the Mean while I Hope I Can Make Myself Understood.

Inclosed You will find two letters from Clel Parker and a Return of Cannon left at Portsmouth. The Ships, troops and Stores Have Arrivd in York River. This Evacuation did not Appear to Me Worth a Great official Account As our Harvest of Laurels on the occasion Was Very trifling. However as I Have Sent to Congress a letter which Some field officers Requested me to forward, Giving an Account of the Impressing our prisoners on Board their Ships, I Have Added Parker's list of Artillery that Congress May Make the Most of it they Can. I thought, My dear General, Your Intention would Be that the Works Be Immediately levelled. This Portsmouth to us is A Mere trap. However Should the Executive Request it I will (untill your orders are Received) leave a Small Battery upon the Water.

Now to the Grand point. What His Excellency Hinted to me, I Have Sometime Ago Hinted to you. He Has Since disclosed His Mind. I will not Speak very plain in point of numbers But plain Enough to Be Understood.

The 3d inst was the Date of Departure. Number of Ships more than Equal to Your Expectations. What troops I do not know. But do not think it So Considerable as You Imagine. What I Guessed the General would do with His troops proves to Be Right. He will, I think, Conduct a Considerable Reinforcement. The Mode and Number not Yet deter- mined. But He Announces me a Subsequent letter. The one He writes Is on the Instant He Receives the Answer from our friends. Their first destination is Against his Lordship. But I do not Hope any thing for the Undertaking first Mentionned in your letter.

The General directs I Should prevent that ennemy from Escaping through North Carolina. In Consequence of Which I Have Requested the Executive (under an other pretence) to Have 600 Militia Collected upon Black Water. Gal Waïne[,] whom Gal Washington directs me to Keep Untill farther orders[,] is Gone to Westover under the idea of joining You. A feint of our Vanguard Has thrown the Ennemy's Cavalry and part of the troops on the Gloster Side. Our troops are Near Pamunkey River. I expect the Arrival Every minute.

Militia, Arms, Ammunition, Accoutrements, and Even provisions are Wanting to a degree which from the Measures adopted and the Efforts promised I Had no Reason to Expect. Our Men are Nacked and Bare- footed. Horse Accoutrements that Have Been Announced four Months Ago Cannot Yet Be Heard of. In Consequence of Which Col [Anthony W.] White with 200 dragoons and 200 Horses is forced to Lay Still. In Short, my dear General, We are totally Unprovided. Of this I Have Apprised His Excellency and Have frankly told Him that with His Reinforcement He

Must Bring Every thing. But Water transportation will Greatly forward Supplies. I Expect them from Every Quarter and Perhaps will they Come in time.

No Maryland troops. Every other Means Being Insufficient I sent Mr Washington. He has promised the troops Should Set off in three days. I am told Gal Smallwood Remains there to Command. In fact I Have little Expectations of Seeing the Marylanders. Col Moriss told me He thought it Was Your opinion I Should keep them if they Come. From what the General [writes] I would think Yet You May Be Reinforced from Hence. But Have No Certainty of His projects as He Refers me to a future letter which I will not Expect Before I tell you what I Have thus far learned.

Gal Washington writes me that Hessian Recruits are Arrived at New-york. Other Intelligences Add they are 2000 escorted By 5 Ships of the line under Digby with the Royal Little tar. If it is the Case the young prince will look at His father's Colonies through the key Hole.

In Going along I find I Have Been More free than I intended. But after all you Must Be Apprized and our friends will I Hope arrive Before this Reaches the tory Country.

Most Respectfully and affectionately Your obedient Hble Servant

LAFAYETTE

General Washington writes me that Untill the plans are adjusted and a Reinforcement Arrives I am to do the Best I Can with Count de Grasse and the french Commanding officer. On their Arrival they will Receive a letter from me advising them of the Ennemy's Situation and asking their intentions. After this I fancy the other object (But not the first) you Mention will Be undertaken.

The Society of the Cincinnati