

sion an immense loss of time were I first to call for the returns then transmit them back from hence, or wherever I may happen to be. I have for that reason directed Major General Greene to furnish Your Excellency with a State of your line, and give you credit for any Men you may have serving in the Legionary Corps or Artillery—deducting the amount from the quota assigned to you by the arrangement of the 3^d & 21st of October 1780 will point out exactly your deficiency.

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I flatter myself it is needless to impress upon Your Excellency the necessity of complying as fully as possible with the requisition of Congress above mentioned. It is a well known fact, that the critical and dangerous situation to which all the Southern States were reduced, was owing to the want of a sufficient regular Force to oppose to that of the Enemy, who taking the advantage of the frequent desolution of our temporary Armies, had gained such footing in the foremost Southern, that their Governments were totally subverted or so debilitated, that they were not capable of exerting sufficient authority to bring a regular Army into the field. Happily the scene is changed and a moment is allowed us to rectify our past errors, and, if rightly improved to put ourselves in such a situation, that we need not be apprehensive of the force which Great Britain has remaining upon the Continent, or which she can probably hereafter bring. But the greatest encouragement to a vigorous preparation is that it will be the most likely method of gaining new Allies, and forcing Great Britain into a negotiation, which we have every reason to suppose would end in a peace honorable to the interests and views of America.

I will take the liberty of recommending a matter to Your Excellency, which I must solicit you to urge to the Legislature as absolutely necessary to the filling your Regiments with proper men, more especially if the mode of drafting should be adopted. It is stationing Continental Officers, of the Rank of Field Officers at least, at the different places of rendezvous who shall judge of the ability of the Recruits and pass him or reject him as circumstances may require. For want of a regulation of this kind we have had hundreds of old men and many Children, disordered and decrepid persons passed by civil Characters appointed for Muster Masters and have been under the necessity of discharging them the moment they have joined the Army—whereby the State has been put to a vast expense for a useless man, and the service has lost a Man for the Campaign, the districts from whence such have been sent, have scarce ever replaced them. The Secretary at War will address your Excellency upon this subject, which I can assure you is of the utmost importance to the constitution of the Army.

I have the honor to be Your Excellencys
Most Ob^t Humble Serv^t