

Security, and take up a Number of Negroes that at present have nobody to stop their going to the Enemy."

Militiamen, or better yet, men willing to enlist in the Continental Line from Maryland, were desperately needed to reinforce Washington's army, but regrettably the governor did have to order militia units to remain in the state to prevent the kind of activities described by Rumsey. Furthermore, units ordered to march to the northward frequently could not, or would not. In a letter to Governor Johnson dated October 13, Francis Ware reported from Port Tobacco, Charles County, that he had appointed officers for the local militia but that the number that would actually be marching to reinforce Washington would "be short of what your Excellence Expects owing in a great Measure to the people being very sickly, and many of them so poore that they are not able as times are, to furnish clothing sufficient to Shelter Them from the inclemency of the weather." On the 15th, Benjamin Mackall, IV, of Calvert County, reported to Johnson that he had ordered the militia to assemble on October 9, but that day being rainy, he postponed the meeting until the following Monday, at which time most of the militiamen refused to march, with the exception of "the Officers and a few Privates." Mackall added that the field officers were attempting to find substitutes, but he doubted that even a single company could be completed, because the total property owned by those who refused to march was worth less than the amount that had been established for the purchase of a substitute, and therefore confiscation of their estates would be futile.

The frustration of being unable to find men willing to march in the militia took its toll on the officers. Brice Howard, an officer in a Baltimore County militia company, wrote to Col. John Dorsey on October 17, enclosing his commission as an officer, explaining: "I should be Sorry to find my motive for giving up my Commission should be misconstrued, (Knowing it to be Customary for the worst Constructions to be put on these things) but you and Every other Gentleman in the Battalion must Know that Even Job himself Could not have held out so Long as I've done with such a Set [of men]. I Cannot hold it any longer." An even more eloquent letter of disgust, written by Joseph Johnson, a lieutenant in Capt. Michael Troutman's Company of Frederick County militia, to Governor Johnson on October 27, stated:

...I have Acted in Actual Service at every Great inconveniency and Great Hazard being in the back parts of Virginia last winter when called for and returned from thence