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Act for Raising Volunteers to Join the Grand Army, May 1777

An ACT for raising VOLUNTEERS to join the GRAND ARMY.*

WHEREAS it is of the greatest importance to the interest and freedom of *America*, that a speedy reinforcement should be sent out of this commonwealth to his Excellency General *Washington*, to render the operations of the present campaign more decisive and honourable to the *American* arms.

BE it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, that two thousand volunteers rank and file, be raised, who are to join the commander in chief of the *American* army, when ordered by his Excellency the Governour or chief magistrate of this commonwealth.

AND be it farther enacted, that as an inducement to engage volunteers at this important and critical period, a bounty of thirty dollars and a complete suit of regimentals, to consist of a coat, jacket, a pair of breeches, two pair of shoes, two pair of stockings, two shirts, and a hat, shall be given to every soldier who obliges himself to serve till the 1st day of *January*, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Nine, unless sooner discharged by the commander in chief, the bounty to be paid on the volunteers receiving orders to march out of their county, and the regimentals to be delivered at the place of general rendezvous; and that for the farther encouragement of such volunteers, they shall be exempt from all draughts and military duty, except in case of an actual invasion of this commonwealth, or insurrection therein, and from payment of any tax on their persons for the space of twelve months, to commence from the day of their obtaining their discharge from the commanding officer in chief of the *American* army; that their pay and rations be the same of the soldiers in the continental army, and that while in camp, they shall be supplied with a gill of spirits *per day gratis*, if to be procured, and all such articles as they may actually want, in the opinion of their brigadier general, or commanding officer of the brigade, shall be furnished them on the terms such articles were usually sold on in the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Four.

AND for the more speedy carrying this act into execution, two copies thereof shall be forthwith printed for each county hereafter named, and shall be despatched by messengers express, or otherwise, to the county lieutenant, or the commanding officer in the said counties, who shall call together the militia of his said county, within ten days after receiving the same, and shall then with his field officers and captains attending, appoint the most proper man or men in the county, as officer or officers for the volunteer service. The proportion of officers to the several counties hereafter named is as followeth, *viz.* *Albemarle*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Amelia*, one captain, one lieutenant, two ensigns; *Augusta*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, *Amherst*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Bedford*, two captains, two ensigns; *Berkeley*, two captains, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Brunswick*, two captains, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Buckingham*, one captain, one ensign; *Caroline*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Culpeper*, two captains, one lieutenant, two ensigns; *Cumberland*, one lieutenant; *Dinwiddie*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Shenando*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Essex*, one captain, one ensign; *Fairfax*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Fauquier*, one captain, one lieutenant, two ensigns; *Fluvanna*, one lieutenant; *Frederick*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Gloucester*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Goochland*, one lieutenant, one ensign, *Halifax*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Hampshire*, one captain, two ensigns; *Hanover*, one captain, one

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lieutenant, one ensign; *Henrico*, one captain, one ensign; *Henry*, one captain, one ensign; *King & Queen*, one lieutenant, one ensign; *King George*, one lieutenant; *King William*, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Lancaster*, one ensign, *Loudoun*, two captains, two lieutenants, one ensign; *Louisa*, one captain, one ensign; *Lunenburg*, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Middlesex*, one ensign, *Mecklenburg*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *New Kent*, one lieutenant; *Northumberland*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Orange*, one lieutenant; *Pittsylvania*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Powhatan*, one lieutenant; *Prince Edward*, one captain, one ensign; *Prince George*, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Prince William*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Richmond*, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Rockbridge*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Rockingham*, one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign; *Spotsylvania*, one lieutenant; *Stafford*, one lieutenant; *Sussex*, one captain, one lieutenant; *Westmoreland*, one captain, one ensign.

THE officers being so appointed, shall immediately proceed to enlist volunteers to make up their respective quotas; a captain twenty four, a lieutenant sixteen, an ensign ten. And if any person so appointed should refuse to act, or if any one who shall act, fails to complete his quota, within twenty days after his appointment, the said field officers and captains, or a majority of them, may appoint any other person they may judge most likely to complete the said quota, provided they should think the service would be benefited by the new appointment; and all volunteer officers appointed under this act shall have full liberty to recruit any where within this commonwealth. The captains, besides their quotas, are to recruit two serjeants, one drummer, and one fifer, the subalterns one serjeant each.

AND be it farther enacted, that from and after the first day of *August* next, all enlistments under this act shall cease; and where it may be the case that the full quota of men is not raised in any by the time aforesaid, the Governour and Council may join together the parts of companies in the several counties; so as to form them into complete companies. The county Lieutenant, or commanding officer in the respective counties, is hereby directed to transmit to the Governour and Council on or before the tenth day of *August* next, by express, to be paid by the Treasurer on a warrant from the Governour, a just and accurate return of the number of men raised in his county; and for the farther encouragement of the officers recruiting volunteers, the sum of five dollars shall be paid for each man recruited.

AND be it enacted, that the said volunteers shall be formed into four distinct battalions, to consist of ten companies of fifty men each rank and file, to be under the command of one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, and four serjeants, and allowed a drummer and fifer; each battalion to be under the command of a lieutenant colonel commandant and major, and be allowed a chaplain, adjutant, quartermaster, surgeon, one surgeon's mate, and a quartermaster serjeant, and the whole shall be under the command of a brigadier general, who shall be appointed by the Governour, with the advice of the Council, and commissioned by the Governour. The Governour and Council shall appoint the field officers, who, with the captains and subalterns, shall be commissioned by the Governour.

AND be it farther enacted, that every officer appointed in the manner before directed, shall, on the enlistments of the volunteers under him, obtain their subscription in the following terms, to wit: We do severally enlist to serve in the corps of volunteers now raising to reinforce the continental army, for the time and upon the terms directed by an act of Assembly intituled *An act for raising volunteers*; and that the volunteers so raised, when they join the grand army, are to be governed by the like rules, regulations, and articles of war, as govern continental officers and soldiers. The said volunteers when raised, shall, during the time they remain in the commonwealth, be subject to the orders of the Governour and Council, who shall, from time to

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time, as they may see cause, fix their place of rendezvous, and adjust all disputes about rank, paying proper regard to priority.

THE brigadier, field officers, captains, and subalterns pay and rations to be the same of officers of equal rank in the continental army, and to commence from the time of their being called into service.

AND be it farther enacted, that the Governour with the advice of the Council, is hereby authorised to use the most expeditious and effectual means for furnishing the said volunteers with proper tents, arms, and accoutrements, and moreover to appoint one or more paymasters, commissaries, or contractors, for the more regularly and punctually paying and providing necessaries for the said troops.

THAT the acts of General Assembly heretofore passed for the relief and support of the distressed wives and families of such soldiers as have hitherto enlisted into the service of this commonwealth, extend to the distressed wives and families of all such volunteer soldiers as may engage under the terms aforesaid.

THE treasurer shall, from time, to [t]ime on warrants from the Governour and Council, pay all such sums of money as may be requisite for the purposes before mentioned, such warrants being previously entered at the auditors office and certified by them to be so entered; the sum so certified by the auditors shall by them be charged in account to those to whom they are payable, and due credits be given them for all expenditures authorised by their instructions from the Governour and Council, and properly vouched; all sums not so expended shall be repaid to the treasurer, whose receipt being delivered to the auditors, they shall give to such person a discharge in full. If any such person shall fail to render account of the application of any such money, or to repay to the treasurer the unexpended balance, and produce his receipt for the same when called on by the auditors, such proceedings shall be used against him as are prescribed by an act of General Assembly passed in the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven, for the recovery of monies due to the publick.

* The printer of this document used the long or leading s, a character that looks similar to an "f" but is used as an "s."

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