

Camp near Pamunkey River

May 3d 1781.

Sir:

I had lately the honor to inform you of the Enemies movements towards Richmond, and the forced marches I was making to its defence. The detachment arrived on the 29th the British Army was thirteen miles distant on the other side of the river. Petersburg, Chesterfield Courthouse, and a part of our vessels had fallen into their hands. Our regular force consisted of 900 men rank and file, that of the Enemy of 2300 at the lowest estimate.

The Command of the water, and such a superiority of regular Troops gave them possession of one Shore. There was no crossing for us, but under a circuit of fifteen miles, and from the number and size of their Boats, their passage over the river was at times quicker than ours.

Richmond being their main object, I determined to defend this Capital, where a quantity of public Stores, & Tobacco was contained. Genl. Nelson was there with a Corps of militia, and Generals Stuben and Mulenburg higher up on the other side.

The same evening we were by summons from General Phillips, made accountable for the public stores on Board vessels near the Town, which he declared should fall into his hands. Next morning the Enemy moved to Manchester opposite Richmond, where they burnt warehouses. 600 men had ventured this side, but were timely recalled, and being charged by a few dragons of Major Nelsons, flew into their Boats with precipitation.

Knowing General Phillips's intention against Richmond (orders for the attack had been already given) I directed Baron de Stuben to join us, and collected our force to receive the Enemy. But the same night they retreated to Osburns, from there to the neck of land, formed by James river and Appamatox, where they have reembarked. Col. Pleasants, and Good's Battalions were sent on each side of the river, and gave annoiance to their Troops and Boats. The Enemy have lost some men killed, prisoners, and Deserters. Since the British Army landed at City point (some Flour excepted at the Courthouse) no public property has been destroyed.

With the highest regard  
I have the honor to be  
Sir

Your most Obt.  
Humble Servant

Lafayette.

Major Genl. Greene.