

Willie Blount to Andrew Jackson, November 11, 1812, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

WILLIE BLOUNT TO JACKSON.1

1 Nov. 23, Blount sent an order to Jackson, fixing Dec. 10, 1812, as the day of rendezvous and the place Nashville.

Nashville, November 11, 1812.

Sir, I am required by Brigadier Genl. Harrison who acts under the Authority of the President of the United States to hold two Regiments of the Militia of the 2d. Division detached conformably to the Act of the 10th. of April 1812, in readiness to march as soon as they may be called for, either by Governor Howard or Governor Edwards, for the protection of their Territories,² or for an expedition against the hostile Tribes of the Illinois river.

² Ninian Edwards was governor of Illinois, 1809 to 1818. Benjamin Howard was governor of Missouri from 1809 until late in 1812.

You will give the necessary orders in your Division to cause two Regiments of said detached Militia to hold themselves in readiness for that service to move at a moments warning when required by either Governor Edwards or Governor Howard; and you will without delay transmit to me a Roster of the Officers selected to command in said Regiments, and state the number of men detached and held in readiness for said service.³

³ This letter was copied in Jackson's MSS., Letter-Book B, p. 7, but the portion embraced in the first and second paragraphs was not copied.

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I am required by the President of the United States thro' the Secy War to call out, organize, arm and equip fifteen hundred of the Militia of Tennessee detached conformably to the Act of April the 10th. 1812; or of Volunteers who have tendered their services to the President of the United States under the Acts of Feby 6th. and July 6th. 1812, for the whole or such part of the required detachment as may be deemed expedient, to be rendezvoused at such parts of the State as may be judged most convenient for their march to New Orleans for the defence of the lower Country, to be organized as far as practicable according to the laws of the United States, under the command of a Brigadier General.⁴ I am authorized to assure the Volunteers that they will not be continued in service in the lower Country during the next Summer,—commissions are forwarded for Officers to command the volunteers as selected. when said Volunteer Corps may be commissioned and organized the fifteen hundred will be ordered to move to New Orleans either by land or water as shall be most convenient, to go on all together, or by detachments of four or five hundred according as the necessary arrangements therefor can be made. They are the Volunteers under your command, whose services with yours have been tendered to and accepted by the President, who are to perform this service you will command them.⁵

⁴ The detachment was ordered merely as a reinforcement for Wilkinson, commanding at New Orleans, which, it was feared, might be attacked by the British during the coming winter.

⁵ The letter of Secretary Eustis, Oct. 21, 1812, is as follows:

“Sir, I am commanded by the President to request your Excellency to call out, organize arm and equip, fifteen hundred of the Militia of Tennessee, detached conformably to the Act of April 10th. 1812 as soon as practicable. It is submitted to your Excellency to have these troops detached and rendezvoused at such parts of the state as you may judge most convenient for their march to New Orleans for the defence of the Lower Country.

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“In consequence of the very great and extensive calls for Tents and other camp Equipage, and the time required for transportation, the Government rely on the exertions of your Excellency and the patriotism of the citizens of Tennessee for a great part of these supplies. One thousand stands of Arms will be ordered from Harper's ferry and down the Ohio, with ammunition and such other stores as can be reasonably procured, which together with a Thousand stands ordered to be delivered to your Excellency from the stores at Newport in May last, will, it is presumed, enable you to arm and equip the Detachment for immediate Service. Should Volunteers offer under the Acts of February 6th. and July 6th. 1812, your Excellency is authorized to organize them for the whole, or such part of the Detachment, as you may deem expedient. Seventy Blank Commissions are transmitted, to be filled up by your Excellency as the Officers are selected. It will be distinctly understood, that the Volunteers will not be entitled to pay, until they are called into actual service.

“Your Excellency will please to order these Troops to move for New Orleans by Land or Water, as shall be deemed most expeditious and convenient, in detachments of four or five hundred as they are organized, and the necessary arrangements are made. Copies of the contracts for supplying Rations are herewith inclosed, and your Excellency will appoint such agents as may be necessary, conformably to the Law, copies of which are also inclosed. Your Excellency will please to communicate with General Wilkinson at New Orleans, keep him advised of your arrangements, the number of Troops in each detachment, and the time of their Rendezvous and march from the several points. For the necessary Expenditures under this Order, your Excellency is hereby authorized to draw Bills on this Department.”

A second letter from Eustis to Governor Blount. Oct. 23, 1812, directed that the volunteers be infantry or riflemen under the command of a brigadier-general, and that they be assured they would not have to serve in the “lower country during the next summer”.

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You will please notify the Officers of said Volunteer Companies who have made a tender of service under said acts and who have forwarded rolls that I am authorized to commission them as selected by their Companies; and also to request the said officers to meet at Nashville on the twenty first day of November Instant. for the purpose of nominating and selecting the field officers to command.

You will please procure the necessary Boats for the transportation of the Troops to New Orleans, together with the necessary Camp equipage; tho', it is to be understood that for supplies of the latter description including Tents the General Government rely principally on the patriotism of the Citizens of Tennessee, hence with such each man will be expected to furnish himself as fully as it may be in his power to do. this reliance on the patriotism of our fellow citizens in part is owing to the great and extensive calls for tents and other Camp equipage, and the time required for transportation.

The Troops will also be expected to take with them their own Arms and equipments such as may be fit for service including Rifles—those who have not arms will as far as practicable be furnished by Government meaning both detached Militia and Volunteers. For the necessary expenditures under this order I am authorized to draw Bills on the War Department. The well known attachment of yourself and the volunteers for your country is a sure pledge for the prompt execution of this order, respectfully

your Obt. Servant