

**George Mason to George Washington, May 16, 1758,
Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers.
Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of
America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.**

FROM COLONEL GEORGE MASON.

DOGUES NECK 16th. May 1758

DEAR SIR

I am favour'd with yrs. of the 8th. Inst, pr. French Mason, & am perfectly satisfied wth. the Justice of yr. Reasons for not providing for him in yr. Regiment at this Time. I am Convinced from your State of the Case that it Could not have been done without prejudicing the service. He tells me you were kind enough to promise him a Commission the next vacancy that happens. I shou'd have been very glad his Fortune would have supported him as a Volunteer: both he & I were very found of his entering as such in yr. Regiment; but I really did not think it advisable that he shou'd run his own little Estate in Debt upon the occasion: You know what kind of an establishment our Virginia Troops are on—Nobody can tell how soon they may all be disbanded without any provision for a broken Leg, or a shortened Arm! or if they shou'd happen to be kept up for a good many years, how possible is it for an Officer to be reduced without being guilty or so much as accused of any Misbehaviour? Faith these are discouraging Circumstances. On the British Establishment a young fellow may venture to dip his Estate a little on the Road to preferment, where he is sure, if he behaves well that a Commission is some sort of a provision for Life; but here I really think a young man who Enters into the service, & has but a small Estate of his own ought if possible to preserve it unimpaired, to return to in case of a Disappointment, or an Accident.—These Reasons have influenced me

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to dissuade French Mason from entering as a Volunteer; & as he is very fond of trying a Soldiers Life & indeed I found it absolutely necessary that he should do so, as the only means of getting clear of a very foolish Affair he is likely to fall into with a Girl in this Neighbourhood, I have advised him to enlist in the new Regiment, if he can be made a Serjeant: my Reason for advising him to enlist in that Regiment, is that if he shou'd be disappointed in getting a Commission, he may if he pleases, quit the Service the first of December next; whereas, from the Act of Assembly, it appears to Me, that the Men who enlist in the old Regiment may be detain'd as long as any Troops are kept up in the pay of this Government; at least it may admit of a Dispute—I speak this to you only as my own private Opinion, without any Intention of making it public to the prejudice of the recruiting Service —

If he shou'd have the good fortune to get a Commission, tho' he will accept of the first that offers in either Regiment, he will prefer an Ensigny in yr. Regiment to a Lieutenancy in the other, & I have advised him if he shou'd get a Comn. in Colo. Byrd's Regiment to exchange it if he can by any Means for one in yours—I shall relye Sir on your good Offi in his Favour whenever a Vacancy happens, & flatter myself that, by a strict Adherence to hi Duty, he will strive to deserve your good Opinion—I very sincerely wish you [mutilated] Health & every Felicity & am Dr. Sir

Yr. most obd: Ser G MA