

## Military Bounty Warrants 1779

### CHAPTER XXI.

**An Act for more Effectually Securing to the Officers and Soldiers of the Virginia line, the lands reserved to them, for discouraging present settlements on the north west side of the Ohio river, and for punishing persons attempting to prevent the execution of land office warrants.**

*Approved October 1779 by the Virginia General Assembly*

I. **WHEREAS** all the lands lying between the Green river and the Tenisee river, from the Alleghany mountains to the Ohio river, except the tract granted unto Richard Henderson, esq and company, have been reserved for the officers and soldiers of the Virginia line, on continental and state establishment, to give them choice of good lands, not only for the publick bounty due to them for military service, but also in their private adventures as citizens; and no person was allowed by law to enter any of the said lands, until they shall have been first satisfied; and it is now represented to the general assembly, that several persons are, notwithstanding, settling upon the lands so reserved; whereby the said officers and soldiers may be in danger of losing the preference and benefit intended for them by the legislature: **Be it enacted** by the General Assembly, That every person hereafter settling upon the lands reserved for the officers and soldiers as aforesaid; or who having already settled thereon, shall not remove from the said lands within six months next after the end of this present session of assembly, shall forfeit all his or her goods and chattels to the commonwealth; for the recovery of which, the attorney for the state in the county of Kentucky for the time being, is hereby required immediately after the expiration of the said term, to enter prosecution by way of information in the court of the said county on behalf of the commonwealth, and on judgment being obtained, immediately to issue execution and proceed to the sale of such goods and chattels; and if the person or persons so prosecuted shall not remove from off the said lands in three months after prosecution so entered, the said attorney shall certify to the governour the name or names of the person or persons so refusing to remove, who, with the advice of the council may, and he is hereby required to issue orders to the commanding officer of the said county, or to any other officer in the pay of this state, to remove such person or persons, or any others that may be settled thereon, from off the said lands by force of arms, except such as were actually settled prior to the first day of January, one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight.

II. **AND WHEREAS** no law of this commonwealth hath yet ascertained the proportions of quantity of land to be granted, at the end of the present war, to the officers of the Virginia line on continental or state establishment, or to the officers of the Virginia navy, and doubts may arise respecting the particular quantity of land due to the soldiers and sailors, from the different terms of their enlistments; **Be it enacted**, That the officers who shall have served in the Virginia line on continental establishment, or in the army or navy upon state establishment to the end of the present war; and the non-commissioned officers, soldiers, and sailors upon either of the said establishments, their heirs or legal representatives, shall respectively be entitled to and receive the proportion and quantities of land following: that is to say, every colonel, five thousand acres; every lieutenant colonel, four thousand five hundred acres; every major, four thousand acres; every captain, three thousand acres; every subaltern,

two thousand acres; every non-commissioned officer who having enlisted for the war, shall have served to the end thereof, four hundred acres; and every soldier and sailor under the like circumstances, two hundred acres; every non-commissioned officer, who having enlisted for the term of three years, shall have served out the same, or to the end of the present war, two hundred acres; and every soldier and sailor under the like circumstances, one hundred acres; every officer of the navy the same quantity of land as an officer of equal rank in the army. And where any officer, soldier, or sailor shall have fallen or died in the service, his heirs or legal representatives shall be entitled to and receive the same quantity of land as would have been due to such officer, soldier, or sailor respectively, had he been living.

III. **AND WHEREAS**, although no lands were allowed by law to be entered or warrants to be located on the north west side of the Ohio river, until the farther order of the general assembly, several persons are notwithstanding removing themselves to and making new settlements on the lands upon the north west side of the said river, which will probably bring on an Indian war with some tribes still in amity with the United American States, and thereby involve the commonwealth in great expense and bring distress on the inhabitants of our western frontier: ***Be it declared and enacted***, That no person so removing to and settling on the said lands on the north west side of the Ohio river, shall be entitled to or allowed any right of preemption or other benefit whatever, from such settlement or occupancy; and the governour is hereby desired to issue a proclamation, requiring all persons settled on the said lands immediately to remove there from, and forbidding others to settle in future, and moreover with the advice of the council, from time to time, to order such armed force as shall be thought necessary to remove from the said lands, such person or persons as shall remain on or settle contrary to the said proclamation: ***Provided***, That nothing herein contained shall be construed in any manner to injure or affect any French, Canadian, or other families, or persons heretofore actually settled in or about the villages near or adjacent to the posts reduced by the forces of this state.

IV. **AND WHEREAS** various reports have been industriously circulated by evil minded and designing men, of a combination to hinder by force and violence, the execution and survey of legal land warrants, whereby many people have been deterred from purchasing unappropriated lands upon the south east side of the Ohio river within this commonwealth, and the receipt of considerable sums of money at the treasury thereby prevented to the injury of the publick credit, and tending to destroy all confidence in the laws of the land: ***Be it farther enacted***, That all and every person or persons who shall be force or violence, or by threats of force or violence, attempt to hinder or prevent the execution of any warrant from the register of the land office upon waste and unappropriated lands, or who shall be force or violence, or by threats of force or violence attempt to hinder, restrain, or prevent any surveyor, chain carriers, markers, or other persons necessary employed therein, from laying off, marking, or bounding any waste or unappropriated land according to law, by virtue of such warrant, and also all and every person or persons, aiding, abetting, or assisting in, or accessory to such force or violence, shall upon conviction thereof, forfeit and lose his, her, or their title to all ungranted land which he, she, or they, may or shall have acquired by settlement, preemption right, land office warrant, or any other means whatsoever, and shall moreover suffer twelve months imprisonment without bail or mainprize, and be rendered ineligible and incapable of being appointed to, or holding any office of trust or profit, civil, or military within this commonwealth, for the space of seven years. And all justices of the peace and other

civil officers, are hereby strictly enjoined and required to suppress all such force or violence, and to cause the offenders to be apprehended and brought to justice; and all and every person or persons rescuing or attempting to rescue any such offender, shall be deemed and are hereby declared accessories, and subject to the same penalties and punishment as the principal.

REF: "The Statutes at Large being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia", Vol. X, by William Waller Hening, pp. 159-162.