Portsmouth, 14th June 1804

My Lord,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship’s letter of the 12th Instant and I have to acquaint you that I received another of same date from Hackwood Parks this Morning, the latter enclosing a letter from Captain Cole, which I now return by your Lordship’s desire.

I am very sorry that my letter of the 9th with the monthly return has not arrived. I sent it by an Orderly to Winchester when I forwarded my Return to the Assistant Adjutant General.

The reason that I have not communicated any thing confidentially to your Lordships, respecting the last untoward Proceedings at Portsmouth, is, because I knew so little of the subject that I was apprehensive I might write too much or not enough, as most of what I have understood was from private Conversation and, in fact, I have ever endeavoured to steer as clear from misleading your Lordship as it has been my most earnest wish to inculcate Subordination and Harmony.

As far as I am informed, the business of the late Resignations proceeded from some observations, or orders threatened to have been given, by General Whitelocke, in consequence of the three Captains in question, after having been written to the Lieutenant Governor that they could not appear with their Companies on His Majesty’s Birthday, shewing themselves in the Field at their Head. This carrying the idea of merely “playing at Soldiers” I imagine struck the Major General very forcibly, as it would any one else, and his displeasure was in consequence shewn.

It is rumoured that the three Captains certainly did not mean to be in the Field, but that many of their Men having declared they would go, in some way of other, the Officers were induced to go. Thus, by the way, I write from mere hearsay, and I request your Lordship will not conceive that I mean to make any unfair impression but to comply with your wishes, to be informed of what I may have learnt.

I have not seen Captain Cole, and therefore have not had an opportunity of being shewn your Lordship’s answer to his letter.

I will make the necessary enquiries to the Commandants of the other Companies at Gosport how they have disposed of the Money allowed for necessaries.

I take the liberty of enclosing in another envelope a letter which I received from Mr Clayton the Adjutant of the Gosport Volunteers, and I have most earnestly to request your Lordship’s kind attention to him.

I have the honor to be, etc

F. F. Mannooch, Inspecting Field Officer

Right Honorable Lord Bolton