Portsmouth 11th April 1804

My Lord

If the sense of gratitude and respect that we have uniformly felt and expressed, towards your Lordship, would admit of Increase, it would be for the last Mark of your Friendship, and Condescension, with which you have honoured us, in your Communication to Captain Garrett, and we humbly hope, that you will not impute Hesitation, at placing ourselves under Mr Arnaud’s Command, as Major, and seeing Mr Deacon placed over the other Corps as a Field Officer, and both to be Commanded or Superintended, by an Officer from the Line, to an Impracticability of Temper, or a Difficulty or satisfying us, but to its candid, true, and honest motive, a thorough Conviction that it will never accomplish the object, wished for by your Lordship, or aimed at by General Whitelocke. Every day’s Experience teaches us that unless Volunteers are placed under the command of a Man to who they are attached, and for whom they feel a Degree of Respect, no Efficacy can be derived. Mr Greetham, when at Winchester, acknowledges to have said to your Lordship, that if it was perfectly impossible that our Companies could be attached to Major Garrett’s Corps, they would prefer even going under Mr Arnaud, but on feeling the pulse of the other Officers, and of the Men, in Consequence of the hint to that intent in your Lordship’s letter, we find insurmountable objections to an Union with Mr Arnaud. The Men in general, feel, that his Men are of a very different Description to themselves, all Revenue Officers, and differing in other Material Points.

We therefore beg to remain as four Independent Companies, unless we can unite with that Gentleman, under who, we all served during the last War, with who we all enrolled in the present War, and for whom we feel the strongest attachment, and under whom it will be our Pleasure and Pride to anticipate every Wish, that the Government might form of Volunteers, and cheerfully submit to every Duty, the Lieutenant Governor might wish us to perform. We are not without hopes that this may now be granted, since the obstacle seem to be removed, of there being no Individual in the civil Rank of Inhabitants to be made Field Officers (we judge so from your Lordship’s hinting that Messr Arnaud and Deacon might have the rank of Major).

We are aware that much suspicion might be created against us, some will imagine that this has been our object throughout this unfortunate struggle, while others will fancy that we seek Rank for our Friend, and that he has instigated us, We solemnly declare both we know that he has no view to Rank, and that if he had the Command of ten Companies, he would decline additional Rank, we know that the object he is most anxious for, is to be of as much Service to His Country, at this eventful Moment as he can, and as to our Motives we should have been contented to have remained as you originally destined us to be, namely Independent Companies. That system now being abandoned, we do humbly propose an Alteration. We conceive that points have been yielded to General Whitelocke that could only be suggested by him, and submitted to by the Government, under the Impression that the Volunteers were not of that correct disposition and Character that they ought to be, and that Powers not know to the Law or ever hinted at in Parliament, should be given to the Lieutenant Governor of Portsmouth, that are not adopted in any other Garrison in the Kingdom, at least as we believe and suppose. Under these Impressions, and alive to the Purity of Motives, fully assured that no one Circumstance when fairly and fully explained, can be alleged against us, to Question our Principles, we had rather withdrawn ourselves than be placed in a Situation that is not likely to restore Harmony and efficiency as necessary amongst Volunteers. We think that on this Proposal of ours being submitted by you to the General, he may not be disinclined to admit it, seeing that his attempt at putting us under the Command of Field Officer of the Line, have completely failed, and that the necessary Efficiency and public Benefit as not likely to be attained but by our being on the footing of all other Volunteers, namely being commanded by a Man of our own choice. If the Determination of not making any Individual a Field Officer had been adhered to, we had no right to propose this Plan, but it being given up in one Instance we see no Reason why those Companies who originally offered themselves under Major Garrett, should not be restored to him (especially as we seek no additional Rank ourselves) in preference to being united to Mr Arnaud, to whom we bear every friendly Respect, but with whom it is we fear impossible to prevail upon our Men to unite. Major Garrett in the event of the Enemy landing is ordered to Hilsea which is within the Limits of the Garrison of Portsmouth, and if it should not be the Pleasure of the Governor, or Lieutenant Governor, to order him into the Town, we shall be very willing to join him at Hilsea, as it is very immaterial whether we mount Guard on the Walls of Hilsea, or the Ramparts of Portsmouth, and we beg leave humble to suggest the Difficulty as to Mr Arnaud can easily got over by placing him at the Head of several Companies of Artillery.

We have the honor to be

My Lord, your Lordship’s

Much obliged and very humble servants

G. Garrett

Mr Greetham junior

J. A. Hickely

P.S. Anxious not to lose another Post, and Captain Mottley at this moment not being in the Way, to put his Signature to the above, we think it advisable to forward it as it is, satisfied that it contains his Sentiments, as well as our own.