Portsmouth January 22nd 1804

My Lord

I have just been honoured with your Lordship’s letter of yesterday upon the subject of the Volunteers of this place, and I daresay your Lordship will not be suprized that I should in future decline in as great a degree as possible any interference with them beyond the necessary attention to their Discipline when under Arms.

I am always ready to do my Duty and I trust zealously in any situation in which His Majesty may place me, but the present instance has convinced me of the great impropriety under any circumstances, of an Officer suffering himself to be directed from the strict line of His profession.

The information your Lordship requires from me, would certainly come with more propriety from His Majesty's Secretary of State, the appointment of Field Officers from the Line to command the three Battalions at Portsmouth, Portsea and Gosport having been arranged between Mr Yorke, and the Commander in Chief. and in my humble opinion with wisdom and propriety, and as Your Lordship will recollect in exact conformity to what was proposed at the formation of the Independent Companies; for good and politic reasons, leaving out the Inhabitants as Field Officers. Major Maxwell who had the Kings appointment to command those of Portsmouth, is just removed to the situation of Inspector, Major Carter (a nephew of Sir Johns) Commands at Portsea, and Gosport is without a Field Officer.

In my last, I thought I had mentioned as much as was necessary relative to the three Captains resigned, and from the peculiar nature of the case, I am quite certain that further explanation will answer no good purpose. The truth is however, that the factitious spirit of Party, that has so long pervaded the Town of Portsmouth was not in this case to be subdued by public zeal, or any thing else; and these Gentlemen finding their situation from such circumstances unpleasant, desired to quit, and the measure was certainly calculated to produce tranquillity, at their particular request I forwarded their Resignation to your Lordship, but in future Lieutenant Colonel Mannooch will do so, with such information as Your Lordship may require from him.

Notwithstanding my wishes to see the Volunteer System better arranged generally, I have some satisfaction in stating to your Lordship that I have not experienced any great difficulty in carrying on the service with them here, and as far as I consider it to be strictly my duty, I shall continue to do so in future.

I am with respect

My Lord, your Lordship’s

Most obedient humble servant

John Whitelocke, Major General

I have for some days promised Mr Lindergreen that when I wrote to your Lordship, I would mention to you his earnest desire that the appointment of Mr Hall may take place without delay, and relieve him from the anxiety of his present situation.