Hackwood Park, 8th June 1804

Private

Gentlemen

I need not seek to assure you of the concern I feel upon your recent communication, which I received late last night on my return from London; I am in so wretched a state of health, that I can only, in obedient to your wish, transmit the whole to the Secretary of State, except that I will take the liberty to make some alterations in the expressions of your letters to me, which I am afraid would be misconstrued, I will send you a Copy of the letter I shall send. It seems to me now impossible to avoid some enquiry. The Order No. 10 seems indeed to me perfectly indefencible. But I would rather let opinions come from other Quarters than from me.

I will not however, decline making one or two observations as they occur at the moment. I have waited till the arrival of the Post this morning in hopes of hearing from the General, but I have not a line from any quarter, but yours with certain resignations. I have understood that Colonel Mannooch would have been back before Monday, I suppose he was not, as Mr. Martin White alone appears.

I do not understand, to whom the order was addressed by the terms subscribed. To the Officer Commanding the Portsmouth Battalion of Volunteers, there being in fact at present no Commanding Officer. I should suppose by your letter to Major Pritzler that you considered yourselves as not included in that description, if so, I cannot conceive, what belongs to the designation. By the by, I see no mention of Captain Mottley, where does he act or how is he considered? I must fairly own that I think it would have been well if upon the Second order, however doubtful such orders may be, you had, for the sake of the occasion, at once agreed to act in Battalion. You had always made your own declaration that you would be ready to do so upon special occasion or on the summons of the General. You would have put the other Companies completely in the wrong, if they had refused to join you or to act with you. But I must also applaud your readiness to take any station upon the Ground, to which the General might appoint you, but still I wish no previous difficulty had been made, because, I own, it appears to me inconsistent with your declarations even when you wished generally to drill in separate Companies.

But the paper No. 8 seems to convey a mistake of your meaning by comprehending an idea of total stipulation for station as a condition of your going out. I wish that No. 9 had been more particular upon that ground and in explanation. No. 10 must be judged by the Secretary of State, it certainly appears to me to be perfectly wrong, and indefencible, in my hasty notion from a first thought at present, I am sorry that you attempted to march after yours No. 9, because I think they General will seek to take advantage of that as a step without, and after his message, contrary to his Orders when you were under Arms, it was difficult to know what to do; perhaps the best way would have been to have marched back and dismissed your several Companies, you certainly could not give your sanction to the Men going in Arms without their Officers. If they had quitted you in consequence of the Generals orders under the message delivered by Mr Martin White you would have had no responsibility, but I conceive you would have had very strong grounds of representations.

As the thing now unfortunately is circumstanced I can only refer it altogether to the Secretary of State, but I wish to know previously, if you are informed about the Generals proceedings upon the case, for I dare say he will take some steps to give favourable colour to his own conduct and the contrary to yours.

I have only one more question to ask, which is, when you had all agreed upon my going to Portsmouth to act as a Battalion, you were not prevented by the refusal or oppositions of the Six Companies and whether the General [Whitelocke] did not allow that to be the case.

I have the honor to be

Gentlemen

Your very faithfull obedient servant

Bolton

Captains Garrett, Greetham, Hickley