Carisbrook Castle, 28 July 1803

Private

My Lord

I have great satisfactor in being enabled to inform your Lordship that I attended yesterday at Portsmouth a very large Meeting of the Inhabitants convened by the Mayor. The summons extended on this occasion to the whole Island of Portsea including the two parishes of Portsmouth and Portsea jealousies and disagreements of various kinds chiefly political, have long sperated the Corporation and prevented all union of Intercourse. The situation of the Country is General which I had found mean to circulate among them all as a cause for laying aside all Dissensions for the present, and for uniting in effort to give aid and support to it, has prevailed, and enabled me to report to your Lordship a unanimity of sentiment and impulse to join in the most zealous exertions for the Public. General Whitelocke Lieutenant Governor and at present commanding the Garrision at Portsmoth has infinite merit in his very able management of these discordant People. After consulatation with him, and by his assistance I have succeded completely in the object of obtaining a most valuable force of Volunteers in this quarter, who are to be enrolled in companies of 80 Men and to have a Captain, 2 Lieutenants and one Ensign in each Company. Their Service will be Garrison Duty in the Isle of Portsea, and it connections in case of exigency, for which purpose they will be trained and exercised as other Volunteer Corps under the Regulations. General Whitelocke wished that about 400 may be alotted to the Great Guns, and the rest be form’d as Corps of Infantry, except the Men of the Victualing Department who both at Portsmouth and Gosport may be fored and trained seperately and the whole put under the command of a Naval Officer, not at present employ’d. Admiral Montague has recommended to me Captain Deacon for that purpose, the number will be about 300. I ought to have observed that Universal Assent followed the Proposition for leaving the superior command by Field Officers if thought necessary, in the selection or appointment of His Majesty by the Lieutenant of the County when their enrolment shall have taken place, and I shall have it in my power to view the number and composition of the Companies and the Officers recommended, I shall be better able to judge, what it may be right for me to represent to your Lordship for His Majesty’s approbation in that respect.

I recken upon Artillery 400

Infantry 1300

Victualling Office 300

2000

Besides these the Dock yard will afford a very large body probably 800 or 1000 Shipwrights, labourers, etc. who will be of infinite use particularly manning the wall and Bastions and Lord Charles Saxton assures me that very little training will complete their fitness for such service, General Whitelock and Admiral Montague are of the same opinion. I have also to represent to Lordship that the inhabitant of Hayling Island have offered their services to be trained to Great Guns and small arms, and will be ready upon exigency to take any duty in that Island or at Fort Cumberland or in any place connected with these, and the General Defence of Portsmouth, etc. General Whitelocke strongly recommends the acceptance of this proposition, which is made to me be Mr Badd, a resident there of considerable property. On the Coast towards Sussex the People of Havant and Emsworth are desirous of forming a respectable Corps. On the other side the inhabitants of Gosport unanimously follow the example of Portsmouth and will undertake the same arrangement of service and duty offer’d in companies of 80 Men and subject to superior command as His Majesty may think proper to put over them in case of forming a battalion, etc. In some degree separated from these, but connected by Vicinity and offer of occasional junction and Aid in service a small Corps of 50 or 60 Riflemen offer themselves for Service without pay or allowance and to find their own Arms and to be commanded by Captain March who had a small Corps of that sort in the last War. I take for granted that this will not be objected to. I confine this letter, which however I am very sorry to make so long, to the subject of Portsmouth and Gosport, which are assuredly of the greatest important, I am sorry to add, that at present they are not so secure in any respect, as might be wished. I hope and trust they soon will. I mark this letter private, because upon the whole I think it best to do so, but your Lordship will of course consider any part of it which you may think proper as public. General Whitelocke seems extremely anxious to have the aid of one or two Military Officers of certain rank, who may be upon half pay, or retired and capable, of superintending the discipline etc of these several Corps can then be hoped any proper compensation in emolument for such Officers in this case and indeed in large Corps, which may be formed under the new Act for Defence of the Realm. I conceive that infinite good might arise from some discretionary in the Lieutenants of Counties to obtain by such means the aid of Retired Officers, etc. I will add no more. I go to Winchester tomorrow to attend a General Meeting of the Lieutenancy on Saturday, I shall be at Hackwood on Sunday, and I hope on Monday to be able to run up for 3 or 4 days to London and will be happy to wait upon your Lordship at any hour on Tuesday, I shall be at Lothians Hotel in Albermarle Street. I will not make apologies for this scrawl, as I would not lose tome be attempt to make a copy.

I have the honor to be, etc

Bolton