Carisbrook Castle

6th August 1803

My Lord

I trouble your Lordship with a few concluding lines upon the subject of Volunteers Corps of Infantry in the County of Southampton upon the conditions offered by the Government in June last.

The Battalion at Christchurch under Lieutenant Colonel Walcot has sent the plan the plan of their Establishment to your Lordship’s Offices.

That of the New Forest Rangers (previously Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst) under Major W. F. Rose has not yet transmitted theirs, as Mr Rose was (after the first proposition submitted to your Lordship and accepted) a Petitioner to be allowed to increase his number of Companies from three, to which extent only the first [?] had gone, to four or five with fewer men in each Company. In the [?[ was he commanded two companies of eighty men each and the first idea was the same now but the offer of service increasing, the proposition was settled to be made of three companies. The blank however for the number was not filled up in Your Lordships letter of acceptance. I have now since I saw your Lordship, and full sensible of the strict line which should be drawn and observed, told Mr Rose, that your Lordship would not give assent to more than three Companies, with a doubt of their number being more than sixty men in each, but that I would hope to have your agreement to the number desired of 80 for each company and I trust therefore now final, that your Lordship will allow this Establishment to be given in at three Companies of 80 ranks and file a company. (They offer to extend their services to any part of Great Britain)

Several other offers were made in other parts particularly of the revival of some companies upon the New Forrest side of the Southampton Water and the acceptance of which I should have been glad to have agree, had I not been checked by the introduction of the New Defence Bill.

I always of course except the management for Portsmouth and Gosport and the neighbourhood, which your Lordship had indeed yourself early instructed me to encourage, but which has only now been brought into a state for regular establishment. Upon that subject I beg leave to enclose two letters from General Whitelocke, and to pray your Lordship's attention to them.

I conclude the General to be mistaken in his first letter about the exemptions from the operation of the new Defence Act expecting so far as he has been taught to suppose (and as they do under the Militia and Army of Reserve Acts) to the men of the Dockyard, etc. But assuredly I was ready from what I had been allowed by your Lordship to hold out, to say that the men might very safely rely upon their service not being required beyond the line proposed. I have indeed always considered such places as Portsmouth and Gosport to be fairly entitled to exception in very many respects - not from favour - but from views to the public good. I am confident that no plan will be so effectually accomplished by the unanimity of all parties and the opinion of the Military Commander as that, which has been proposed, of raising the necessary force by Companies and afterwards appointing a few Field Officers, being Gentlemen of the neighbourhood with rank of Major, and over the whole such an Officer as Col. Duke (himself however under the general superintendence and command of the Lieutenant Governor, or some other General on the staff at Portsmouth) with the assistance of Captain Meredith in respect to the Artillery, and Captain Henry Deacon for the Victualling Office men. I only add in respect[?] my cordial and continuous conviction that the Defense of Portsmouth etc is of such importance as not only warrants but demands arrangements peculiar to such local situations, etc.

I leave the matter now with your Lordship, and I have the honor to be

My Lord, your Lordships

Most obedient humble servant

Bolton

P.S. I should have noticed Mr Lindegreed’s letter. He is, I believe, what the General represents him – but I do not wish, on account of the other Gentleman above alluded to recommend him for higher rank than that of Major. I shall so suggest it to General Whitelocke but awaiting of course upon the whole your Lordship’s instructions with His Majesty’s pleasure.

P.S. I have this moment received another letter from General Whitelocke, which I beg leave to enclose and refer the contents of it to your Lordships consideration. A certain number both at Portsmouth and Gosport should assuredly be entitled to the benefit of the regulation, as having offered and been accepted even before the date of them.

[On the back – enclosures returned to Lord Bolton]