Hackwood Park

20th June 1804

Dear Sir

Even under circumstance of strong health and spirits I should much feel the pain of discussing with you such subject as that which is now occurred, but in my present state of indisposition I must content myself with a very few lines merely to express my cordial regret at what has passed and the more, because I am from my heart convinced, that mistake and misapprehension alone could have occasioned any thing of the king[?]. I must [?] that I see with infinite concern your continued idea of a design by those Gentlemen and particularly in Mr Greetham to insult you, on which, I am confident, nothing has been further from their thoughts. You must allow me to say that I think it a little hard after the declaration on my last visit to Portsmouth and the readiness on the part of those Gentlemen to concur in the arrangement which was recommended by you and me, that the defeat of it by the refusal of [?] Companies should subject them to blame. The insult surely to you was that of the leading Officer of Officers of the Six Companies, who resisted without any apparent reason the junction desired and agreed to. I understand you at the time to feel it so, and in consequence to have yourself advised separation, and that Six Companies and Four Companies should distinctly act together. This was in consequence communicated to Mr Yorke and much approved on by Him, who [?] me was anxious to avoid any disturbance of the Gentlemen’s spirit of zeal and patriotism. I am informed that you have been made acquainted with the very offensive proceedings on South Common of the Six Companies or rather of the leader of them to the Four, when the latter intended a compliment to the other.

I cannot help persuading myself, that if you had been aware of this, which I think it was the duty of Mr Martin White to have done, you would not have given such a reprimand to the Officers who now desire to resign, for a modest request without complaint, to be placed any where at your pleasure but not to be intermixed with those Companies, from whom they have been separated by the resistance of those to join them and still more the subsequent unprovoked outrage.

I feel that I ought to beg pardon, when I attempt an opinion of Military matters, but I must beg you to believe I am adduced to do it solely from the conviction of my mind, that you never would have experience any thwarting opposition from the Gentlemen in question, and that it was occasioned solely in the latter instance by the unaccountable ill humour of the others. These are my real sentiments and I cannot help fairly imparting them to you. I have at the same time no wish to defend the one at the expense of the other. I am persuaded that there have been faults on all sides, and in such cases there must be a good deal of forbearance and allowance. I think you will do me the justice to acknowledge, that I have sought indifferently to encourage all, who were disposed to come forward and with proper spirit of all parties. I have no personal concern in any of these differences and have studiously avoided any influence by them; I have laboured for the success of General arrangements and certainly in regard to any lucrative employments have manifested at least my impartial attention. Under these circumstances I cannot fear the imputation of any idea on my part to support a disposition in any to create discordance or embarrassment much less to be guilty of insubordination. I will only add one word upon the matter of the Birth Day, it seems to me, that the Four Companies acting together were not called upon by the circulation of your first invitation, which must, I hope been accidentally occasioned by the forgetfulness of the Adjutant. I certainly wish, that afterwards upon your order of arrangement the three Officers had immediately assented, only claiming your protection of which I am sure you will think they had some reason to apprehend the need.

They appear however even in submitting their wish to be left together, to have given themselves totally to your wishes for any station whatever in the Line. And at the last to have offered themselves even for the intermixture, at first the object of their apprehension, because they were earnest (I will so far be confident for them) as any the most loyal of the whole to manifest their devotion to their Sovereign, and their dutiful zeal in his Cause and in that of their Country. My perfect sense of what is due from me in regard to opinion at least had prevailed upon me to overcome my reluctance to give you the trouble in this way. I wish with all my heart that you may find every obstacle removed by the retirement of these [?] Gentlemen

I have the honor to be, etc

Bolton

Major General Whitelocke