Hackwood House, 19th June 1804

My Lord,

I have the honor to transmit to your Lordship a letter, which I have this moment received from Colonel Clavering, Inspecting Field Officer, with report of proceedings and carrying your Lordships instructions into execution for disbanding the Westmeon Company.

I am extremely glad to observe the contrition, which seems to have prevailed in the mass of the Men of the Corps and I shall be much gratified, if your Lordship should be of opinion, that they be allowed to redeem themselves and in some degree their Parish from disgrace. In regard to the concluding recommendation of Colonel Clavering for the public notice of the delinquency and condemnation of the officers it is a measure not too severe for their demerits; but I am not aware of such an example being set before and perhaps your Lordship would deem it rather incorrect in this case on account of some circumstance. But I of course beg leave to submit the idea to your Lordship’s considerations.

I venture to persuade myself that your Lordship will approve of the union proposed of the Warxford with the Meonstoke and Droxford, which will form a Battalion, and the consequent transfer of the sergeant major. But I shall be furnished with more regular propositions to lay before your Lordship on this head.

Having not received the honor of your Lordship’s answer to my letter (private) upon the subject of the resignations of the officers of three Companies of the Portsmouth Volunteers, I yet delay communication to them of the acceptance of their resignations. But I take for granted, that as Officers as well Privates have the power of withdrawing themselves upon proper notice I may without further hesitation acquaint them that they of course at liberty to retire. I cannot do so without again lamenting the mistake, which I am satisfied, has in some degree prevailed on all sides. I am persuaded that the General from circumstances I have since heard, had not been made acquainted with all the provocations received by the officers of the Four Companies from those of the Six, or he would not have made a difficulty of allowing them a station less intermixed with the others. And I think also, that these officers misapprehended a design of their humiliation, when probably it arose only from hurry and accidental misconception. I can however be influenced by no motive but that of an earnest wish for conciliation and the general good of the Service and it is only from despair of success in any further attempt to compose the differences, that I yield without more remonstrance or interposition to the life of these officers. Your Lordships will be of course sufficient that I conceive the General to have made no complaint against these officers.

I have the honor to be

My Lord

Your Lordship’s most obedient humble servant

Bolton