

Barrleur off the Chesapeake Sept 21st 1781

My dear General

When I joined Sir George Rodney on the 30th of June in Bapeterre road Ist Kitts, I was under orders to proceed with 14 sail of the line to this coast, after seeing the Jamaica Trade off Cape Tiberoon which was then to proceed on, under the Convoy of the Sandwich Hydra & Ranger; but Sir George having immediately after I anchored, received intelligence, that five or six sail of the Line of French Ships, were arrived at Martinique, he judged it necessary to lessen my Squadron, and to detach Rear Admiral Drake with five Ships to St Lucia

At noon that day I took leave of the Admiral to collect the Ships, I had ordered to complete their water at old Road, that no time might be lost, in fulfilling my orders, on the arrival of the Jamaica Trade from Ist Lucia, which, the Belligueux and Prince William were ordered to bring to me, at Ist Eustatius

Soon after I sailed from Bapeterre the intention of my going off Tiberoon, was laid aside, and the Jamaica Ships, put under convoy of the Torbay, Sandwich Prince William, Hydra, & Ranger; and on Sir George Rodney's arrival at

at

at S^t. Eustatius the next day, he declared his intention
of going for England immediately taking with him
the Gibraltar, Triumph, Panther & Boreas frigates
and made over to me, the Command of His Majesty's
Fleet on the Leeward Island Station. That same
evening I received the enclosed intelligence
N^o. 1, and early the next morning, Sir George
sent me the letter N^o. 2 from the Senior Captain
at S^t. Lucia, informing him, that the Ships arrived
at Martinique, were two frigates & two Sloops of war,
with about seventy sail from Marseilles; and it was
recommended to me, by the Admiral, to recall
the Ships, which he had sent to S^t. Lucia with Rear
Admiral Drake, and to wait their joining me, before
I proceeded to this Coast. I instantly dispatched
the Sybil on that service, with orders for their
meeting me, at S^t. Johns Road Antigua, for which
place I sailed the next evening, with ten sail of
the Line. In the night I fell in with La Nymphe
Frigate, which Sir George Rodney had sent from
Mafseterre road, to reconnoiter Post Royal Bay
and S^t. Piers, and being informed by her Commander

that

that he had seen four sail of the Line at Fort Royal
but that the weather was so very hazy, he could
form no opinion of their force; I immediately sent
La Nymphe back, with the letter N^o. 3 to Rear adm^l.
Drake. Early the next morning, I spoke with an
armed Brig from New York, with dispatches
from Sir Henry Clinton, & Rear Admiral Graves
addressed to Sir George Rodney, of which N^o. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
are copies. I immediately ordered the armed
Brig into Nevis road to compleat her water
and then proceed to St. John's Road; on the 6th.
She joined me, and without waiting an hour
pushed away, on her return to New York, with
answers to the letters she brought.

Having embarked the 40th. Reg^t on board His
Majesty's Squadron under my command, at the
request of Brigad^r. General Christie, to whom
Sir Henry Clinton's messenger delivered the
dispatches he was charged with, for General
Vanhan; I put to sea on the 10th at the dawn
of day, not caring to wait any longer for the
St. Lucia ships, lest the Enemy should make this
coast

Coast before me, but as I was running out Mr. Drake appeared, with four ships of the Line, having a certainty, that the Enemy had no ship, larger than a frigate at Port Royal, and without delaying a moment, I pushed on as fast as possible on the 28th. I made the Land a little to the Southward of Cape Henry, and from thence dispatched ^{a Frigate} with the Letter N^o. 9 to R. A. Graves and finding no Enemy had appeared either in the Chesapeake, or Delaware, I proceeded off Sandy Hook. On the 28th in the morning I received the Letter N^o. 10, from Mr Graves, which was couched in terms I did not expect, from what he had written to Sir George Rodney, and being apprehensive much inconvenience might arise, from the Squadron under my Command going within the Hook, and knowing there was not a moment to be lost, in moving with His Majesty's whole Naval force, in order to prevent a junction of the West India ships, with those
at

at Rhode Island if possible; though the Barfleure
was seven leagues from the place the commanding
officers were to meet, I immediately got into
my Boat, and in the afternoon found the General
& Admiral together, who were consulting upon
an attempt, to destroy the Ships at Rhode Island
This was an additional Argument, in support
of my opinion, against my going within the
Bar, as the Equinox was so near at hand, and
I urged the necessity, which struck me very forcibly
that such of Rear Admiral Graves's Ships as were
ready, should immediately proceed without the
Hook, whether to attend Sir Henry Clinton to
Rhode Island, or to look for the enemy at Sea;
My Idea was readily acquiesced in; but that
same night, intelligence was received, that the
Rhode Island Ships sailed on the 25th taking all
their Transports with them, but without Troops.
On the 31st in the evening M^r. Graves came over the
Bar, with the London, Bedford, Royal Oak, America,
Europe

Europe & Adamant / the Robust & Prudent, being up
at New York / I was undersail to receive him
and without dropping anchor, he steered to the
Southward - But how unfortunate no frigate
was stationed to watch the motions of the French
Squadron, as I understand it had been laying
in a state ready to push to sea, at the shortest
notice - and upon the return of the Concorde
frigate, which carried the Pilots to the Count
De Grape at the Cape, all the Ships sailed; now
they must either be destined to make a
Junction with the West India Ships, or they are
gone to Boston; Had a frigate been placed
at Gayhead, or Block Island, and have dogged
the Squadron at a distance, a few leagues, to
the eastward of Nantucket Shoals, a pretty
clear judgement might have been formed, when
it is gone to, at present we move totally in
the dark. If it is gone to Boston, De Grasse has
either laid aside his intentions of coming to
America

America, or his object is Halifax; one or the other
seems pretty certain to my mind; but I confess
I cannot think the enemy bold enough to attempt
to attempt Halifax so late in the year.

We have looked into the Delaware
without gathering any intelligence of the Enemy
and are now going to the Chesapeake; in case
an opportunity of a conveyance for New York
should suddenly arise, I will close my letter
and if any material occurrence should turn
up, before anything goes towards New York, I
will take up my pen again

believe my dear General, and believe me
with all truth & attachment

Your most faithful and
obedient humble servant

James Hardy

Depart des Isles =
arrivé a New York =
parti pour la Chesapeake
le 2. Sept.