

My dear General

Battle at Sea Feb^y 23 1782

If the *Triumph* arrives safe you will know my situation to the 7th Inst^t.

From the very strong assurances Governor Shirley gave me, of Brimstone Hill being in the greatest security, and from the spirited, and very encouraging message sent by Gen^l Fraser, to Gen^l Prescott on the 24th of last month; I had not the least doubt of relieving the Island, after I got the Enemy's anchorage in the road of Bapeterre: And the Governor having expressed a wish, for an able sea officer, I sent Cap^t Cargenven & Lieut^t Ware, who were eager volunteers, for the service, with 30 men, in two boats, to endeavour to throw themselves into Brimstone Hill in the night. The oars were muffled, and every precaution used, that not the least noise should be made, to give an alarm, but upon passing the stems of the Boats, towards the shore, Volley, after Volley of musketry was fired at them, and they were obliged to return - two nights after

after, the man I first sent upon the hill, and who Capt. Curgewen took with him, thought he could make his way alone to the Garrison, he made the trial in a small canoe, but was forced to return, being fired at from every place, he attempted to land.

At the same time Lieut. Jaykie of the Rufsel, landed at Red Flag bay, on the north part of the Island; his father is judge of the admiralty, had retired to the hill, and whose estate lay at the foot of it, on that side; Lieut. Jaykie knowing every accessible path to the hill, was strong in his hopes, of being able to reach the Garrison, but after waiting two nights found it impossible, and came back.

Upon the signals being made from the hill on the 8th. That the enemy's batteries had been successful in damaging the works & buildings, that the Garrison was reduced, & short of Ordnance Stores, I was eager to make further trials, to get an officer upon the hill and Capt. Curgewen, then offering his service, as well as Capt. Bourne of the Marines, I sent them away that evening

evening in a very small Boat towed by a Barge, near
the place they intended to land - They got on shore
at midnight, and after being landed ten minutes
Capt Curgewen came back & ordered the Boats on
board, but neither was successfull in reaching the
Garrison, and both were made prisoners at different
places. About the hour Capt Curgewen left the
Bastille, Lieut. Haynie was again landed on the
North side of the Island, being desirous of making
another trial from his father's estate; and as he is
not yet returned, and I have heard nothing of him
conclude he was made prisoner also.

I was extremely sanguine for getting an officer
into the Garrison, just to say, that I was confident
the Count De Grapre was tired of his situation, and
as the Marquis De Bonelie was destroying every
Fort & magazine at Mafseterre, and had blown their
very foundations up, I was perswaded he despaired
of success, and that if the Garrison could hold out.

Ten

Ten days longer, the Island must be saved.

I am however extremely concerned to say, that on the 13th in the evening, Captⁿ. Robinson of the 15th Reg^t. came on board the *Barfleur*, to enquire for Gen^l. Prescott, being charged with a letter for him, from Gov^r. Shirley & Gen^l. Fraser, acquainting him, of their having surrendered the Garrison that morning, to the arms of the French King.

What Captⁿ. Robinson informed me, is as follows, that he was sent to M^{ons}. S^r. Simon at 7 in the evening of the 12th to propose a cessation of arms— At that hour another officer was sent to the Marquis De Bonille on the same errand, and so eager was the Marquis to get possession of the hill, that he granted, all that was asked; and the terms were agreed to, at his / Captⁿ. Robinsons / return to the Garrison at midnight.

I enquired if no article was stipulated for my being made acquainted, with the State of the Garrison

Garrison, before the surrender took place, and to my great great surprise, was answered in the negative

On the 14th the Enemy's Fleet anchored off Nevis, consisting of the Ville De Paris, six Ships of 80 guns, twenty three of 74, & four of 64, one of 64. was at Old road, and another at Sandy point; The Experiment and sagittaire were not there. The Triumphant & Brave, joined the 6th from Europe.

Under this situation of things, I had no longer any business in Bapeteuse road, especially as the Enemy was getting Cannon & shells, upon a height, that would annoy the Ships in the Van, and I left it that night unperceived I imagine, as not a french Ship was to be seen in the morning.

with so great a superiority against me, I had nothing left to do, but to endeavour to join Sir George Rodney as expeditiously as possible, and as it was of very great importance to the Kings Service, that I should

carry

carry His Majesty's Squadron to him, in as perfect a state
as I could, I judged it necessary, that every ship might
be under sail nearly at the same moment, for the
better preserving a compact body, to give orders, for
the Squadron to cut, exactly at eleven o'clock, in
which year Admiral Drake most readily concurred,
thinking it highly expedient, as we had every reason
to expect, to be attacked, the Enemy's ships being not
more than five miles from us, and their Light very
distinctly seen

Except Governor Shirley's letter, & the message
General Prescott's officer brought from General Fraser
on the 24th of last month, I never heard a syllable
from Brimstone hill, or any one person in the
Island; and what is still more wonderful to tell,
The Garrison in all probability could not have been
reduced, but for the eight brass 24^{lb} cannon, two brass
13 Inch mortars, 1500 shells, & 6000 24^{lb} cannon ball,
the Enemy found at the foot of the hill, which had
been

been sent out by Government, and which the inhabitants
of the Island, would not give proper assistance to gett
up; The ship the Enemy's shells were on board of,
was sunk, and with great labour not more than
two or 5 of a day could be fished up; and L'Esmon
which had all the shells could be got from Martinique
was taken by one of my look out frigates, close
under Nevis, on the morning of the 24th of last month
This is all the information I am able to give, and
I by no means insinuate in the most distant manner
that the Garrison could have held out, even a
single day beyond what it did, as the works &
buildings were totally destroyed, and no further
defence as I understand could be made

We are under difficulty every way, the Squadron
is without bread, and there is not an ounce in
the West Indies. I came here on the 19th for flour
& yams, and having got all I could sailed yesterday
and

and am now on my passage to Barbadoes, to join
Sir George Rodney, to get water, and bread if the convoy
should be arrived, if not we must be assisted from Sir
George's ships. Captⁿ Rodney in the Sybil, in his way
from reconnoitering Fort Royal & St. Piers fell in with
on the 12th. twenty one sail of French ships under the
Island of Guadeloupe, seven of which were of two
Decks very large, so that Vandreuil's ships are now all
arrived, and make De Grasse upwards of forty
sail of the Line of Battle - he moved into the Road
of Bapisterre the day after I left it. I left two of my
fastest sailing frigates watching his motions, which
have since joined, with a report the French fleet
consisting of 36 of the Line six frigates and upwards
of fifty small vessels, left Bapisterre road on the 20th 21st
and steered for Martinique, the ^{frigates} are again gone to
watch the enemy. Never my dear General
was

was I believe a man in command in more trying situations, than I have been, but trust I have not disgraced His Majesty's Flag in either and it is in points of difficulty only, an Officer can shew what he is made of, and is equal to. I have had many high Compliments paid me from all quarters. which gives vigour to my mind, and enables me the better to bear my bodily fatigues.

What a glorious turn would have been given to His Majesty's Affairs in this Country, had Rear Admiral Kempenfelt been directed in case of falling in with the French Armament and finding its destination, to have proceeded on to the West Indies! had it so been, and the
Admiral

Admiral with his Squadron had joined me
when the Tritone did, we should have been
able to have destroyed De Grape in a couple of hours,
and have saved St. Christophers. But it is a truly
melancholly circumstance to be labouring to
protect men, who wish not to be protected, and who
for the greater part, seem to prefer french to
English government, I mean the residents of the
Islands, and not the proprietors of Lands in
England. It is by mens actions alone, you can
judge them

I am ever with great truth
and affection

my dear General

Your very sincere and
faithfull humble servant

J. M. Hooy

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