

August 8th - 13 1782

No appearance as yet of the Convoy, which leads me to imagine Admiral Graves has recollected himself, and waited off Cape Antonio for the captured French Ships and the remainder of the Trade, as I understood the Convoy was not to leave Blue fields, till the last day of the month; which appears, that Mr. Graves sailed upon an application from the masters of Ships, then with him for a schooner arrived at Blue fields, with final orders from Lord Rodney, the day after he sailed and are now on board the *Formidable*.

It is I think beyond a doubt, that Don Solano and his Squadron are at the Bayanna, and I wish much to be certain, whether General Don Galvez, and his Troops, returned from the Cape with him, before we pass the Gulph. Now the question is, what can be Vandrenil's plan, with the ten sail of prime Ships he put to sea, in company with Solano from the Cape?

If he is gone to America he will have done his business before we can gett there, and be secure against any attack, unless he can be mett with in deep water. Should he be gone to Europe Admiral Pigot can do but little good upon the American coast, but he must go to
New York

Newyork, to compleat the water, and Provisions of
his fleet, as far as the Kings magazines will allow.
But is it unlikely, that Vandrenil, as well as Solano,
may have an eye, upon the Jamaica Convoy, and
the captured Line of battle Ships? for by the instructions
to the Captains of the American Privateers / the Schuykill
taken, and Le Compte De Grape destroyed / from a James
Seagrave at the Bayanna, the people there well knew
the Convoy was to sail from Jamaica, between the
middle and latter end of the last month, and the said
privateers were to look out for, and endeavour to fall
into the rear of it, to pick up straglers, or such as may
be following to overtake the Convoy.

It now having turned all circumstances very seriously
in my mind, I will very candidly confes to you, what
I should think the Kings Service called upon me to do.

His Majesty's Squadron now consists of twenty four
Ships of the Line, the Jupiter, and four frigates; I would
direct a flag officer, with ten or eleven sail, the fifty
gun ship, & two frigates, to push on towards Bermuda
and cruise forty or fifty leagues to the South east of that
Island, for 16 or 18 days, and then repair to Newyork

and

and proceed with the rest, after the Convoy was
through the gulph, to that Port, reconnoitering the
Chesapeake as I went along; This Squadron would
most probably have completed their water &c
before the other arrived, which would be saving time
and preventing much confusion; for the powers
of New York, are not equal to the completing so
large a fleet, at one and the same time.

Well then, supposing there is no object for the Fleet
upon the American coast? why, I should in that
case hasten to sea again, and make the best of
my way off Cape Francois, then divide the Fleet,
station one half off the latter Port, and the other
between the Caynes Bank & Reneago. This would
give a fair chance, for preventing a junction between
Solano & Vandrenil, supposing an attack upon
Jamaica is still intended, and upon receiving
intelligence to be relied on, that the design is given
up, I would then push away to windward, taking
care to dispatch a frigate immediately to Barbadoes
* The Invincible is expected to join every day
and I suppose the Monsiegh & Anson will
come to us at New York

and order her captain to join me at New York, as expeditiously as possible, and I would direct another Frigate from that quarter, to cruise for me, between Cape Francois, & the Caynes bank, that I might know the exact state of the Windward Islands. But should I find Vandrenil harboured, upon the American coast I would leave a force sufficient to watch him, and proceed with the remainder of the Squadron off Cape Francois, to guard that Port against Solano's entrance, or Vandrenil's, should he be able to give the Squadron cruising for him, the Slip.

This I shall communicate to Admiral Pigot, if he does me the honor to ask my thoughts. August 9th

I begin to suspect, the Convoy is gone by in the night, by keeping on the Florida Shore, to avoid the Havanna, and on that account I wished the Admiral, to station a couple of Ships, between Bahia Honda and the dry Postugas, so that Mr. Graves should not pass unseen. But the Admiral is so very intent upon keeping his fleet together that he will not suffer a single Ship to be out of his sight, or try to get hold of a small coaster, for fear of a Frigate getting ashore; but if he will risque nothing, and suffer himself to remain in ignorance of what is very material for him to know, he will do nothing, but from the Chapter of accidents - It was a very great mistake in my humble opinion, that a small two deck Ship, and a frigate or two, was not ordered to precede the fleet off the Havanna, in order to have procured intelligence

August 10th

August 10th

The German Schoon, joined this morning, left Bluefields the 29th of last month, when the monarch was under sail for Port Royal, attended by the Fox frigate. The captain of the German, spoke with Admiral Graves on Monday the 5th ten Leagues to the westward of Cape Antonio; The Gloriosa & Jason had not joined but were not more, than a dozen Leagues astern both which the German saw the day before, and as the Hydra, with several merchant ships left behind were following to overtake the Convoy, I imagine Admiral Graves would lay too, or make moderate till the two captured ships, and the Trade came up.

I think no other man in the world, but Lord Rodney would have deprived the Convoy of such additional strength as the Resolution & Montagu, and have taken the Nonsuch, Arson, Flora, and Alert Schoon, to protect his own person, through the windward passage, and I am told means to take the two latter with him to England, as well as the
Resolution

Resolution; His flag is on board the Montagu, which
I shall not wonder if he shifts to one of the other ships
before he passes the latitude of Bermuda; Surely no
country ever produced such another man! One should
have thought any rational person in his Lordships
situation, would have taken his passage in the
Jupiter; If any accident befalls the convoy, which
the above two seventy four gun ships, would have
prevented he will have much to answer for.

The daily declarations of Vandercil and all the
French officers at Cape Francois, to Capt. Merrick &
Capt. Ball - were, we cannot deny you gained
a most complete victory on the 12th of April, but you
on your part, must acknowledge you knew not how
to make use of it - nothing was ever more true
to the everlasting disgrace of the Commander in Chief

August 12th.

Since my confinement by the accident to my Leg, I have been
very much indisposed, with a complaint I have laboured under
for years, in my stomach & bowels; but keep this to yourself for
if my wife knows it, she will be miserable. This morning
I had a note from Admiral Pigot, who seemed much alarmed
by

by a letter he had received from the Lieut. Gov^r of Jamaica, informing him of the arrival of two transports, with 3 companies of soldiers on board, from Carolina, but last from Antigua, under convoy of the *Pendant*, *Rothebarde* and *Magicienne* for St. Lucia, and that Major Maxwell & the masters of the transports, said that after having parted company, they saw under Dominique a fleet of 36 sail, amongst which were several men of war that soon after they discovered 5 or 6 sail, seemingly in chase of the first, to one of the six sail, they made the private signal which being answered, they stood towards her, but as she in no long time after began to engage, they bore away for Jamaica, where they arrived the 24th. I presently satisfied the Admiral about this fleet, and made it clear next to a certainty, that it must consist of two frigates from Marseilles, with that part of the trade they had not dropped at Tobago, Grenada & St. Vincent, which I suppose would amount to upwards of 30 sail for the other Islands; for this convoy had been seen going into Grenada not many days before; By having recourse to known facts & dates, and other circumstances, things which appear alarming at first, are easily reconciled to be unworthy of the smallest attention - I took this opportunity of observing to Admiral Pigot as follows - "May not Vandrenil with his ten or eleven Prime Ships be cruising to intercept the Jamaica Convoy, and the captured Line of Wable Ships? The object was undoubtedly very tempting: and may not Solano, have retreated to the Havana

11. Havana on the same errand; for if he had not some immediate
 11. Object in view, he would not be laying at this season of the
 11. Year, with all his ships, in that perfect readiness for sea
 11. That I had been thinking a good deal of the Enemy's probable
 11. Designs, and what was most likely to check them; and that if
 11. he had a wish to know my thoughts, they were very much at
 11. his service, and that I should be extremely happy, if they could
 11. could be useful to him. Admiral Pigot immediately sent ~~me~~
 word he would call upon me, and on his coming on board
 I gave him the substance of what I have suggested to you
 with my name to it.

Major General Bude.
 St James's
 London

he expressed himself much obliged, but what the effect will be
 time alone can show. August 13th

Yesterday the small frigates, assisted by the boats of the
 Fleet, it being almost calm, chased a ship and two Brigs
 into a small creek, a few leagues to the eastward of the
 Havana, where they found two other vessels; the three
 former

former and one of the latter were brought off,
the fifth an empty vessel was burnt: the latter
is a Spaniard, laden with Mahogany, the others
are Americans laden with flour, all armed
they sailed from Baltimore, with 11 others, under
the convoy of a ship of 22 guns, which they
parted with 14 days ago, and are now astern
the signal is just made for a fleet in the
NW. which I suppose is the Jamaica convoy
I shall therefore conclude, and am with
great truth & affection

My dear General

most faithfully yours

Rooby