

Battle of May 22. near Barbadoes

Ten thousand thanks my dear General for your very affectionate letter of March 18th which I had the honor to receive on the 17th instant by the Ranger cutter, which then joined Sir George Rodney, between Guadaloupe & Antigua and next morning I sent for Mr. Stillingfleet who presented me, with your other favour of the 20th. I shall have very great pleasure in rendering this young man, the most friendly attention, he is placed in the watch of a very excellent officer, and I have not a doubt, but he will turn out, to be an honor and an ornament to His Majesty's Navy.

The King has been, exceeding gracious and kind, in giving to His Fleet & Army, the Booty taken at St. Eustatius, and I hope and trust every individual, will have a most grateful sense of His Majesty's great goodness and make it the study of his Life, in some degree to merit His royal Bounty.

H

If the Snake Brig meets no interruption in her
 passage to England, which sailed from St. Helles
 on the 9th you will know before this reaches
 you, that I had a long shot action on the
 29th of last month in sight of Fort Royal with
 23 sail of the Line / to my 18 / under the command
 of the Count De Grape, having Massin & Vandrevel
 with him, both Admirals. The Rupsel was obliged
 to quit the Line, and seek her safety as she
 could that evening, but I continued with 17
 sail, about 3 miles to leeward of the enemy
 offering to renew the battle, till the next night
 when finding the Centaur & Intrepid could
 not keep their stations from their Leaks, owing
 to a number of shot they had received under
 water, and that the lower masts of the
 Montagu & Forbes, were badly wounded
 and otherwise much damaged, and knowing
 the Squadron was very sickly and short of complement
 by death, I thought it my duty to bear up, and
 made the signal at 8 o'clock. with this you
 will

will receive my dear General, a particular detail of my conduct for the two days, I was in sight of the Enemy, which I flattered myself would have accompanied Sir George Rodney's dispatches, but he would not suffer a single Letter to be sent by any one, rather unkind, if not to say illiberal; The only circumstance I have reason to be displeas'd with him for since I had the honor of serving under his Command, for in all other respects he has shewn me great civility and attention, and we are upon best terms imaginable which has led me to suggest many things to him, which I should not otherwise have taken the liberty to have done.

I am much concern'd to find that the Enemy ~~has~~ landed a large body of Troops upon the Island of St. Lucia, the 8th or 9th covered by 24 or 25 sail of the Line, Ten of which have been driven from Gros Islet Bay, by the Batteries
on

on Pidgeon Island. The Santa Monica, Sybil,
and Scourge Sloop got into the carenage, and
the Thetis was lost in warping in, her men
and stores, saved. The officers and men of
these ships, will be of singular service, in the
Defence of Morne Fortunes, which I hope will
be able to hold out, till Sir George Rodney can
get to its relief. On the 11th I joined Sir George
between St. Christophers & Antigna, with 14
sail of the Line, I having sent four to repair
their Damages at St. Sautatus. The next day
we anchored off the latter Island for men
and stores from Commissioner Laforey, and
to wait the Junction of the disabled Ships. The
14 at night we sailed, the Centaur & Intrepid
being with us, and on the 16th the Russel
joined, but we have yet seen nothing of the
Torbay. When she comes, Sir George will have
20 of the Line, with which I am very sure, he
will attack the Enemy's 24 or 25, and I trust a
very

very good account will be given of them.

The Count De Gaspé is in the Bretagne, and he brought from Europe with him 3 of 80 guns 14 of 74, and 1 of 64, 1 of 74, ~~1 of 64~~, & 3 of 64 were left in this Country by Count Guichen last year, This is the exact force, we are to beat, and I doubt not of doing it, can we come to close action. I believe not more than 12 or 13 of the Enemy's Ships are coppered. But it is a little extraordinary, that such a Squadron, with so large a Convoy, should come upon us, without our having the least notice, for had a small fast sailing vessel have left England, a fortnight after their departure from Brest, she must have been here before them. The Enemy's Squadron the Santa Monica saw on the 31st December steering this way, and was afterwards seen in Latitude 25 is I fear gone to the East Indies I dread what may happen in that quarter

and

and am in pain for Commodore Johnson. God
grant my apprehensions may be groundless, &
that all possible success may attend the
expedition! There is great knowledge, great
courage, and great judgement in both the
commanding officers, and if they cannot
command success, I am sure they will deserve
it. When we weighed anchor from before
Antigua, Sir George Rodney meant to have
looked at St. Lucia, as I understood here, but
he seems now to be pushing to Barbadoes (where
we shall probably be tomorrow morning) for
the purpose I imagine of watering the Squadron.
For not three ships in it, have more than
eight days, and many not so much, and
have been for sometime at very short allowance
which is very distressing to sickly crews.

I have long been apprehensive of the
difficulties we now experience, and in
march, when I found the Squadron slow
seen

seen by the Santa Monica, could not be
destined for these Islands, I mentioned to
Sir George to let the ships go into port, to be
refitted, and put in serviceable order; and
to give the poor men, what refreshments we
could; for upon turning in my thoughts the
length of passage D'Estaing had from Cadix to
Brest, and that he did not reach the latter
Port, till towards the end of December, it was
clear to my mind, no force of any consequence
could possibly arrive from Europe, in these
parts, before the middle, or latter end of
April, till His Majesty's Ships, should therefore
have been in the best order possible at
that time. To you my dear General and
to you only, I inbosom myself thus freely,
and I have this great consolation, that I
have no one neglect to charge myself
with, and on that account, I feel quite at
ease, conscious of the rectitude of my actions
and that I never lose sight of the dignity
and

I cannot help thinking that a great part of
De Grasse's force, is by this time in America. There is no
other way of accounting for his very extraordinary conduct

and honor, of our most gracious and royal
Masters Service. I will keep my letter open
till we get to Barbadoes.

Carlisle Ban May 23^d 1781

We all anchored here this day, except the Torbay,
and I have the very great satisfaction to acquaint
you, that the French Troops, reembarked from
St. Lucia, on the 13^A between one & four in the morning
with great precipitation, leaving part of their Camp
Equipage behind. The reason of the Marquis
De Bouillie's sudden retreat, is reported to be, by
a deserter, that he did not expect to find Things
in so respectable a state for defence, that it was
said a large reinforcement of Ships was arrived
from England, and that Sir George Rodney with
his whole force, was at hand; I understand the
arrival of the three frigates in the Carenage, was very
seasonable, as the Seamen man'd all the Batteries
This event is of infinite consolation to my mind.

I enclose you a list of the French Naval force, which
is not exactly, as I have before stated it. De Grasse is
in the Ville De Paris, and not in the Bretagne, and
Bouzanville & Chabert, are the Admirals under him
instead of Marin & Vaudreuil, as the Marquis De Bouillie
said were coming

most sincerely & faithfully yours

Wm. Atty