

Lord Sandwich

Fortescue 2422

3079

Hampton Court Sept: 15th 1778

Lord Sandwich has the honour to send to your Majesty the last letters publick & private that have been recieved from admiral Keppell, & allso one from admiral Gambier as it contains some detail concerning ^LHawes fleet.

Admiral Arbuthnot is now with ^LSandwich, he has left everything well at Halifax, the troops from the Clyde safe arrived & in good health, the Marine Battalion he says maybe expected home every day. the Culloden arrived at Halifax on the 16th of August in great distrep having lost one of her topmasts, and landed 240 sick men; she parted with admiral Byron ten days before in another storm, 100 Leagues to the Eastward of S^t Georges

Bank; he had then no other ship in company, the Invincible & Guadaloupe having parted from him some days before in a hard gale of wind. Commissioner Hughes was arrived at Halifax with the Pacifick & Dummore storeships, which will be a very reasonable supply of stores for the fleet in America. On the first of September in the night in the Longitude of the Western Islands Mr Marlborough who was in the Thetis fell in with a fleet of ships bound to Europe, which by their lights, and being close along side of one of them, he was sure were (some of them at least) large men of war; he supposed them to be D'Estaing's on his return to Europe; but this L^d Sandwich cannot believe to be the case, as it seems impossible for him to have recruited his water & to be already so far

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³⁰⁷⁹⁽²⁾ advanced in his way home, since the 28th of July when he was seen by some of L^d Hawes's cruizers steering for Rhode Island or Boston: this Idea of Mr Marlborough's accounts for what Mr Keppell says in one of his private letters, concerning the possibility of D'Estaing's being returned into these seas.

Your Majesty will observe that tho' Admiral Keppell exculpates Captain Breerton of his misbehaviour in the action, the utmost he points out in his behalf is that he should be put upon half pay.

The minutes of the court martial held upon this gentleman in the East Indies are very voluminous, they were put in hand to be copied the day L^d Sandwich left London, & will be laid before your Majesty the moment they are finished; and Admiral Keppell is written to desire he would as soon as he can, send home

The Minutes of the late Court Martial.

[Faint, illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

15 Sept 1798