

Jersey 2. October 1778.

Two Men of this Island, who had been taken in Torture Bay at Newfoundland by the Americans who gave among a Number of them a Shallop which they fitted and were coming for Jersey when in the Bay they were taken by the French Fleet before the Action, and were Divided in the Different Ships left Brest this Day all with about 240 Prisoners for Linnian, but made their escape three Days ago, and arrived this Day in a small Boat with two Cars, Have been with me and give the following Particulars, That they were in Different Ships of war in the Action with Admiral Keppel, one in the Ship of 64 Guns, who says, that being allowed to come up sometimes, he Describes the Different movem^{ts} of the Fleet, nearly as mentioned in the Gazette, that they were the third that engaged that being something to windward of their line, they scarce received any Damage, but from a 74 Gun Ship of ours, who was the last that fired upon them & killed them 4 Men and wounded some few, but the Sails and rigging was much Damaged; that after that they did not fire a Gun; and a three Decker of ours coming up the Colours were lowered until she was past, to avoid her Broadside, but as soon as passed the Colours were hoisted again. - That after the Action they came to Seward of our Fleet: and between Ten and Twelve o'clock at Night they bore away for Brest, that the Sailors and Petty Officers were so alarmed at the thoughts of engaging our Fleet, that there was a general consternation after they made our Fleet entire, and during the Action; they had been tryng to keep them at Quarters, that when they arriv'd in Brest Harbour, the Jersey Prisoners were all put onboard the Bretagne, where they remained two Days they found her much shattered in her Hull Masts and Yards, and were told they had great many Men killed and wounded, that many more Ships had suffered equally, and a 74 even more, that from what they could learn from the other Prisoners onboard, the French must have had upwards of 1500 Men killed and wounded; - That Seven Jersey Men were onboard led Villiers Paris who were made to assist talking down and Dressing the Wounded, who told them that 280 Men were killed and wounded onboard, and the Ship so Disabled, her Masts Yards &c. so Wounded; and so Shattered in her Hull, that they with Difficulty brought her in; but cannot go out again.

The other was in the Roland of 64 Guns which was the 26th Ship, but only received a Broadside, which did great Execution, killing 4 Men, Wounding some, but away the Main and Mizzen Yards, wounded the Bowprit & Mainmast and Shattered the upper Works so, as to bring nearly two Ports into one, the rigging was also much Damaged, which they suppose was the reason of their getting to Seward, as they could not have withstood to Windward; This Man also agrees as to the great fear expressed in General from seeing our Fleet so Strong, and that being only single Prisoners onboard, and pretending not to understand French, they spoke freely before them, complaining much of their Situation, and that it would be as agreeable to them to be in Prison in England, as to remain in the service. And further say that two light Gun Ships were Launched whilst they were at Brest.

That the Windows of the Prison led into the Harbour, from
whence by Stealth they discovered many things.
The Lieutenant of a Jersey Privateer taken by the Fleet in a Prize,
before the Action was in a Frigate during the time, and was allowed
to be upon Deck, who confirmed the account of the killed and wounded,
and said much Discontent appeared among the Officers of his Ship
the next Day, and further told them that he saw three Capital Ships
so mixed with ours and seemingly so Disabled that he judged they
must have sunk could we have spared some Ships to stay by them
they expressed great fear of our Fire Ships. That being once in Prison
they spoke French but denied being of Jersey, as they understood they
treated these Islanders without mercy, That many of the Petty Officers
and Seamen came to see them in Prison, before they sailed this last Time,
who expressed a great fear, least they should again meet with the English
Fleet, and that they were told by the crew of the Fox Frigate, that they
had mostly kept in the Bottom of the Bay, These Men complain much
of the small allowances of Provisions; And say that the intended
attack of these Islands was the general talk in the Fleet, and by those
who came to see the Prisoners, pretending that the Nation was provoked
to it by the Mischief they done to their Trade; They further say that
the French Fleet was returned to Brest, and the Men of the Fox
Frigate, told them that they had kept in the Bottom of the Bay, not
meaning to find out. W. Sheppit.