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Admiralty-Office, September 10, 1779.

YESTERDAY in the Evening the Honourable Vice-Admiral Barrington, and Captain Sawyer, of His Majesty's Ship the *Boyne*, arrived at this Office with Dispatches from the Honourable Vice-Admiral Byron, of which the following are Copies and Extracts.

Copy of a Letter from the Honourable Vice-Admiral Byron to Mr. Stephens, dated Prince's Royal at Sea, the 8th of July, 1779.

S I R,

AGREEABLE to what I wrote you by the *St. Albans*, Duplicate of which will accompany this, I failed from *St. Christopher's* the 15th of last Month, at the same Time the Trade left it for Europe, and proceeded to Windward of the Islands for Protection of the Convoy, intending to call at *Barbados* in my Way to *St. Lucia*; but a strong Lee Current, with the Wind at East, retarded our Progress so much, that it was the 30th of June before the Squadron could weather the Island of *Martinico*. This induced me to proceed directly to *St. Lucia*, where I arrived next Morning, and learnt that the French had possessed themselves of the Island of *St. Vincent*, with a very small Force, and without Opposition. Upon a Conference with Major-General Grant it was determined to attempt the Retaking of *St. Vincent's*, for which Purpose the Troops were ordered to be embarked immediately on board the Transports, and every Thing got in Readiness without a Moment's Loss of Time; but Intelligence being received of a Fleet seen that Morning to Leeward steering a Course for *Grenada*, I wrote to Lord Macartney, by one of his Aids de Camp that happened to be at *St. Lucia*, to give his Lordship Notice of our Motions, and that the Troop and Squadron would immediately come to his Relief, if, at *St. Vincent*, or on the Passage thither, we should learn that *Grenada* was attacked. I likewise sent an Officer in a fast sailing Schooner to look into *Fort Royal Bay*, where he saw Thirteen large Ships, which he supposed Ships of War, more especially as one of them bore a Flag at the Foretop Gallant Mast-head; but a Frigate and some other small Craft giving him Chase, he was prevented from going so near as he intended.

The Line of Battle, to be transmitted herewith, will shew that the Squadron under my Command consisted of Twenty-one Ships and a Frigate; with these and the Transports I failed from *St. Lucia* on Saturday the 3d, and next Afternoon had Intelligence from *St. Vincent* of more than Thirty Sail of French Men of War and Armed Ships having passed there on Thursday, and among them appeared to be upwards of Twenty Ships of the Line

of Battle; it was farther reported that *Monf. de la Motte Piquet* had joined the Count D'Estaing about a Week before with a strong Reinforcement. Upon this Information the Signal was made instantly to bear up for *Grenada*; but it fell calm soon after, and continued so until Nine o'Clock next Morning, about which Time a small Schooner that left *Grenada* on Saturday Evening came into the Fleet, and the principal Person on board her (a Merchant) reported, that the French had landed about Two thousand five hundred Troops near the Town of *St. George* on Friday, made an Attack upon the Fort that Night, and were repulsed; that Lord Macartney expected to hold out a Fortnight; and that he had seen the Enemy's Naval Force there, which did not exceed Eight Ships of the Line, besides Frigates and Armed Transports. Another Schooner from *Grenada* joined us soon after, and brought a similar Account; only the Master of her, who had been frequently a Pilot on board the King's Ships, reported, that the Enemy had between Fourteen and Nineteen Ships of the Line. It being my Intention from this Intelligence to be off *St. George's Bay* soon after Day-break, I drew the Ships of War from among the Transports, leaving only the *Suffolk*, *Vigilant* and *Monmouth* for their Protection, under the Orders of Rear-Admiral Rowley, who was intended to conduct the Debarkment of the Troops; but he was to join me with these Ships if I saw Occasion for their Service. One of the Enemy's Frigates was very near us in the Night, and gave the Alarm of our Approach. Soon after Day-light on Tuesday the 6th, the French Squadron was seen off *St. George's*, most of them at Anchor, but getting under Way, seemingly in great Confusion, and with little or no Wind. The Signal was immediately made for a general Chase in that Quarter, as well as for Rear-Admiral Rowley to leave the Convoy; and as not more than Fourteen or Fifteen of the Enemy's Ships appeared to be of the Line from the Position they were in, the Signal was made for the Ships to engage, and form as they could get up; in Consequence of which, Vice-Admiral Barrington in the *Prince of Wales*, with Captain Sawyer in the *Boyne*, and Captain Gardner in the *Sultan*, being the Headmost of the British Squadron, and carrying a Press of Sail, were soon fired upon at a great Distance, which they did not return until they got considerably nearer; but the Enemy getting the Breeze of Wind about that Time, drew out their Line from the Cluster they were lying in, by bearing away and forming to Leeward on the Starboard Tack, which shewed their Strength to be very different from our *Grenada* Intelligence, for it was plainly discovered they had Thirty-four Sail of Ships of War, Twenty-six or Twenty-seven of which were of the Line, and many of those appeared

[Price Seven-Pence.]