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Admiralty-Office, March 7, 1809.

*Copy of a Letter from the Hon. Robert Stopford, Rear-Admiral of the Blue, to the Hon. William Wellesley Pole, dated on board His Majesty's Ship the Cæsar, at Anchor, Baleine Light-House N. E. by N. Four Miles, Chaffron S. S. E. Ten, the 27th February 1809.*

SIR,

YOU will be pleased to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that, on the 23d Instant, being at Anchor to the N. W. of the Chaffron Light-House, with the Ships named in the Margin \*, the Amethyst looking out in the N. W., the Wind being to the Eastward, about Ten P. M. I observed several Rockets in the N. W. Quarter, which induced me to get under Sail and stand towards them. At Eleven observed several strange Sail to the Eastward, to which I gave Chace with the Squadron until Daylight next Morning, at which Time the strange Ships were standing into the Pertuis d'Antioche, consisting of Eight Sail of the Line, one of them a Three Decker, and Two Frigates. They hoisted French Colours, and conceiving them to be the Squadron from Brett, I immediately detached the Naiad by Signal to acquaint Admiral Lord Gambier.

The Naiad having stood a few Miles to the N. W. made the Signal for Three Sail appearing suspicious, I immediately chased them with the Squadron under my Command, (leaving the Amethyst and Emerald to watch the Enemy,) and I soon discovered them to be Three French Frigates standing in for the Sable d'Olonne; I was at the same Time joined by the Amelia and Doterel.

The French Frigates having anchored in a Position which I thought attackable, I stood in with the Cæsar, Defiance, Donegal, and Amelia, and opened our Fire in passing as near as the Depth of Water would permit the Cæsar and Donegal to go. The Defiance being of much less Draught of Water, anchored within Half a Mile of them; in which Situation, so judiciously chosen by Captain Hotham, the Fire of the Defiance and the other Ships obliged Two of the Frigates to cut their Cables and go on Shore. The Ebb Tide making, and the Water falling fast, obliged the Defiance to get under Sail,

\* Cæsar, Defiance, Donegal, Emerald, Naiad.

and all the Ships to stand out; leaving all the Frigates ashore, Two of them heeling much. They have been noticed closely, and from Captain Rodd's Report Yesterday Afternoon, they appeared with all their Topmasts on Deck, sails unbent, Main-yards rigged for getting Guns out, and several Boats clearing them. I fancy they will endeavour to get over the Bar into a small Pier, but I am informed by the Pilots that it is scarcely practicable.

The Batteries protecting these Frigates are strong and numerous. The Cæsar had her Bow-sprit wounded and Rigging cut. The Defiance has all her Masts badly wounded; Two Men killed, and Twenty-five wounded. Donegal, One killed and Six wounded.

The French Frigates had been out from L'Orient Two Days; and, by Captain Irby's Report, appear to be the Itallienne, Calypso, and Furieuse. I am very confident they will never go to Sea again. My chief Object in attacking these Frigates so near a superior Force of the Enemy, was to endeavour to draw them out, and to give our Squadron more Time to assemble, but in this I was disappointed. I returned to the Chaffron at Sun-set, and observed the Enemy anchored in Basque Roads.

On the 25th I was joined by Captain Beresford in the Thefeus, with the Triumph, Revenge, Valiant, and Indefatigable, I therefore resumed the Blockade of the Enemy's Ships in Basque Roads, and shall continue it till further Orders.

The Enemy's Force consists of Eleven Sail of the Line, Four Frigates, and the Calcutta. The Force under my Command consists of Seven Sail of the Line and Five Frigates.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

ROB. STOPFORD.

Admiralty-Office, March 7, 1809.

*Extract of a Letter from Captain Seymour, of His Majesty's Ship Amethyst, to Rear-Admiral Stopford, dated near Chaffron, Feb. 27, 1809.*

YESTERDAY the 26th the whole weighed from Basque-Roads, and proceeded to the Isle d'Aix Anchorage, one Frigate excepted, which run aground on the Shoals near Isle Madame, called Les Pallis; and after endeavouring to force her off by Puffs of Sail she failed, and unrigged.