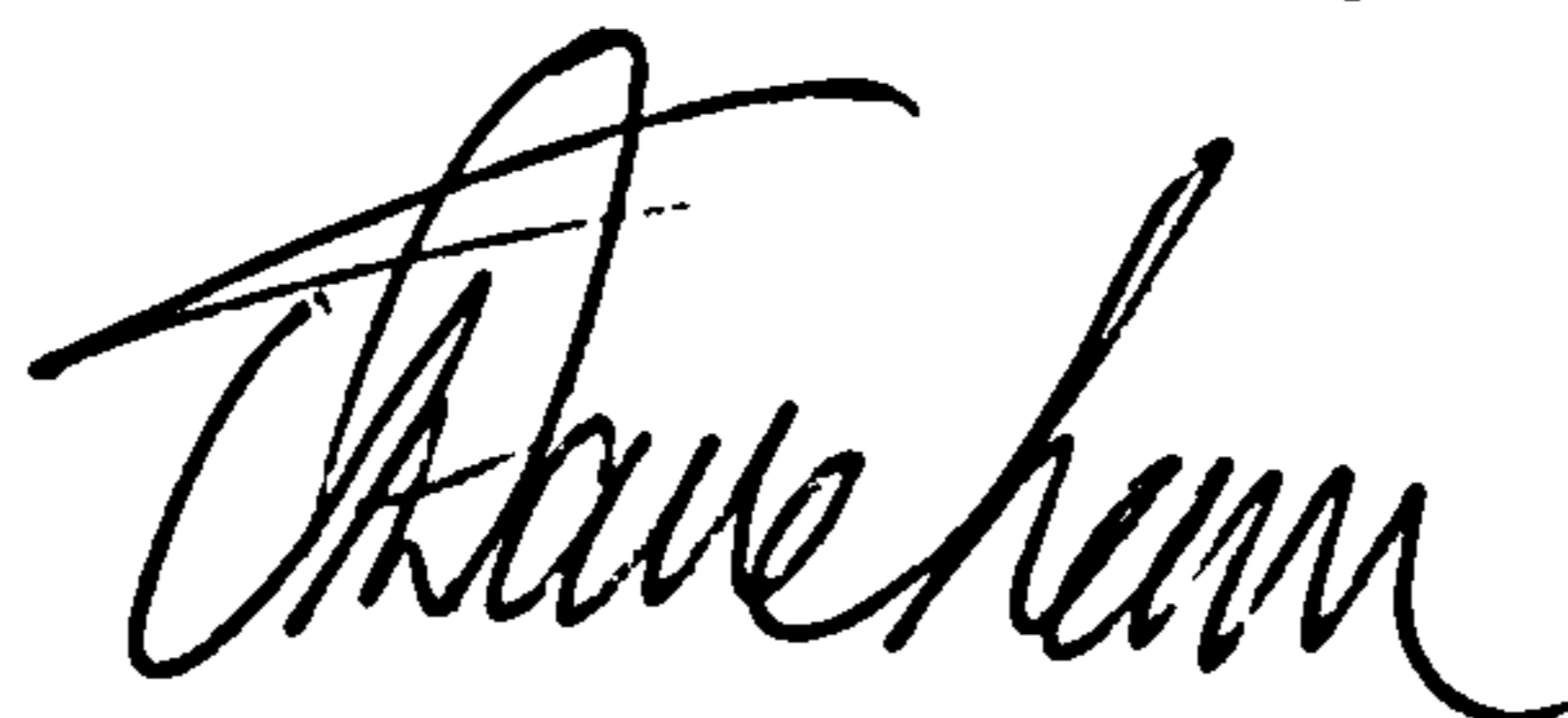


**The Frigate Captains of the Royal Navy,  
1793-1815.**

**Submitted by Thomas Nigel Ralph Wareham  
to the University of Exeter as a thesis for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History  
in May, 1999**

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Wareham', written in a cursive style.

## **Abstract.**

This thesis considers the qualities that made the 'star' frigate commanders of the Royal Navy during the 'Great War with France' of 1793-1815, and the factors that influenced their careers. The study begins by defining the frigate, its role and deployment. Then the careers of approximately two hundred Post Captains are assessed in order to establish the typical naval career and provide a context against which to evaluate the careers of the frigate commanders. The career and employment record of nearly 700 frigate commanders is examined, and factors such as speed of promotion, length of employment, and number of frigates commanded are considered.

What emerges is a clear indication that the most able frigate commanders were kept on active frigate service for much longer than normal. Furthermore, their employment was not as dependent on the haphazard influence of 'interest' as may have been previously accepted; on the contrary there is evidence that a career structure existed and that frigate command was becoming an elite area of activity.

The reasons for the popularity of frigate command are discussed, with specific reference to comments made by officers at the time and the conventional view that frigate command was less highly regarded command in the ship-of-the-line is challenged. The question of 'command' (i.e. leadership and crew-management) is analysed through the writings of officers of the period, their order books and the punishment record of the ships' logs. The thesis argues that a very different picture emerges from past assumption of universal barbarity.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Definitions

Whilst the use of the very unique language of the sea has been kept to a minimum in this thesis, the use of certain terms has been unavoidable. These are explained below.

*Rate* - a warship was generally 'rated' according to the number of guns she carried.

*Post* - The man who commanded any ship was technically known as the 'Captain', regardless of his actual rank within, for example, the Royal Navy. A Post Captain in the Royal Navy was an officer promoted beyond the rank of Commander to be a Captain of a ship of between First and Sixth Rates. These ships were frequently known as 'Post Ships'.

*Commander* - the rank below that of Post Captain. Confusingly the commander of a Sloop, for example, would be known as her Captain; the Captain of a Post Ship could also be called her commander. In this thesis the real rank of the officer is denoted by the use of a capital letter e.g. Captain John Smith is a Post Captain. Smith may also be described as commander of the frigate X.

*Long Gun* - a ship's cannon. A ship was generally described and rated according to the number of long guns carried. (N.B. Carronades were excluded from this denomination).

*Carronade* - a short-range cannon firing heavy shot.

*12-pdr frigate* - a frigate whose main battery featured guns firing 12lb shot. This type of description could be used for frigates carrying guns firing 18lb (18-pdr) or 24lb (24-pdr) shot.

*28-gun frigate* - A frigate carrying 28 long-guns. Frigates were usually described according to the number and type of their main armament. Thus a *12-pdr 28-gun frigate* would have carried 28 long guns firing 12lb shot as her main armament. Most frigates additionally carried carronades (close range cannon) but these were not counted in the denomination.

Note. Where a particular frigate Captain is introduced into the discussion his name is signified at first in bold type.



## Introduction.

On the 18th June, 1793, the Royal Navy obtained its first significant and crucial victory at sea when the first French frigate Cleopatre surrendered to the British frigate Nymphe commanded by Captain Edward Pellew, in the first single-ship or frigate action of the war.<sup>1</sup> Almost within a week, to great public enthusiasm, Pellew had been received by the King at a royal levee in St. James's Palace and had been knighted. For, as Pellew's first biographer noted:

*"The capture of the first frigate in a war is always an object of much interest; and the circumstances of the late action, the merit of which was enhanced by the skill and gallantry of the enemy, gave additional importance to Captain Pellew's success."*<sup>2</sup>

However, the enthusiasm to which Osler refers was not reserved just for the first frigate capture of the war. On at least one occasion a theatre performance in the presence of the King was joyfully disrupted by the news of a frigate victory and frequently during the course of the war, crowds turned out at Portsmouth or Plymouth or Halifax, N.S., to watch as prize-frigates and their conquerors returned to Port. On shore the bands struck up Purcell's "Britons Strike Home" and those watching would join in extraordinary exhibitions of patriotic fervour. One observer recalled how, in 1813, the arrival of Philip Broke's Shannon with the captured American frigate Chesapeake brought normal proceedings to a standstill and abruptly ended the Sunday church services of the town. He recalled that,

*"... an English man of war was coming up the harbour with an American frigate as her prize. By that time the ships were in full view near St. George's Island and slowly moving through the water. Every housetop and every wharf was crowded with groups of excited people, and as the ships successively passed, they were greeted with vociferous cheers. Halifax was never in such a state of excitement before or since..."*<sup>3</sup>

No one today would question the popular enthusiasm that seemed to follow Nelson wherever he went - an enthusiasm that actually, on at least one occasion, eclipsed that for the King! Yet, at the time, there was also great public interest in the successful frigate Captains. Pellew first came to popular attention in 1793, but four years later following an action between the British frigates Indefatigable, (commanded by Pellew) Amazon, (commanded by Captain Robert Reynolds), and the French 74 Droits de l'Homme, *The Times* still wrote of him in glowing terms, adding: *"..In the annals of naval history, there never was more gallantry displayed on both sides....."*<sup>4</sup>

As the wars dragged on, press claims that the latest action was “unequaled in the Annals of Naval History” actually became a rather repetitive cliché. Nevertheless creating or maintaining naval heroes was important to the national morale and the war effort. *The Time’s* statement offers us a clue to this popularity, for the successful frigate Captains always seem to have been regarded as dashing and brave, cast in the heroic mould. Among what is sometimes called the “polite classes” there was “*a highly selective cult of heroism, never focusing on ordinary soldiers or seamen but only on those commanding them [which] was deeply congenial to men intensely proud of their personal status and honour.*”<sup>5</sup> Among ordinary people the heroic seaman was as likely to be cast in the form of the incorrigible Jack Tar as Nelson, but in between these two symbols somewhere came those frigate Captains who not only acquired sensational riches in the form of prize money, but were regarded as dashing and romantic. On a more practical level these figures fought naval actions which could both stir a populace anxious for an excuse for outbursts of patriotic celebration and reassure an anxious - and powerful - mercantile class.

The crucial factor seems to be that the frigate Captains not only offered a role model, they also delivered the required deeds in time of war, something which the Captain of a ship of the line had less opportunity to do. It is this ability which seems to have dominated the image of the frigate Captain in the popular imagination, both during the wars and ever since.<sup>6</sup>

Some frigate Captains seem to have had extraordinary charisma. When, in 1809, Admiral Gambier’s fleet trapped a French fleet in the Basque Roads, *The Times* reported with near glee that Captain Lord Cochrane was being despatched to help. Even when the outcome of the engagement (if it can be so called) was known, *The Times* was anxious to receive Cochrane’s personal despatch. Days later it arrived and in an article amazingly entitled “*Lord Cochrane’s Victory*” the details were made public. That Cochrane was enormously popular with all but the Admiralty and some senior Captains, is made clear by *The Time’s* commentary:

“.....*the particular fact which most entitles Lord Cochrane to his country’s admiration and applause, ought not to have been smothered in the general acknowledgement that his gallantry and judgement “could not be exceeded by any feat of valour hitherto achieved by the British Navy;” for when the circumstances are better known, we doubt not, an admiring nation will agree with us, that although these are large terms, still they are not extensive enough to include the due praise of this “judicious” and “gallant officer”, whose daring spirit, and total*

*disregard of all personal consideration in the performance of this service, were not only never exceeded, but perhaps never equalled before."*

In this extraordinary editorial, *The Times* elevates Cochrane far above the level of the senior officer on the spot ( Lord Gambier), or any other Captain. But, in general, these quotations from the newspapers of the period should suggest two things to the modern reader. Firstly, that the activities of the Royal Navy's frigates and the men who commanded them generated great interest not just because they were exciting but also because they were making a significant and frequently evident contribution to the war effort. Secondly, that the qualities of certain individual commanders were fully appreciated at the time, sometimes even in spite of the 'official view' of the Admiralty; the example of Cochrane's elevation above Gambier illustrates this very well. There is, in these references, an acknowledgement of the men involved.

However, until comparatively recently there has been very little study of the corps of officers who commanded His Britannic Majesty's frigates. A number of publications have considered frigate actions in their own right but in doing so have largely ignored the men who commanded and fought (e.g. James Henderson's *The Frigates* or Charles Rathbone Low's *Famous Frigate Actions*). Such works have tended to focus on the anecdotal. The intention of this thesis is to approach the subject from a more objective base, using the career of all frigate commanders (nearly 700 in number) as the basis for evaluation. In order to identify the characteristics that made a good frigate commander, consideration will be given to whether there was any form of structural organisation to the officer corps and the way that frigate commanders emerged and were deployed. Previously the assumption has been that the most powerful factor in the organisation of naval employment was 'interest', i.e. the influence of powerful, influential connections. This will be tested, because if interest was the only controlling factor, the ultimate naval victory was the result of a haphazard system that depended on the chance appointment of skilled and able commanders. If interest was not the controlling factor how exactly were the commanders of His Majesty's frigates selected and employed? Was there some form of career structure and, if so, what form did it take and how did frigate command fit into the wider naval career structure? Could active naval command be described as a 'profession' and is there any evidence of a sense of 'professionalism' amongst the most active commanders of the period? If so, what motivated the most active frigate commanders and did they believe themselves to be

different from those officers commanding the ships of the line? Were there particular skills and attributes which marked them as being more suitable than others for frigate command?

All of these aspects must be considered if there is to be an understanding of the men who commanded the warships during the Great Wars with France and, in reaching this understanding, it is hoped that this thesis will advance existing knowledge of the Navy of the period in some modest degree.

## Chapter 1. The Frigate And Frigate Development

In order to develop any form of appreciation of the career of the frigate Captains of the Royal Navy during the great wars with France, it is important that there is firstly an understanding of what a frigate was and the role that it played, for a definition of a frigate Captain requires the definition of a frigate itself. Just how important the role of the frigate was will be considered later but initially and in a very fundamental way, it is useful to have a picture of the size of the frigate fleet as a proportion of the Royal Navy itself.

From the point of view of the study of the frigate commanders there is immediately a difficulty, for there was - and remains - no standard definition of a frigate. The Naval system of rating ships in the period is well known, but there is a general vagueness about definitions at the lower end of the rating. In Steel's Navy Lists, for example, frigates were invariably classed as either fifth or sixth rate ships, and it was recognised that the largest ship which could be considered a fifth rate ship was that of 44-guns - (although there were 44-gun ships which were not frigates, carrying their main armament on two decks) - however, there was also ambiguity at the lower end of the sixth rate. For ships at the lower end of the Sixth rate, though recognised to be 'Post Ships', were not often considered to be frigates.

William James drew the same distinction between frigates and "post-ships", indeed he was actually rather dismissive of the smaller ships. The 24-gun ship "...so designated, as being the lowest classes to which post-Captains are appointed. They are frequently called frigates; but even the ships of the class next above them (i.e. 28's) scarcely deserve that name, and would, in the French Navy, class as corvettes..."<sup>7</sup> Brenton also was fairly disparaging about the smaller frigates.<sup>8</sup> Among modern historians there is, likewise, an understanding that ships of less than 28 guns were not frigates. Brian Lavery in "Nelson's Navy" describes Sixth-Rate ships as being "small ships from 20-30 guns - frigates of 28 guns, and small 'post-ships' of less."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, James Henderson in his study on frigates<sup>10</sup> distinguishes between the 28 and the 24-gun ships, and does not include the latter in his work. David Lyon notes a distinction between frigates and "true frigates", then explains that "confusingly" sea officers used the term frigate to describe any cruising ship not a ship of the line.<sup>11</sup>

The inclusion of the 24-gun ship in the frigate class would, therefore, seem to be open to question. During the American War the Admiralty took a decision not to build any more ships of this size, thereby signifying its demise as a useful class. In fact, by 1793, there were only six of these ships in service, and half of these appear to have been in ordinary or in dock for repair.<sup>12</sup>

Twenty-four gun ships did actually continue in service, although their number gradually reduced and by 1814, although there were still three 24-gun ships in service, only one was in commission. A similar situation was to occur with the small 28-gun frigates. In 1793 there were 23 of these ships in service, that is approximately 27% of the entire frigate force. By 1801, this number had reduced by half, and the last remaining 28-gun frigate went out of service in 1813.

For the purpose of this study therefore, only those ships rated as bearing between 28 and 44 guns AND being engaged in those duties for which the frigate was intended have been included.<sup>13</sup>

### Frigate Development

The development of the frigate during the 18th century owed much of its impetus to the numerous wars and confrontations that dogged the European, and of course American, governments. Both Robert Gardiner and Jean Boudriot<sup>14</sup> find in their respective studies of British and French frigates that, certainly up until the middle of the century, design tended to be locked in a conservatism which itself almost ground to a halt at the conclusion of a period of conflict. When advances were made it was usually as a result of co-incidental requirements. Thus Robert Gardiner points out that when, in the early part of the century design changes were made to the smaller, 6th Rate ships<sup>15</sup> these were a consequence of the earlier questionable policy of over-gunning ships; and, as Gardiner states "*none of these alterations improved their sailing qualities*"...

Boudriot notes exactly the same process in action with French frigate design: "*... in accordance with a well established phenomenon, it was not the design of the frigate which evolved, but rather its armament, usually to the detriment of the vessel's performance.*"<sup>16</sup>

After 1744 the Admiralty and Navy Board's attitude towards English frigate design changed rapidly. In 1739 Britain went to war with Spain, confident that British sea power would quickly overcome the Spanish navy. Indeed to some degree it was this confidence which drove Britain to

war; British merchants, anxious to shatter the Spanish domination of the South Americas used the humiliation of British merchant shipping by the Spanish navy as an excuse for demanding British intervention.<sup>17</sup> But by 1740 France too had joined the conflict on the side of Spain and the balance of naval power shifted subtly. British Merchant shipping losses began to rise dramatically as the existing British frigates were unable to out-sail French cruisers and privateers. In response to complaints from British Naval Officers that their ships (24 and 44-gun) were both too slow and poor sailors in competition with the French, the Admiralty had ordered larger ships. However the basic design remained the same, and the complaints continued. Ultimately the contrast in performance between British frigates and French was significant enough (so were the protests from Mercantile interests) for the Admiralty to give serious attention to the differences in Frigate design. In April, 1744 the Dreadnought 60 captured a recently built French frigate, the Medee, which it was quickly recognised owned many of the structural qualities that were giving the small French warships and privateers an advantage over the Royal Navy. Whilst she was surveyed, none of the apparent innovations in design were immediately incorporated into British frigate design, although she does appear to have had some influence in the longer term<sup>18</sup> and in 1748 two prototypes, the Unicorn and the Lyme were built incorporating some of the design features<sup>19</sup>.

With the threat of another war looming after 1750, the Admiralty returned to these two prototypes and from these, two new frigates of 28-gun 9-pounder ships were built. These, the Lowestoffe and the Tartar, proving successful, a further eighteen were built and launched by 1766. Of this Unicorn class, at least three (Tartar, Carysfort and Hind) were still employed on frigate duties during the French Revolutionary War.

It might also be worth noting that five of the class were built from Fir, in an experiment to see just how quickly frigates of this design could be completed. All were at sea within a five month period, but their life span was short. Within nine years three of them had to be broken up as useless, and a fourth followed within very few years.<sup>20</sup> The other ships in this class took approximately a year to complete but generally lasted significantly longer. The Carysfort, launched in 1766 saw active service up until 1806, and was then not sold off until 1813.<sup>21</sup>

Curiously, although the experiment with fir or pine-built frigates could not be regarded as a major success (they were regarded as a financial and operational necessity), the Navy Board built more of them during the French wars. These were built over three clear phases. Clyde, Glenmore,

Maidstone, Shannon(1), Tamar, Trent and Triton(2) were built in 1795/96; Alexandria (2), Clyde (2)<sup>22</sup> Hebe (2), Jason(3), Minerva(2), Pallas(2)and Thames(2) were built between 1804/1806; and Araxes, Cydnus, Eurotas, Euphrates, Hebrus, Ister, Meander, Niger(2), Orontes, Pactolus, Scamander and Tagus were all built in 1813.

The first group, i.e. those built in 1795/96, lasted much longer than their predecessors from the Unicorn Class. The Trent for example was converted to a Hospital ship in 1803 and later continued to serve as Hulk before being finally broken up in 1823; a period of twenty-seven years. Triton also survived for 24 years. The shortest lived of this group was the Shannon which was sold after only six years, but during the Peace of Amiens, which may be significant. The second group lasted between 10-12 years, with the exception of the Pallas which was wrecked in the Firth of Forth in December, 1810<sup>23</sup>. The final group generally lasted no more than ten years, and usually much less than this, however, this life-span may have been affected by the end of the war.

Ultimately we can state that as the average life of all of the frigates serving during the period of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars was seventeen years, the Fir Built ships did not last well. However, it is doubtful whether the Navy Board ever seriously expected them to be particularly durable; they had originally been conceived as part of a quick-build policy to meet a short-term crisis<sup>24</sup> and this they seem to have done.<sup>25</sup>

Whilst innovations were being made with new 28-gun frigates in the middle of the century, the Navy Board continued with the construction the old design of heavier 44-gun ships. It was known<sup>26</sup> that the French had developed 40 gun ships of high performance, but their lighter construction tended to limit (in the eyes of the Navy Board) their ability to carry a superior weight of guns. The Navy Board persisted with its 44-gun ships because it regarded them as the minimum that could be deployed on convoy protection duty. Equivalent French ships generally carried 12 Pounder guns as opposed to the British 18-pounders.

During the American War also there was a slight renewal of enthusiasm for the heavier 44-gun ship<sup>27</sup>. The French had recognised the need for heavier frigates during the American War, to act as heavy commerce raiders; the Admiralty favoured them because they were shallower than a line of battle ship, and yet carried guns sufficient for coastal operations and bombardment of



fortifications. This was particularly important for the shallower waters around the coast of the American eastern seaboard. Furthermore, as noted above they were useful in convoy protection.

The 44-gun ship was, even by the American War, an obsolete class. At a time when greater concentration was being given to speed and seaworthiness, and above all economy of production costs, the 44 was slow at sea, not particularly seaworthy and expensive to build in comparison with 32-gun or 36-gun frigates.

A number 44-gun ships were laid down in 1780-82, but ultimately they spent little time on genuine frigate duties.<sup>28</sup> Compared to the newer 38-gun 18-pounder frigates they suffered from a series of disadvantages; their heavier guns were much nearer the waterline and could not be used in heavy weather, a significant proportion of the crew would have difficulty reaching the upper deck to defend it if boarded, it was altogether a bigger ship thus more vulnerable to heavy weather and, finally, as had been realised once before, its heavier weight of guns meant that it had to have a broader, slower hull. A number of these factors combined to make the 44-gun ship more suitable as either a troop transport or store-ship, and it is these duties with which that class of frigate is more usually associated after 1793.

A noticeable change in the policy of British frigate design was not actually initiated until 1756, on the eve of the Seven Years War, when orders were placed for the 32-gun frigates Richmond and Southampton.<sup>29</sup> Both carried 26 12-pounder guns on the main deck and six 6-pounders on the quarter-deck. Simultaneously orders were placed for three 36-gun ships, the Pallas class. However this design was not a success and no more were built, whilst ten of the Richmond and Southampton classes were built.<sup>30</sup>

In 1755 Thomas Slade had been appointed one of the new Surveyors to the Navy and is now acknowledged to have been one of the finest ship designers of the 18th century. Slade had certainly been involved in the development of the Richmond and Southampton classes. However one of his greatest achievements was that of the Niger class frigates, eleven of which were built and launched by 1766. Five of these were still in active service throughout the Revolutionary War; Niger, Alarm, Aeolus, Pearl and Winchelsea.

Even by 1793 these 32-gun 12-pounder frigates must have been desirable commands. They were fast sailers which performed well in difficult conditions and their main gun deck was seven feet above the waterline when the ship was fully stowed, which meant that the lee guns could still fire at a considerable heel. Slade's design also allowed for all cable handling to take place on the upper-deck, thus allowing more space for crew accommodation; a factor which might have had some bearing on living conditions and morale.

Ironically the success of the navy in capturing the smaller enemy ships during the Seven Years war, and the subsequent peace, reduced the pressure for further frigate development. However, before his death in 1771, Slade had designed two further classes of 28-gun and 32-gun frigates which were drawn with lines taken from a particularly fast French prize.<sup>31</sup> Two small classes Mermaid 28 and Lowestoffe 32 were eventually built to these designs, though most were completed after Slade's death. Of these only the Lowestoffe herself actually survived to see much service in the later wars, being wrecked eventually in 1801 in the West Indies.<sup>32</sup>

Between 1777 and 1783 a further 22 28-gun frigates were laid down; however, in 1778 the Admiralty took the conscious decision not to consider designs in the future for any frigate of less than 32 guns.<sup>33</sup> On the contrary the emphasis was to be towards larger frigates of 36 and 38 guns. The Navy Board response to this was, perhaps surprisingly - given its previous conservatism, to produce draughts for heavier 18-pounder frigates. This change in attitude may have been forced upon the Admiralty following the entry of France into the American War when the Royal Navy suddenly found that it no longer had numerical superiority.

Before leaving the development of the 12-pounder frigate it is worth noting that there was a very final flurry of building of 12-pounder frigates after the Peace of Amiens, in the Circe class. This came about for very specific reasons. Following the breakdown of the peace, it was realised that St. Vincent's attempts to carry out reforms in timber contracting arrangements had offended the timber merchants at the precise moment when it was realised that there was going to be a shortage of frigates upon the re-commencement of hostilities. The result was a desperate shortage of the larger compass-oak timbers; the solution was to build smaller frigates of lighter design. Hence, many of the Circe class were built of fir. The other point being of course that it was much quicker to build a frigate out of softwood as it did not require the usual seasoning in frame.<sup>34</sup> Regardless

of the difference in construction or weight of armament, the fir-built frigates served on virtually every station except the East Indies.

### The 18-pounder Frigates.

The French began considering 18-pounder frigates in about 1775<sup>35</sup> and paradoxically whilst the normally conservative Navy Board embraced the idea, the French rejected it.

This deliberate move away from the smaller 12-pounder frigates explains why little interest was taken in enemy 12-pounder frigates taken during the American War. However, there were other equally important reasons which drew attention away from weaknesses in design. During the American War the wide-spread use of copper sheathing of warships was adopted. This of course greatly improved speed and therefore gave the impression that British frigates were comparing favourably with their fouled opponents; it also meant that those British frigates did not have to be docked so frequently for treatment to deter the Teredos worm. Secondly, the carronade was introduced. This short-range weapon greatly increased the fire-power of British frigates in close action, which again probably distracted attention from any shortcomings over their other armament.

In fairly quick succession the Admiralty approved four classes of 18-pounder frigate; two of 36-guns (The Flora and Perseverance classes) and two of 38-guns (the Minerva and Latona classes) in 1778/79. The 38-gun ships were very highly thought of, but both classes suffered from early design difficulties. In particular the 38-gun ships were built to the same gun-deck length specification as the 36-gun ships, with the result that their gun decks were cramped, making it awkward for the gun crews to operate their guns. This was a factor which became worse in a heavy sea because, with the additional gun on each broadside, the weight of guns was carried further towards both stem and stern, making the 38-gun frigate pitch heavily. Captains frequently overcame this problem by temporarily moving the foremost guns back along the deck; however, this inevitably meant delays in clearing the ship for action and, until repositioned, they could not be fired, which then defeated the object of having a 38-gun frigate.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless the number of these ships available grew steadily during the war, particularly after 1806.<sup>37</sup>

By the time of the Spanish armament in 1790, the design for the smaller 32-gun 18-pounder Pallas class frigate had become the basic standard for the future British frigate. In 1790, after a lull of several years and following the Spanish armament, orders were placed for three 32-gun 18-pounder frigates. The reduction in size was largely determined by shortage of suitable timber. However, whilst the Pallas class were generally regarded as fine boats in heavy weather they were short - and it is perhaps no coincidence that at this time dissent was expressed about the design length of British ships. In particular, as Robert Gardiner points out,<sup>38</sup> this view was expounded by the Society for the Improvement of Naval Architecture. A prominent member of this was Sir John Borlase Warren, at thirty-seven years of age, one of the Royal Navy's most experienced frigate Commanders, destined to become commodore of one of the Channel Squadrons after 1793.

#### The 24-pounder Frigates.

Although the French had considered 24-pounder frigates as early as 1766 and experimented with 24-pounder frigate design in 1793, they didn't actually build a full frigate of this armament until 1794 when they built La Forte, and later, in 1799 L'Egyptienne. Both of which were to be captured by the Royal Navy and entered into service.

The French 24-pounder frigates were very large, nearly 1,500 tons, and thus as big as the later heavy American frigates. They were certainly much larger than any British frigate-built ship of the time<sup>39</sup>, and remained heavier than the British 24-pounder frigates which were launched after 1812. In many ways the 24-pounder was ideally suited for the French naval war effort, for they were large enough to carry stores for a year, and were therefore capable of sustained commerce raiding, particularly in the East Indies. However, production ceased because it was felt that the cost was excessive when compared with what was considered in some quarters to be the more strategically important ship of the line.<sup>40</sup>

The British attitude to the 24-pounder frigate tended to be negative at first; after all both the Forte and L'Egyptienne had fallen to smaller British frigates. However the War against America, commencing in 1812, converted complacency to alarm. In relatively quick succession three British frigates fell to the American Navy, and the Navy Board were forced to reassess their attitude towards the larger frigates. Five were built simultaneously out of red-pine in the privately owned Blackwall yard of Wigram & Green, on the Thames, in 1813. Ironically, none of these ever came into action against one of the American frigates, though the Eurotas did suffer a particularly unfortunate engagement with a smaller French ship.<sup>41</sup>

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The outbreak of war against Revolutionary France clearly served to focus the minds of the Admiralty on the need for producing better frigates in greater numbers, and during the following twenty-one years a total of 156 frigates were built.<sup>42</sup> (See Appendix 1.2) Ultimately however, the determining factor in British frigate production came from the relationship between the actual unit cost of production and the recognised need for numerical superiority. British design could keep up with French development, but in the end it was the British ability to produce greater numbers which would tell; and this was a factor which was probably decided by her much more advanced industrialisation.

The question of the comparative quality of French and British built designed frigates has, and may continue to be, a matter of some debate. However it may be that the debate, such as it is, has often taken place in a vacuum because in fact it is rather unrealistic to try and compare the relative performance of French and British frigates. They were actually designed with different functions in mind. The role of the frigate will be considered shortly, however at this point it is simply worth noting that British mercantile interests dictated that British shipping should have the safest possible passage in the East and West Indies, North Sea and the Channel waters. With the main enemy bases so close to British home ports it was essential to dominate the home waters throughout the year. Consequently British frigates were built to stay at sea. French frigates tended to be lightly built, highly manoeuvrable and, as far as the Navy Board seem to have been concerned, under-gunned. The first two characteristics are those of ships built as raiders, designed to prey in enemy trade routes, striking fast and escaping before counter action can be implemented. The last characteristic is indicative of the fact that the primary interest of the French Navy may have been the destruction of British merchant vessels rather than a head-on engagement with British warships. Contemporary British complaints about many captured French vessels almost certainly arise from the role that they were expected to play when put into service in the Royal Navy.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Gardiner points out<sup>44</sup> that the traditional condemnation of British ships is based upon observations which are contradicted by study of the contemporary Captains' reports of the performance of their ships.

*"In general the sailing qualities of many British classes improved as conditions became more boisterous;.... In contrast, many French ships were said to dislike heavy weather .... most*

*French vessels rolled and/or pitched greatly and shipped water, whereas the motions of British vessels was much easier and consequently they tended to be much drier.*"<sup>45</sup>

Gardiner is here referring to captured French frigates, and whilst it might be tempting to suggest that the poorest performing French frigates were also those more likely to be susceptible to capture, there is no real evidence to support such an assertion. Yet it is striking that when captured French frigates were subjected to the same testing as British frigates, they invariably performed less well.<sup>46</sup> British frigates tended to be more manoeuvrable, a factor which could be crucial in the kind of tacking-duel that opened many single-ship actions. French ships were slower in stays "*almost certainly a result of their longer, shallower hulls*",<sup>47</sup> and whilst the length of French ships made them fast, they were less manoeuvrable and less able to sail close to the wind. (This weakness may explain why British frigates could take the weather gauge so often. Having to fire their windward battery might explain why French fighting tactics tended to concentrate on disabling enemy rigging rather than damaging the hull - put simply, firing to windward reduced the chance of hitting the opponent's hull).

It is probably worth bearing in mind, when comparing French and British frigate design, that British criticism of the performance of French ships usually arose because the ships were being strained beyond their design capability. Boudriot points out, for example, that the French 12-pounder frigates had low hull volume at bow and stern which made them fast in good weather, but made them pitch badly and make poor seaway in adverse conditions. Sané's designs for 18-pounder frigates were a significant improvement and performed much better all round provided that they were correctly trimmed.<sup>48</sup> Of course, the Royal Navy's practise of adding a few guns wherever possible probably did little to meet Sané's recommendations on ship trim.

Boudriot also makes a useful overall comment about the comparison between British and French frigates. "*It has to be admitted that in the Royal Navy frigates were commissioned much more frequently than in the French Navy, so that they were subject to greater wear and tear and needed to be more robust.*"<sup>49</sup>

A comparison of the quality of the construction of French and British frigates quickly highlights differences which seem to support his view.<sup>50</sup> British frigates were more heavily built and lasted longer. The Royal Dockyards claimed for themselves a high standard of workmanship and were consequently critical of the quality of French built ships. If they were poorly constructed then it

was only reasonable to assume that they would be costly to maintain; and of course, as has already been mentioned, cost-effectiveness was clearly a factor in Navy Board strategy.<sup>51</sup>

Notwithstanding these facts, there were certainly some aspects of French frigate design which were respected and therefore incorporated into British shipbuilding. Certainly at least one officer wrote thinly disguised articles advocating the adoption of certain aspects of French frigate design.

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French frigates may have looked beautiful in the eyes of James Stanier Clarke, John MacArthur and the other correspondents of The Naval Chronicle, but in use they may often have been less satisfactory. It is also worth bearing in mind that the frigate Captain who had just captured a French frigate would have been more inclined to view his prize in a rosy light, especially when describing it in his report, as this might enhance its value as a prize or his chance of reward. This suggestion is supported by the fact that there appears to be a lack of contemporary evidence that the French themselves considered their own ships to be superior; on the contrary, they were sometimes even disparaging.<sup>53</sup>

### The Role of the Frigate

It is possible to view the naval war of this period as having two strategic elements. On the one hand were the fleets and squadrons of English line of battle ships, stationed strategically to meet or counter any movement by Dutch, French or Spanish fleets or squadrons. On the whole these groups of ships were static, their position and activity largely determined by the movement or lack of movement of the enemy. They were able to remain static because they could generally rely on the frigates and smaller ships to scout for them and call them into action when required.

The other element was of course the small ship war - that of the 5th and 6th rate ships. Often operating alone or in pairs, acting as escorts, scouts or cruisers and sometimes operating as mobile batteries in conjunction with land forces. The role of the frigate was well understood to contemporaries, as were the rules under which the frigate operated. The frigate carried fewer and lighter guns than the line of battle ship; its scantlings were thinner, so its hull was much more vulnerable to impact from round shot, and it carried a smaller crew; all of these factors restricted its use in general engagement. The frigate, for example, was not expected to engage a much larger ship although as will be illustrated below, this did happen. Likewise a line of battle ship was not really expected to open fire upon a frigate; where a frigate was captured by a line of battle ship,

token shots were exchanged before the frigate struck to acknowledge the overwhelming superiority of her opponent.

Again, there were exceptions to this. One example being an incident at the Battle of the Nile when the French frigate Serieuse opened fire upon the Orion 74 commanded by Captain Sir James Saumarez. One of Saumarez's Lieutenants proposed returning the fire, but instead the frigate was lured under the silent guns of the Orion only to receive a double-shotted broadside at point blank range. The effect among the frigate's crew must have been ghastly, as it was, Serieuse lost all of her masts immediately and drifted away to sink a short while after.<sup>54</sup> The coldness of Saumarez's handling of the incident was largely determined by the sense of outrage at being fired upon by a ship that was breaking the unwritten code of conduct of naval war.

Probably the most important characteristic of the frigate was its ability to engage the enemy in even the most difficult of weather conditions and under certain circumstances a frigate could engage a ship of the line.<sup>55</sup> As noted previously, the frigate's main gun deck was higher out of the water than most ships of the line and it could engage to leeward even when heeling considerably. The classic example of this must be the engagement between the French 74-gun Droits de l'Homme and the British Frigates Indefatigable and Amazon commanded by Sir Edward Pellew and Captain Robert Carthew Reynolds. On 13th January, 1797, the two frigates encountered the Seventy-Four south west of Ushant and engaged her in very heavy weather conditions, giving her a very heavy pounding. James, in commenting on the poor result of the Droits de l'Homme's gunnery says that one cause must have been the fact that, *"her lower-deck ports, being nearer to the water's edge by 14 inches than those of the generality of French 74's, were obliged to be shut almost as soon as opened, to keep out the quantity of water that was rushing through them... During the whole of this long engagement, the sea ran so high, that the people on the main decks of the frigates were up to their middles in water."*<sup>56</sup>

Frigates were also formed into highly effective semi-autonomous squadrons. The most famous of these being the Channel or Western squadrons,<sup>57</sup> formed mainly for the protection of trade in the Western approaches and blockading enemy ports. Squadrons were also active on other stations at different times, around the Isle de France, for example, and in the Adriatic.

Quite apart from sheer size, there were a number of characteristics which distinguished the frigate from the ship of the line. As will have been noted from the introduction to frigate development, the frigate was smaller and lighter than ships of the line. This had implications, not just for its



role but also for its number. The construction of frigates could be - and frequently was - contracted out to many of the smaller private yards which did not have the facilities to build a ship of the line. The frigate had the advantage of a shallower draft and, in theory at least, and in some conditions the frigate could sail faster than a ship of the line.

Importantly, from the point of view of manpower resources which were always badly stretched, the frigate needed less than half of the complement of say, a third-rate 74-gun ship of the line.<sup>58</sup> Whilst a ship of the line and a frigate required virtually the same number of skilled seamen, the frigate required less landsmen, because it had fewer guns to crew. It was therefore theoretically possible to get a frigate to sea much quicker than a ship of the line provided that it had enough skilled seamen.

Above all it was the role that the frigate was expected to play that determined these characteristics. The ship's small size and lighter overall armament (requiring less structural strength) made the frigate a cheaper vessel to build, and, subject to usage, an easier vessel to maintain. A frigate could after all be refitted or repaired in a dock which was too large for it; whereas, a 74-gun ship could not fit into a dock which was too small. Frigates could, moreover still be refitted and docked in yards which were becoming increasingly inaccessible to ships of the line because of silting-up. This partly explains why as the wars drew on it was the Thames-side yards and Chatham that attracted many of the frigate repairs and refits. A frigate was basically more flexible in terms of activity and maintenance. It was possible to build more frigates, and in a shorter time, than the larger ships - particularly if softwood was used in the construction.<sup>59</sup> Such timber was not strong enough for the larger ships and consequently production of softwood frigates could continue during periods of hard-wood timber shortage. As noted above, some twenty-six fir frigates were built during the wars, and several more remained in service from earlier years.<sup>60</sup>

The frigate's shallow draft and (usual) seaworthiness made it suitable for close inshore work around enemy ports and made it ideal for blockade work, harassing enemy coastal trade, spying into enemy ports and assisting with amphibious operations. By a peculiar quirk, the effectiveness of the frigate in such coastal operations made its role more difficult. In order to try and reduce the loss of coastal merchant vessels to British cruisers, the French built a chain of gun-batteries along the coast of both the Channel, Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean. Small French ships could creep surreptitiously between these along the coast, sheltering under friendly guns when

necessary.<sup>61</sup> To overcome this, frigate Captains increasingly had to resort to cutting-out expeditions, where armed boat crews entered hostile ports or rowed close in-shore, usually under cover of darkness, to silence enemy batteries and board enemy vessels.<sup>62</sup>

As they were often faster than ships of the line and lighter to manoeuvre, the frigate was the ideal vessel for chasing enemy privateers, frigates and merchantmen, or simply shadowing hostile fleet movements without being in too much danger of getting caught. The frigate was also the ideal scouting ship, able to range in wide squadrons across vast areas of sea. The general flexibility that the frigate offered meant that even in limited numbers they could be used in variety of roles, almost simultaneously, to maximum effect. This is demonstrated by, for example, Collingwood's disposition of frigates in the Mediterranean after Trafalgar

After Trafalgar, Collingwood's domination of the Mediterranean and his ability to keep close watch of French and Spanish naval activity was totally dependent on a wise disposition of his frigates. Thus two cruisers were stationed off of Toulon; if the French fleet came out, one of the cruisers was under orders to warn the British squadron at Palermo. The other followed the enemy and if the enemy set a course towards the straits of Gibraltar, that frigate preceded them to warn British ships blockading Carthage and Cadiz. And generally, any Frigates employed in attacking the coastal trade along the southern coast of France and Western Italy were also under instruction to observe any movements in Toulon and Naples. One cruiser was usually stationed off Cape Spartel as this was on the route of any significant enemy cruiser squadron entering or leaving the Mediterranean. A sloop was usually based off the southern coast of Sardinia guarding the passage between that island and Sicily, whilst a further cruiser would be stationed further out into the passage itself.<sup>63</sup>

The frigate was often used for convoy duty, usually escorting a group of merchantmen across its patrol area and handing them on to the care of another ship; though not infrequently frigate commanders were obliged to escort a convoy across the Atlantic, especially in times of particular crisis. This duty could pay dividends to the commander involved, but it was also clearly one of the biggest causes of anxiety and frustration. However, this aspect will be considered in more detail later. The ability of the frigate to operate in such a powerful and yet versatile manner gave it the opportunity to act as an independent cruiser, and this in many ways is the keystone of a study on frigate Captains.

However, before moving on to review the number of frigates that were available between 1793-1815, it must be noted that most of the duties described above related to frigates acting on detached duty. A great number of frigates spent considerable periods attached to battle fleets. This might mean that a frigate spent some of its commission on moorings in Spithead or Hamoaze.<sup>64</sup> In active periods it might be called upon to act as Repeating Frigate during manoeuvres or a major engagement, i.e. passing on signals along the line of battle. Or, during a battle, the frigate could be employed towing crippled line of battle ships out of an engagement or deflecting fire ships. As with convoy duty, there were both positive and negative consequences for a frigate Captain on attached duty, and these will be considered later.

### Frigate Numbers

Having clarified the definition and role of the frigate<sup>65</sup> for the purposes of this study it is now possible to proceed to the question of the number of frigates available to the Navy during the French Wars. Utilising Colledge,<sup>66</sup> David Lyon,<sup>67</sup> and Robert Gardiner<sup>68</sup> it is possible to compile a list of nearly 420 frigates that were available to the Royal Navy at some point between 1793 and 1815. (See Appendix 1.3). Problems begin to arise when more definitive information is sought. The date on which any particular ship was launched is usually known; the date on which it was sold, broken up or lost is also usually known; however, the dates on which frigates commenced active service as frigates is much more ambiguous and it is frequently difficult to identify when a frigate became temporarily, and sometimes permanently, reduced from frigate status.

For example, according to William James<sup>69</sup> there were 88 frigates available (i.e. in Commission or ordinary) at the beginning of 1793, of which 42 were in commission. But according to the Admiralty List Books there were actually 32 frigates in commission, including those fitting for service in the dockyards.<sup>70</sup> If we accept the Admiralty records to be accurate for ships in commission we can quickly see what percentage of the frigate force was operable and in service. The percentage of frigates in commission is given in the fourth column;

Figures drawn from the Admiralty List Books are for the same month in each year. William James' statistics are given for "the commencement of" each year.

**Table 1.1. Frigates in Commission: 1793-1815.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>James<sup>71</sup></b>	<b>Admiralty List<sup>72</sup> Books</b>	<b>% in commission*</b>
1793	88	32	38
1794	93	92	99
1795	112	109	97
1796	120	117	97
1797	133	121	91
1798	140	121	86
1799	134	111	83
1800	119	111	93
1801	121	120	99
1802	126	117	93
1803	108	68	63
1804	112	87	78
1805	122	99	81
1806	133	113	85
1807	145	122	84
1808	148	127	86
1809	151	127	84
1810	156	135	87
1811	142	127	89
1812	138	109	79
1813	122	108	88
1814	132	128	97
1815	124	N/A	-

(Sources: William James. *A Naval History of Great Britain*. & *Admiralty List Books*.)

(\* That is percentage of total given by James).

The most striking feature here is the difference between the First and Second Wars. During the first War, on aggregate, the Navy Board managed to keep more ships in commission than during the second - reaching 99% efficiency on two occasions.

However, a number of factors mitigate against any suggestion of growing inefficiency. Firstly, as the war progressed the existing frigates became more exhausted and therefore more in need of repair. With only limited repair facilities, as the Navy became larger, the waiting time for repair would unavoidably become longer. Secondly, St. Vincent's policy of close blockade off Brest, and of pushing ships out to sea as often as possible, with minimal delay, had to result in much greater wear and tear during the Second War. Indeed this was one of the main criticisms of that blockade system.

(Undoubtedly there will still be some discrepancies between James's figures and those given by the List Books. There is no doubt that the Navy Board and Dockyard records relating to ships in repair were at best untidy and at worst simply non-existent.<sup>73</sup> This state of affairs contributes to the conclusion that the Admiralty and Navy Board Clerks must have had considerable difficulty producing accurate statistical records about repairs - which naturally colours our ability to make sense of the records now.

Furthermore, James's statistics may well include those frigates temporarily (or permanently) disrated for troop-ship or store-ship duties. In theory these have been ignored for the purposes of this study, however, unless a full survey of the career of every single frigate, active during the period, is made it would be almost impossible to identify when particular ships were temporarily engaged in "non-frigate" duties.

Both sets of statistics confirm, however, that there were generally more frigates available to the Royal Navy during the Second War, and that the strength peaked in 1810. On the whole, both show corresponding fluctuations in frigate strength; though the List Books record a dramatic decrease in ships in commission in 1803.

The Admiralty List Books do not state the weight of armaments of the frigates in the list; for this it is again necessary to refer to the Abstracts given by James, (as well as the tables provided by Robert Gardiner and David Lyon).<sup>74</sup> At Appendix 1. is a table of statistics extracted from James' Naval History detailing the number of frigates in existence for each year of the War. This is in

many ways a much more interesting set of statistics, for it shows graphically the movement away from the lighter armed frigates at the beginning of the Wars, towards a majority of 18-pounder frigates by around 1803. It also shows the much later increase in the 24-pounder frigate after 1813.

Of the frigates available to the Royal Navy during 1793-1815, 101 were built pre-1793, 155 were built during the Wars, and 161 appear to have been taken from the enemy. (See Appendix 3). Ultimately, some ambiguity must be acknowledged with these statistics due to uncertainties remaining over certain ships purchased from the East India Company.<sup>75</sup>

At the outbreak of War in 1793, the Navy had nearly one hundred frigates, though a small number of these were actually in commission (and as noted above, some were no longer truly frigates). The oldest of these dated back to 1756 and others were already thirty-six years old by the time that War broke out. Some like the Woolwich and the 44-gun Gorgon, built as late as 1785, were already considered unfit for active frigate duties and had become either troopships or store-ships<sup>76</sup>; Or like the Gladiator of 44 guns built in 1783, had never carried out any seagoing duty and had always been on harbour service.

Sixteen of these veterans saw out the war on active service of some sort (though several were broken up in the final months of the War) and one, the Venus had been reduced from 36-guns to 32 in 1792. Thirty-four of these ships were allocated other duties during the War; harbour service, troop-ships or store-ships, the most unseaworthy suffered the ignominy of being reduced to slop-ships, floating batteries or prison-hulks. Twenty were wrecked on active service, and one foundered. Two were burnt by accident and one was blown up. The remainder were either broken-up during the course of the War or were sold for what was probably a similar purpose.

During the five years preceding the outbreak of War the Royal Navy had launched only one frigate, the Beaulieu and even this was built on speculation by the privately owned Adams Yard at Buckler's Hard<sup>77</sup>. In 1793 only one frigate the 18-pounder 32-gun Pallas was built in Britain. However, the building rate accelerated rapidly with the onset of War. The first three ships of the Pallas class were all ordered at the end of 1790, but were not laid down until 1792 and the Pallas herself was the first to sail in December, 1793, followed within seven months by her two sisters.<sup>78</sup> Between 1794-95 a total of 17 new frigates were launched and three 74-gun ships were razed to reinforce the heavier frigates.

It is probably meaningless to try and talk about an average annual construction figure for frigates after 1793, but at least one new frigate was built each year. Other years saw fluctuations which could not have been foreseen. For example, in 1802, during the Peace of Amiens, only one frigate was built; but the Navy scrapped 12 old frigates and lost one by accident.

In 1809-10 the Navy built seventeen frigates, more than it had managed since the early years of the War, however, in these same two years seven ships were lost through accident, nine scrapped, and five (or six) lost to the enemy.<sup>79</sup> Four of these ships, (arguably five), in one naval campaign alone. Two years later further disaster struck when the Guerrierre, Java and Macedonian were all captured by the American Navy. Perhaps these losses later in the War spurred the Navy Board into more urgent action for whilst in 1811 only four frigates were built, (although 18 were scrapped and another five lost by accident) there was a sudden increase in frigate building. In 1812, eight were launched; then a stunning twenty-five in 1813; and seven in 1814. Almost all of these were built to meet the demands of the War of 1812. Interestingly enough, of these last forty frigates, only about a dozen were constructed in Royal Naval yards. The rest were contracted out. To balance this fifty-eight or fifty-nine frigates were either broken up or sold off during the last three years of the War.

Seen in perspective however, during the course of the War the Navy built or purchased 155 frigates and lost 97. Revealingly, only 20 fifth and sixth rate ships were lost to the enemy during the course of the two Wars.

**Table 1.2. Frigates lost by the Royal Navy. - 1793-1815.**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wrecked</u>	<u>Captured</u>	<u>Foundered</u>	<u>Fire/explosion</u>	<u>Abandoned</u>
1793	1	1	0	0	0
1794	1	1	0	0	0
1795	2	1	0	0	0
1796	4	0	1	1	0
1797	5	1*	0	0	1
1798	6	1	0	2	0
1799	5	0	0	0	1
1800	1	0	0	0	0
1801	5	1	1	0	0
1802	1	0	0	0	0
1803	3	2	0	0	0
1804	2	0	1	0	1
1805	2	2	0	0	0

1806	0	0	0	0	0
1807	3	0	1	0	0
1808	5	0	0	0	1
1809	2	2	0	0	1
1810	2	4	0	0	3
1811	4	0	0	0	1
1812	3	3	0	0	1
1813	0	0	0	0	1
1814	0	1	0	0	0
1815	0	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>
Percent	59.8%	20.5%	4.1%	3.0%	12.4%

(Source: Hepper, D. British Warship Losses).

\* The Hermione frigate, surrendered to the Spanish following the mutiny of her crew. The only frigate of 28-guns or more to be lost in this manner.

N.B. Table does not take into account recaptures in the case of surrendered ships.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, ships which were abandoned after damage caused by striking rocks are counted as "abandoned".

Michael Lewis<sup>81</sup> estimated that of the total number of men killed in the navy during the twenty years of the wars, 12.2% were lost through ships foundering, shipwreck, fire or explosion; whilst only 6.3% were killed in action against the enemy. Lewis's figures relate to the Navy as whole. In fact between 83-86% of the fifth and sixth rate ships which were lost, were lost by causes other than enemy action during the war, a far greater number than any of the ships of the line, and exceeded possibly only by the smaller ships in the naval service. Whilst frigate crews were much smaller in number than the greater ships, there can be hardly any question that most of Lewis's casualties were sustained by frigate crews. Most of these ship losses occurred during the months of October - February, (peaking in December and January), the harshest months when frigates were expected to be at sea in all weathers. July also was a bad month, this being the month coinciding with the onset of tropical storms.

See Appendix 1.4 for a list of ships lost between 1793 - 1815.



### The Deployment of Frigates

The Admiralty List Books,<sup>82</sup> which were primarily intended to record the disposition of His Majesty's ships, provide detail of deployment in approximately four categories.

Firstly in terms of the major stations; always commencing with the East Indies, and including Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Mediterranean and Nova Scotia. Secondly in terms of Home Waters; e.g. Duncan's North Sea Fleet, Howe's Fleet (later the Grand Fleet), Plymouth, Portsmouth (and Spithead) and Downs etc. Thirdly in terms of particular duties; Cruising or Convoy Duty (although the records do not usually specify which); with the King at Weymouth; refitting or fitting and stowing for either Channel or Foreign Service; or the rather quaint "Particular Services".

Finally in terms of squadrons or divisions of fleets; the most famous being Warren's and Pellew's frigate squadrons in the Channel between 1796-97. But frigates were also recorded as attached to squadron's of line of battle ships.

In July, 1794, Sir Charles Middleton<sup>83</sup> produced a memorandum outlining his recommendations for the deployment of men of war to defend the dominions.<sup>84</sup>

His recommendations for the deployment of frigates specified the following as necessary: North Sea 1; Ireland and St. George's Channel 1; Newfoundland 2; North America 1; Jamaica 4; Leeward islands 2; East Indies 3.

It should be noted that, the priority of this deployment was determined by the need to protect trade. Middleton was quite clear about this, and stated such in a memorandum drafted at some time in 1793; *"The French being deficient in the great articles of naval stores, their first object will be a general attack upon our trade and supplying themselves by these means of what may be difficult to procure other ways."*

*".....In a war of this kind, which I cannot look upon in any other light than a war against trade, and where a large number of trading vessels are to be protected ..... it will be necessary to have a very large number of frigates, sloops, brigs and cutters..."*<sup>85</sup>

The very much greater number of frigates actually deployed in the Leeward Islands in this month arises from the Jervis & Grey expedition of 1793-94, and reflects the enormous importance of the

colonies in the West Indies for British commerce.<sup>86</sup> The region was, of course, also of extreme importance to the French.

The Newfoundland deployment required frigates to convoy the trade to Spain and Portugal; whilst the North Sea deployment covered the convoy of naval stores from the Baltic; (although no frigates were deployed under this station, two of those engaged on particular services were in the Baltic in July, 1794).

In the case of the coast of Ireland, North America and the East Indies, the principal role of the frigate seems to be that of patrolling the seaways, particularly with the former where protection of the Western Approaches was probably the main role. In the case of the latter, a Seventy-Four gun ship was to accompany the trade as far as the Cape, or even all the way home, leaving the frigates in the Indian Ocean.<sup>87</sup> There were no frigates in the East Indies for this month i.e. July, 1794. At the outbreak of war there were already three 18-pounder frigates in the East Indies, Minerva, Perseverance and Phoenix. By July, 1793, only the Minerva remained on that station; Phoenix under Richard Strachan was brought back for Channel duties, whilst Perseverance was paid off and laid up, presumably because she was in need of major repair or refit. By May, 1794, all frigates had been withdrawn from the East Indies and none returned until May, 1795.

The List Books for July, 1794, show that there were twenty-seven frigates assigned to overseas stations, as listed above. Middleton's memorandum does not include the Mediterranean, where there were in fact twelve frigates; a further five were under secret orders. This totals forty-four frigates, leaving forty-five frigates based on the home station. These were actually deployed as follows:-

Particular Service	3
Convoy Protection/cruising	9
Portsmouth/Spithead	7
Downs	1
Thames	5
Howe's Squadron	10
Macbride's Squadron	10

Therefore, approximately half of the entire frigate force was devoted to overseas stations; moreover, a number of those ships in the Thames (including Chatham, and the Nore) and Portsmouth/Spithead were actually being refitted. As a consequence the total number of frigates

available for trade protection was even smaller. Howe's and Macbride's squadrons were primarily engaged in Blockade work, which of course gave some protection to merchant vessels entering the Channel, but the real work of convoy protection seems to have been left to less than fifteen frigates though we must not forget the role that the smaller ships, and the smaller ships of the line could play in this.

It is hardly surprising that by about 1795 Middleton was warning that the French attack on trade, *".... must be successful in the outset, unless our merchant ships are prohibited to sail without convoys, and our cruisers put in order for service and properly arranged before the winter sets in ..... for foreign service has been so very great ..... that it will become absolutely necessary to husband the use of our remaining ones as much as possible, and particularly in the demands for convoys, passages, messengers &c. &c., by the secretaries of state, who have no idea of the numerous services required from our cruisers for the fleet and trade of the kingdom, and the very great difficulties we are put to in complying with their demands, which are generally made on very short notices."*<sup>88</sup>

A more interesting snapshot of frigate deployment can be obtained from sample months of Steel's Navy Lists. The following tables <sup>89</sup> show this deployment for sample months in 1795, 1799, 1801, 1805 and 1812.

**Table 1.3. Deployment of ships of the line and frigates for sample years, by station.****1795**

<b>Station</b>	<b>1st &amp; 2nd rate</b>	<b>3rd Rate</b>	<b>4th Rate</b>	<b>Frigates</b>
Channel Fleet	14	24	0	16
Halifax	0	3	1	7
Mediterranean	4	11	0	20
North Sea	0	1	0	15
Convoys	0	1	2	1
Ireland	0	2	1	10
West Indies	0	12	1	11
East Indies	0	0	1	4
Leeward I.	0	0	0	0
Jamaica	0	0	1	3
Cruising	0	1	0	4
Channel	0	0	0	5
Cadiz	0	0	0	1
Lisbon	0	0	0	1
Africa	0	0	1	2
Brunswick	0	0	1	2
Deptford	0	0	0	4
Sheerness	1	1	0	9
Portsmouth	5	24	4	24
Chatham	1	9	2	6
Plymouth	5	12	1	7
Woolwich	0	1	1	4
Downs	0	0	1	3

**1799**

<b>Station</b>	<b>1st &amp; 2nd Rate</b>	<b>3rd Rate</b>	<b>4th Rate</b>	<b>Frigates</b>
Channel	2	6	0	4
Halifax	0	1	2	1
Mediterranean	0	15	0	7
North Sea	0	3	3	3
Convoys	0	0	2	7
Ireland	0	1	3	6
West Indies	1	3	0	10
East Indies	0	5	2	9

Leeward I.	0	0	0	0
Jamaica	1	6	1	10
Downs	0	1	0	0
Lisbon	6	10	0	7
Portsmouth	11	12	0	7
Nore	0	2	0	4
Woolwich	0	1	1	6
Plymouth	4	15	2	19
Harwich	0	0	1	0
Sheerness	0	2	3	10
Chatham	2	6	1	1
Yarmouth	0	3	0	0
Cruising	0	3	0	8
Deptford	0	0	0	6
Africa	0	0	0	1
Cape	0	2	2	1
Gibraltar	0	7	0	0
America	0	1	0	2
Bahamas	0	0	0	1
Portugal	0	0	0	2
St. Marcou	0	0	0	2

### 1801 (June)

Station	1st & 2nd Rate	3rd Rate	4th Rate	Frigates
Channel Fleet	14	16	0	11
Halifax	0	1	0	1
Mediterranean	0	11	1	11
North Sea	0	1	0	3
Convoys	0	1	1	10
Ireland	0	0	0	3
West Indies	0	0	0	4
East Indies	0	5	3	6
Leeward I.	0	1	0	9
Jamaica	0	5	0	15
Baltic	2	14	2	3
Cape	0	2	3	0
Gibraltar	0	0	0	0
Pursuing	1	5	0	1
French Sq.				
Lisbon	0	0	0	3
Africa	0	0	0	1
Secret Orders	0	0	1	0

Portsmouth	3	11	0	7
Plymouth	2	18	0	10
Yarmouth	0	9	2	3
Chatham	1	10	2	2
Deptford	0	0	0	4
Woolwich	0	0	0	2
Downs	0	0	0	4
Harwich	0	1	0	0
Sheerness	0	0	0	3
Cruising	0	0	0	11
Dutch ships*	0	1	0	2

\* Moored at Blackstakes.

### 1805

Station	1st & Rate	2nd	3rd Rate	4th Rate	Frigates
Channel Fleet	7		12	0	3
Halifax	0		0	1	2
Mediterranean	2		10	0	11
North Sea	0		0	0	1
Convoys	0		0	1	4
Ireland	0		3	0	3
West Indies	0		0	0	2
East Indies	0		9	1	10
Leeward I.	0		1	0	5
Jamaica	0		3	0	13
Cochrane's Sq.	1		5	0	1
Orde (off Cadiz)	1		4	1	3
Antigua	0		0	0	1
Ferrol	3		2	0	1
Madeira	0		0	0	1
Gibraltar	0		0	0	1
Africa	0		0	0	1
Portsmouth	4		18	3	15
Plymouth	4		13	2	15
Northfleet	0		1	0	1
Chatham	0		11	6	6
Yarmouth	0		3	2	0
Deptford	0		0	0	4
Texel	0		0	0	2
Sheerness	0		0	0	3
Dartmouth	0		0	0	1

Woolwich	0	0	0	6
Downs	0	2	3	3
Nore	0	0	1	1
Channel I.	0	0	0	1
Boulogne	0	0	1	0
Medway	0	1	0	0
Cherbourg	0	0	0	1
Harwich	0	0	0	1
Cruising	0	0	0	17

## 1812.

Station	1st & 2nd rate	3rd Rate	4th rate	Frigates
Channel Fleet	0	2	0	0
Halifax	0	1	0	5
Mediterranean	3	22	0	27
North Sea	0	0	0	1
Convoy	0	0	1	5
Ireland/Cork	0	0	0	4
West Indies	0	0	0	3
East Indies	0	4	0	17
Leeward I.	0	1	0	4
Jamaica	0	1	0	8
Cadiz	0	3	2	0
Adriatic	0	0	0	2
Africa	0	0	0	1
Basque Roads	0	1	0	3
Cape	0	1	0	5
Texel	0	2	0	1
Bombay	0	1	0	0
Lisbon	0	0	0	4
Baltic	0	0	0	2
Brazil	0	1	0	1
S. America	0	0	2	0
Spain	0	0	0	1
L'Orient	0	1	0	0
Havre	0	0	0	1
Bermuda	0	1	0	0
N.America	0	0	0	1
Corunna	0	0	0	1
Toulon	1	0	0	0
Portsmouth	7	23	0	24
Downs	1	5	0	4
Chatham	0	18	1	8

Leith	0	0	1	2
Plymouth	10	7	0	19
Deptford	0	0	1	8
Flushing	0	7	0	0
Cruising	0	9	0	11
Sheerness	0	3	1	4
Woolwich	0	2	0	4
Brest	0	3	0	0
Cherbourg	0	3	0	1
Guernsey	0	0	0	1
Northfleet	0	1	0	0
Nore	0	1	0	1
Secret Orders	0	0	0	1
Jersey	0	0	0	1

(Source: Steel's Navy Lists)

It is comparatively easy to identify which stations were mainly concerned with Trade protection; thus for 1795, it can be argued that Halifax, The West and East Indies, Leeward Islands and Jamaica are the stations concerned. If Trade protection is the focus then it must be necessary to include convoy duty, since most of the frigates engaged in this would have been escorting merchantmen.

In later years it is necessary to add-in other stations e.g. The Cape, Baltic, Bombay, which were also primarily developed because of the trade interest. The Mediterranean station should be included, for there were substantial Trade interests in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>90</sup>

**Table 1.4. Sample Years Showing Percentage Of Frigates Engaged In Trade Protection.**

<u>Station</u>	<u>Year</u>	1795	1799	1801	1805	1812
General Trade		15%	27%	38%	25%	27%
Mediterranean		11%	5%	9%	8%	15%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>42%</b>

(Source: Statistics drawn from Admiralty List Books).

Clearly, therefore, the need for trade protection placed massive demands on the Royal Navy. For whilst in these years alone as much as half of the frigate force was engaged in these duties, it must not be forgotten that many of the other deployments also played their role in this work. Similarly,



the range of deployment increased throughout the war as both the war itself and the political sphere of influence grew. In 1795, for example, the Royal Navy had its ships deployed over twenty-four stations, twelve of which were home ports or home waters. By 1812, the spread was 45 different locations, of which nineteen were in home waters.<sup>91</sup>

Fortunately Middleton also drafted a statement laying out his views on the number of frigates which were necessary to blockade the French ports successfully. Middleton's statement on this subject is much more detailed for in this he took account of the need to refit and victual the cruisers, and therefore differentiated between the number of frigates necessary to maintain superiority over the enemy's force, those available in commission, and the number which could realistically be kept off of an enemy port.

**Table 1.5. Frigates Required To Maintain Blockade Superiority In The English Channel.**

<u>Port</u>	<u>Ships needed for superiority</u>	<u>Ships in commission</u>	<u>Realistic number</u>
Brest	16	14	6
Toulon	21	21	14
St.Malo	13	13	10
Cherbourg	13	13	12
Dunkirk	13	13	12

(Source: Middleton papers. NMM Mid/10/3/21).

Therefore Middleton believed that he needed seventy-six frigates for channel blockade work, whereas in fact he had only fifty-four. Invariably, there were not enough of the larger frigates to cover all blockade stations, and the disparity between the number of guns available at each location and those required was huge. When it is recalled that there were only eighty-nine frigates in total available in July, 1794, some sense of the stress under which the frigate service and the frigate Captains were serving, can be comprehended.

### **Comparative Deployment**

Certain stations dominate deployment strategy throughout the wars and these were not only those whose key value related directly to trade interest. Ireland and the Channel stations were equally important for defence and military blockade work as for the protection of convoys through the

dangerous western approaches and channel. Taking the tables of stations for sample years throughout the war, it is possible to compare the strength of naval force deployed on each of them. (See Appendix 1.5 referred to above, giving samples for Steel's Navy Lists.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that certain stations were always predominantly frigate stations e.g. The Leeward Islands, The West Indies (when there was no major expedition under way), Jamaica to a very large degree. It is also worth noting that convoy duty was very largely the concern of the fifth and sixth rate ships, though an occasional fourth rate was allocated to this work. Secondly it is noticeable how much naval strength was allocated to the Mediterranean almost throughout the war in terms of both line of battle ships and frigates. This is particularly noticeable when considering third rate ships, for the deployment of these in the Mediterranean is almost always higher than any other deployment at sea. The only exceptions to this rule appear to coincide with expeditions to the West Indies in 1795 and the Baltic in 1801. As suggested above, the Mediterranean contained a large number of strategically important sub-stations; e.g. the blockade of Toulon and the French coast, Gibraltar, Mahon, the Sicilian and Neapolitan theatres of war, the Adriatic, the frequently troublesome Barbary coast, Egypt and the Turkish coast, where again mercantile interests played an important role.

The North Sea Fleet was primarily responsible for the blockade of Dutch and French Channel Ports, whilst the Channel fleet itself was responsible for the blockade of Brest and Biscay ports. It is of course very likely that some of the frigates counted in the tables as either Cruisers or Convoy escorts would have played some role in assisting blockade work, simply by their presence along the coastal seaways.<sup>92</sup> Convoys assembled at St. Helen's, for example, often seem to have been accompanied by frigates making their way from Spithead towards one of the blockading squadrons. During the second war, of course, St. Vincent's policy of enforcing close blockade work meant that more of the Channel Fleet spent more time at sea than at their moorings in Cawsand Bay or Spithead. (It is worth remembering that during the first war as many as 30 - 45% of the frigate force was attached to the Channel Fleet many of whom could be at moorings refitting or restowing.

The fluctuating importance of the East Indies station should also be noted. This station was almost abandoned in the early years of the War, but attention focused on it with Napoleon's designs on Egypt. During the second war the French threat to the East Indies trade, and British

designs on Dutch colonies resulted in a much stronger naval, and particularly frigate, presence in those waters.

It would also appear that there was a preference for keeping First and Second Rate ships on stations where they could act as counters to the French fleets or, during the second war, to the Eastern seaboard of America. Ships of the line usually accompanied major expeditions, e.g. The Grey-Jervis expedition to the West Indies in 1794 was accompanied by the Boyne 98, as well as the third rate 74-guns ships Vengeance and Irresistable. The sample shows that none were sent to the North American seaboard, Leeward Islands or East Indies, which suggests that there was some concern about risking the larger ships of the line in the more dangerous seas, particularly as there was comparatively little chance of them being engaged against a hostile fleet. In fact the sample only really reveals one occasion when the largest ships of the line were at sea, and that coincides with the Trafalgar Campaign. Conversely, it is remarkable how many stations were entrusted to a small number of frigates alone. This of course signifies one of the crucial characteristics of the frigate Captain, that is, his ability to act alone or in small squadrons. It is therefore time to look at the human element, the Post Captain himself.

## Chapter 2. The Naval Officer and his Career.

Although the subject of this thesis is the frigate Captain, it would make little sense to study the frigate Captain in complete isolation. So, in order to be able to contextualise the careers of the frigate Captains, a general survey of Post Captains is required first of all. For the purpose of this paper, a random sample of Post Captains has been studied. These were simply chosen by taking all of those Post Captains whose surnames begin with the letters D, E & F, and who were technically available for service between 1793-1815, i.e. posted before 1815 and were still alive or had not reached Flag Rank before 1793. The commission dates for these officers has been drawn from Syrett & DiNardo's list of *Commissioned sea Officers of the Royal Navy*.<sup>93</sup> Details of each officer's career after posting has been sampled from two types of source. The first being Comdr. C. G. Pitcairn Jones *List of Commissioned Sea Officers* kept at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich<sup>94</sup> which lists the ships on which each officer served; the other type of source being the biographical Dictionaries compiled by Lt. John Marshall and William O'Byrne.<sup>95</sup> Although there have been a number of general studies about the career of naval officers, these have tended to avoid events after promotion to Post Captain, focusing instead on the earlier career.<sup>96</sup> For the following study of frigate Captains, however, it is important that some context for the later career is available.

The DEF sample provides the names of 208 officers.

### Promotion to Post Captain.

Twenty-two per-cent of the sample officers were posted by the end of the American War in 1783. At the other extreme one officer, George William D'Aeth was promoted as the French wars reached their conclusion in 1815. The promotion dates of the sample reveals that between 1784-1789, the years of peace between the end of the American War and the mobilisation for the Spanish Armament of 1790, the number of Commanders being promoted fell markedly. In fact, only 1.5% of the sample were posted during this period. The Spanish Armament saw a flurry of promotions with 4% being posted, but then the rate drops to zero until 1793 when nearly 3.5% of the sample were promoted. It is therefore very clear to what extent naval promotion was tied in

with mobilisation and the threat of, or actual, state of hostilities. Twenty-five percent of the sample were posted during the Revolutionary War, i.e. between 1793-1801, with most occurring during 1795. By 1800 the rate of promotion dropped significantly and only one promotion (less than 0.5%) is recorded for that year. There is a renewed increase in promotion during 1801 (nearly 4%) and then a major increase for 1802. This rise in promotion for 1802 provides the first of a number of interesting phenomenon. Over 8% of the officers promoted to Post Captain in the sample were promoted in this year. This must relate to the cessation of hostilities in March, 1802, when the Treaty Of Amiens was signed. This is proven by the fact that 16 of the 17 officers promoted for this year were promoted on the same day, 29 April, 1802.

Between 1803-1814, the years of the Napoleonic War, 39% of the sample were promoted but, again, over 8% (17 officers) were promoted at the end of the war, in 1814. One lucky officer already mentioned, George D'Aeth, received his promotion during the flurry of the 100 days conflict following Napoleon's return from exile.

### Age of the Officer Corps.

Forty-one per cent of the sample were commissioned as Lieutenants before the end of the American War. Since the minimum age at which a Midshipman was supposed to present himself for his Lieutenant's examination was 20 years (19 from 1806) it must follow that nearly half of the Post Captains available to the Navy upon the outbreak of war in 1793 were thirty years or more in age. Although there were anecdotes about midshipmen getting round the regulations and obtaining false certificates as to their age this was probably uncommon, as most of the stories relate to officers with significant interest behind them. The standard ruse was to have one's name entered onto a ships muster book long before actually taking up one's berth - in this way the Midshipman could claim the requisite sea time. Certificates providing proof of age were, so it was rumoured, available at a certain price from the porters at the Admiralty. There are, consequently, many examples of officers who passed for Lieutenant and were commissioned at 18-19 years of age.<sup>97</sup> However, it does seem that the majority of officers did not pass prematurely, and in many cases officers were commissioned Lieutenants at an even later age; (This is reinforced by the slow rate of promotion before 1790 - see below).

The group who it would be thought would be the most obvious beneficiaries of this system (apart from the sons of Admirals, that is) were the sons of the peerage. Of 40 Post Captains tested (not restricted to the DEF sample) who qualify for this social group it was found that only 21 were commissioned as Lieutenants before the age of 20. To some degree this was affected by the date when the subject entered the navy, for example, a number of the sons of the peerage who passed for Lieutenant after the age of 20 had joined the navy either before or during the American War. This suggests either that the rules governing the Lieutenant's examinations were perhaps more firmly adhered to before 1793 and a little less rigidly applied by the time of the French wars or that there was really less privilege for those with social rank than has been assumed and that they were equally affected by the slower rate of promotion. There were always late starters of course, Thomas, Lord Cochrane being self-professedly one of these.<sup>98</sup> However, as will be seen shortly, the speed of promotion also changed during the last quarter of the 18th century.

### Promotion to Flag Rank

The sample suggests that those posted in 1783/84 could not obtain Flag Rank until the aftermath of Trafalgar in 1805, i.e. a wait of 21 years.; examples being Philip D'Auvergne and Michael de Courcy. Those posted early in 1793, however, might reach flag rank by around 1810 i.e. 17 years later. This reduction in waiting time may have arisen because of the age factor and the consequent death of many of the older Captains on the list. Seven of those posted by 1783 were dead within a few years of the start of the war against Revolutionary France and approximately one third (14) of those officers reaching Post rank before the end of the American War, were dead before Trafalgar.

### Commands.

Thus far, of course no detail has been provided about the sample officers' actual careers. One method of checking upon the level of activity of the sample during the period in question is to check on the number of ships commanded by them after posting. Fortunately the Pitcairn-Jones *List of Commissioned Sea officers*<sup>99</sup> includes the name of that Officer's command as at July of each year. Pitcairn-Jones lists most of the sample.<sup>100</sup>

### Post Captains without Commands.

It is with this aspect that the second significant phenomenon is found. For of the 208 Post Captains in the sample it would appear that 61 (nearly 30%) were never given command at sea. This would appear to be a very high level of unemployment. In part this was caused by the cessation of war in 1783. About 22% of the sample were posted before 1790 and twelve of these were therefore posted at the end of the American War with little prospect of active employment. But there were also officers posted during the course of the American War who were not given employment.<sup>101</sup> The number of 'never-employed' Post Captains appears to fall to zero for those officers posted during the Revolutionary War but, once again, with the end of hostilities around 1801/1802, the numbers rise. The incidence disappears again until 1809 but then continues at a low level until 1814. Although there would have been little point in promoting an officer and then not employing him, it cannot be assumed that this was not deliberate. It is possible that promotion was being used as a form of superannuation.

Previous sea command experience also seems to have been an important factor when employing Captains at the outbreak of war in 1793. Of the 48 Post Captains posted before 1790, 33 had previous command experience before that date; a lucky twelve being given commands during the period of peace. Of these 33, two-thirds were also given commands after the outbreak of war with France. About 8% of the sample were posted in the last two years of the Napoleonic War, when the competition for command was so great that a Post Captain often had to consider himself lucky to get a sloop.<sup>102</sup>

Lack of Sea Command did not necessarily mean unemployment. Some officers had to be satisfied with the responsibility of commanding districts of Sea Fencibles or with raising levies of seamen in different parts of Britain and Ireland. A few simply died before they could be given command, e.g. Henry Duncan, who was drowned before taking up his command in 1802; or Daniel Dobree who died, presumably from illness, in the same year.

It is possible that many officers simply "retired" from active service and never again made themselves available. Some, either more enterprising or financially pressed, entered the merchant marine or some foreign service. A number of Captains appointed to frigates after 1793 did this

and it is just possible that by keeping their skills alive they enhanced their prospect for employment when the threat of war loomed once again.<sup>103</sup>

### Number of Ships Commanded.

Perhaps the next aspect to consider is the number of ships commanded by the sample.

**Table 2.1. Total Number Of Ships Commanded By Post Captains**

No. of Ships	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
%	14	21	16	14	14	17

(Source: Pitcairn Jones *List of Commissioned Sea Officers*).

It would appear that most Post Captains who were given employment could expect to command up to three or four ships during their active career, whilst the more favoured might command five or six. A small number would command seven, eight or even more during the course of their career but those with high numbers of commands must be treated with a certain amount of caution.<sup>104</sup>

Although this table also includes the earlier commands of those Officers posted before 1790; were these to be removed, it would be found that the percentages are remarkably consistent. In fact the statistics vary by not more than 1% until the higher end of the scale when a slightly smaller proportion of Post Captains commanded a greater number of ships.<sup>105</sup> To take just one example, Sir Archibald Dickson(1) was posted in 1774. He then commanded five ships before the outbreak of war in 1793.<sup>106</sup> In 1793 he commanded the Egmont 74, but in April of the following year he reached Flag Rank and therefore no longer qualified to command a single ship in the usual sense.

### Frigate Command.

The third interesting phenomenon is found when considering the rate of ships commanded by the active Captains in the sample. Disregarding those who had no command at all, 19% of the active Captains never appear to have been given frigate command during their career.



This lack of frigate service cannot be attributed to age because, according to the sample, this phenomenon occurs continuously throughout the period, whereas if older age was the critical factor in ruling out frigate command we might expect those older Post Captains in 1793 to have no frigate command after that date. However, on the contrary at least thirteen of those posted during the American War (before July, 1783) saw frigate command during the French Revolutionary War and whilst the majority of these may only have seen frigate command during the French Wars for a brief time, others like the Hon Michael de Courcy<sup>107</sup> and Jonathan Faulknor(2) saw significant service at 5.5 and 6 years respectively.

To a certain degree of course, age and seniority on the Post Captains List went hand in hand; but it certainly appears that neither of these factors bore any consistent relationship to frigate service or lack of it. This must raise a question about how Captains were selected for frigate service, because it should not be regarded as simply a precursor to more senior command. In the next Chapter and elsewhere in this thesis closer consideration will be given to the employment of Post Captains in frigates, however at this point, it is worth considering the employment of Captains in larger ships of the line.

#### Command of ships of the line.

A very small number of Post Captains, particularly during the Napoleonic War, were employed solely in frigates during their active career. Sooner or later the great majority of active Post Captains commanded ships of between the first and fourth rate. The interesting phenomenon here relates to turnover of command. This can be sampled by taking 74-gun ships as an example and analysing the names of their Captains over a three year period, 1812-1814.<sup>108</sup> For this period a total of ninety-nine 74's were in commission for at least one year.

Of the 99, 34 were taken out of service for at least one year. Thus 65 (say 65%) ships were in commission for the full three years. Thirty seven of these ships ( 57%) retained the same Commander throughout the sample period. In four additional cases the same officer was in command in both 1812 and 1814, whilst in 1813 the ship was either temporarily out of commission or under an Acting Captain. Two further officers transferred from one ship to another during the sample period, i.e. Richard Raggett (commanded the Defiance 74 in 1812-1813 and the Conqueror 74 in 1814; J. Halsted commanded the Bellerophon 74 in 1812-13 and the

Scarborough 74 in 1814). This suggests that around 66% of the officers placed in command of a 74-gun ship of the line could expect to continue their commission for at least two years. To some degree longevity of command would have depended on where a ship was stationed. For example, a ship of the line with the Mediterranean Fleet was probably much more likely to retain its commander for a longer period than a ship on either the West Indies station, where there was a high incidence of illness, or the Home station, where there seems to have been more mobility, requests for leave and the use of Acting/temporary Captains.

These statistics bear interesting comparison with those for 74-gun ships during the American War, for example. To check these a sample was taken for the years 1780, 1781 and 1782, giving a total of fifty-three 74-gun ships. Of these only 31 ships were in commission continuously for the full period and only nine commanders are listed as being in command for the three years. That is 29% as opposed to 57% for the Napoleonic Wars. Three others transferred between 74's. Therefore only 39% of Captains of 74-gun ships during the American War could expect to continue in command for at least two years, as opposed to 66% during the later wars.

One other comparison could be made, and that involves looking at the rate of discontinuity of command. During the American War three 74-gun ships had a different commander in each of the sample years, whereas during the Napoleonic War only one ship experienced this. That is 9.5% as opposed to 1.5%. In other words, during the Napoleonic Wars, turnover was less than during the earlier American War and approximately 66% of Post Captains were likely to commission a ship for more than two years.

### **Rate of Promotion.**

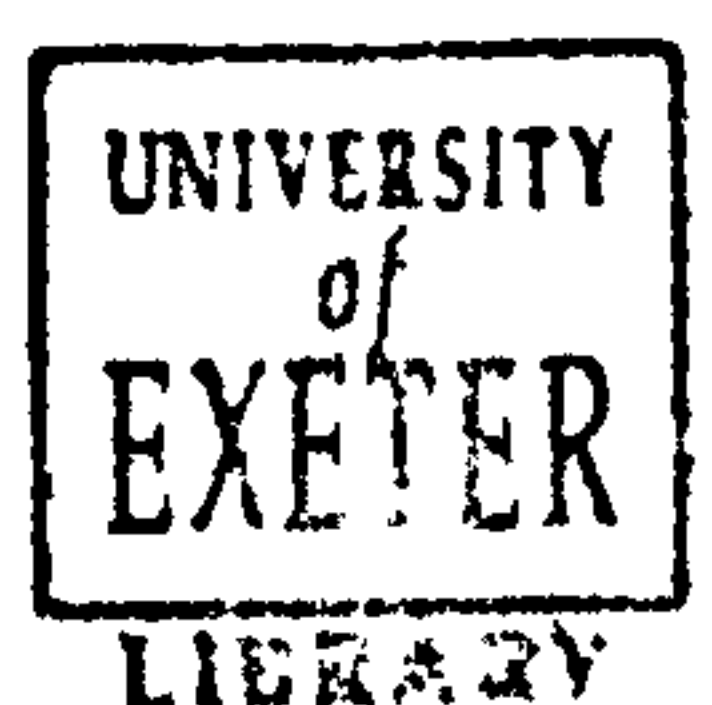
One useful indicator of an officer's ability or interest is revealed in the speed at which he moved from Lieutenant to Post Captain. As previously explained there were, at least in theory, formal rules governing the earliest occasion upon which a Midshipman could present himself for the Lieutenant's examination. Thereafter the system became much more flexible and an officer's progress through the ranks became a matter of interest, ability and undeniably, luck. Using the Commission dates of the sample Captains, where these seem to be reliable and are available, it is possible to calculate the average length of time between passing from Lieutenant to Post Captain.

(For the sake of ease, the number of years between passing for a Lieutenant and being posted will be termed the "Promotion Rate").

**Table 2.2. Average Promotion Rate By Year Passed For Lieutenant.**  
**(DEF Sample)**

N.B. Figures along the top row represent the maximum years to reach Post Captain, thus 3.75 years would be shown as 4; 16.75 years as 17.

Year Passed as Lieutenant.	>	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	Average Promotion rate*	Number in Sample
	2				0	2	4	6	8	0	0		
1745-59		1			2		1	1	1	2	8	20	16
1760-65							1	3		2	1	17.5	7
1771-1775			4	2	2	1						7	9
1776			1	2			1		1	1		11.29	6
1777		1	2	2			3	3				10	11
1778		5	3				2	1	2		2	10	15
1779							1		1		2	20.75	4
1780							1	1	2	1	1	17	6
1781								3			1	16	4
1782					1	2	1	1		1	1	14.8	7
1783							1					13	1
1784												0	0
1785							1					8.75	1
1786												0	0
1787						1						10.25	1
1788												0	0
1789			1									5.5	1
1790			4	3	1	3	1	2			1	9.7	15
1791			1			1						8.25	2
1792												0	0
1793	1		3	1				1	3			9.45	10
1794			1	5		1		1	2	1		11.2	11
1795			2	2		1		1	1	1		11.43	8
1796			1	1		1		1	1			10.85	5
1797			2	1	1	1	2	1				9.44	8
1798				1	1		3					11.1	5
1799	1	1		1	1	1						6.95	5
1800		2	2		1	1	3	1				9	10
1801		1	1		1		1					7.6	4
1802		1		2	3	1	2					9	9
1803		1			1							5.5	2
1804	1		2	2								6.8	5



	>	4	6	8	1	1	1	1	1	2	2		
	2				0	2	4	6	8	0	0		
												+	
1805		1		2	1	1						7.25	6
1806			1		2							7.75	3
1807		1	1	1								5	3
1808			1	2								5.9	3

The table clearly shows the almost non-existent promotion rate between 1784-1789, the years of peace after the American War. It also shows that very few of those officers commissioned as Lieutenant during the American War (i.e. 1776-1783) could expect to be promoted through the ranks in less than four years and 58% of them would not reach Post Captain for at least 12 years. The highest numbers being promoted at between 12-15 years.

It should be acknowledged however, that an officer promoted during the Peace was likely to have a degree of interest or favour to be employed at all - and this might accelerate his individual rate of promotion. The unusually rapid promotion of the Lieutenant of 1789 is a good example. This was Percy Fraser. A chance remark in a somewhat cynical letter from the young William Lukin, to his uncle, William Windham reveals that Fraser was promoted young for mentoring the Prince of Brunswick.<sup>109</sup>

After 1790 the percentage of officers passing through the ranks at high speed remained fairly constant but by this time 46% were reaching Post Rank after between 4-10 years and 75% of officers reached Post Rank before 12 years had passed. If we begin by considering those Officers passing for Lieutenant before 1783, it is probable that those with a promotion rate of between 12-15 years are going to be fairly typical whilst those passing quicker or slower may be unusual. Those officers passing for Lieutenant from 1790 onwards, could expect a much quicker transition through the ranks. The average would probably have been between 7-8 years.

It has already been suggested that those officers who were already experienced by the outbreak of war in 1793 stood a greater chance of an active sea career once they were posted. Fifty-eight Captains were posted before 1793 but only seventeen of these (29%) were given a sea-going command in the ten years of peace between the American and the French Revolutionary War; and, in fact, most of these were temporary commands during the Spanish Armament. Although the numerical figure is small, 71% of those officers who were given a command during the peace were then given commands after 1793.

In all 46% of Captains posted by 1783 were given commands after the outbreak of the war with France - although in many cases the command seems to have been their last and possibly of brief duration. This would suggest that a significant number of those officers were ageing and perhaps not fully fit for command.

If only about seventeen officers in the sample seem to have held a period of command during the years leading up to the War.<sup>110</sup> this would suggest that as many as 70% of the navy's Post Captains at the outbreak of war in 1793, lacked recent sea experience in the Royal Navy. In reality the situation could have been much worse, for many of those who were given commands probably never got their ships to sea in 1790. A number of officers, however, served in the merchant marine or in foreign service during this period. **John Dilkes**, for example served in the Portuguese Navy and, outside of this sample, **David Milne** served in the East India Trade for most of the period between the end of the American War and the outbreak of the War against France. It is possible that many junior officers took this option, though it was probably widely regarded as degrading for a Post Captain to accept service in the merchant service.<sup>111</sup> Others took slightly different courses. **Philip Beaver** became involved in an abortive attempt to set up a co-operative colony off the coast of Africa, the experience of which considerably added to his skills and experience.<sup>112</sup> One should also mention **Sir William Sidney Smith** who had, very controversially, served and fought for the Swedish navy during this period; and **Home Popham**, who served in the Far East with the East India Company.

#### Officers with Rapid Promotion Rates.

The rate of promotion might also be used to identify the good and bad, or the lucky and unlucky, depending on interpretation. As noted above, a large number in the sample saw no frigate service during the wars. Since the object of this thesis is to study frigate Captains it might be useful to consider the non-frigate officers to gain a comparison.

Age does not appear to have been the overriding factor in choosing whether a Captain was appointed to a frigate or a Line of Battle ship, for the age of these non-frigate officers at their date of posting generally ranges between 22-40 years,<sup>113</sup> although only a very small number were posted under the age of 28 and one officer, **John Dilkes**, was probably 48 years old when he was

posted. There would therefore be no justification for the suggestion that frigates were strictly the province of younger men nor that ships-of-the-line tended to be given to those of more mature age; for, those who did not get frigates were also of a wide age range. However, as will be seen later, there was most certainly a tendency for frigates to be given to officers as their first Post ship.

A number of officers in the sample had to wait several years after posting to be given their first ship - but the proportion is not significant enough to be meaningful. Whilst it might be stretching the point too far to suggest that those officers who did not serve in frigates also happened to be less active in their naval careers, it does appear to be the case that frigate Captains tended to have more active careers. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. It is probably not possible to explain why some officers never had frigate command. However, it is possible to suggest that frigate Captains actively sought out that service. The attractions of the frigate service will be discussed in detail in a later chapter, but for now it is probably sufficient to note that frigate command had its drawbacks and did not suit everyone. Even Collingwood, that most articulate correspondent, stated clearly on one occasion that he would prefer a 74 gun ship above anything else - and that was immediately after Lord Chatham had given him a choice of two comparatively new frigates.<sup>114</sup>

Twenty-seven per-cent of the Captains in the sample experienced a marked delay (i.e. of more than one year) in being appointed to a ship after Posting. This is probably no higher than we might expect given that there were always more Post Captains than there were ships to which they could be appointed. The joy of being posted, which is so clearly expressed in the memoirs of Captains of this time<sup>115</sup> was often soon dulled by the growing sense of frustration at not getting a command. Possibly even worse was the tendency to give new Post Captains temporary commands. This seems to have been less of a problem on distant stations where the Commander-in-Chief almost enjoyed carte blanche to appoint officers to commands in the knowledge that it would be some time before the Admiralty could send orders countermanding any such move. On the home station, however, a series of acting commands could be both expensive and unrewarding<sup>116</sup>. The Acting Captain had no time to build up a rapport with the crew of his temporary command and, unless he was very lucky, little enough time to make his name in a ship action. True, a Post Captain had merely to sit patiently for long enough and he would automatically be raised to Flag Rank, but this was not what most naval officers wanted, nor indeed was it the reason that they had joined the navy. It is undoubtedly true that there were some

officers who simply avoided serving in any active capacity or who refused the offer of a ship because it did not suit them. However, these latter stood the risk of being 'overlooked' later when they decided that they did desire a command.

A small proportion of officers were posted as Flag-Captains. This meant that instead of being given their own command, they became the Captain of the vessel carrying the Admiral, that is the flag-ship. This was frequently a sign that the officer enjoyed the patronage of that flag-officer as an Admiral could, to a certain degree, select his own Flag-Captain. In actual fact something like 12%<sup>117</sup> of the sample actually served as Flag Captains at some stage in their career and some positively seem to have made a career out of it.<sup>118</sup>

Many officer's ideal, as will be explored later, was to be posted directly into their own frigate. Of the DEF sample, only 24% were this fortunate, and this rather contradicts any assumption that it was the custom to promote the majority of new Post Captains into frigates; 18% of the sample were promoted into ships of other rate without delay. Henry Digby was one of the lucky ones, but then his father also happened to be the Chaplain in Ordinary to the King. Ross Donnelly<sup>119</sup> was posted directly into the old Pegasus 28 and although he was also a well respected seaman, he also had the likes of Nelson, Duncan, and the Earl of Tankerville<sup>120</sup> promoting his interests. He was also a favourite of Lord Spencer, who became First Lord of the Admiralty, six months before Donnelly's promotion.<sup>121</sup> Philip Durham was posted directly into the Hind 28 in the Channel, having proved himself as a Commander of some ability by capturing a number of privateers; and Charles Dashwood was posted into a frigate after engaging the heavier French frigate Artemise in 1801.

Approximately 34% of Post Captains' careers show a clear and steady progression after posting, from one ship to another. Sometimes this commences with a frigate or smaller ship, or even a fourth rate, and then develops to the command of a Seventy-Four or larger ship. It is tempting to suggest that of all the Post Captains in the navy during the wars with France, this 34% formed the heart of the officer corps; that these were the officers who kept the blockading fleets moving backwards and forwards without ever really obtaining glamour or distinction. When it is noted that some 30% of the sample may never have actually served in command of a ship after being posted, this may not seem altogether unreasonable.

## Health and Command

There are clear indications that in the case of at least five officers in the sample, breakdown in health (short of death) had a significant effect upon their career. In the case of one of these, **Sir William Domett**, this decline in health came late in his career and after he had reached flag-rank. As he may have been in his fifties by this time, we should not read too much into this. **Richard Dacres**, on the other hand, gives us a prime example of a Post Captain who was sent to the West Indies, in a frigate, and who subsequently became ill and had to resign his command. Dacres had already spent several years on the Jamaica station when he became ill. Upon return to England he was found a position commanding Sea Fencibles, at Dartmouth. The command of Sea Fencibles was frequently given to officers who became incapacitated in some way, but the problem with this duty was that it was sometimes difficult to escape afterwards. Dacres' good fortune was that he was shortly after summoned to be flag Captain to **Sir William Sydney Smith** on the Pompee 80. His luck had not so much to do with Sidney Smith, but the fact that Dacres stayed with the ship when the flag was transferred to Vice-Admiral Stanhope for the second battle of Copenhagen, where Dacres earned much praise by organising teams to subdue a serious fire in the dockyard.<sup>122</sup>

Sometimes an officer had to choose just the right moment to prove the reliability of his health. **Mauritius Adolphus Newton De Starck**, for example, resigned as Lieutenant of the Salisbury 50, because of ill health. His career only seems to have recovered when he offered his services against the mutineers at the Nore, in 1797. Ill health may actually have saved the career of **Edward Dix**<sup>123</sup>, who was appointed Midshipman of the Hermione frigate, which spent an astonishing length of time in the West Indies.<sup>124</sup> Dix contracted malaria and then suffered recurrent bouts of fever on two further occasions before being invalided home, fortunate to escape the savage fate of most of the other ship's officers.<sup>125</sup> In the case of **William Henry Dillon**, frequent bouts of ill-health in the West Indies hindered his promotion. In his memoirs he recounts how as a Lieutenant he was second in line for promotion until it was realised that he was unwell. His patron at this time, Admiral Harvey, ordered him to take sick leave at Tortola in the hope that he might recover, rather than return him to England, for as Harvey reputedly commented "*That may injure him at the Admiralty*".<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, as even Dillon would probably have recognised, to leave his patron at such a promising juncture would be extremely undesirable. Unfortunately, Dillon's health did not recover sufficiently and, like Dix, he was forced to convalesce in England for several months.



Of course, the officers<sup>127</sup> mentioned here cannot be taken as a representative sample when considering the effect and incidence of poor health. Michael Lewis points out that Disease was the greatest cause of death in the Royal Navy<sup>128</sup> and it is obvious that a considerable number of junior officers would have died young and as a consequence would not appear in either the sample or in Marshall's *Royal Naval Biography*.

Twenty-four (11.5%) of the sample died during the course of the war, in years which suggest that the cause was not old age. Of these two, **George Duff** and **George Downie**, were killed in action; whilst **John William Taylor Dixon** and **Henry Duncan(2)** were both drowned. The longer term effect of disease and ill health also had its casualties. **James Dalrymple** died in 1803 at the age of 29 after, the *Naval Chronicle* records, a long illness.<sup>129</sup> **Captain Charles Sidney Davers** died in 1805, a few months after resigning from the Active because of poor health and **John Dolling** died whilst Captain of the Suffolk stationed at the Cape.<sup>130</sup>

Four (2%) of the sample suffered from wounds in action. Here we should take note of the psychology of those submitting their biographical returns to Marshall. Two of those who mention being wounded record that they were "severely wounded"; the other two mention being wounded in association with important naval episodes, that is, Camperdown and Trafalgar. It is an open question how severely an officer had to be wounded before he would make a point of it in his return to Marshall. From a Psychological point of view, it is understandable that some officers would mention it to explain gaps in their active service. However others may simply have taken the view that a wound which did not cause major difficulties or draw attention to a famous event, or result in a pension, was not worth mentioning. **Philip Durham**, who was shot in the leg and side at Trafalgar suffered long term effects, as his biographer records " *His wound appeared slight at first, but it was many years before he completely recovered, after narrowly escaping the loss of his leg.*"<sup>131</sup>

**Francis Douglas**, severely wounded at Camperdown, was posted a long thirteen years later. He had been promoted Commander in 1800, but by 1805 he was still commanding the guardship at Lymington, another type of post that seems to have been given to those recovering from illness or the long term effects of wounds as it usually enabled the Captain to live on shore most of the time, often with his family. Douglas never seems to have served after being posted, and was certainly

in receipt of a pension after 1815.<sup>132</sup> **William Hugh Dobbie**<sup>133</sup>, apparently a favourite of Admiral Rainier, was promoted Commander by his patron following an attack upon a fort on Baite Island, during which Dobbie was severely wounded. Possibly in order to give him time to recover from his wounds, Rainier made Dobbie the Governor of the naval hospital at Madras; although he certainly seems to have recovered well enough by the following year when he served as a volunteer in the search for Linois' squadron in the Indian Ocean. **John Draper**, probably already suffering from wounds or ill health died whilst employed as agent for prisoners of war in Huntingdonshire.<sup>134</sup>

At least eighty-six (41%) of the sample were dead by 1822 and were, therefore, unfortunately not included by either John Marshall or William O'Byrne in their autobiographical studies.<sup>135</sup> As a consequence there is little ready information about most of them apart from their commission dates unless there happens to be an obituary for them in, for example, *The Naval Chronicle*, or unless they submitted a return of their services to the Admiralty.

### Promotion and Naval Action

The incidence of promotion linked to involvement in a naval engagement was most frequently related to single ship actions between frigates or smaller ships. It is well known that after a major engagement, e.g. the 1st of June or Trafalgar, there could be a general promotion for most of the officers involved. However a diverse range of engagements could result in promotion, and statistically it does seem that promotion was more likely to arise from a single ship engagement than from a major fleet action.

Of a third of the sample whose career details have been checked, only ten, (i.e. about 5% of the sample) were very clearly promoted at some time because of their involvement in a naval engagement. Of the officers concerned only two of them, **Ross Donnelly** and **John Ferris Devonshire**<sup>136</sup>, earned promotion as a result of their presence in a fleet action. In Donnelly's case it was because of his assuming command of the Montagu 74 during the Battle of the 1st June, 1794.<sup>137</sup> Devonshire really received his boost as a result of a single ship action. However, he was also present at Copenhagen in 1801 as Commander of the Dart sloop, and became a Post Captain as a result. It is then, possible to assert, that the majority of those promoted as a result of presence in an engagement, were promoted because of single or small ship actions. Of the nine

officers who fall into this category, approximately half were promoted because of their activities whilst commanding sloops or smaller ships. Others were present in single-ship, mainly frigate, actions.

## Chapter 3. The Frigate Captains.

In the previous chapter an attempt was made to illustrate the career of the naval officer in general by taking a random sample of Post Captains. The rate at which officers rose from Lieutenant to Post Captain was explored as well as the incidence of posting. Consideration was given to the fact that many posted after 1801 were never given a sea-going command. Within the sample it was noted that those Captains who had at some time been given frigate command were more likely to be given successive command of, often, more than three ships thereby suggesting that they were more active officers. Approximately 27% of Post Captains had to wait more than a year to be given their first ship, whereas 24% of that DEF-sample were posted directly into a frigate. It was also noted that approximately 34% of Post Captain's careers demonstrated a clear progression from ship to ship.

In this chapter attention will focus on frigate Captains only. Their rate of promotion will be analysed as well as the incidence of promotion. Consideration will be given to age and promotion as well as the significance of age to the length of frigate service. Variations in the rate of promotion and length of frigate service will be reviewed.

### The data.

The basic data for this research has mainly been drawn from the large volumes of Lists of officers and ships in commission between 1793-1815, known familiarly as 'The Admiralty List Books'.<sup>138</sup> These, at least for most of the war, provide a month by month list of every ship in commission, its commanding officer, Lieutenants and complement according to its station. Using these, it is possible to record the name of every officer commanding every frigate for nearly every month of the wars. Unfortunately, the List Books become inconsistent towards the end of the Napoleonic War and no list remains for the period after 1813. For the final years of the war it has been necessary to refer to other sources, including Steel's Navy List and Government digests which were almost certainly based upon Steel's work.<sup>139</sup>

For the Revolutionary War, the details of every Frigate, its Captain and station have been recorded. For the Napoleonic War it was found that a reasonably accurate survey could be achieved by recording the entries on a quarterly basis for each year.

It must be said at the outset that the List Books need to be used with some caution. For, whilst there is no reason for believing that the Admiralty Clerks were prone to making many errors, the Lists contain inconsistent spelling of surnames as well as occasional confusion about forenames. Furthermore it rapidly becomes apparent that the Clerks had difficulty in keeping accurate records about appointments. Although the lists were reviewed each month it is evident that this frequency could only barely keep up with the changes that were taking place in commanding officers. Whilst the ships themselves may have moved between stations at an understandably 'leisurely' pace, the men in command could be changed at such speed that, by the time the Clerks had entered a man's name against a particular ship, he could be in another ship or someone could have replaced him. Some of this difficulty was undoubtedly caused by the very basic nature of communications at that time for, although there was a very fast and efficient system of communications between London and the naval ports, in the form of the telegraph system, it is very clear that the Admiralty itself had problems keeping track on the appointments made by Commanders-in-Chief of very distant stations.

In addition to this it was not at all unusual to appoint officers to the command of ships as "Acting Captains" or on a temporary basis. The status of the appointment in these cases would mean their inclusion in the List Books, although it was not subsequently made clear when the temporary or acting status had become more of a permanent posting. Confusingly, the fact that a Captain had been posted to a new ship whilst still in his previous command, could lead to his name appearing against both ships for many months.

That this can lead to uncertainty is all too apparent in the Pitcairn Jones List of Sea Officers and their commands,<sup>140</sup> which is another source that has been used for cross referencing the List of frigate Captains and their commands. *The List of Commissioned Sea Officers* consists of twelve A3-sized volumes, being photocopies of Commander Pitcairn Jones's notes about Commissioned Officers. Pitcairn Jones used the Admiralty List Books at the Public Record Office to compile a complete list of the ships to which every Commissioned Officer was appointed throughout his career. To do this he took an annual sample from the List Books, using the month of July in each year and recorded the officer/ship accordingly. Unfortunately the consequence of his method is that there can be an eleven month discrepancy between an officer's actual appointment to a ship

and the recording of the same in the Pitcairn Jones List. The method used for this thesis does ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, the dates are accurate to within three months.

### **The Number of Frigate Captains.**

It is possible to identify approximately Six Hundred and Sixty-six Captains who commanded a frigate of between 28 and 44 guns at some point between 1793 and 1815. Absolute precision cannot be relied upon because, for example, the List Books record some names which it has not been possible to verify. There are also names in the List Books which prove to be those of Lieutenants or Commanders; and, often, these entries coincide with the down-rating of a frigate, either temporarily or permanently.<sup>141</sup>

Cross referencing with the Pitcairn Jones List and the Syrett & DiNardo List<sup>142</sup> has helped weed out many of the more doubtful entries and the number cited would seem to be the closest number that can be obtained, given the dearth of List information after 1813.

### **Rate of Promotion.**

As stated in the previous chapter, one of the most valuable statistical tools for analysing the career of large numbers of officers, is that of rate of promotion. With the large sample given by the frigate Captains it is possible to identify an interesting trend in the rate of promotion from Lieutenant to Post Captain, both preceding and during the war itself.

Generally speaking, the average time taken for an officer to pass through the ranks ( which for the sake of brevity will be referred to as "promotion rate" ) was 8.49 years for all Post Captains in the frigate sample. When divided between Captains posted before and after 1790, it was found that there was a marked difference. Those posted prior to 1790 were promoted within an average of 10.4 years; those posted after 1790, within 5.9 years. However, this figure reveals little in itself. More importantly variations can be found when comparing the promotion rate of those officers passing for Lieutenant in the same year. This is a much more significant method of analysis because it compares the promotion rate of individual officers with others who were subject to the same conditions - military, political and administrative. It is also useful to compare the average rate from year to year.

**Table 3.1. : Promotion Rate Of Frigate Captains From Date Of Lieutenancy.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Officers</b>	<b>Average Promotion Rate</b>
1776	15	9.91
1777	31	12.1
1778	43	12.59
1779	20	12.53
1780	22	12.56
1781	18	11.36
1782	32	9.39
1783	18	13.36
1784	5	11.75
1785	5	9.35
1786	0	0
1787	5	7.8
1788	5	6.3
1789	17	6.5
1790	89	7.8
1791	11	6.63
1792	2	6.25
1793	51	7.07
1794	41	7.45
1795	27	8.12
1796	25	6.94
1797	25	6.88
1798	12	6.70
1799	19	5.94
1800	17	5.26
1801	17	5.1
1802	14	5.76
1803	5	4.35
1804	16	3.18
1805	11	4.22
1806	2	2.62?
1807/8	2	5.75?

(N.B. Average Promotion rate is given in years. 6.5 years therefore represents 6 years and six months).

(Source: Dates from Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy*).

The years prior to 1776 have not been included in this table although twenty-six officers who served as frigate Captains during the Wars of 1793-1815, passed for Lieutenants during this time. The reason for this exclusion is that the further backwards in time this review of promotion rate is

taken, the less valid the rate becomes. For example, the average promotion rate for the twelve officers who became Lieutenants before 1771, is 20.62 years. The problem with this is that it tells us little about those officers other than the fact that they were quite old by the time that war broke out in 1793; they had been passed over during the American war and suffered from the almost non-existent promotion during the following peace. In a sense, imposing the dates 1793-1815 as the benchmark against which to study officers' career advancement also imposes an artificial scale. In another sense they are also freak survivors and it might be unwise to include them at this particular point. The table, therefore commences with the year 1776 which was, of course, the first year of the American War. The table should be read in two ways; firstly to note the number of Lieutenants passing in each year and secondly to consider the length of time that it took, statistically to reach Post Captain.

Up until 1776, a small number of Midshipman in the sample were being promoted each year.<sup>143</sup> The number increases dramatically in 1776, appears to peak in 1778 ( and again in 1782) and then falls away during the following years of peacetime. It will be recalled that in the previous chapter, where the D-Sample was considered, only 3 Lieutenants were found to have passed between 1784 and 1789.

In 1786 no promotions to Lieutenant were recorded within the sample. In 1787, the year of the Dutch Armament, the number passing returns to its normal level for the inter-war years, increasing dramatically as tension built in 1790 with the Spanish Mobilisation. The numbers peak again with the outbreak of war and then gradually settle down until about 1805. At this point again there must be an artificial cut-off point, because the sample only relates to officers who became Captains of frigates before the end of the wars and none of the frigate Captains identified, passed for Lieutenant after 1808. Furthermore, the data relating to the four officers passing for Lieutenant in 1806-1808 may need to be treated with caution because of the small number involved, and because of who they were:- Lord James Townshend (youngest son of the Marquis of Townshend), Edward Troubridge (son of Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge) in 1806; the Hon Henry Peachey (son of Baron Selsey) in 1807 and Sir David Dunn in 1808.<sup>144</sup>

What these statistics show us is obviously that the number of officers required to man ships grew during periods of naval mobilisation. Since officers are "created" by upwards only promotion, this is reflected in the number of midshipmen becoming Lieutenants. The sudden fall in the



number of promotions after 1783 reflects the fact that once Lieutenants were created they remained until they could be promoted on once again. Thus, with the end of the American Revolutionary War, there was a glut and the number passing drops sharply.

Reviewing the promotion rate is the second way of reading this table. In some ways this is, once again, a slightly artificial method. For comparative purposes it is debatable whether the promotion rate should be read forwards from the date of passing for Lieutenant, as it is presented here, or backwards, i.e. from the date of posting. The former method has been chosen because it would seem more accurate to compare prospective Captains at a given fixed point in time. In this instance it can be reasonably anticipated that for most of the officers in each year, men of similar age are being compared. They are all at the start of their career, which is important because the influence of "interest" or patronage became stronger thereafter. Furthermore, as new Lieutenants they would have had little previous opportunity to prove themselves. Looking forward in this manner, therefore, also enables us to highlight the exceptions; and this will be considered in more detail in due course.

The average rate of promotion allows us to review the overall trend. With the DEF Sample it was found that those Lieutenants passing before 1790 spent an average of 14 years to reach Post Captain. Those passing from 1790 onwards, about 8 years.

With the frigate Captain the average time was 10.4 years for those passing for Lieutenant prior to 1790; and 5.9 years for those after 1790. The number of officers included in the comparative samples would necessarily mean that of the two, the frigate Captain sample would be the more reliable, however, the promotion rate given by the DEF-sample does suggest that the frigate sample contains a higher proportion of officers passing through the ranks with greater speed.

In general it is clear from the above table that the speed at which officers rose to Post Captain increased after 1784. Again, it is important to bear in mind that the variable factor is the date at which each officer was posted and general factors could have a major affect here. For example, those Lieutenants (frigate Captain sample) passing in 1785 became Post Captains within an average of 9.35 years; those passing in 1787 became Post Captains within an average 7.8 years. Those passing in 1788 were posted on average in just over six years. In other words most of them

would have been posted around 1794 at the time of the great mobilisation for war, and therefore the state of conflict was the major determining factor.

The discussion here relates to trends revealed by averages and may only conclude that it would be reasonable to expect the speed of promotion to increase as a result of the outbreak of war in 1793 and the consequent mobilisation, or that the waiting time would decline the nearer an officer passed for Lieutenant to the outbreak of war.<sup>145</sup>

What is more significant is that the promotion rate for frigate Captains gets faster as the war progresses. Whilst it might have been expected that there would have been a temporary increase to reflect the mobilisation at the start of the war, it might also have been expected that the rate would slow down as the corps of Post Captains grew larger and there was increasing difficulty in giving them active commands. Since it could not have been predicted that the wars would conclude in 1815, something else was working to ensure that many of the frigate Captains were reaching Post Rank with as little delay as possible and, on average, much faster than officers who were not given frigate commands after posting

**Table 3.2. DEF Sample Showing Variation Between Frigate And Non-Frigate Captains' Promotion Rate, By Year Passed For Lieutenant.**

	Non Frigate Captains		Frigate Captains	
	Number of Officers	Average Promotion Rate	Number of Officers	Average Promotion Rate
1776	3	12.6	3	9.9
1777	3	10.6	8	9.75
1778	7	13.96	8	6.53
1779	1	30.75	3	14.41
1780	1	19.5	5	16.5
1781	2	17.6	2	14.1
1782	2	14.5	5	15
1783	0	-	1	13
1784	0	-	0	-
1785	0	-	1	8.75
1786	0	-	0	-
1787	1	10.25	0	-
1788	0	-	0	-
1789	0	-	1	5.5
1790	3	17	12	7.89
1791	1	11	1	5.5
1792	0	-	0	-
1793	4	14.9	6	5.79
1794	8	12.9	3	6.58
1795	4	10.8	4	12.06
1796	3	11.3	2	10.12
1797	3	11.25	5	8.35
1798	3	13.75	2	7.25
1799	3	6.91	2	7
1800	5	12	5	6.05
1801	2	12.25	2	2.97
1802	6	10.25	3	6.75
1803	1	8.25	1	2.75
1804	4	8.18	1	1.25
1805	4	8.44	2	4.75
1806	3	7.75	0	-
1807	3	5	0	-
1808	2	5.87	1	6

(Source: Statistics drawn from Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy*).

The interesting result of this comparison is that in almost every year, those officers who became frigate Captains were, on average, promoted faster than those destined not to command frigates. This raises a significant question: why did the Admiralty continue promoting officers, some at a

faster rate, when there were a substantial number of unemployed - or perhaps under-employed - Post Captains

When the promotion rate of the DEF Sample is considered, although the number in the sample is much smaller we can see many similar characteristics as that described above. With the number of Lieutenants passing, for example, there is a peak in 1778 and a decline after 1782; In 1790, there was a big increase in the numbers of Midshipmen passing, in response to the Nootka Sound crisis; and again, a peak at the beginning of the War with Revolutionary France. The promotion rate of officers in the DEF-Sample follows similar trends as the frigate Captain sample, however, the speed at which their promotion occurred was slower than that of the frigate Captains. The Promotion rate of the frigate Captains will be considered again later when we turn to assess who was promoted quickly and why, and to compare them with the slower movers.

### Age of Post Captains.

#### 1). Post Captains available in 1793.

Nearly 18% of those officers given command of a frigate during the Wars, that is 118 men, were actually posted before the outbreak of War in 1793. This enables us, using the formula utilised to analyse the ages of the DEF Sample in the previous Chapter, to estimate the ages of these Captains in 1793<sup>146</sup>. In the DEF Sample, i.e. a sample of all officers, it was found that nearly half of the corps of Post Captains were over the age of 30 when war broke out.

The frigate Captains sample reveals the ages to have been as follows:-

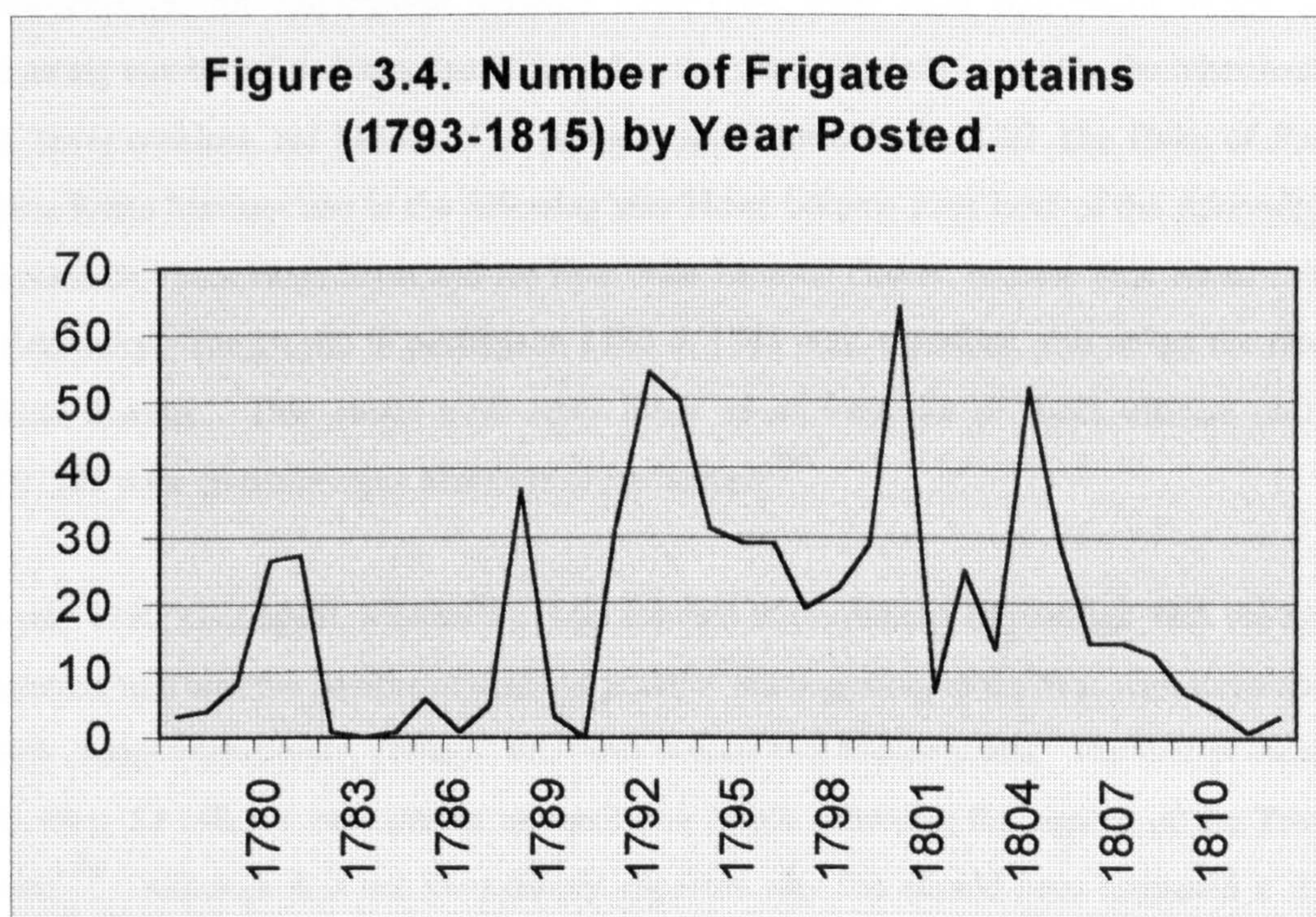
**Table 3.3. Age of Captains in 1793. (Frigate Captain Sample).**

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE
43 and over	11	9.3%
42	1	0.8%
41	3	2.5%
40	5	4.2%
39	3	2.5%
38	2	0.8%
37	13	11%
36	22	18.6%
35	28	23.72%
34	13	11%
33	7	5.9%
32	6	5.1%
31	4	3.4%

(Source: Calculated from dates in Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers*).

From this it can be seen that the majority of Captains were between the ages of 34-37 years at the outbreak of war. One of the oldest was Sir William George Fairfax, born in 1739, he entered the navy in 1750 and passed for Lieutenant in 1757. He was therefore 53 years old when war broke out.

Among the youngest were **Sir Edward Buller** (son of the Bishop of Exeter), **The Hon Robert Forbes(1)** (younger son of Lord Forbes) and **William Bentinck**. Both Buller and Forbes passed for Lieutenant in 1782 and were posted in 1790 (both slightly faster than average). Bentinck was more fortunate, for he passed for Lieutenant in 1782 and was posted in the following year, which also happened to be the year that his father, Lord Portland, became Prime Minister. Buller was actually born in 1764 and was therefore 29, slightly younger than the formula suggests. He actually entered the navy at the age of twelve and became a Commander in April, 1783 at the age of 19 - perhaps explaining why Marshall should choose to describe him as “a mere boy” at that juncture of his career.<sup>147</sup>



(Source: Dates drawn from Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers*).

With the previous tables it could be seen that at certain points in time the number of promotions to Lieutenant increased. In table 3.4. however, can be seen the outcome of those increases and the rate at which the corps of Post Captains was increased. In 1782 and 1783, right at the end of the American Revolutionary War there was a significant increase in Commanders being posted. To a certain degree this seems curious, for why should the rate of posting leap right at the end of the War? Although the Admiralty could hardly predict the date of the end of the war, there wasn't

exactly a massive increase in need for Post Captains. The need for experienced Captains would have been evident at the outset of naval mobilisation and we would consequently expect a steady stream of postings throughout the War. In 1782 and 1783, however, the increase may reflect the need to reward the Lieutenants and Commanders who had served through most of the conflict, prior to them going on permanent half-pay.<sup>148</sup> M.A. Lewis argued that the increased promotions at the end of a war might reflect a conscious act of charity by the Admiralty:

*"...The Government....did realize by now that it could never again hope to give many thousands of its servants work on full pay, and it knew that all these thousands faced the certainty of a drab, penurious existence on half pay....For such people promotion would not give employment (and therefore full pay), but it would give them the better half pay of their new rank..."*<sup>149</sup>

This sudden boom in the number of postings, followed by what must have been a serious decline in opportunities for employment between 1784-1790, must have contributed to the starkly contrasting number of postings that followed in the years of peace. On the other hand one must never overlook the likelihood of political appointments. In 1782 The Duke of Portland became Prime Minister and in the following year Howe became First Lord of the Admiralty and, in succession, both Hugh Pigot and the Hon. John Leveson Gower, became First Naval Lords of the Admiralty. The growth in postings in 1782 & 1783 may, therefore, also reflect the return of political favours. This seems even more likely as at least six of those officers posted in 1782/1783 went on to become Members of Parliament.<sup>150</sup>

The year 1790, once again, witnessed a large increase in the number of postings with the Spanish Armament; and then the number of postings peaks at the beginning of the War with Revolutionary France. More interestingly, perhaps, this table reveals two further peaks. The first of these is in 1802 when 53 officers were posted in April, the month following the signing of the Treaty of Amiens.<sup>151</sup> Although it is not immediately apparent why this should have happened it is most likely that, as in 1782/1783, the Admiralty recognised the need to reward officers for services rendered. A second peak occurs in 1806. This may well arise from a general promotion after the Battle of Trafalgar, and is a factor which does not reveal itself on the previous tables. Equally, it may reflect the appointment of Grenville as Prime Minister, following the death of Pitt in January 1806.<sup>152</sup> Once again this is supported by the fact that at least four of those officers posted during 1806 became Members of Parliament.<sup>153</sup> Curiously, the data for the frigate Captains also reveals the fact that there appear to have been particular dates on which an extraordinary number of officers were posted. For example, 21 officers in the frigate Captain

sample were posted on 22nd November, 1790, presumably an indication of the mobilisation during the Spanish Armament. Forty-four were posted on 29th April, 1802 - that is 6.5% of the entire sample on a single day.

The failure to control the number of the officer corps and the apparent inability to plan strategically, led increasingly to what might be described as an overcrowding of the corps in general. This situation, combined with the system of appointing flag officers by seniority was to lead to what Michael Lewis described as "chaos" by 1840.<sup>154</sup> The difficulty lay in the fact that officers could be selectively promoted until they reached Post Rank; once they became Post Captains, however, although they could be ignored in terms of appointment to an active command, they were undeniably Flag Officers in waiting.<sup>155</sup>

As already noted, a significant number of the corps of Post Captains were over the age of 35 at the outbreak of the war (i.e. just over 13% of the sample). Some of these may have been of questionable health or fitness for service; but assumptions cannot be made. William George Fairfax whom we have already noted was 53 when war broke out<sup>156</sup> was still in active command of the Quebec in 1799 at the age of 59, and reached Flag Rank in 1801.

**Table 3.5. The Age Of Frigate Captains At Time Of posting - I..<sup>157</sup>**

Year	Number in sample	Average Age
1779	3	31
1780	4	22
1781	8	27
1782	26	26
1783	27	25
1784	1	26
1785	0	-
1786	1	29
1787	6	33
1788	1	26
1789	5	30
1790	37	34
1791	3	27
1792	0	-
1793	31	29
1794	54	28
1795	50	28
1796	31	26
1797	29	28



1798	29	26
1799	19	28
1800	22	29
1801	29	27
1802	64	29
1803	7	25
1804	25	26
1805	13	26
1806	52	26
1807	29	28
1808	14	28
1809	14	29
1810	12	31
1811	7	30
1812	4	29
1813	1	33
1814	3	27

(Source. Calculated from dates in Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers*).

This table shows us that on the whole there seems to have been some consistency about the way that promotions occurred over the years between 1779 and 1814. It suggests in fact that, on average, an officer became a Post Captain between the ages of 25 - 30 years. The range of averages suggests that the usual age was 28 or 29, as these are the ages that occur where the sample number is highest. A more accurate way of viewing the estimated age of the frigate Captains at time of posting, is through a scatter chart:-

**Table 3.6. Age Of Frigate Captains At Time Of posting - II.**<sup>158</sup>

	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31-35	36-40	Over 40
1779				1								1	
1780		3	1										
1781		1	2	1			1				1	1	
1782	1	2	3	8	1	2			3		2	1	1
1783	1	3	2	7	4	3	2			1	2	1	
1784						1							
1785													
1786									1				
1787									1		4	1	
1788						1							
1789								1	1		3		
1790					1	1	1	3	2	3	20		4
1791			1						1	1			
1792													
1793			7	2	3	1			1	3	9	5	
1794	3	1	6	9	4	1	1	1			23	4	

1795	3	5	2	10	4	2	1				15	8	
1796	1	2	3	1	11	7					5		
1797	2	2	3	3	1	4	1				7	6	
1798	4	2	1	5	6		4	3			1	2	
1799	2	1	1	2	1	1		3	9	1		4	
1800			1		2	2	2	1	5	3	2	4	
1801		2	2	1	4	5	4	12		5	2	1	2
1802	1		2	4	4	9	7	2	1	2	14	6	2
1803		2	1			1			1				
1804		1	5	6		2	4	2	3	2	1		1
1805			1	4	1		2				3		
1806	5	4	3	4	3	9	3		5	2	9	1	1
1807	1	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	5	2	2
1808			2		2	1	1			2	4	1	
1809			3	1	1		1	1			4	2	
1810					2			1		1	6		1
1811								1	3		2	1	
1812					1		1			1		1	
1813											1		
1814						1		1	1				
	24	34	55	68	58	56	38	33	39	29	145	53	14
%	4	5	9	11	9	9	6	5	6	4	22	8	2

Presented in this manner, the statistics become much more useful, because the spread of age on posting is immediately visible. In 1782 and 1783, for example there would seem to have been a comparatively high number of postings of twenty-four year old commanders, but when averaged out over all of those posted in each of those years, the average age was 26 and 25 respectively. Averages, therefore, need to be treated with considerable caution. This being the case, it can be seen that at the outbreak of war in 1793 a significant number of Post Captains were at least ten years beyond the age at which men were normally promoted to active command. If not unfit, they may have constituted, as it were, 'old blood'.

What is of particular interest however is the extreme ends of the spectrum. Because those who seem to have been posted at a young age were generally, at the same time, those posted the quickest. These will be looked at in some detail shortly. Of the older Captains, it is worth noting that the most significant clusters of promotion of older Commanders occurred at times of crisis. In 1790, at the time of the Spanish Armament, 24 Captains were posted who were over the age of 31, i.e. the majority of the Captains in the sample posted during that year (68%). As has been previously noted, the rate of promotion slowed markedly from the end of the American Revolutionary War, and the numbers of Midshipmen passing during the intervening peace fell

correspondingly. The table suggests therefore that when the Navy needed to mobilise its ships out of ordinary in 1790 the majority of the officer corps available for posting were somewhat older than usual. But it also shows that when need arose, one of the first groups to whom it turned were the officers who had been passed-over for posting in 1783. If, for example, we take the 20 older officers posted in 1790 and who were between the age of 31-35, we can track backwards over the years to 1782/3 when eight and seven officers of the same 'generation' were posted respectively. The twenty men posted in 1790 were, in a sense, the forgotten generation of Post Captains of the post-war period. The other factor that must have a bearing is the inability of many midshipmen or junior officers to gain sufficient sea-time during the peace preceding 1790 to reinforce their career ambitions.

With the outbreak of war against Revolutionary France a similar situation is evident. For as the Navy swung into operation to bring ships out of Ordinary once again during 1794 and 1795, there was a heavy concentration of posting of older commanders. Twenty Seven over the age of 30 in 1794 ( 77% of those posted); and 23 in 1795 ( 44%). The posting of older commanders then gradually declines until 1802 when, the Peace of Amiens collapsing, 22 of that age group were posted (40%). (Hostilities did not just benefit older officers: in September-November, 1790, 34 Lieutenants were promoted to Commander. Of these one, the Hon. Henry Curzon, was posted in 1790, 3 were posted in 1791, none in 1792, 20 in 1793, 8 in 1794 and one in 1795).

The age of some of these older Captains is largely confirmed by checking the dates at which they passed their Lieutenants examinations. Of those posted in 1794 Robert Barton, for example, passed in June, 1776; Charles Paterson in February, 1777 and Charles V. Penrose in August, 1779. Of those posted in 1795, George Burlton passed in August, 1777; W.G. Lobb in December, 1777, and Henry Lidgburd Ball in August, 1778. Given that most of these officers should have been about twenty years of age at that time, it can be seen that they were significantly older than average when they were finally posted.

It is also worth reflecting for a moment on those older officers who were posted in 1802. Philip Somerville for example, who was one of the longest serving frigate Captains of the period, died at the age of 54 in December, 1817.<sup>159</sup> He was therefore born in 1763 and aged 39 when posted. James C. Crawford was born in 1760 and was therefore 42 years of age when posted. Crawford

actually didn't enter the Royal Navy until he was 17 years of age, having served for several years in the Merchant Service.<sup>160</sup>

### The Younger Post Captain.

The above table also suggests that a number of officers reached Post Rank at a significantly younger age or that they passed through the ranks with unusual speed. The two were not synonymous for it was not unheard of for an officer to enter the navy at a slightly later age and reach Post Rank in a comparatively short time; an example of this will follow. A review of the names of some of the officers highlighted by the table quickly reveals the causes of much of the rapid promotion.

Of those officers posted in 1794 three appear to have been promoted with speed. They were **George Cockburn, Robert Gambier Middleton and the Hon. Charles Elphinstone Fleeming**. Cockburn, like so many officers was fortunate in that he had become the favourite of the Commander-in Chief of a foreign station. In this case the station was the Mediterranean and the Admiral was Lord Hood. As soon as Hood was able to identify a vacant frigate command he ordered Cockburn into it with a temporary commission<sup>161</sup> and then wrote to the Admiralty telling them what he had done and requesting their formal confirmation of Cockburn's new rank. This confirmation was forthcoming,<sup>162</sup> and Cockburn became a Post Captain at the age of twenty-one. Cockburn also attracted the attention of Nelson, but this was perhaps of less importance (other than adding to his personal "interest").

Robert Gambier Middleton was the nephew of Sir Charles Middleton who, in 1794, also happened to be a Lord of the Admiralty. Like Cockburn, Middleton was serving in the Mediterranean at the time and there can have been little doubt that confirmation would be forthcoming in this case. The Hon. Charles Elphinstone Fleeming was the son of Baron Elphinstone, a Scottish peer<sup>163</sup>; his mother was a granddaughter of the Earl of Bute and Charles also seems to have been a nephew of Viscount Keith.<sup>164</sup>

Of those officers posted quickly in 1795, **The Hon. Henry Hotham** appears to have been just 18 years of age when posted<sup>165</sup> (Both Henry Hotham and **William Hotham** his cousin, were posted in the Mediterranean while Admiral Hotham, Henry's father, was Commander-in-Chief of that

station). **David Milne**, on the other hand was 32 years of age when he was posted. Born in 1763, he didn't actually enter the navy until he was sixteen years old, somewhat later than usual. Although he saw much active service as a Midshipman during the American War he lacked any real interest and opted for service with the East India Company until 1793. After the outbreak of war his abilities were quickly recognised by Sir John Jervis following the action between HMS Blanche and the French frigate La Pique, and he was promoted from Lieutenant in January, 1794, to Post Captain in October, 1795. **James Bowen (1)** clearly made rapid progress because of ability, being promoted from Lieutenant in June, 1794, to Post Captain in September, 1795.<sup>166</sup>

Both of the youngest Captains posted in 1797 were well connected with the peerage. **The Hon Sir Charles Paget** was the younger brother of the Earl of Uxbridge and **Sir William Hall Gage** was almost certainly related to Baron Gage of Castlebar. There is more certainty surrounding the rapid promotions of 1798. **Sir Henry Heathcote** was 21 years of age when posted and was the son of **Sir William Heathcote, Bart, MP for Hampshire**<sup>167</sup>. **The Hon Charles Herbert Pierrepont** was the son of Earl Manvers and was possibly 20 years of age when posted. **The Hon Thomas Bladen Capel** was the youngest son of the Earl of Essex, and was 22 years old when posted.<sup>168</sup> The remaining officer posted at some rapidity in 1798 was **Josiah Nisbet**.<sup>169</sup> The fact that he was Nelson's step-son was, of course, material in his quick promotion, however that relationship was also partly responsible for the subsequent destruction of his career.<sup>170</sup>

These preceding examples should suffice to illustrate the point that rapid promotion was largely dependant on influential connections. It is worth noting that some of the fast movers during the Napoleonic War also happened to share the surname of Flag Officers, e.g. **Augustus Leveson Gower** 1802, **James Richard Dacres (2)**, the **Hon Archibald Cochrane**, **Sir Thomas John Cochrane**, **Sir George Francis Seymour** in 1806, and **Edward T. Troubridge** in 1807. Both Seymour and Troubridge were promoted quickly into frigates on the Mediterranean Station and East Indies Station respectively.<sup>171</sup>

### Age and length of frigate command.

As far as can be ascertained, age in itself was not a significant factor determining the length of an officer's career as a frigate Captain - although an officer who was clearly unfit would simply not have been given a frigate. However, chronologically the year in which an officer was posted may

well have been an important factor and not simply because a later Posting meant fewer years of the war remaining. It would appear that the Admiralty operated a policy whereby Captains of certain seniority were regarded as no longer eligible for frigate command - but this was only applied to Captains of between 10-12 years standing. (See Chapter 5). This in turn could determine the maximum age of a frigate Captain.

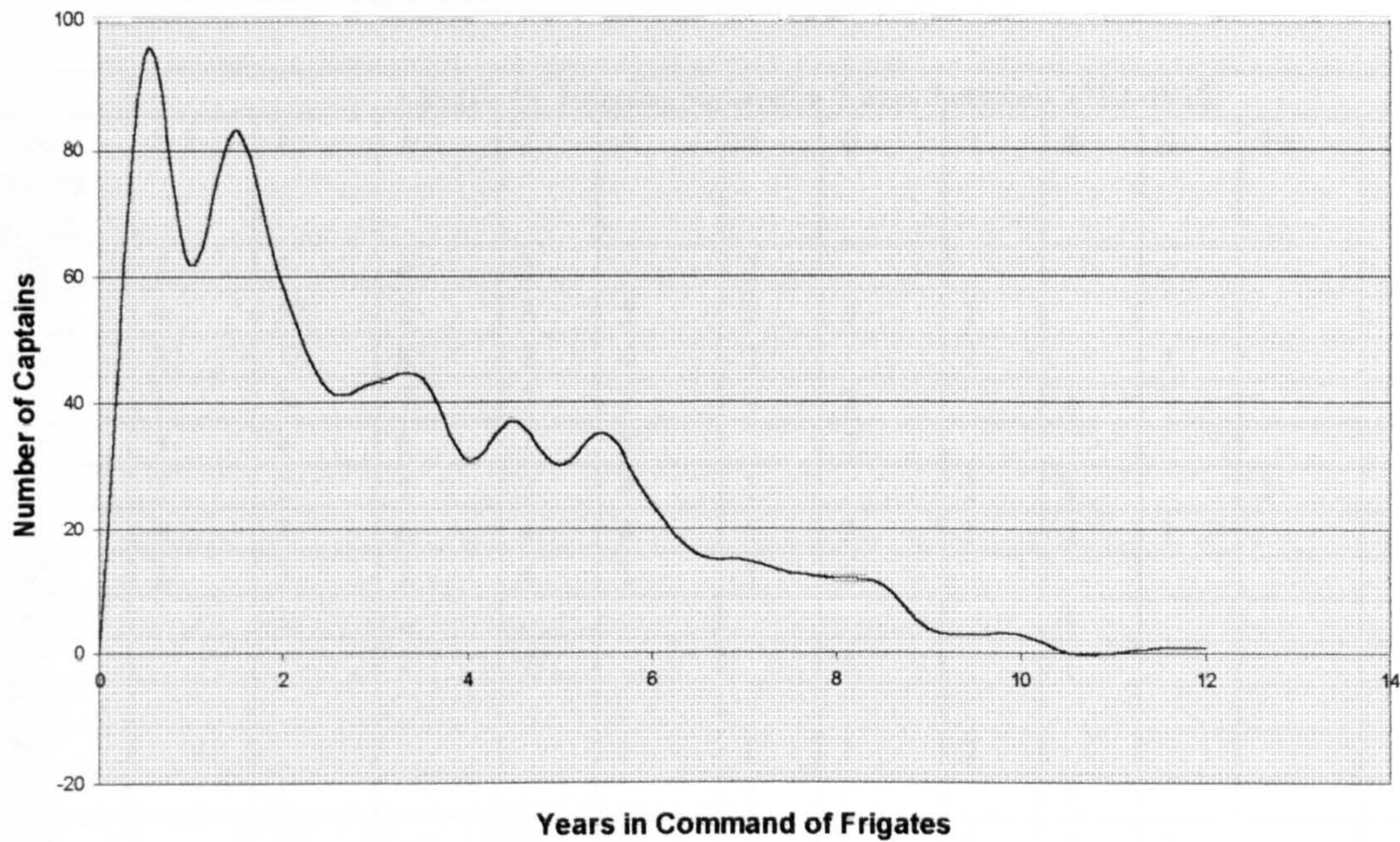
One of the main exercises in this research has been to consider the length of time that a frigate Captain spent in command of that type of ship and one of the questions that will be answered in due course relates to the factors that influenced the term of command. As stated at the outset of this chapter, the basic data from the research has been taken from the Admiralty List Books.<sup>172</sup> From these books the dates of command for each officer for each frigate have been recorded and the length of time calculated. For example:-

Captain Robert Barton,<sup>173</sup> who was posted in April, 1794 was appointed to the 9 Pounder frigate Lapwing in August of the same year and continued in command until April, 1798. A period of 3 years and 9 months. He was then immediately given the 12-pounder frigate Concorde which he commanded from May, 1798 until April, 1800. A further period of two years. His total frigate command period therefore was 5 years and 9 months, or 5.75 years. This period will be referred to henceforth in this thesis as "Frigate Service".

Using the same method of calculation, the length of frigate service of every Captain can be calculated.<sup>174</sup> At the shortest, there are command periods recorded of a single month where, in almost every case, the command was an acting/temporary appointment or was probably immediately altered by the Admiralty or Commander in Chief. (One also cannot rule out the possibility of an error by the Admiralty Clerk making the entry). As was previously noted, some of the List Book entries indicate the poor quality of communication between Commanders-in-Chief of distant stations and the Admiralty; where it has been possible to adjust the data using other sources, this has been done.

At the highest end of the scale, the maximum length of frigate service would seem to have been that of 11 Years and 9 months, being the period served by Philip Somerville, although his total was only a few months more than that of Sir Edward W.C.R. Owen.

**Figure 3.7. Frigate Captains - Total Length of Frigate Service 1793-1815.**



(Source: Calculated from data drawn from *Admiralty List Books* and *Pitcairn Jones List of Commissioned Officers*).

Overall, the average total frigate service was approximately three years and six months however, as can be seen from this chart, only a small minority actually served for around the average length of command. The variation in total service is enormous and at a later point closer examination of the longer serving frigate commanders will be considered, but at this stage it is the relationship between an officer's age and length of frigate service which needs to be examined.

This can be done in the first instance by using the same formula as previously, that is, by assuming that the majority of officers were approximately twenty years old at the time they passed for Lieutenant. As the focus here is the frigate service during the Great Wars it is possible to compare the length of service for all of those Post Captains who passed for Lieutenant during one year, with those passing in the previous or subsequent year.

**Table 3.8. Total Frigate Service (Between 1793-1815) Of Post Captains (In Full Years) By Year Commissioned As Lieutenant.**

Year Passed for Lt.	Length of Frigate Service in Years between 1793-1815.											
	> 1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1776	3	5	4	1		2						
1777	4	12	2	3	5	2	3	1				
1778	11	13	8	2	4	2	1	2		1		
1779	1	3	7	3	2	1	2		1			
1780	3	4	6	1	5		3					
1781	3	2	2	3	4	1		1	1		1	
1782	5	3	6	4	4	4	2	1	2	1		1
1783	2	3	3	4	1	3	2					
1784		2	2						1			
1785			2	1			1		1			
1786												
1787					1	1	1	2				
1788		1				1	1		1			
1789		1		2	6	1	3	1	2	1		
1790	13	12	14	13	13	11	7	1	2		1	
1791	4	1		2		2		2				
1792						1	1					
1793	8	9	9	8	5	5	2	1	3			1
1794	8	7	5	6	2	9	1	2	1			
1795	5	4	3	3	6	1	2	1	2			
1796	6	6	3	3		2	3		2			
1797	4	8		2	2	2	2	2	3			
1798	1	4	2	1	2			1			1	
1799	5	3	3	2		1		3				
1800	4	5	4	1	2					1		
1801	4	3	4	2	1	1	1		1			
1802	4	2	5		2	1						
1803	2	1				2						
1804	3	6	2	2	1	1						
1805	5	1	1	2	1	1		1				
1806		1		1								
1807	1											
1808	1											

(Source: Calculated from data drawn from *Admiralty List Books* and *Pitcairn Jones List of Commissioned Officers*).

The first thing to note about this table is that it shows fairly quickly that frigate service was not necessarily the province of younger men. Some of the longer serving frigate Captains were



already between the ages of 31-35 years when war broke out in 1793. Nine individuals stand out as long serving frigate Captains.<sup>175</sup>

Additionally, long service was not restricted to junior Captains but was also applicable to some of the more senior Captains.<sup>176</sup> Since some of the more senior Captains were given long frigate service any assumption that frigate service was merely an induction for more “serious” command, has to be questioned. Nevertheless there is evidence that a time limit was placed on this service. Whilst it is possible to find a degree of correlation between age/seniority and length of frigate service, the simple fact is that between officers posted in the same year, and Post Captains of similar age, there was wide variation in the length of frigate command which they experienced. Neither age nor seniority therefore were the dominant factors in determining the length of frigate command. One of the questions that it is hoped will be answered during the course of this thesis asks what were the determining factors for length of frigate command.

**Table 3.9. Total Frigate Service by Year posted.**

Year posted.	>1yr	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1779	2	1										
1780	1	3										
1781	2	3	2		1							
1782	7	8	5		2	2	2					
1783	3	8	10	3	2	1	1					
1784		1			1							
1785												
1786		1										
1787	3	2	1									
1788					1							
1789		3	1					1				
1790	8	10	5	4	3	3	2		2			
1791			1		1			1				
1792												
1793	2		4	3	1	6	10	2	3			
1794	5	9	6	7	7	5	5	4	3	2		
1795	5	7	3	4	13	9	5	1	3	1	1	
1796	7	6	6	2	5	2	2	1				
1797	5	1	6	6	3	5	2				1	
1798	2	4	10	5	1	3	1		2			1
1799	1	5	2	4	5				1		1	
1800		4	2	3	6	2	2		3			
1801	2	3	2	5	3	4	3	2	4			
1802	10	15	8	10	4	7	2	6	1			1
1803		1		2	1	1	2					

1804	4	6	4	3	2	3		2	1	1		
1805	4	3		1	4		1					
1806	14	12	10	6	3	6						
1807	9	9	5	3	2	1						
1808	3	3	2	3	1	1		1				
1809	5	5	2	2								
1810	10	2										
1811	4	1	2									
1812	3	1										
1813	1											
1814	3											

(Source: Calculated from data drawn from *Admiralty List Books* and Pitcairn Jones *List of Commissioned Officers*).

Approximately 120 Post Captains ( 18% of the total ) commanded a frigate for a period of less than 12 months. There is possibly a case for disregarding all of these as in many cases information regarding their careers as frigate Captains is almost irretrievable. Those who lived long enough to be included by John Marshall in his *Royal Naval Biography*, may well have remembered to mention their temporary posting to a frigate, but it is more than likely that such a brief command would have been too insignificant or uneventful to have been worth noting. For many of these officers, their experience in a frigate would have been of two or three month's duration at the most. In fact some forty Captains spent approximately this period of time commanding a frigate, whilst a further sixty commanded for between three and six months only.

It would be erroneous to assume from this that those officers who commanded a frigate for a temporary period only, were particularly deficient. In fact of those Post Captains who commanded a frigate for less than twelve months aggregate, approximately 60% had often substantial commands in other rated ships during their career. Approximately 16% would appear to have had no other command after their brief spell in a frigate, which suggests that they were raised to Post Captain and given a few months in a frigate, before being effectively superannuated. Approximately 12.5% may have commanded other ships briefly before frigate command and then none thereafter, and at least 7% were promoted to frigate command close to the end of the war and thus their career was curtailed. At least two officers were drowned and three killed in action which brought a literal end to their career potential; and one was court martialled and dismissed from the service.

Since few of these officers will feature at a later point in this thesis it is worth considering the careers of a random sample of these officers to identify the reasons why their frigate career was so brief.

Officers with brief frigate service.

**Edward Codrington**<sup>177</sup> was posted in April, 1795, at the age of 25 years. He was the grandson of a baronet after whom he was named<sup>178</sup> After entering the navy he attracted the patronage of Lord Howe, and it was probably for this reason that he passed his Lieutenant's examination and was promoted to Post Captain in less than two years. His first Post command was the Babet 22, which he was given quickly after Posting. In 1796 he commanded the 12-pounder frigate Druid off the coast of Portugal for approximately six months<sup>179</sup> until she was paid off.<sup>180</sup> He then seems to have been unemployed for a number of years. This might have been the result of his patron's (i.e. Lord Howe's) death on 5th August, 1799. In the summer of 1804 he was offered the command of the Argo 44, but turning this down he was given instead the Orion 74 which he appears to have accepted with some reluctance and commanded at Trafalgar.<sup>181</sup> In 1809 he commanded the Blake another 74, spending several years serving on the coast of Spain and reached Flag Rank in 1814. Since Codrington did not marry until some time after the paying-off of the Druid, it is possible that his period of leisure was made more attractive by a reasonable inheritance and these may have been key factors influencing the length of his frigate service.

**Sir Isaac Coffin.** Coffin was posted in June, 1782, and was 34 years of age when war broke out in 1793. His command of frigates, indeed of any ship, during the Great Wars was brief mainly because the focus of his sea-going career dates before the period in question. The son of a Boston (Mass) customs officer, Coffin entered under the patronage of Rear-Admiral Montagu and then won the support of Sir Samuel Hood (later Lord Hood), under whom he served as a volunteer<sup>182</sup> in the West Indies. posted to a 74, he immediately fell foul of Admiral Rodney and was court martialled. As a result of this he was sent home in the Hydra 20 and paid off. Two years later he was given the Thisbe frigate and commanded her for a year before again being Court Martialled, this time for signing a false muster. He was dismissed and then struck off the list before being reinstated after a sensational court case. In 1790, Coffin was once again given a frigate, this time the Alligator 28 and largely at the instigation of Lord Hood. Confirmation of

this continuing patronage comes unequivocally from the memoirs of Sir William Hotham, who recorded:

*"....At the close of the year 1790 I was appointed Second Lieutenant of the 'Alligator', a 28-gun frigate commanded by Captain Coffin, then under orders for the Halifax station. The tide of prejudice, however, ran so much against this commander that, young as I was, and he not bearing the character that promised much allowance for age or inexperience, I was very much alarmed at the prospect and got a month's leave of absence, principally for the purpose of having, if it were possible, this commission cancelled. My friend on this (as on all other occasions) was Lord Hood<sup>183</sup>, who was then on the board, and to whom I communicated my apprehensions, begging his furtherance of the object I solicited. His reply to me was decisive 'I am much inclined to serve you,' he told me, 'but if you take my advice you will, after your leave has expired, join the 'Alligator'....."<sup>184</sup>*

Sadly for Coffin, once again his command was to be relatively short-lived. The frigate being anchored at the Nore during stormy conditions, Coffin leapt bravely over the side to save a drowning seaman. Although the rescue was successful, Coffin was injured in the process. Following the paying-off of the Alligator, Coffin travelled extensively in Europe until May, 1793, when he was appointed to the 18-pounder frigate Melampus. In March of the following year, however, he was injured yet again and was forced to invalid himself out of active sea service. He was given a position as Regulating Captain, and Commissioner on several stations until he became both Rear Admiral and a Baronet in 1804.

It would seem that his early career as a frigate Captain was highly successful for his Biographer records that *"...The judicious investment of his pay and prize money by one of his cousins made him rich...."*<sup>185</sup> In his will he left endowments to found several nautical schools in America. The two salient points for the purposes of this study are that a). Coffin's brief frigate service during the war was the result of a combination of age, seniority and infirmity, and b). Coffin had pre-war success in taking prizes which may have eased any financial pressures upon him after 1794.

**Edmund Crawley's** career was less distinguished, either by success or notoriety. He was among the older and possibly senior Post Captains by the time that War broke out having passed his Lieutenants' examinations in March, 1778. He commanded a sloop on the American station during the American war and, as a Commander, a sloop in the Channel during the Spanish Armament. He was posted in November, 1790, but then placed on half-pay, not receiving his

first Post command until April, 1795, when he was given the Adventure, now reduced to a troopship. In October of the same year he was given the Lion 64 and sent to the West Indies; and an apparently brief command of the Valiant 74 on the North Sea station followed later, in 1797. Subsequently he was placed on half-pay once again until he reached flag rank in 1809.<sup>186</sup> Crawley's career is typical of an officer who lacked powerful interest and was born just too early for his star to rise during the Great Wars. The key here too, seems to have been age and lack of 'Interest'.

**Sir Francis Hartwell, Bart**, commanded the 18-pounder frigate Thetis for approximately eight months after the outbreak of war in 1793. Born the third son of the Lieutenant Governor of Greenwich Hospital in 1757, he commanded a cutter during the American War and captured what Marshall described as a "*very valuable French West Indiaman*"<sup>187</sup> Possibly as a result he was made Commander in January, 1779 and Post Captain before the year was out. According to Pitcairn-Jones' List, Hartwell seems to have commanded third rates during the intervening peace and was given the Thetis in 1792. He was therefore a very senior Post-Captain by the outbreak of war and, chronologically, would have become a flag officer by 1797. However, instead he became firstly Commissioner of the Victualling Board until 1796, then Superintendent at Sheerness. By 1814 when he decided to retire, he was Deputy Comptroller of the Navy Board. As has been previously noted, thirty-five years of age was not too old to command a frigate, but Hartwell's position in the upper echelons of the Navy List seems to have made it more unlikely that he would continue with active sea service. The fact that he was given successive administrative positions suggests that his strengths lay in other quarters.

**James Carpenter**, whose frigate command totalled approximately twelve months, was 33 years of age when War broke out. He had entered the navy under Captain John Jervis, (later of course St. Vincent) and had also served for a time on Rodney's flagship during the American war. He was clearly a protégé of Jervis's for, as a Lieutenant, he was appointed to Jervis's flagship in 1793, where, in the West Indies, Jervis promoted him to Commander of the Nautilus. When Martinique fell in March, 1794, the French 28-gun frigate Bien Venue<sup>188</sup> was captured and given to Carpenter who was posted for this purpose. He was moved rapidly to the Veteran 64 and then, in around December of the same year, was given the 12-pounder 32-gun frigate Alarm. Some eight months later he commanded the Quebec, a frigate of similar armament to the Alarm, and which he probably brought back to decommission. It is apparent that much of Carpenter's service

was in the West Indies, for in 1800 he was invalided home from there, having had command of the Leviathan 74 in which he had been Sir John Duckworth's Flag Captain and had captured some valuable prizes.

Unfortunately on his voyage home, Carpenter was captured by the French and sent as a prisoner of war, to Spain. He was later released after the direct intervention of St. Vincent. Between 1803 - 1810 he was placed in command of a section of Sea Fencibles, a role which was not unusually given to officers who were suffering from some lapse in health. In 1811, having recovered, he became Duckworth's Flag Captain once again, this time in the Antelope 50, and a year before he reached flag rank. According to Marshall<sup>189</sup> Carpenter saw no further service. Obviously there are gaps in Carpenter's career that are difficult to explain. He was in active service in the West Indies almost continually until the end of 1795, and this may have affected his health. This would account for the apparent gap between the end of 1795 and 1799.<sup>190</sup>

From the examples considered thus far the suggestion must be that Seniority on the List played a part in the rate of a ship which might be made available to a Post Captain. However, as has already been shown, a degree of Seniority did not rule out significant periods of frigate command. It is also probable that many of the older and more senior Post Captains had already served for some time in frigates before 1793 and therefore do not fall favourably within the statistical scope of this research. Coffin for example only commanded frigates for about nine months after 1793, yet he had significant pre-war frigate service. Nevertheless virtually no examples have been found of Captains who were near the very top of the Navy List at the time they were commanding a frigate. Some officers quite clearly had skills and abilities which made them much more valuable in other roles. For example, Hartwell among the above and, in the previous chapter, it was evident that Sir William Domett was recognised as a valuable fleet administrator.

### Number of frigates commanded.

Taking all of those Captains who served in frigates for longer than three months (i.e. 0.25 of a year) it is found that the average Captain commanded two frigates during a frigate service totalling just over three years. Throughout his career as a Post Captain, (including those posted

before 1793) he might expect to command four ships altogether. The Following table shows the number of Captains by both the number of frigates commanded and the length of their service. As should by now be expected there is a heavy concentration of officers commanding just one frigate for a period not exceeding two years and three months. Those with an aggregate frigate service of more than three years were more likely to have served in two frigates; and after six years it was more likely that a Captain would serve in three frigates.

Approximately 49% of frigate Captains commanded just one frigate. Initially it might be tempting to pass over these people, however, given that there does appear to have been a trend for Captains to command more frigates the longer their frigate service, those officers who commanded just one ship for extended periods, become much more interesting. One then has to ask what it was about the Captain and/or the ship, that kept them together so long? Were they simply given undesirable commands and left there to atrophy, or were they actually kept there as a recognition of something else? Likewise it would be valuable to consider those longer serving officers who commanded two ships during a frigate service that was significantly longer than the average of three years.<sup>191</sup>

**Table 3.10. Number Of Post Captains By Frigates Commanded And According To Length Of Frigate Service.**

	Number of Frigates Commanded.					
	1	2	3	4	5	<5
Frigate Service in Years						
0.25	24	1				
0.50	50	5	2			
0.75	25	5				
1.00	19	11	1			
1.25	26	8	1			
1.50	33	8	2	1	1	
1.75	15	5	3			
2.00	28	5		1		
2.25	15	9	2	1		
2.50	6	8				
2.75	6	12	4			
3.00	10	5	6			
3.25	5	13	3	2		
3.50	6	8	5		1	
3.75	4	5	2			
4.00	8	5	4	1		
4.25	2	1	4	1	1	

4.50	4	12	5	3	1	
4.75	3	8	4			
5.00	1	5	5			
5.25	4	5	1	3	1	
5.50	3	4	7	2	3	
5.75		6	2	2	1	
6.00	3	4	3	3		
6.25	1	2	3	1		
6.50	1	2	3	3		
6.75	1	7	1		1	
7.00	1	1	3			
7.25	1	3		2	1	
7.50			4	1		
7.75		2	1	1		
8.00		4	3	1		
8.25		1	4			
8.50		3	2	1		
<8.50	1	2	4	5	1	

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books* and Pitcairn Jones *List Of Commissioned Officers*).

One further aspect should be highlighted before moving on. Twenty per cent of frigate Captains were given a frigate either immediately on Posting or within a few months. Their aggregate frigate service varies from between 6 months and 11 years 9 months. However on average their frigate service is longer than the average of the whole-frigate Captain list. Captains posted quickly into frigates had a frigate service of on average 3.9 years as against 3.1 years; and whilst they, in common with all of the other frigate Captains, commanded an average of two frigates, their wider careers tended to include the command of more ships. In other words, those officers posted directly into a frigate, served in frigates longer and commanded more ships generally.

### Social Background.

One cannot move on from a general discussion about the frigate Captains without some consideration being given to their social background. For a more detailed analysis of the social status of naval officers' and their parents, the reader is directed to Michael Lewis's study in *A Social History of the Navy: 1793-1815*.<sup>192</sup> Lewis calculated that the social background or class of the parents of naval officers in his study, broke down as follows:<sup>193</sup>

Titled (Peers/Baronets)	12.0%
Gentry	27.4%



Public Office	5.7%
MP	1.0%
Navy	24.1
Army	7.3%
Church	8.7%
Medicine	2.8%
Others	11.0% <sup>194</sup>

Within the frigate sample it has been possible to identify the parental-social background of 148 frigate Captains. These are as follows:

Titled Family	43.1%
Gentry	9.8%
Public Office	10.5%
MP	3.9%
Navy	17%
Army	5.2%
Church	4.6%
Medicine	2.6%
Other	3.3%

To a large degree the comparison is misleading, because Lewis was considering a much larger group over a much larger period than that for the frigate Captains. What can be observed however, is that Lewis's three most significant groups were The Gentry, Naval Families and then the titled families. Within the frigate sample the most significant groups are the Titled families, Naval families and those holding public office. It should also be noted that the percentage of sons of Government Ministers and M.P.'s is larger in the frigate sample. This would seem to suggest that within the frigate Captain sample there were a higher number of fathers in prominent positions. Furthermore it is possible to mark a change during the course of the war by separating parental background according to the period in which an officer was posted.

**Table 3.11. Social Background Of Frigate Captain Sample (In Percentages) By Date Of Posting.**

<b>Background</b>	<b>pre-1793</b>	<b>1793-1800</b>	<b>1801-1814</b>
Titled	33	34	61
Gentry	10	11	8
Public Office	6	17	4
MP	6	4	2
Navy	30	11	17
Army	3	7	4
Church	6	6	2
Medicine	0	6	0
Other	3	4	2

(Source: John Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*).

During the Revolutionary war, it can be seen that members of the Gentry and those holding public office (e.g. Colonial Service or Customs Officers) were in a position to wield a strong amount of interest on behalf of their sons. The heavy pre-dominance of the sons of titled families cannot be overlooked in this table. This heavy weighting is partly imbalanced because of the fact that it is simply easier to identify to sons of titled families than many others; however, that factor is true across all three periods, so that the increase in aristocratic frigate Captains from 1800 is unquestionable. This supports the view that from the beginning of the 19th century there was a growing sense of class consciousness in the navy.<sup>195</sup> The position of naval families is also interesting. The high presence of officers' sons at the beginning of the war is probably explained by the fact that those officers probably found it much easier than others to obtain appointment to a ship, especially during the long peace before 1793. The literal growth in the number of officers from 1790 onwards meant statistically that there was more likelihood of a growth in the sons of naval officers!

Another factor which can be considered is that of the popularity of the Navy as a career among the sons of the peerage. For this analysis 48 families with at least one son in the frigate sample were checked, to ascertain the profession of sons. It may be thought that because of the practice of primogeniture, eldest sons would not need to choose a career, least of all one where there was hardship or danger. However, of the 48 families checked, ten had eldest surviving sons in the Royal Navy. Seven of these were the sons (or in one case nephew) of Naval Officers, and six of them also had a younger son in the Navy. Where a career was found to be necessary or chosen, the Royal Navy was much more popular than either the army (4 elder sons) or Public Office (1 elder son). Nevertheless 69% of eldest sons do not seem to have entered any profession. This

pattern continues with second sons where, out of 48, twenty-one entered the navy, nine the army and two the Church. In fact for virtually all families the navy seems to have been the single most popular profession.

**Table 3.12. Profession Of Sons Of Sample Group Of Titled Families.**

Name	eldest	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Date Lt	Father RN?
De Courcy	Army		RN					20/11/1776	No
Finch			RN	Army	Church	RN		30/08/1777	No
Northesk		RN	Army					07/12/1777	Yes
Saumarez	RN		RN	Army	Surgeon	PO		25/01/1778	No
Ranelagh	RN	Army		Army	Army	RN		21/01/1782	No
Forbes		RN		RN				28/06/1782	No
Curzon		Army	RN	Church	RN			01/02/1783	No
Gardener	RN	RN	Army					12/01/1784	Yes
Paulet		RN						12/03/1789	No
Legge		RN		RN	Church	Church		03/08/1789	No
Garlies		RN	Army	Church		PO		08/08/1789	No
Fitzroy		Army	RN	RN	Church			17/03/1790	No
Byng	RN							01/11/1790	Yes
Murray		Army	RN	EICo				03/11/1790	No
O'Bryen		RN	RN	Army	Army			19/11/1790	No
Boyle		Army	RN					22/11/1790	No
Herbert		RN	Church	Church	Law			05/04/1793	No
Elphinstone	Army	RN	PO	PO				22/04/1793	No
Colville	RN	Army						29/07/1793	Yes
Wodehouse		RN	Church	Church				06/01/1794	No
Hotham	Army	Church	RN					06/06/1794	Yes
Kerr			RN	Army				01/11/1794	No
Maitland		RN	Army					04/03/1795	No
Cochrane T.	RN							27/05/1796	Yes
King			RN	Army	Church	PO	RN	16/06/1796	No
Aylmer	Army		RN					17/12/1796	No
Irby		RN	Church	Army	Church	Army	RN	06/01/1797	No
Dundas	RN	Army		Church	RN	Army		23/03/1797	Yes
Falkland		RN						30/03/1797	No
Mackay			Army	RN				27/03/1798	No
Cochrane A.		Army	PO	Church	EICo	RN		19/05/1798	No
Pleydell-		RN						16/02/1799	No
Bennett			RN					02/08/1799	No
Rodney		RN	PO	RN				29/08/1799	Yes
Elliott	PO	RN						12/08/1800	No
Stuart			Army	RN	RN	PO		21/03/1801	No
Cathcart	RN	Army						02/09/1801	No
Cadogan		Church	RN	EICo	Army	Army	RN	12/04/1802	No
Duncan		RN						21/04/1803	Yes
Pakenham		Army	Army	RN	Church			29/06/1803	No
Powlett		RN	Army					03/04/1804	No
Percy		PO	Church	RN	Army	RN	Army	30/04/1804	No
Gordon		RN	Army	Army	PO	RN		02/07/1804	No
Waldegrave	RN	RN						20/07/1804	Yes
Proby	RN		RN					24/10/1804	Yes
Maude			Church	RN	Church	RN		29/03/1805	No
Townshend			Church		RN			31/01/1806	No
Peachey		RN	Church					05/01/1807	No

(Key: RN - Royal Navy; PO - Public Office; EICo - East India Company;) (Source: *Debrett's Peerage*. 1834.)

### Mortality among frigate Captains.

Accidental death was an accepted hazard of the seaman's life during the age of sail. Indeed, as Michael Lewis demonstrates,<sup>196</sup> the dangers of the sea resulted in greater loss of life than engagement with the enemy. Disease accounted for as many as 50% of the deaths of seamen during the period but accidents, either to the individual or to ships, accounted for a further 41%.<sup>197</sup> The frigate, at sea in all conditions and in all areas of the world, was more likely than a ship of the line to suffer from natural weather hazards. It is therefore not surprising that the reason why some frigate Captains served only briefly was simply that they did not long survive their appointment; for example, the list of short-term Captains would include the name of **John Morrison**, who was appointed to the 12-pounder frigate Circe in October or November, 1806. The Circe had been under the command of Captain **Jonas Rose** since early in 1805, and had been on the Leeward Island Station for approximately one year. Morrison's career had been relatively uneventful although as Commander he had been involved in Abercromby's expedition to Egypt in 1801 when he had commanded the Thisbe frigate, probably reduced to a troopship.<sup>198</sup> On that occasion he failed to attract the attention of a senior officer and he continued as a Commander until he was finally posted in May, 1806. (He had passed for Lieutenant over fifteen years earlier!). His first Post command was as Acting Captain of the Northumberland 74. He was then given the Heureux 22 an ex-French privateer mounting 12-pounder guns; and it was whilst commanding this ship that he was appointed to the Circe. If the news reached him of his appointment to the larger Circe, Morrison must have been delighted for it had taken a long time for him to become a Captain of a frigate. Now he had been given the two-year old Circe which, whilst she had a reputation for being rather crank, was thought to be good and fast in manoeuvres<sup>199</sup>. Sometime in the later part of 1806 Morrison set sail in the Hereux to join his new command. Sadly, somewhere between Halifax and the Leeward Islands, the Hereux disappeared without trace. His career as a frigate Captain had quite literally sunk before it had even started.

Both **George William Augustus Courteney** and **John Eveleigh** commanded a frigate for less than a year before being killed in action. Just as the role of the frigate exposed it to frequently hazardous weather conditions, so too its role rendered it much more likely than, say a 74-gun ship, to come into contact with the enemy.

In the case of the vast majority of officers who served as Captains of frigates it has been possible to find the date of their death. Out of 624 such officers 155 (25%) died or were killed during the course of the conflict. For some of these, death came after their period in command of a frigate, but for 74 officers, (48% of those in the frigate sample who died during the years 1793-1815), death coincided with their command. Twelve officers were killed during some form of action whilst in command of a frigate, starting with **G.W.A. Courtenay** of HMS Boston, killed in action against the French frigate Embuscade in 1793<sup>200</sup>. But only eight<sup>201</sup> of these were during frigate engagements as such. **Edward Riou** for example was commanding the frigate squadron at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801 when he was killed by a shot from the Danish batteries. **Conway Shipley** was killed during a disastrous cutting out expedition in the Tagus in 1808;<sup>202</sup> the fact that he was the only officer in the sample found who had died in the course of this type of activity illustrates how rare it was for Captains to actually lead such expeditions themselves. Notwithstanding, **Richard Bowen**, of the Terpsichore was killed whilst leading a landing against Tenerife in 1797 and, in a less well known example, **Peter Parker** of the Menelaus was killed whilst leading a combined force of seamen and soldiers during an attack up the Chesapeake in 1814.<sup>203</sup>

Twenty-six Captains died whilst in command of their frigates in either the East Indies or the West Indies, including **Lord William Stuart**, who had just relinquished command of his frigate and died on the passage back to England from the West Indies. To this should be added **Philip Beaver** who died as a result of a longer term debility he is thought to have contracted in Batavia; Beaver was commanding the Nisus at the time of his death. It cannot be ascertained whether all of these died from some form of fever, but given the reputation of the stations involved, this would seem to have been the most likely cause of death. If so, then fever accounted for at least 36% of the deaths of active frigate commanders. Other illnesses are also occasionally encountered. **W.H. Dillon** tells us the Captain **Thomas Twysden** of the Revolutionnaire suffered some form of seizure and was found dead in his cabin.<sup>204</sup>

The other common cause of death was that of drowning. Ten Captains died either through shipwreck or foundering, or as in the case of **Bridges Taylor** when his boat overturned attempting to land in heavy surf at Brindisi in the Adriatic.<sup>205</sup> A less common cause of death was that caused in duelling. In fact only **Hassard Stackpoole** of the Statira was killed whilst in command; though in 1809 the infamous **Lord Falkland** was also eventually killed in a duel eighteen months after

being removed from the Quebec for his unreliable and, some claimed, insane behaviour<sup>206</sup>. Fortunately, an even less common cause of death was that of mutiny; only **Henry Pigot** of the Hermione was killed by his crew. Finally, **Edward Pakenham** was killed when the Resistance blew up in the East Indies in 1798. Fire and explosion were not uncommon, but Pakenham was the only frigate Captain to have been killed in this way during the wars.

This accounts for 53 of the 74 deaths of active frigate Captains. A further 17 Captains were in active command of ships of the line at the time of their death and the remaining officers no longer appear to have been active at the time of their death or died after the war. A significant number of officers, of course, would have died from ‘common’ illnesses or natural ageing and this may account for the 21 unaccounted frigate Captains. It almost certainly explains why 80% of those who died whilst inactive, passed away after 1807. Many of these officers were significantly older officers, as in the case of **William Fairfax** who had entered the Navy in 1750; or there were those who had entered during the American War like **George Henry Towry** who the *Naval Chronicle* described as “*an old Post Captain*” who died of a ‘Quinzy’ in 1809.

It is difficult to check the ages of those Captains for whom no stated cause of death is given, but using the formula adopted elsewhere in this thesis by which it is assumed that each officer was 20 years of age when passing his Lieutenant’s examination it is possible to assign comparative ages for this group as follows:

**Table: 3.13. Showing Possible Age At Death Of Captains Not Dying Of Known Causes.**

Possible Age at Death	Number. (%)
Less than 30	2 (3%)
30-34	7 (11%)
35-39	3 (5%)
40-44	8 (12%)
45-49	11 (17%)
50-54	19 (29%)
55-59	10 (15%)
60+	5 (8%)

(Source: Calculated from dates given in Syrett & DiNardo. *List of Commissioned Sea Officers*).

The fact that 52% of those who died, probably did so over the age of fifty, suggests that natural ageing may have explained why many of these officers were no longer active in the navy at the time of death.

From the point of view of the study of frigate Captains, however, the most important finding is that the greatest danger for a frigate Captain lay in disease upon the West Indies or, to a lesser extent, the East Indies station.

## Chapter 4. The Typical Frigate Captain.

As outlined in the previous Chapter certain statistical details can help to identify the “average” or typical frigate Captain.

1. His promotion from Lieutenant to Post Captain is likely to have occurred in 10.5 years (if he was posted before 1790) or 5.9 years (if posted thereafter).
2. His age at Posting will be between 25 and 30 years, but more accurately 28 or 29.
3. His total frigate service will have been in the range of 3.5 years.
4. It is unlikely that he will serve in a frigate more than 8.5 years after becoming a Post Captain.
5. Finally, he will probably command two frigates during this period.

Using these statistics as indicators, the careers of the following officers most closely conform to the “typical”.

Name	Date posted	Approx. period of frigate service <sup>207</sup>
Edward Griffith (Colpoys)	21.5.1794	October, 1797 - May, 1802.
John Turnor	26.12.1796	January, 1797 - May, 1800. <sup>208</sup>
Graham Eden Hamond	30.11.1798	January, 1801 - May, 1806.
Thomas Livingstone	13.1.1800	August, 1804 - May, 1808.
Lord Cochrane	8.8.1801	February, 1805 - May, 1809. <sup>209</sup>
Christopher Cole	20.4.1802	May, 1802 - January, 1811.
John Wainwright (2)	29.4.1802	November, 1807 - July, 1811.
Alexander Skene (2)	29.4.1802	November, 1802 - November, 1810.
John Quilliam	24.12.1805	November, 1810 - 1814.
John Hancock (1)	22.1.1806	February, 1808 - 1814.
Woodley Losack	22.1.1806	November, 1810 - 1814.
Lucius Curtis	22.1.1806	February, 1809 - 1814.
Edmund Heywood	22.1.1806	February, 1808 - 1814.
Alexander Robert Kerr	22.1.1806	November, 1809 - 1814.
Francis Mason	22.1.1806	January, 1810 - 1814.

Whilst care has been taken to select officers who conform to a typical standard, it must be pointed out that there are several slight anomalies. All of these officers served as frigate Captains for between 3.25 and 3.75 years; and in all cases their frigate service ended between 8-9 years after Posting. However, if the last criterion were to be taken strictly into account, the last six officers on the list ought to be excluded because the date of termination of their frigate service may have been determined by a) the end of the war, or b) the end of the Admiralty Lists. Moreover it is



curious all six were posted on the same date, ( see discussion in previous chapter on co-occurrence of Posting dates) however, they continue to be included because potentially their frigate service could have been longer than 3.25 - 3.75 years. To a certain degree therefore, this list contains officers who could be deemed “untypical”.

The second point to make is that of the fifteen officers on the list only one, **Christopher Cole**, was posted directly into a frigate. Christopher Cole had three brothers in influential positions. One was the Chaplain of Greenwich Hospital; another was vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford and domestic Chaplain to the Duke of Clarence, and the third, his older brother Frank, was a Captain and a close friend of **Sir Edward Pellew**. His rate of promotion was actually rather slower than expected, partly because of an unfortunate twist of fate. Early in his career he obtained the patronage of Rear-Admiral Sir Francis Samuel Drake. Drake secured for him a position on board the Crown 64 commanded by Commodore Sir William Cornwallis, in the East Indies. Unfortunately, when eventually Cole arrived in India to join his new ship, he learned that Drake was dead, and “....all hopes of speedy promotion were consequently abandoned by him; nor did he obtain the rank he had so long sought after until 1793...”<sup>210</sup> Ironically, another gamble actually paid off. In 1799 he was given the choice of being promoted to Commander on half-pay, or remaining as a Lieutenant and sailing with **Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour**, who was due to take up his position as Commander-in-Chief of the West Indies where, as has already been noted, the mortality rate almost guaranteed the chance of promotion. He opted for the latter and shortly after, was promoted Commander and given a captured 20-gun ship the Surinam. In 1801 Seymour, now Commander-in-Chief, died and was succeeded by **Sir John Duckworth** who also became a patron of Cole. Early in 1802, Duckworth posted Cole into the Southampton frigate and Cole’s career was assured.

### Stations

Having identified some typical frigate Captains from the criteria identified in the previous chapter it is possible to examine their careers particularly in terms of where they served. Here from the outset it must be said that the Admiralty List Books are a little imprecise when it comes to providing information about an officer’s or frigate’s whereabouts. To a degree this is disappointing, especially as one of the reasons for the Lists was to provide the Admiralty with a regularly updated reference to the disposition of its ships in commission. However, since there

had to be some vagueness about a ship's activities (because of the shortfalls of communication) it was obviously thought sufficient to record the whereabouts of each ship according to its general or even command disposition. Thus, virtually all frigates allocated to the Channel Fleet command were listed in the Books under "Channel Fleet"<sup>211</sup>; under this heading they could be anywhere between Spithead and the coast of Portugal. They could be at anchor or cruising (even though there was a separate Listing for ships Cruising under what seems to have been Admiralty Orders - see below). Likewise, frigates attached to particular squadrons would be listed under the name of the squadron Commander e.g. Duncan's Squadron or Pellew's Squadron<sup>212</sup>.

Nevertheless, even with this ambiguity, it is possible to gain a general, overall picture of the disposition of frigates. However, eighteen is too small a sample to be useful. For the purposes of analysing disposition of "typical" frigate Captains, therefore, all of those Captains who served in frigates for more than three but less than four years have been considered, as the average length of frigate service throughout the wars would lie somewhere within this range. This parameter provides a list of sixty-eight frigate Captains.

In order to carry out the analysis of the stations on which these frigate Captains served the range of stations has had to be simplified to eight stations, as follows:-

**The Channel Fleet** - This includes ships at Spithead. However, although the List Books do not specify as such, it would also include ships on Channel patrol and blockade work of the French Channel ports. The Channel Fleet's station also continued as far south as Portugal.

**Cruising & Convoy** - Whilst within the other stations, frigates were frequently dispatched on both cruises and convoy duties without direct reference in the List Books, there is still a separate List each month for certain frigates sailing under these instructions. It seems quite likely that these were sailing under direct Admiralty Orders as opposed to those of the station commander. Frigates were often sent on autonomous cruises by their Commander-in-Chief, frequently as a form of reward or special favour. Frigates sailing under these orders rarely seem to appear under the 'Cruising and Convoy' category in the Admiralty List Books. This category may well refer to local coastal and convoy duties or coastal patrols - a thankless task which offered little chance of worthwhile prize money. Furthermore this duty might have been used for officers who had fallen out of favour. An example of this could be found in the case of Captain Woodley Losack who, it

will be seen from the tables, spent approximately 46% of his frigate career on Cruising or Convoy duties. Losack was not promoted with any great speed - in fact his promotion rate was very slow (approximately 12 years). However, in 1810 he was given the new 36 gun 18-pounder frigate Galatea, and sent to join Schomberg's Squadron based at the Cape. In May, 1811, Schomberg's squadron became involved in a heavy action with some French frigates and the Galatea suffered heavy damage.<sup>213</sup> Losack himself was badly wounded. In his public letter reporting on the action, Schomberg was critical of Losack and implied misconduct on his behalf. On his return to England Losack demanded a Court Martial to clear his name, but the Admiralty refused on the basis that they were perfectly satisfied with his conduct. However, Losack was then promptly dispatched off on Cruising or Convoy work and the suspicion must be that he was out of favour.<sup>214</sup>

**The North Sea** - this includes Duncan's Squadron between August, 1796, and May, 1800; Nore, Baltic and frigates recorded as being at the Texel.

**East Indies** - this includes ships at the Cape of Good Hope. For most of the wars the East Indies station stretched from the Cape to China, and the Cape itself was a crucial position, commanding as it did the route to India. After 1805 the station was divided and the Cape became a station in its own right.<sup>215</sup> However, since cruisers had invariably to cross that divide, it has been included here as the one station.

**West Indies** - This includes Jamaica and the Leeward Islands and, perhaps questionably, those frigates sent to South America.

**North America** - Includes Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

**Mediterranean** - This is perhaps fairly straightforward as the Mediterranean is the only station so easily defined. It should perhaps be noted that the Adriatic command came under this station and that in the West it extended to Cape St. Vincent and Cape Spartel.

**Port** - Where possible all references to ships being in Portsmouth, Plymouth, or the Thames yards are included in this category, particularly where it is stated that they are fitting and stowing for Channel or "foreign" service. It is perhaps the one category which should be treated with

extra caution as it is not always possible to differentiate the status of a ship at Plymouth/Hamoaze or Portsmouth/Spithead. Whilst both Spithead and Hamoaze were moorings, it is not unusual to find the List Books recording that a ship was fitting or stowing at these positions. Ships moored at St. Helen's and Cawsand Bay are also included in this category.<sup>216</sup>

**Table 4.1. The Station Disposition Of "Typical" Frigate Captains (1793-1801) Given As A Percentage Of Frigate Service.<sup>217</sup>**

Captain	Channel	Cruising convoy	North Sea	East Indies	West Indies	North America	Medi terra nean	Port
Alms J.		10	32		22			36
Bagot R.	25		16		61			
Bayntun H.W.			7		86			7
Berkeley V.C.	31	13			13		18	27
Bowen W.							95	5
Buller E.	31	28		23				18
Cole F.	81	11						8
Downman H.							100	
Drew J.	64	21						15
Fayerman F.	62	5	17				4	12
Freemantle T.							97	3
Griffith E.	86	12						2
Harvey J.					92			3
Harvey T.	24				76			
Lane R.	28	10	8		45			10
Lee Sir R.	29	29			40			2
Linzee S.	11	3		27			49	10
Ogilvie W.	56		4		33			7
Raper H.	14				71		3	12
Robinson M.	73	9						18
Rowley C.	49		32			15		5
Seater J.	24		8		47	21		
Stephens G.				90				10
Turner J.				100				
Waller T.							93	7
White C.			100					
Woodley J.	24	11			8		51	5
<b>Percent of time</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books*).

For a comparison, the information is presented in two tables, one for the first war and one for the period from Mid-1801 until 1814. Obviously the career of some officers spans both periods,

across the Peace of Amiens. Those officers have been placed according to the majority of their frigate service.

**Table 4.2. Station Disposition Of "Typical" Frigate Captains (1801-1814).**

	Channel	C/C	North Sea	EI	WI	North America	Med	Port
Ballard V.					86			14
Bullen C.							88	12
Byron R.		7				93		
Cochrane Lord	23		10			13	41	13
Cole C.					100			
Crawford J.	27	36		27				3
Cumberland W.	21	7			57			14
Curtis L.		38		56				6
Dick J.	14					86		
Deans J.W.D.	100							
Dunn R.D.	60			8			28	4
Grant C.	65		8		28			
Hamond G.E.	43	26					26	5
Hancock J.	6	28	60				6	
Heywood E.			89		11			
Harris G.	43			57				
Hawker E.					17	83		
Hill H.	86					14		
Hope H.							100	
Kerr A.	50					50		
Livingstone T.			10				80	10
Lloyd R.	14				33	53		
Losack W.		46		54				
Lumley R.						33	67	
Mason F.	73		27					
Mends R.	73				27			
Miller G.	46	15			31			8
Montagu W.	29			71				
Oswald J.	50		17				33	
Pelly C.			6	56		25		12
Quilliam J.			47			53		
Raggett R.	26	47	16					10
Richardson C.	56			35	9			
Rose J.	45				55			
Serrell J.	57		*218		43			
Skene A.		7	38			45		10
Stackpoole H.			14		86	*219		
Stuart J.	92					8		
Townshend						100		

Lord								
Wainwright J.				91			9	
Walker J.		34	3	23	29			11
Percent of time	27	7	8	12	15	16	12	3

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books*).

The table for the first war contains 27 names. Strikingly, fourteen of those Captains (52%) spent over 70% of their frigate service on one station. Ten of them (37%) in the East or West Indies, or the Mediterranean, that is, on a distant station. Three served mainly in the Channel and one in the North Sea. It is quickly apparent from the percentage of time spent on each station which were the most active for the frigate Captains. The second table contains 41 names, a larger number as we would expect because the period is longer and the navy larger. Of these, 17 Captains (41%) spent more than 70% of their frigate service on one station. Eleven of them (27%) on a distant station. This clearly shows that during the second war there was less chance of a Captain spending a long commission on a distant foreign station.

Only 38 % of all of these Captains (12 out of the Captains during the first war, and 14 out of the Captains in the second war), were sent to the West Indies. Some officers regarded orders to go there as being the result of very good fortune, others regarded it as a very doubtful benefit, given the high level of mortality on that station. Others, however, saw the West Indies as, quite literally, a golden opportunity. The example of Christopher Cole has already been cited but another fine example here is that of Josias Rogers who made a substantial sum from Prize Money as a sloop commander during the American War,<sup>220</sup> only to lose it again when his bank crashed. According to his biographer, Gilpin, Rogers responded very jauntily to this calamity by claiming that he would simply go to sea and get more. When war broke out in 1793, Rogers appears to have lobbied Sir John Jervis<sup>221</sup>, even turning down the offer of a ship of the line, until he was given a frigate, the Quebec, and joined the Jervis-Grey expedition to the West Indies where, *"In a little time he took nine ships, which was a greater number, than all the other cruisers together had taken"*<sup>222</sup>.

As previously noted, however, a Lieutenant or Commander serving in the West Indies knew that the high mortality rate on that station increased his chances of promotion; and provided that he was prepared to run the risk of fever himself, he could profit from service there. Ironically a significant number of frigate Captains ran this risk and survived the immediate peril only to succumb to the longer term breakdown of health that followed Malaria.<sup>223</sup> In the case of Josias

Rogers, who used his appointment to the West Indies not only to try and recover his fortune but also to gain promotion for a younger brother he took with him, fever took them both within a short space of time.

The sample of typical Captains of the second war shows that less frigate time was dedicated to the West Indies during the second war, than during the first. That is 22% of the above Captain's service in the First war, as opposed to only 15% during the second. Within this also it is apparent that there was less opportunity of longer commissions on that station during the second war<sup>224</sup>. This imbalance reflects the fact that the major expeditions to secure the West Indies and the British colonies there, really all took place during the first war.<sup>225</sup> However, following the Grey-Jervis expedition of 1793-1794, the French recovered their bases at Guadeloupe and St. Lucia and were able to spread their influence over other islands, increasing the threat of native revolt. From Guadeloupe the French were able to send both privateers and frigates out to attack British trade<sup>226</sup> so the continued presence of a strong force of British frigates on this station remained essential.

Frigate presence on the East Indies station was slightly higher during the second war. In many ways the East Indies station with its long trade routes, particularly to the Dutch and British colonies, made it an ideal cruising ground for the frigates. The second war, did of course see the Mauritius campaign, and the campaigns against both Java and piracy. Moreover when the number of Captains involved is considered as opposed to the proportion of time, however, a higher number were sent to the East Indies (including the Cape) after 1801. (24% of the Captains as opposed to 15% for the first war).

As with the West Indies, the major battle for the Mediterranean as a whole was concentrated in the years preceding 1805. This is not to say that there was not much activity thereafter, nor is it to devalue the enormously important role played by Collingwood. With both of these stations, however, it is clear that they were less of a priority than others in the second war. Although the danger from across the North Sea was lessened (though not in any way mitigated) by the Royal Navy's victories at Camperdown, the two battles of Copenhagen and several landings of troops on the Baltic coast,<sup>227</sup> there continued to be much activity in the North Sea and virtually a continual presence in the Baltic thereafter. During both wars there were major, and usually disastrous campaigns in the North Sea station,<sup>228</sup> both of which were demanding on both frigates and frigate

Captains. These employments were not popular. Sir Michael Seymour in the frigate Amethyst was diverted from his favourite station, cruising in the Channel and Biscay, to assist with the Scheldt expedition in 1809. He wrote to his brother-in-law Captain Edward Hawker, describing himself as *"...hurried and worried to death with the strange accumulation of this expedition intended against the "Scheldt", shipping etc. etc. at Antwerp, all suddenly and confusedly brought together.....Amethyst was sent from Plymouth, where I was sadly hurried, .... I have no wish this way but to get Westward....."*<sup>229</sup>

Nevertheless, with so much activity on that station, it is hardly surprising that frigate presence on that station seems to have remained constant.

In the second war there was a greater frigate presence in the Channel and Channel Ports; (34% as opposed to 30%). Again there are clear reasons for this. With the collapse of the Peace of Amiens and very obvious signs of a planned French invasion, British naval strategy was dominated by the need to guard against an invasion flotilla crossing the Channel. This statistical comparison, of course, relies on the inclusion of the "Port" station which fell from 8% of total time to 3% during the second war. It is well known that from the Spring of 1800, when St. Vincent was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet (and during the second war during his tenure at the Admiralty), Captains and their frigates were kept out of dock and away from port as long as possible. A policy which was deliberately introduced to counteract what was seen by St. Vincent as a growing threat of mutiny and a lack of discipline amongst the officers in the Channel Fleet<sup>230</sup>. The policy caused considerable complaint and grievance. In November, 1800, for example, Lady Martin (Mother of Sir Thomas Byam Martin, Captain of the 18-pounder frigate Fisgard) wrote to Sir Henry Martin of her son: *"...he is very much hurried preparing for sea, though it seems impossible for him to go next Friday as ordered, as he has defects in his ship that must be made good, particularly in a mast. He and all the fleet are (with reason) outrageous with Lord St. Vincent; he hurries them so much, that the seamen, after their long cruises, are working night and day, and no time for them to get on shore....."*<sup>231</sup>

In fact it might have been expected that the second war would show an even higher level of channel activity than the first, given the threat of invasion (and in a sense it does, because numerically there are more frigates operating in the Channel than during the first war). However, the statistic for the Channel activity for the first war may be distorted because of the activity of the frigate squadrons under Edward Pellew and John Borlase Warren. Francis Cole whose



name appears listed as a typical frigate Captain during the first war was one of those officers who served with Pellew's squadron, and he spent approximately 81% of his time on that station. Ironically his name appears in the table almost by accident. His career having been cut short by his sudden death in 1798. Many of the Captains who served with the Western Squadrons went on to have much longer frigate careers; **Philip Durham, Robert Barlow, Richard Keats, Robert Carthew Reynolds, Israel Pellew and James Young.**

The most obvious statistical difference between the two tables relates to time spent on the American seaboard. This reflects the greater presence demanded on that station following the outbreak of war with America in 1812. In actual fact the proportion of time spent by frigate Captains on that station was probably even greater than indicated here, because the records in the Admiralty List Books become fragmented towards the end of the period, just at the time that greater concentration was being focused there. **Richard Byron**, it can be seen, spent approximately 93% of his frigate service there commanding the Belvidera. He commissioned the Belvidera in February, 1810, and she wasn't paid off until 1814.<sup>232</sup> **John Dick** in the Penelope was part of **Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren's** squadron<sup>233</sup> from the middle of 1807 until early 1811, during which time he seems to have spent much time between Halifax and Martinique. He was part of **Philip Beaver's** squadron escorting troops to the latter island and was closely involved in the attack there in 1809, securing Fort Trinite with a party of his crew.<sup>234</sup> **Lord James Townshend**, like Richard Byron, was also part of **Sir Philip Broke's** squadron.

### Background and Interest.

Although the background of these frigate Captains is of only relative interest to this study - a much more general study having been carried out by Michael Lewis<sup>235</sup> - it has to be noted that a small number of the sample listed in the above table of typical frigate Captains would appear to have been well connected in any sense at the time of their entry into the Navy.<sup>236</sup> Few of those who were included in Marshall's *Naval Biography* seem to have made any mention of their background. There is, as might be expected, a scattering of men who were either following in family tradition or were influenced by their father's career in entering the navy. **Edward Buller's** father, for example, was both a Member of Parliament and a member of the Admiralty for many years. **John Harvey's** father was a naval Captain and his Uncle was **Admiral Sir**

Henry Harvey. Other officers were connected with the peerage ( e.g. Lord Townshend), Diplomats (e.g. H.W. Bayntun) or other well placed relatives<sup>237</sup>.

### Patronage

It is well recognised that the patronage of a senior officer in a powerful position was crucial to obtaining a desirable appointment. For example Henry Hill, H.W. Bayntun and Edward Griffith were all protégés of Sir John Jervis and J.C. Crawford was the protégé of Sir Roger Curtis. The support of these patrons at a crucial time inevitably gave these officers a career opportunity of which they took full advantage. Sometimes the patron was able to assist on several occasions. Charles Richardson for example was a protégé of Viscount Duncan who specifically requested his services on his flagship. Richardson also served on a number of occasions with Sir Richard Strachan, both as a midshipman and then, years later, as a Lieutenant when Strachan was not only Rear-Admiral of the Blue but had also been awarded his KCB..

Some officers seemed almost doomed to failure in spite of strong support. John Hancock was supported in his early career by both Captain Robert Kingsmill ( a Member of Parliament 1779-80 & 1784-90 and a Rear Admiral in 1793)and Sir John Colpoys (Rear-Admiral in 1794). Having passed his Lieutenant's examinations in 1785 he continued serving with Colpoys until 1787 when he decided that the continuing peace gave him little prospect of promotion or better employment. Disillusioned he decided to quit the service.<sup>238</sup> In 1790 with the excitement of the Nootka Sound crisis he once again joined Colpoys who was now commanding a 74-gun ship. Despite Colpoy's patronage Hancock failed to secure advancement in the general promotion which followed, and once again resigned. After a short period friends persuaded him to change his mind and in 1798 he found himself serving under the Commander-in-Chief of the Jamaica station, Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, "*...and whose lasting friendship he had now the good fortune to obtain...*"<sup>239</sup>. Sadly for Hancock, Hyde Parker was then recalled before his friendship could result in promotion. Hancock continued with what, it must be emphasised, was a far from mediocre career until 1804 when his services under Sir William Sidney Smith earned him a letter of approbation from Lord Melville, then First Lord of the Admiralty. The following year Melville was impeached and Sir Charles Middleton (Lord Barham) became First Lord. Hancock

simply struggled on until 1815 when, like so many others, he was faced with terminal redundancy. Ironically Hancock's career was remarkable and there is no doubt that he was both an excellent seaman, a brave and skilled military commander and a humane frigate Captain. It is certainly no wonder at all that he should have come to the attention of senior and powerful officers. Unluckily those officers were never in a position to help him when it was necessary. Furthermore it must be seriously doubted that Hancock's example was unparalleled.

What Hancock's career illustrates is the fact that although "interest" could be of enormous value to a Captain it was not enough on its own. As noted above, only a minority of the above sample (whose entries in Marshall's *Royal Naval Biography* have been checked) seem to have had any significant "interest" other than that attracted by a display of talent. A talented officer could still get appointments, particularly as it would have been in the interest of any Admiral/Commander-in-chief to have men commanding frigates who were good seamen, enthusiastic, energetic and popular with their crews. Good Seamen were, hopefully, less likely to lose their ships and stood a better chance of outsailing enemy vessels, whether merchantmen or men-of-war and were more likely to have the confidence of their officers and crew. An enthusiastic and energetic Captain would not have to be repeatedly "encouraged" to take his ship to sea.<sup>240</sup> A Captain who was popular with his crew, provided that he was not unlucky, would be more likely to achieve success, by any criteria. It is no coincidence that some of the most successful frigate Captains also appear to have been popular with their crews (most of the time!). This recognition of talent would of course be rewarded even more if the Captain concerned was thought to be lucky with prizes, of which the Admiral got a share. Ability and talent reflected glory as well as attracting it.

### Frigate Progression.

In the previous chapter, the number of frigates that a Captain was likely to command between 1793-1815 was considered and in particular it was noted that a typical frigate Captain would command two frigates. This is confirmed in the following tables although it will also be noted that, overall, only about 48% of those Captains selected on the basis of average frigate service, commanded two frigates. (23% commanded three frigates; and 29% just one). It should not be assumed that because an officer commanded just one frigate, he was in any way less valued. His one frigate might have been a particularly crack ship; a desirable command which he might wish to hold onto for as long as possible and which served his purposes. Samuel Ballard for example,

though not a typical frigate Captain was, after a short period as acting Captain of the Tremendous 74, given command of the 12-pounder frigate Pearl in March, 1796. His command of her was continuous until February, 1802, when she was paid off. A period of six years. The Pearl was an old frigate, but being one of the crack Niger class frigates, her performance was outstanding. She was very fast, highly manoeuvrable, with plenty of room for the accommodation of the crew below decks and she was dry.<sup>241</sup> Marshall tells us that in her six year commission under Ballard Pearl had taken, destroyed or captured eighty enemy vessels; and the Pearl served on many different stations. It is therefore not surprising that Ballard does not seem to have been pressing for a different frigate.

Within the sample of typical frigate Captains can be cited the example of Francis Cole who commanded the captured French frigate Revolutionnaire for three years, almost until his death. Revolutionnaire<sup>242</sup> was a very large, fast frigate mounting 38 18-pounder guns on her gun deck and at the time of her capture she was thought to be the largest frigate in the possession of the Royal Navy.<sup>243</sup> It is doubtful that Cole wanted a better ship for, had this been the case, his commodore and great friend, Edward Pellew, would certainly have seen to it.

Frigate Captains were not hesitant in complaining if they felt their ship to be poor or inadequate. Robert Barrie, a great favourite of William Windham Grenville, Baron Grenville, used an argument along these lines to great effect. In 1806, when Grenville became Prime Minister (and his brother Thomas became First Lord of the Admiralty), Barrie wrote to him complaining about the frigate which he had commissioned but a few months previously, the old and rather small 28 gun nine-pounder frigate Brilliant. (It is worth mentioning at this point that Barrie, who was posted in April, 1802, had not been given an appointment at all until Grenville was returned to office. His commissioning of the Brilliant was obviously a result of some heavy lobbying of his friend). On 17th April, 1806, Barrie wrote apologising to Grenville for calling upon his favour once again:

*".....but I am urged to do so by my disappointment and chagrin - I can gain neither honor or profit in the Brilliant. Very lately I chased for two days a Privateer and her Prize without being able to come up even with the Merchant ship, and two days ago the Boadicea (N.B. no flyer) fairly ran us out of sight in eight hours....."*<sup>244</sup>

By August, 1806, Barrie was commanding the 18-pounder frigate Pomone.<sup>245</sup>

In the vast majority of cases, where an officer commanded more than one frigate, he progressed from the smaller to the heavier frigates. Naturally all Captains wanted to have a ship which stood the best possible chance of success against the enemy. In terms of vessel this meant speed and manoeuvrability, and also best possible armament. The tendency, then, was to hope for better ships as a career progressed. The tables show that this was clearly the rule though there are exceptions. Richard Dalling Dunn for example, commanded a 38-gun 18-pounder frigate after a 40-gun 18-pounder frigate. However, there was a gap of several years between the two commands, during which Dunn commanded several line of battle ships. His 38-gun frigate was the captured French frigate Armide; his previous frigate had been the older Acasta. There would also appear to be no obvious explanation why Henry Hope should have moved from the relatively new 18-pounder frigate Leonidas to the older 12-pounder Topaze; (although since he was in the former for only 6-8 months it might have been a temporary appointment ).

**Table 4.3. Armament Of Frigates Commanded By Typical Frigate Captains (First War).**

Captain	First Frigate	Second frigate	Third Frigate
Alms J.	28 gun 9-pdr	36 gun 12-pdr	
Bagot R.	32 gun 18-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr
Bayntun H.W. <sup>246</sup>	28 gun 9-pdr	36 gun 12-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr
Berkeley V.C.	44 gun	36 gun 18-pdr	
Bowen W.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Buller E.	44 gun	36 gun 18-pdr	
Cole F.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Downman H.	34 gun 12-pdr		
Drew J.	32 gun 18-pdr		
Fayerman F.	40 gun 18-pdr		
Freemantle T.	28 gun 9-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Griffith E.	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Harvey J.	32 gun 12-pdr		
Harvey T.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr	
Lane R.	32 gun 12-pdr	40 gun 18-pdr	
Lee, Sir R.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr	
Linzee S.	28 gun 9-pdr	36 gun 12-pdr	
Ogilvie W.	36 gun 12-pdr		
Raper H.	36 gun 12-pdr		
Robinson M.	28 gun 9-pdr	38 guns <sup>247</sup>	38 gun 18-pdr
Rowley C.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr
Seater J.	36 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 12-pdr	44 guns <sup>248</sup>
Stephens G.	36 gun 12-pdr		
Turner J.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr	
Waller T.	36 gun 18-pdr		
White C.	28 gun 9-pdr		
Woodley J.	28 gun 9-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books* and Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*).

During the first war, the majority of the typical Captains were given command of a nine-pounder frigate as their first frigate command. Only about a 25% were given the heavier 18-pounder frigates as their first command. None of the Captains in this group were given a nine-pounder frigate as their second frigate command and, indeed, the table clearly shows the transition towards heavier and larger frigates.

**Table 4.4. Armament Of Frigates Commanded By Typical Frigate Captains (Second War).**

Ballard V.	28 gun 9-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Bullen C.	38 gun 18-pdr		
Byron R.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Cochrane, Lord	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Cole C.	32 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr
Crawford J.	36 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr
Cumberland W.	36 gun 18-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	
Curtis L.	36 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr
Dick J.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Deans. J.W.D.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Dunn R.D.	32 gun 12-pdr	40 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr
Grant C.	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Hamond G.E.	36 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Hancock J.	48 gun 18-pdr <sup>249</sup>	36 gun 18-pdr	
Harris G.	38 gun <sup>250</sup>	38 gun 18-pdr	
Hawker E.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Heywood E.	32 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	
Hill H.	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Hope H.	36 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 12-pdr	<sup>251</sup> 44 gun 24-pdr
Kerr A.	32 gun 18-pdr	40 gun 18-pdr	
Livingstone T.	44 gun <sup>252</sup>	38 gun 12-pdr	
Losack W.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Lloyd R.	38 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Lumley J.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 18-pdr	
Mason F.	38 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Mends R.	32 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr
Miller G.	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Montagu W. <sup>253</sup>	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Oswald J.	38 gun 18-pdr	40 gun 18-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr
Pelly C.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 18-pdr	
Quilliam J.	32 gun 12-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Raggett R.	38 gun 18-pdr		
Richardson C.	28 gun 9-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	
Rose J.	32 gun 12-pdr	32 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr
Serrell J.	36 gun 18-pdr		
Skene A.	28 gun 9-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr
Stackpoole H.	36 gun 18-pdr	38 gun 18-pdr	
Stuart J.	36 gun 12-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr	

Townshend, Lord	32 gun 12-pdr		
Wainwright J.	36 gun 12-pdr		
Walker J.	28 gun 9-pdr	32 gun 18-pdr	36 gun 18-pdr

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books* and Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*).

During the second war, only 15% of first frigate commands were 9-pounder frigates, (as opposed to 44% in the first war). Furthermore, the eighteen -pounder frigate was allocated to a larger number of Captains as their first frigate, than either the nine or twelve pounder ships.

### Continuous Service.

The progression of frigate Captains from smaller to heavier frigate is only really significant if that progress forms a more or less continuous period within each individual officer's career. In other words, if the three years of frigate service is actually scattered through a career of say ten to fifteen years, it would become less significant. Fortunately, using the data from the Admiralty List Books it is possible to review the incidence of frigate command in order to check this information. Using the samples given above it is found that during the first war eleven (41%) of the frigate Captains served all of their frigate service in one ship. A further eight, whilst they commanded more than one frigate, moved from one to another with very little intervening period of unemployment (i.e. nothing longer than six months)<sup>254</sup>. That is a total of 70%.

Three Captains actually commanded larger ships of the line between periods of frigate command. **Charles Rowley**, for example, commanded the Prince George 90, whilst both **John Seater** and **Samuel Hood Linzee** commanded ships of 64 guns. Most significant, of course, is the fact that all three officers subsequently returned to command frigates thereafter. This reinforces the assertion that frigate command was not regarded as having lesser status and may even support the view that frigate command was regarded as more desirable than fleet service in a ship of the line.

Four of the Captains in the sample for the first war had noticeable periods of unemployment in between frigate commands. However in the case of several others it is possible that those gaps were actually filled by temporary command of a frigate which was not recorded in the Admiralty List Books, but which was identified elsewhere by Pitcairn Jones<sup>255</sup>. **Richard Lane** for example may have had temporary command of the Nymphe during his gap of six months. **Edward**

Freemantle likewise, may have commanded the Inconstant during the gap in his service. Edward Griffith, according to Marshall<sup>256</sup> commanded the new fir-built frigate Triton for its first year. It is even possible that he was specifically selected to work up the new ship. Griffith was the nephew of Admiral Sir John Colpoys and received his break into frigate command following the mutiny at the Nore in which he played a critical part.<sup>257</sup> Indeed very shortly after the end of the mutiny he was given the crack 12-pounder frigate Niger after her commander, Edward Foote was given the 18-pounder frigate Seahorse.<sup>258</sup>

Of those Captains in the first war sample only Bayntun, Berkeley and Lee seem to have had significant periods of unemployment during their frigate service. In summary therefore it can be asserted that over 70% of typical frigate Captains underwent virtually continuous frigate service during the first war.

Of those 41 Captains in the sample for the second war, ten commanded one frigate only for the duration of their service. Eleven officers commanded more than one frigate but saw more or less continuous service. In addition to these it is quite possible that John Lumley commanded the Topaze frigate for a period in between the Hind and Narcissus; and that John Stuart(2) commanded the Clyde frigate during the one year gap in his service. This gives a total of 23 Captains or 56% experiencing continuous service during the second war.

Eleven Captains would appear to have commanded line of battle ships during gaps in frigate service, that is 27% as against 11% in the first war. Furthermore it should be noted that during the second war there was a much greater incidence of command of 2nd or 3rd rate ships of the line. Christopher Cole, for example, commanded the Culloden 74 in the five year period between his frigate commands. Graham Eden Hamond also commanded a 74, whilst John Hancock(1), Charles Richardson(2) and Hassard Stackpoole all commanded 80-gun ships between frigate service. Seven Captains would appear to have experienced significant unemployment in between frigate service.<sup>259</sup>

The conclusion must be that during the first war the typical frigate Captain might expect a greater chance of three years' continuous employment within the frigate service. During the second war there was less chance of continuous frigate service but there was a much greater opportunity of serving in a ship of the line in between frigates. This is curious because whilst frigate numbers peaked at 121 in 1797, and again at 135 in 1810,<sup>260</sup> the number of ships of the line in commission



remained the same, that is 108 in both years; ( during the second war, the number of ships of the line reached a peak in 1809, when there were 113 ships in commission). The implication here is that Captains who had experience of frigate command appear to have stood better chance of employment in a ship of the line than those who had not.

The rate of unemployment was more or less the same in both wars. Another way of looking at this is to note that during the second war there was a much greater chance of a Captain returning to frigate service after a spell in command of a line of battle ship. This suggests that there might have been greater flexibility between 1801-1814, either because of the greater number of ships available in the Royal Navy or because of a change of attitude among the officer corps. It must be said, however, that little evidence has been found of the latter and that, on the contrary, officers were as keen to command a frigate during the second war, as officers had been during the first. However, officers may have been obliged to accept other types of command as a way of keeping in favour and demonstrating their commitment to the service. Later there was a suggestion that commanding a troopship, for example, was a necessary preliminary to frigate command.<sup>261</sup>

### Earlier Career.

At some point a question must arise as to the relativity of pre-war command and Seniority, with length of frigate service. This was touched upon in the previous chapter, but here the focus is on the average or typical frigate Captain.

In Chapter 3 it was noted that 18% of the frigate Captains serving between 1793-1815 were actually posted before 1793. Of the sample given in this chapter this is only about 9%. Of these only three officers had commands before the outbreak of war. These happened to be James Alms, John Drew, and Sir Edward Buller who are also the most senior officers in the sample. Velters Berkeley, Mark Robinson (2) and Francis Cole were also posted before the war but saw no command before that time. However, Alms, Drew and Buller were promoted through the ranks much quicker than Berkeley, Robinson or Cole. This implies a link between speed of promotion and employment both before and during the war. Certainly at the beginning of the war seniority played a role in employment.<sup>262</sup> Of the 122 Captains posted before 1793, thereby being senior Captains on the list, some 17% served in frigates after 1793 for longer than the average term (as opposed to 5% serving for the average term).

### Later Career.

One method of assessing how highly regarded an officer's capabilities might have been, is to review his service after frigate command. A favoured officer might expect to have been given further employment after his frigate time and, of course, the reverse may also be true. A poor frigate commander may not have been an attractive prospect as Captain of a ship of the line. Without closely assessing each officer's biographical details it would be impossible to be sure about the application of the latter point. But it is relatively easy to identify which officers, upon completion of between three and four years service in frigates, were re-employed in ships of the line.

The confusing factor here, of course, is the end of the war. Typical frigate Captains completing their frigate time in the latter years of the war, when there were an increased number of Captains clamouring for employment, were less likely to be successful in their applications than those completing frigate time in the first war. This is confirmed by the fact that 52% of typical frigate Captains serving during the first war went on to command ships of the line before 1815. Of those frigate Captains serving during the second war only 37% succeeded in this way. That constitutes 43% of all of the typical frigate Captains, which it may be argued is a high percentage especially as over 21% of those on the list were dead before the end of the war. Most of these latter would appear to have succumbed to age, infirmity or disease, although John Woodley drowned when his frigate the 36-gun Leda foundered during a storm and Hassard Stackpoole was killed in a duel. This suggests that by the second war there was a tendency to give command of ships of the line to the more experienced and senior Captains. However, the fact that these officers were already 'in place', combined with the literal growth on the size of the corps of Post Captains may have mitigated against the employment prospects of the less senior Captains.

Ultimately, as might be expected, a higher proportion of officers in the first war sample went on reach flag rank than the second. That is, 71% as opposed to 49%. Of those first war officers reaching flag rank, all but two<sup>263</sup> achieved this before 1815. Those who did not reach flag rank were either dead or superannuated.

## Chapter 5. The Lure of Frigate Command.

To a very large extent this thesis has, so far, relied upon statistical evidence to illustrate and reveal information about the careers of the frigate commanders. In doing this an assumption has been made that frigate command was somewhat different from command of, in particular, a ship of the line - not just in terms of the range of duties, but also in terms of its character and the kudos it attracted. (The reader is referred here to the quotations in the introduction to this thesis).

This raises the question of whether naval officers themselves thought of frigate service as being distinct. To what extent, for example, did they consciously seek appointment to the command of a frigate? It is the incidence of articulation by the officers themselves of their feelings about frigate service that indicates that this is the case. There are two aspects to this; firstly there are examples from those who were aspiring to frigate service and, secondly, there are the comments of the more experienced Post Captains.

In one sense the most obvious place to look for evidence of officers' desire for frigate command would be among the deluge of letters of appeal which must have been sent to the First Lord of the Admiralty. However this source would be unreliable, for a desperate appellant would be only too glad for any form of employment. As will be shown, however, the more experienced and renowned the officer, the more confident he would be, not only that his appeal would be heeded at all, but also that he might even specify which frigate he wanted.

It is apparent that there are three main aspects that need to be considered when assessing the attraction or otherwise of frigate command.

a). Firstly there is the question of finance. The much considered<sup>264</sup> question of Prize Money is most often exercised in association with frigate Captains. But this needs to be offset by the comparatively lower pay and the costs of frigate command.

b). Secondly one must consider the question of autonomy of command. Frigates could be sent on independent cruises by the Admiralty or they could be employed in operations which put them outside the orders of the station's Commander-in-Chief.

c). Finally there is the matter of kudos- though in the parlance of the time this was usually referred to as honour or glory. There is no doubt that some Captains honed their crews to a very high state of training and preparedness. One of the best examples of this is to be found in the case of Captain Philip Broke whose letters reveal him to have been deeply concerned about winning glory in action<sup>265</sup>. It is the existence of these particular Captains and crews who reinforce the view that the frigate service was - or was becoming - the elite of the Royal navy.

### The reward of frigate command.

In May 1790, at the height of the Spanish Armament and approximately ten years after he was posted Cuthbert Collingwood, by now fairly high on the List of Post Captains<sup>266</sup>, wrote to his sister in a tone of almost breathless excitement:

*"...I believe no man can say at present whether this spark will blaze or not....The Admiral wrote to Lord Chatham<sup>267</sup> to ask for a frigate for me....Captain Conway..came to me a few days after to tell me Lord Ch[hatham] had assured him I should have a 32, which after the great frigates are to[sic] preferr'd to other classes, and for which all are pushing."*<sup>268</sup>

Two weeks later he wrote;

*"Lord Chatham has been particularly civil to me and I think I shall have...one of the best frigates of 32 guns that we have.....You will, may-be, wonder that I shou'd prefer a frigate to a line of battle ship where my pay wou'd be two hundred pounds a year more: a 74 I shou'd prefer to anything....And as for the different emolument; in a frigate the expenses are somewhat less and if I can get her into the W't Indies I will make the Dons pay me the difference once or twice a month I hope. The larger frigates are in general more sought after, but I think I can make mine equal to anything the Spaniards have on one deck....."*<sup>269</sup>

Collingwood did not serve as a frigate Captain during the great wars, but his comments are a pertinent introduction. It should be acknowledged that according to the second letter, Collingwood clearly wished for a ship of the line - specifically a 74-gun ship - but he clearly thought that he was being given special consideration and was obviously far from unhappy at being given a frigate. It is not clear whether, between the two letters, Collingwood had changed his mind about his real preference but it is evident from the dismissive comments that he made about 64 gun ships<sup>270</sup> that he wanted either to be in the line-of-battle or in a frigate that was

capable of both achieving fame through a frigate action or taking prizes. Both were attractive prospects.

Collingwood had previous experience of frigate command<sup>271</sup> and, as the extract suggests, knew of the advantages to be gained from serving on the West Indies station.<sup>272</sup> Collingwood's other concern, that of the relative costs of command is also extremely interesting. Frigate Captains were certainly at a relative disadvantage when it came to pay - a situation which only improved slightly as the wars progressed.

**Table 5.1. Daily Pay Of Post Captains.**

Rate of ship	Guns	Number of men	Daily Pay 1796-1806	Daily Pay 1807 <sup>273</sup>	Number of men	Daily pay <sup>274</sup> 1810-1815
1st	100+	850-875	£1	£1-3s	837	£2-4s
2nd	90-98	700-750	16s	19s	738	£1-17s-6d
3rd	64-80	500-650	13s	16s-6d	689	£1-13s-6d
					640	£1-12s-6d
					590	£1-11s-3d
4th	50-60	380-420	10s	13s	343	£1-1s-6d
5th	32-44	220-300	8s	11s	314	19s
					284-294	18s-4d
					254-274	17s-9d
					215	16s-6d
6th	20-30	160-200	8s	12s	195	16s-10d
					155-175	16s-2d

(Sources for this are as follows: *Steel's Navy Lists* (August, 1797; May, 1798; June, 1799; etc. to 1805. January, 1807/March, 1808. August, 1810 etc. to 1815 ).

In the early part of the wars a frigate Captain's pay equated to 40% of that of the Captain of a First Rate ship of the line and 61% of that of the Captain of a 74-gun ship. How the rate of pay was arrived at is unclear because at this stage it does not seem to relate to the relative size of the ships crew. Admittedly the Captain of a 4th rate earning 10s per day was commanding, at most 420 men, i.e. half of the size of the smallest 1st rate ship, whose Captain was earning 20s (£1) per day. But the equation does not follow for other rates.

Michael Lewis, in *A Social History of the Navy* claimed that a Captain's pay was somehow linked to the size of crew and the number of guns carried by his ship.<sup>275</sup> This certainly seems possible for the rates of pay between 1793 and 1805 (although the calculation does not work for 5th & 6th rates), but an analysis of the figures for the rest of the war reveals that the link is too

tenuous. Even Lewis had to admit that *“The Proportions are not of course exact”*. It is of course possible that rates of pay were calculated upon a complex combination of both number of guns and complement. By 1807 Captains of all rates had received a 3/- per day increase ( or thereabouts) with the exception of Captains of 6th rates who had been given a 4/- increase. In comparative terms frigate Captains were now slightly better off, as the Captain of a 5th rate was earning 48% of the salary of his First Rate colleague and 66% of that in a 74.

By 1810, there had been an enormous increase in the rates of pay for the Captains of line of battle ships - in fact pay had virtually doubled for them. The calculation had obviously become more complicated, because third rates and frigates were divided into different rates of pay according to the size of the complement. However the rate of pay itself was still not calculated according to that differential. The Captain of a large 3rd Rate ship commanded almost exactly twice the complement of a 4th Rate ship, but his salary was only 64% greater. Furthermore, in comparative terms, the rate of pay for a frigate Captain had slumped.. The pay of a Captain of one of the larger 5th rate frigates was now only 38% that of his colleague in a First rate ship of the line and 58% of that in a 74..

Although officer's pay failed to keep pace with the enormous inflation between 1793-1800, when the value of the pound fell to 56% of its starting value, by the end of the war pay had been increased to bring it back to at least to its original value. Nevertheless in terms of comparative rates of pay, frigate command was not attractive. This can really only be explained in two ways. Firstly, that it was either accepted or understood that frigate Captains would supplement their income in a manner not generally available to other Captains. This may explain why the rate of pay for a 6th rate ship was slightly higher - that is, that the Captain of a sixth rate frigate , which being less well armed stood a smaller chance of taking well-armed prizes, needed a little more in the way of regular pay<sup>276</sup> . Secondly, because it encouraged some Captains to opt for the slightly greater financial security of regular income in a ship of the line, in other words Captains of line of battle ships were paid more as a form of compensation.

This seems to be confirmed by Sir Thomas Byam Martin in an undated memorandum.

*“ The Captain of a ship of the line, though much junior in rank<sup>277</sup> to the Captain of a frigate, has a higher rate of pay, and for the very sufficient reason following:*

*1st That he commands a much larger body of men, and has much more onerous duties to perform.*

*2nd That the Captain of a frigate is almost constantly so employed as to make prize money, which, speaking generally, gives him pecuniary advantages far above the Captain of a line-of-battle ship.*

*3rd In war time Captains always seek the command of a frigate with small pay, in preference to a ship of the line with larger pay.*"<sup>278</sup>

All naval command implied a certain amount of obligatory expenditure both in war and in peacetime. The Captain may, for example, have had to use his personal funds to win the co-operation of dockyard officials in getting his ship ready for sea quickly, or for obtaining just the piece of equipment he wanted or needed. In time of peace Captains were expected to host local dignitaries and their families. The officers of a ship calling at a sea-side town were usually invited to dine with local dignitaries and were often entertained at balls thrown by the local well-to-do. In turn, the hospitality had to be returned. Even at sea it was customary when two ships met for the Senior Captain to invite the junior to dine - often accompanied by selected members of the wardroom. Naval style being what it was these could be lavish affairs and, those Post Captains who could afford it, provided themselves with very fine table-ware and wines. Philip Beaver, after paying off the Determinee frigate in May, 1802, was offered another frigate but declined it because, as his biographer recalled, of his "*absolute inability, in time of peace, to maintain a family at home, and also support the expenses of a table afloat*".<sup>279</sup> Needless to say there was a certain amount of social pressure to put on a good show.<sup>280</sup> Nevertheless the advice given to the young Captain Peter Rainier by his Uncle, Admiral Rainier, following his posting into the Caroline frigate, is interesting:

*"....keep a very economical table, giving your Officers good white wine, only having a little choice Madeira or Claret for extraordinary visitants. Follow the example of your most economical brother officers in these matters, without becoming sordid, or niggardly...."*<sup>281</sup>

The costs of providing entertainment increased according to the status of one's guests. In 1793, Josias Rogers, serving in the Channel in the Quebec frigate wrote to a friend: "*...I am heartily tired of this rambling channel-service. Besides, I am absolutely spending a little fortune. I am constantly full of great folks, and I need not tell you how very expensive this is to me.....*".<sup>282</sup>

Rogers would have felt this keenly, especially as one of his motivations for returning to sea in a frigate was that his bank had crashed and he had suffered a loss of £2,000.

The cost of “great folks” was certainly felt by Captain Samuel Hood of the Juno. Being the nephew of both Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Hood (shortly to become Lord Bridport) and Viscount Hood, he was bound to attract the attention of his family’s well wishers. In the summer of 1791, he was ordered to take the Juno to Weymouth to attend on the Royal Family. Thomas Byam Martin, who was serving as a Lieutenant on the Juno tells us that,

*“...The principal preparation however lay in another way, and rested individually with the Captain. It became necessary to provide largely and handsomely for the royal table and the numerous train of attendants at lunch, which was in fact providing a daily dinner for them when afloat. This was no small affair for six weeks, and as Captain Hood was at that time a very poor man (nothing but his pay), he had no alternative but to borrow money, so that the honour of being selected for this service ended in his being 700L in debt, with no other set off against so great an inconvenience but the royal thanks...”*<sup>283</sup>

In social terms the ‘royal thanks’ might have had some value, and there can be little doubt that some officers benefited from attention from the sovereign. However there is little evidence that the King’s patronage was guaranteed, and it is hard to find any indication that Samuel Hood benefited as a result. Admirals could also be a problem as Captain Michael Seymour of the Amethyst wrote: *“....I sailed on February 8th with Admiral Stopford on board, his furniture, stock, band, secretary, flag and one other Lieutenant, Captain of marines, Chaplain, twelve midshipmen, two mates, his gig’s crew, servants &c &c, stores also for the ships here,...and sixty-three supernumeraries on board from Plymouth Sound, with forty-eight also of my own crew in the sick list, an entire raw crew of marines, the old having been promoted and cut up, and badly replaced,...”*<sup>284</sup>

This was not an uncommon experience, but the point is that in time of war, the cost might be supplemented from prize money. In peacetime there were no prizes to take.<sup>285</sup>

This assumption about the use of a frigate to obtain prize money was common. At about the same time that Collingwood was writing to his Sister, as previously noted, Josias Rogers, having learned of his financial loss (mentioned above) apparently consoled his family with the statement that he would simply go to sea and get more.<sup>286</sup> In fact Rogers had considerable difficulty getting



employment and it took the intervention of his patron, Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, and possibly Prince William himself, to move him from his obscurity. By the end of 1793, Rogers was in command of the 32-gun frigate Quebec in the West Indies where, according to Gilpin: *"...all the frigates and sloops were "on the wing" as Captain Rogers phrases it, to pick up what prizes they could. And it was not without a prudent eye to his own advantage, that he had refused the command of a large ship. He was as active, and judicious in laying out for prizes, as in everything else in which he was concerned...."*<sup>287</sup>

Rogers had actually been offered a ship of the line but had declined it - probably for the obvious reason. Later in the war, Philip Beaver also commented on the question of prize money:

*"....My new little vessel is called the Determinee, and to a person not conversant with our service, it would appear strange for a man to wish to give up the command of a ship of eighty guns, for one of only twenty-four. But in the former, playing only second or third fiddle, I would have little prospect of distinction; which is not the case in the latter, and before the war concludes, as she sails well, I may perchance fill an old leathern bag. Though my new Quarter-deck is diminutive, it is just as broad a highway to honour, as that of a three-decker...."*<sup>288</sup>

In all three of these examples there is not only reference to the use of frigates to get prize money, but also a clear indication that they have declined a larger ship in preference to a frigate. This implies a number of things. Firstly an ability to pick and choose to a certain degree - this sort of confidence (or might it be arrogance) was probably determined by the strength of one's patron. However it also implies an ability to move from larger to smaller ship and this was indeed not uncommon.<sup>289</sup>

Prize money, of course, acted as an inducement to Captains ( and crews for that matter) to be at sea and to be zealous - however it was also a something of a distraction from their essential duties. It is perhaps telling that Josias Rogers biographer, Gilpin, should comment that Rogers was as active in laying out for prizes as in anything else in which he was concerned - for therein lay the problem with the Prize system. Not only could the search for prizes take a frigate Captain off station,<sup>290</sup> but it frequently caused jealousy and bitterness between officers. Not least between Admirals and frigate commanders who were under direct Admiralty orders. This undoubtedly lies behind St. Vincent's enmity towards Sir John Borlase Warren, whom he described as *"....a mere partisan, preferring prize money to the public good at all times...."*<sup>291</sup> One of the reasons that

Bridport apparently resented the independent frigate command of Pellew was also attributable to this.<sup>292</sup>

### Prize Money.

Ascertaining the value of Prizes themselves can prove extremely time consuming and frustrating. Fortunately, under the regulations<sup>293</sup> relating to captures by land or sea, certain shares in all prizes were due to the Greenwich Hospital. (e.g. the shares belonging to a seaman who had subsequently run, or shares not legitimately claimed within three years). As a consequence all Prize Agents were required to submit an account of the produce of all prizes to the Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital within three months of the first payment to the captors. Agents could be fined £500 for not complying with this regulation<sup>294</sup>. Not all did, but the vast majority of agents adhered to the regulation and these accounts are to be found amongst the records of the Greenwich Hospital at the Public Record Office. For the purpose of illustrating this thesis the contents of the accounts for the period 1793-1798 (particularly where they relate to frigates) is appended to this chapter. (Table 6.2)

### Prizes during the first two years of the wars

Richard Hill, in his recent work on the naval prize system, has estimated that some £30 million was received in prize money during the course of the wars<sup>295</sup>. According to the Greenwich Hospital Accounts, the total net figure for prize payments during the first two years alone was somewhere in the region of £691,800. Because of the delay in condemning and selling prizes - or dealing with legal disputes - it could take several years for money to be distributed; hence many sums won during the first few years of the wars, would not be declared in the Hospital Accounts until some time later. To this latter sum should be added, for example, a proportion of the prize money for the Jean Bart French corvette which was taken by Sir John Borlase Warren's squadron in April, 1795; unfortunately Hemmons, the agent appointed to act for this prize, never submitted his accounts to the Greenwich Hospital, so the final net proceeds can only be guessed

Although the accounts show the net sum received from sail of hulls, cargo, Head Money and salvage this was not actually the sum that was paid over or due to the captors, as there were various deductions that had to be made, e.g. the Prize Agent's fee.

Of the total, £489,613 was made up from individual prizes, stores and head money. To this can be added the prizes taken at the Battle of the 1st June, 1794. The Channel Fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Howe gained £201,096 from that battle alone, that is just over 29% of the prize money for the whole period. A study of the accounts immediately shows how prominent the frigates were in taking prizes. In fact frigates were involved in captures to the value of approximately £463,635. (That is just over 67% of the total).

Other rated ships gained prize money totalling approximately £227,365 (33%). This gives us an indication of the comparative success of frigate Captains in taking prizes - that is, that they were twice as likely to gain as a result of frigate command. In fact the difference is even greater because of one particular prize, this was the French East Indiaman La Constitution captured by the Leopard 50 commanded by Captain John Maude. William Henry Dillon recalled that the frigate Thetis, Captain John Hartwell, arrived at St. Helena in June, 1793:

*"...We found lying here our consort the Leopard and several East India ships. The battery saluted the Commodore with 15 guns, the compliment being returned by us. The first person that made his appearance on board was Captain Maude. He had, it seems, taken a large French East Indiaman, and also, when in the Channel, a French Privateer. The Indiaman was named the Constitution. It had originally belonged to our East India Company and was a very fine ship with a valuable cargo.."<sup>296</sup>*

Hartwell and his crew had themselves just taken two valuable prizes, a French merchantman La Trojan and the Mangoff/Mongoff George both of which fell victim through ignorance of the state of hostility that existed. As Thetis was sailing under Admiralty Orders her Captain could expect to retain his full three-eighths share of any prize money.<sup>297</sup> Maude suggested that the Thetis and the Leopard might share the value of their prizes. This was a common practice particularly among frigate squadrons as it enabled all to share from the good luck of one of the group whilst reducing the level of loss if the prize were subsequently lost. Hartwell, conscious of the prospective value of his two captures refused. Sadly, La Trojan, which had already been sent back to England with a prize crew was retaken. The Mangoff George was successfully returned home and sold for £35,057-18s-6d. Of which the officers and crew received £21,378 Of this John Hartwell's share would have been just over £8,000. Dillon anticipated that the value of La Trojan would have been in the region of £120,000.<sup>298</sup>

Hartwell must have rued his decision not to share prize money for Maude's prizes returned to England successfully. La Constitution alone realised £145,287-9s-8d, (although the crew only appear to have received £66,889 of this), of which John Maude received over £25,083, the equivalent of £1,203,984 at 1996 rates.<sup>299</sup> This, together with the £8,031 which was paid out in prize money for the La Victoire captured by Maude and the Leopard earlier in the year, made him a very rich man indeed. His prize money for this one capture amounted to 16% of the total prize money awarded (for the period accounted for). If the Leopard's prize money is disregarded, Captains of Line of Battle ships gained only about £109,000 plus the prize money from the 1st of June (£210,096) which was shared with seven frigates.<sup>300</sup>

### Frigates and Prize Money.

The issue here, however, is that of the Prize Money gained by frigate commanders. It must first of all be noted that, as far as all naval Captains were concerned, the prize system contained a number of hazards. One of the greatest dangers lay in the problem of identifying which vessels were eligible for seizure. At the beginning of the wars there were no guidance notes available for sea officers and although the 1793 Prize Act was available, it was not the sort of document which could easily be used by the majority of sea officers. There was even some confusion over what legally constituted 'blockade' and it took a ruling in 1798 by Sir William Scott, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty to clarify matters somewhat. The situation became much more difficult from 1803 onwards when Channel ports under French control were placed under two different levels of blockade with those ports from which invasion forces might be launched being under strictest blockade.

Behind the strategic interest, however, lay the underlying need of both sides of the conflict to undermine each others economy by effectively breaking trade embargoes and continuing an export trade. Napoleon attempted to seal off the continent with the issuing of the Berlin Decree in November, 1806, to which Britain responded through Orders in Council forbidding neutral vessels to trade between French controlled ports. This should have made the frigate Captain's job easier, but in fact the government capitalised on the situation by permitting licenced neutral vessels to continue trading; using licences purchased from Britain. Frigate Captains on the Channel Station, therefore, found that an increasing amount of their time was spent chasing and boarding vessels legally licenced by His Majesty's government<sup>301</sup>. This could lead to further difficulties. The

owners or merchants with cargo in a vessel wrongly detained could seek redress and reparation from the Captain of the naval vessel involved and the cost of this could be high. In May, 1813, **Thomas Bladen Capel** - an extremely able commander (with over 8.5 years experience as a frigate Captain)- now commanding the 60-gun Hogue, captured and burnt an American Merchant vessel which the owners subsequently claimed was sailing under Licence. Two years later, when the appeal was heard before the High Court of Admiralty, the decision was found for the owners and Capel was liable for £4,000 compensation. In fact the Government retained a fund to cover officers caught in this situation, provided those officers were deemed to have acted reasonably and in good faith.

In spite of these pitfalls, substantial sums could be and were made by Captains during this period. Not surprisingly, the names of the most successful prize-taking frigate Captains during the first two years of the war will be familiar. Perhaps the most successful of these in 1793-94 was **Sir Andrew Snape Douglas** of the Phaeton. Douglas was already a senior Captain by the outbreak of war, having commanded a squadron of frigates during the American War. He was knighted by the King during one of the monarch's peace time summer excursions at Weymouth, and was given the Phaeton in 1793. In April, 1793, in company with three other ships Douglas captured a copper bottomed French privateer, the General Dumourier 22, which was found to be carrying 680 cases of silver. By remarkable coincidence, later on the same day, he captured a Spanish galleon, the St. Jago/St. Iago.<sup>302</sup> He wrote to his uncle, Sir Andrew Snape Hamond:

*".....The two prizes are of immense value, exceeding Commodore Anson's...You may easily imagine, as success has a very sensible effect upon the human mind, how much we are elated at this stroke of fortune, and I feel much gratified at having been the principal feature in the picture.....Phaeton sails remarkably well...."*<sup>303</sup>

Phaeton's share in the capture was approximately £52,000 which gave Douglas a personal share of £13,000<sup>304</sup>. ( The equivalent of nearly £624,000 at today's rate). Douglas' successes might have accrued still further. Lord Howe, who clearly and understandably took a kindly stance towards him, rewarded him:

*".....Lord Howe gave me a distinguishing pendant, and the command of all the frigates of the fleet<sup>305</sup> formed into a separate squadron. This was the first appointment of the kind that had ever taken place; and, as such, I considered it a very honourable one, although it was very fatigueing....."*<sup>306</sup>

Nearly a year later Howe appointed him his Flag Captain, just in time for the battle of the 1st of June, 1794, during which Douglas received a serious head wound from which he never really recovered. He eventually died as a result in 1797. Nevertheless in approximately 18 months whilst in command of the Phaeton, Douglas managed to take prizes which brought he and his crew a total of approximately £75,000 (of which Douglas would have received £18,750 in two-eighth's shares).

Other successful Captains included Sir Richard Strachan, who was posted at the end of the American War, in 1783 and served in the West Indies as a frigate Captain during the intervening peace. In 1793 he was appointed to the Concorde frigate in the Channel, where he operated in a frigate squadron with Sir Edward Pellew in the Arethusa and Sir John Borlase Warren in the Flora. The amount of Prize Money received by Strachan between 1793-1798 amounted to £6,477 (or £9,715 if sailing independently) over 54% of which came from his capture of La Pauline which alone sold for £22,426-18s-11d gross. Likewise both Pellew and Warren showed considerable success in the first six years of the war. Pellew taking approximately £10,300<sup>307</sup> and Warren £8,932. Though the latter also stood to gain further prize money from the proceeds of the Jean Bart Corvette, Robuste and Etoile, captured in company with Galatea, Richard Keats, Anson, Philip Durham and Artois, Edward Nagle (Warren's Frigate squadron) which brought the four frigates a share of £8,190 cash payment.

Strachan, Warren and Pellew, of course, commanded frigate squadrons; the two latter most famously as independent squadrons operating from Falmouth a few years later. All three served longer than average as frigate Captains<sup>308</sup> and it is easy to see exactly why Pellew was so reluctant to surrender not only his frigate when the time came, but also to return to the control of the Admiral of the Fleet who had previously been unable to claim his customary one-eighth share of the frigate's prize money.

Whilst it is clear that the vast majority of prizes were taken on the Channel and Cork Stations between 1793-98, there is clear evidence that valuable prizes could be taken elsewhere. John Woodley in the Leda, in company with the 50 gun ship Romney, Capt. The Hon. W. Paget) took four French vessels in the Mediterranean in June, 1794, which brought the Leda's crew a total of £4,087-18s-6d in cash.

**Captain Edward Foote** and the crew of the crack frigate Niger received £11,096-17s-7d for the capture of the Spanish brig Natalia and the Caradad in January, 1797. Clearly there were major advantages to be had from sailing in one of the Navy's finest frigates. **Thomas Freemantle** and the crew of the Tartar, received £3,142-11s-8d as their share of Prize Money from the capture of La Sybille French frigate and several other vessels.

The example of **Freemantle**, highlights another facet of Prize Money, that is the reward for capturing an enemy frigate. The capture of a frigate brought a number of bonuses. Firstly there was considerably more kudos in capturing an enemy frigate - and some officers were honoured as a consequence. A frigate capture brought public notice and the very strong possibility of a better command and promotion for the junior officers. Financially, a captured frigate made a better prize because - provided she was not too badly damaged during the capture - it was a relatively cheaper way for the Admiralty to acquire another frigate. Complete with guns, stores and rigging, the Admiralty would pay more than prospective merchant purchasers could or would afford. To the value of hull, stores and weapons would have been added the £5 per man bounty known as Head Money - that is, the bonus for every member of the enemy's crew at the start of the action. The sums received for captured frigates usually greatly exceeded that of both merchant vessels and privateers. **Richard Hill** has estimated that the average proceeds for a privateer were in the region of £1,063 net; and on average about £2,500 for a merchant vessel.<sup>309</sup> During the first few years of the wars **Edward Pellew** and the crew of the Nymphe, received £7,798 for the capture of the French frigate Cleopatre. **Saumarez** and the crew of the Crescent shared £5,239 in cash with **Joseph Sidney Yorke** in the Circe, for the capture of the French frigate La Reunion.

There were also clearly advantages to frigate squadrons sharing Prize Money. In April, 1796, **Pellew's** squadron encountered the French frigate Unite and captured her, although it was **Frank Cole** in the Revolutionnaire whose ship actually engaged the French frigate. Just days later the squadron ran into another French frigate, the Virginie, and captured her, although on this occasion it was **Pellew** himself in the Indefatigable who took the prize. However, all of the frigates took a share in the joint proceeds of the two prizes, as follows:

<u>Argo</u>	<b>Richard Burgess</b>	£2,810
<u>Indefatigable</u>	<b>Sir Edward Pellew</b>	£4,205
<u>Amazon</u>	<b>Richard Carthew Reynolds</b>	£3,929
<u>Concorde</u>	<b>Anthony Hunt (2)</b>	£3,401
<u>Revolutionnaire</u>	<b>Frank Cole</b>	£3,862.

### Autonomy.

Thus far, of course, reference has only been made to the financial attraction of frigate command. Frigate Captains also benefited from a degree of independence which was not, even could not, be applicable to the Captain of a line-of-battle ship attached to a fleet or squadron. There would appear to be few comments from Captains about autonomy, but its value is best judged from the reaction of those officers who suddenly found that they had lost this independence. There is, for example, as just mentioned Edward Pellew's fury at finding that he and his squadron were to be put under the command of Lord Bridport, after several years of successfully cruising in the Channel.<sup>310</sup> There is also the case of Lord Cochrane who claimed that his independent cruising orders from the Admiralty had been embargoed by the Port Admiral at Plymouth and re-copied under his own authority. The effect of this being to place Cochrane under the Port Admiral's orders and entitle him to a share of any Prizes that the Pallas took.<sup>311</sup>

The idea that frigate Captains simply roved the high seas looking for prizes should be carefully avoided for it was not the case. Frigates were usually attached to a squadron or division of one of the fleets, and even though their commanders were often left alone to deal with situations as they arose, they were usually under orders of varying rigidity. This, probably fairly typical example was sent by Nelson to Captain William Parker of the Amazon frigate in December, 1804:

*".....I am going off Toulon to see that all is safe, and it is my present intention to return to 97; but should a heavy gale of N.W. wind come on I shall not allow myself to be driven to the southward of the straits of Bonifacio..., but shall go to Madalena, at which place I shall certainly be before the 7th January; therefore, if you have no chance of getting hold of the squadron from the sketch I have given you of my intentions, and you have many bullocks for us, I would recommend your going to Madalena, and landing Mr. Ford and the cattle, that they may be taken care of.*

*.....Should you have much spare time...between the time of your arrival and the 7th January, I would recommend your cruising off the Coast of Corsica, and try and get the Naurice, a store-ship, which loads timber in the Gulf of Saone....If she is there, you may either take or destroy her, and the French have, they say, 4,000 troops ready for embarking at Ajaccio."*<sup>312</sup>



Sometimes a frigate Captain's orders could be deviously ambiguous. In 1793, Lord Hood, commanding the Mediterranean fleet, dispatched Captain **George Lumsdaine** in the Isis 32 with both the Mermaid frigate, Captain **John Trigge** and Commander **Thomas Byam Martin** in the Tisiphone sloop under his command to deliver presents to the Bey of Tripoli. Both Martin and Lumsdaine were summoned to Hood's cabin in the Victory prior to their departure and were informed that they were also charged to deliver a dispatch for the consul at Tunis. Such great emphasis was laid on this latter point that both officers were left puzzled as to its importance and the rather curious way in which their orders had been expressed. In due course, Martin in the Tisiphone was sent ahead of the small squadron to sail into Tunis and return. On approaching Tunis he realised that a French frigate lay in wait for him, preceding him into the port. Anxious not to break the rules of neutrality, Martin entered the port, delivered the dispatch and sailed back to join his squadron. On their successful return to the Fleet Lumsdaine and Martin found themselves under threat of court martial for failing to obey orders - it becoming apparent that Hood had intended Lumsdaine to use the Tisiphone as bait, hoping that if the French succumbed to the temptation to seize her, Lumsdaine and the rest of the fleet would have a general excuse to attack all French shipping in the neutral ports along the African shore. In the end, Lumsdaine was Court Martialled and fully acquitted.<sup>313</sup>

The loss of autonomy could be felt even more acutely by the frigate Captain if the Admiral decided that, for whatever reason, he was going to travel in that frigate itself. In February, 1809, **Sir Michael Seymour**, in the Amethyst, left Plymouth to take up his station blockading L'Orient. As passenger he carried Admiral **Sir Robert Stopford**, in charge of the blockading squadron. The Amethyst struggled through very foul weather constantly changing course as the wind shifted to threaten her with a lee shore, but at least Seymour knew his destination: that is until,

*".....wearing, and pushing hard to get round the Saints for my passage to this station, I first heard from my amiable, excellent Admiral that he meant to call at Glenans to give the L'Orient squadron....some orders.."*<sup>314</sup>

The frustration of this situation can only really be appreciated by reading the full letter from Seymour to his brother Captain, **Edward Hawker**.

Where frigate commanders would appear to have had the most freedom was, as Cochrane was aware, under direct Admiralty orders. But this was granted to a minority. In the months of July, 1793-95, for example between 15-20% of the frigate force was sailing under Admiralty orders,

but this included Convoy duty as well as Cruising or secret orders. In the same months for 1796-97 8 and 4 frigates (i.e. 6% & 3% ) respectively were engaged on these duties - however, during these two years there also existed the independent frigate squadrons under **Pellew and Warren**, who were also engaged on cruising duties in the Channel. During the second war the number of frigates sailing under independent orders seems to have been generally much less than in the first war.<sup>315</sup>

### Prestige.

There was another reason why frigate service was so popular although to the younger midshipmen this attraction was inevitably bound up with money. The narrative of **William Henry Dillon**, records his feelings as a midshipman at anchor in Plymouth Sound, in 1793:

*"....A French frigate, la Blonde, came in here as a prize one day. The official account of her capture as well as that of several others afterwards, always created a great deal of excitement amongst the Mids. of the Defence, as we were, comparatively speaking, doing nothing, whilst our frigates were making prizes daily...."*<sup>316</sup> and *"...Several of the Mids. became dissatisfied with the duty of a line of battle ship. They were not only anxious for more active service, but also to touch some Prize money. Their applications to the Captain [Gambier] to remove them into frigates annoyed him, and he used frequently to declare, "You are all frigate mad"..."*<sup>317</sup>

Dillon was perhaps particularly attracted to the money. Others weren't. The young **Abraham Crawford**, serving as Midshipman on board the frigate Revolutionnaire, Captain Twysden, recalled :

*"....Everybody, even to the least boy in the ship, felt an interest in her fame; and the histories of the chase and capture of the Bordelais and Determinee, two large French privateers, were so familiar to me, that I almost fancied I had been a sharer in the frigate's wonderful exploits upon those memorable occasions..."*<sup>318</sup>

This sense of identification had another dimension in that, in the dockyard towns in particular, the famous frigates would be well known to other seamen and the public. Being part of the crew of one of those frigates would, therefore, bring its own prestige.

Another young midshipman who commented in similar vein was Frederick Chamier, who was moved from the Salsette frigate to a 74:

*"...I confess I did not much like the change, for in those days a certain stigma was attached to midshipmen who belonged to line-of-battle ships, while the midshipmen of frigates were the aristocracy of their grade in the profession...."* <sup>319</sup>

The Midshipmen of frigates were considered - or at least they considered themselves - the Aristocracy of their grade because they were usually deeply involved in their frigate's activities. If one of the major activities of a frigate was the "cutting-out expedition", that is, sending in boats of seamen to board and capture an enemy vessel in a hostile port, one of the major duties of a frigate's Midshipmen was to lead those boats, usually under the direction of the First Lieutenant. A frigate's Midshipman was therefore not only likely to be wealthier<sup>320</sup> than his ship of the line counterpart because of his share of prize money, he was also likely to be more experienced in terms of seeing action.

Captain Frederick Marryatt, who served as a Midshipman in the Imperieuse under Captain Lord Cochrane referred to this in his unashamedly autobiographical first novel *Frank Mildmay*. Transferred from the frigate to the Admiral's flag ship, - *"I should have much preferred remaining in the frigate, whose Captain also wished it, but that was not allowed..."* - Marryatt found himself just one of between sixty and seventy midshipmen.

*"They were mostly youngsters, followers of the rear-admiral, and had seen very little, if any, service and I had seen a great deal for the time I had been afloat. Listening eagerly to my "yarns," the youthful ardour of these striplings kindled, and they longed to emulate my deeds. The consequence was numerous applications from the Midshipmen to be allowed to join the frigates on the station; not one was contented in the flag-ship....."* <sup>321</sup>

And it was not just the Midshipmen of frigates who were conscious of a difference between themselves and the crews of other ships. In 1794, Lt John Surman Carden was in his twenties and apparently languishing on board a ship of the line, The Queen Charlotte. Although he was under the command of his patron, he realised that as the junior of nine Lieutenants his chances of promotion in a first rate ship of the line were remote.

*".....I could not do myself the injustice to remain the Junior of nine Lieutenants in any ship during a hot war, While any other situation afloat would offer me brighter prospects of*

*furtherance in the Service, and as such...I felt myself entitled to become First Lieutenant of a Frigate....”* <sup>322</sup>

Frigates therefore offered the chance of pecuniary reward to those who served in them, whilst at the same time the nature of frigate service enabled the officers and crews to experience a much more direct role in the activities in which they were engaged. This can be explained quite simply. For the officers of a frigate sent out on patrol or cruising, their detachment from the close watch of the Admiral gave them a sense of autonomy and an encouragement to use their initiative which would have been stifled when attached to a fleet. This autonomy and initiative could pay huge dividends both in terms of fame and prize money. For the crews, being one man in a crew of three hundred, (as opposed to one man in a crew of between 800-1000), could only make one's personal contribution the more important and less anonymous. It is this simple fact which enabled some frigate Captains to develop extraordinary relationships with their crews. It also enabled the crews to develop a very keen sense of self-identity, especially when they came together as a team in one of the frigate squadrons.

In 1795 when Sir Graham Moore Captain of the Syren frigate joined Sir Richard Strachan's frigate squadron in the Channel, he noted in his journal:

*“...There is the strongest attachment to each other among the crews of these three frigates [Melampus, Diamond & Syren]. I have always encouraged and promoted it as much as I could, as I think it of very great importance to the service, that ships acting together should be on the most cordial terms with each other....”* <sup>323</sup>

It is certain that the crews of frigates, serving together for considerable periods, developed a close affinity and under a good Captain could be welded into a very efficient team. It may be for this reason that although the Admiralty adopted a policy of dispersing crews of line of battle ships when they were paid off ( apparently to prevent the development of potentially radical associations) frigate crews were often turned over complete to another frigate - usually under the same Captain. E.C.W.R. Owen, for example, was allowed to transfer his entire crew and officers on three different occasions.<sup>324</sup> Michael Seymour was allowed to transfer his entire crew from the Amethyst to the Niemen. Sir Edward Pellew was allowed to transfer the crew of the Nymphe across to the Arethusa and subsequently to the Indefatigable.<sup>325</sup> The difficulties caused when this didn't happen are well illustrated by the story of the very promising Captain Thomas

Twysden who had commanded frigates for nearly five years by 1801, when he was commanding the crack frigate Revolutionnaire:

*"...Having been ordered into Plymouth to refit one winter, under Lord St. Vincent's administration, the whole of his ship's Company was taken from him. Consequently he had to reman the frigate. When he had accomplished that task, and going to sea with a new crew, he was so dissatisfied with their lubberly proceedings that it brought on a fit of passion, during which he fell down in his cabin a dead man."*<sup>326</sup>

When seamen from frigates were dispersed to different ships of the line they were sometimes recognisably different from the seamen from other ships. Crawford, who had himself been serving under Owen in a frigate, joined the first rate Royal George and observed of her crew:

*"...Those who had served chiefly in ships of the line, or passed much of their lives in guard ships, ..were well skilled in slang, and even their ordinary conversation was garnished and interlarded with a superabundance of oaths and obscenity. The collection from sloops of war and gun-brigs might be known by an absence of good breeding, and a certain slouching vulgarity and slovenliness of appearance; while those of the frigate-school differed widely from both. Of this they seemed themselves aware, avoiding as much as they could an intimacy with the others, and forming as much as possible, a society apart."*<sup>327</sup>

This is a fascinating comment by the observant Crawford. Unfortunately, of course, he doesn't state exactly how the frigate seamen differed but it can be assumed that Crawford meant that they were less vulgar in their language and more self-conscious in their appearance. The implication being that they were generally less vulgar and in some way of a higher social rank within the seaman's world. This may be wishful thinking on Crawford's part but it is also worth pointing out his choice of the words "frigate-school" to describe some form of collective identity.

Crawford's observations were not limited to the hands:

*"In the Clyde I felt myself to be an officer of some little consequence. I frequently was placed in charge of the deck, and never was ordered to perform any duty but such as comported with my years and standing in the service. In my new ship, on the contrary, I was but one, and I believe the youngest one of a host of passed midshipmen, who were no more regarded, nor their feelings consulted, as to the duty they were required to perform, than if they had entered the service the day before.*

*.....What, for instance, can be more wounding to the feelings of a young man, who has passed his examination and is qualified in all respects - by birth, by years, and by experience - to fill the situation, and do the duty, of a Lieutenant, than to be ordered, as I have been, to attend with a boat upon the Captain's pleasure, laqueying him like the menial who stands behind your chair, or opens your carriage at the opera?...<sup>328</sup>*

This is another deeply interesting comment from Crawford. Firstly because it gives clear evidence of the class consciousness that increasingly underlay the officer corps at the beginning of the 19th century. It must be said that in his "Reminiscences", Crawford rarely speaks in such a tone, but here there is an element of bitterness arising from his changed circumstances. It must be remembered that the cause of this emotion is the fact that Crawford has been reduced in status. In other words, on board the Clyde he carried a higher status than on the line of battle ship. This may be a reflection of the command style of his former Captain Edward Owen. On the other hand, given comments that have been presented from other sources, it is more likely that it was the nature of service in a frigate that gave greater status.

This is quite easily explained. Crawford himself points out that in a line of battle ship he was just one of a larger number of "passed midshipmen". But it was not so much a matter of rank as of number. In a frigate there were simply fewer men to carry out the same number of duties and therefore, every officer, even a midshipman had to carry a heavier responsibility. Furthermore, the nature of frigate duties meant that the crew would be under greater strain for longer periods, and under a good commander, this could lead to a high level of (unacknowledged) teamwork among both hands and officers. In the Clyde, it is unlikely that Midshipman Crawford was expected to carry out the menial duties he experienced in the Royal George, because he could not be spared for it<sup>329</sup> - not because of his social status although this would undoubtedly have had a bearing on the matter. Likewise, if he was not kept "laqueying" around by Captain Owen, it was probably because Owen's duties kept him away from the idleness or social requirements in which many Captains indulged.<sup>330</sup> There is another point, of course, which is that Crawford's Captain in the Royal George, was the Captain of a line-of-battle-ship rather than a frigate and it may have been more important for him to give a visible display of his status in having junior officers waiting around for him. Just as on land the number of one's servants provided a visible gauge of social importance, so at sea might the number of junior officers.

For the Post Captain the most tangible symbol of prestige, apart from being given employment or command of a squadron, was probably the acquisition of either a Knighthood or elevation to the peerage. The obvious question to ask at this point is whether a Post Captain stood a better chance of obtaining this sort of recognition in a frigate or a ship of the line? The Captain of a ship-of-the-line actually stood little chance of gaining a Knighthood, even after a major fleet action. Scrutiny of the rewards after two such engagements will serve as an illustration.

#### The Battle of Cape St. Vincent.

**Commander-in-Chief** - Admiral Jervis was raised to the Peerage as Baron Jervis & Earl St. Vincent. He was also given a pension of £3,000 p.a.

**Vice-Admirals** - Thompson became a baronet. Waldegrave already had a title<sup>331</sup> as the son of a peer and declined a knighthood. So he was given an Irish Peerage.

**Rear-Admirals** - Parker became a Baronet.

Captain Robert Calder (Jervis's Flag Captain) received a Knighthood because he was sent home with dispatches. Other Captains received a gold medal. Commodore Nelson, technically a Vice-Admiral, although this was only known at home at the time of the battle, was also knighted.

#### The Battle of Camperdown.

**Commander-in-Chief** - Admiral Duncan was created Baron Duncan & Viscount Duncan of Camperdown.

**Vice-Admiral** - Onslow became a Baronet.

Captains Trollope and Fairfax were sent home with despatches and made Knight- Bannerets. (Fairfax was Duncan's Flag Captain).

All other Captains received a gold medal (with the exception of Williamson who was court martialled for cowardice and found guilty).

From this it can be seen that it was really only the flag Captain and the bearer of dispatches who could expect to be knighted following a fleet engagement<sup>332</sup>. At Camperdown there were 16 English ships of the line involved; at St. Vincent there were 15. The Post Captain involved in a major engagement, therefore, had little chance of being honoured.

During the wars there were approximately forty-seven single-ship frigate actions. In twenty-seven of these engagements the enemy ship was either captured or destroyed. In only five cases (possibly six) was the Captain honoured. The reason for this would seem to lie partly in the nature of the ships involved in the engagement.

The first Knighthood awarded to a frigate Captain was that given to Edward Pellew in June, 1793, following the capture of the French frigate Cleopatre by the Nymphe.<sup>333</sup> This being the first contest between the two navies it is hardly surprising that a British victory should be celebrated. What was ignored at the time was the fact that the French frigate could fire a broadside of only 286lbs compared with the Nymphe's 322lbs, though as in virtually all similar engagements the crew of the British ship was significantly smaller. Four months later the Crescent captured the French frigate Reunion in the second successful frigate action of the war.<sup>334</sup> The Crescent's Captain, James Saumarez was also knighted though the honour on this occasion was somewhat soured by the fact that an attempt was made to make Saumarez pay a fee for his knighthood. In November, 1793, he wrote to his brother:

*"..I am not quite so pleased with a letter from Mr. Cooke, who has the distribution of the fees<sup>335</sup> which he says are due from those who receive the honour of a knighthood, and which amount to 103l. 6s. 8d. In reply to this I have referred him to whoever paid the above fees for Sir E. Pellew, on whom that honour was conferred on a similar occasion.....I think it hard to pay so much for an honour which my services have been thought to deserve."<sup>336</sup>*

The Crescent was a much closer match to her opponent. In May, 1794, however, the tiny 28-gun Carysfort captured the Castor which had been taken from the Royal Navy three weeks previously. The broadside weight of the British frigate was only 73% that of her opponent and therefore this could be regarded as a significant victory. However her Captain, Francis Laforey did not receive a knighthood. The reason for this would seem to have been a dispute which immediately broke out as to whether the Castor could justly be regarded as a Prize or as Salvage. The



Admiralty seem to have considered that she was Salvage as she had not been taken into an enemy port. Laforey and his officers disputed the ruling and won their case.<sup>337</sup>

In April, 1795, the 12-pounder 32-gun frigate Astraea under the command of Lord Henry Paulet captured the 40-gun Gloire, a French frigate whose broadside weighed 112lbs more than the Astraea. Paulet received no Knighthood, but then he was already titled. The disparity between the two frigates was significant, but Astraea was not totally alone during the action for, although she alone engaged the Gloire, other ships under the command of Rear-Admiral Sir John Colpoys were also in chase.<sup>338</sup> This was not the case in June, 1796, when the British frigates Santa Margarita, Captain Thomas Byam Martin and Unicorn, Captain Thomas Williams, engaged two French frigates North West of Scilly.

As a result of this engagement Martin, in the 12-pounder Santa Margarita, captured the slightly heavier Tamise, whilst Williams, who was also the senior Captain, in the 18-pounder frigate Unicorn captured the smaller French frigate, Tribune. Perhaps because it was convention, it was the senior Captain Thomas Williams who received a Knighthood although it was probably the Captain of the Santa Margarita who had overcome the greater odds<sup>339</sup>. E.P. Brenton apparently thought that Williams had been knighted because he had overcome a ship of superior force;<sup>340</sup> this was certainly not the case, although he might equally have been knighted for capturing two French frigates.

Later in 1796, Lord Amelius Beauclerk in the Dryad captured the smaller French frigate Proserpine. Apart from the fact that Beauclerk was already titled, the capture of a smaller ship no longer seemed to have attracted public attention in any strong sense. In October of that same year, Richard Bowen in the 32gun 12-pounder Terpsichore captured the 34-gun 12-pounder Spanish frigate Mahonesa after an action which William James described as “..as fair a match as an English officer would wish to fight, or an English writer to record..”<sup>341</sup> By late 1796, even a fair match was no guarantee of obtaining honours and, sadly for Bowen, he was killed less than two years later during the attack on Santa Cruz.<sup>342</sup>

In October, 1798, Thomas Byam Martin, now commanding the 18-pounder Fisgard engaged and captured the slightly more heavily armed French frigate Immortalite. This was his second important frigate engagement and, as on the previous occasion, he was successful. However,

Martin received no public honour. In fact the first real honour conferred on Martin was that of the Order of the Sword, by the King of Sweden in 1808 following an engagement with a Russian 74. He did eventually receive a knighthood in the summer of 1814, but neither of these were the result of his command of a frigate.<sup>343</sup> Between 1798 and 1806 there were a small number of single frigate actions - but many of these involved smaller opponents or demonstrated other clear reasons why a knighthood was not conferred; as for example in the case of the capture of the French La Forte by the British frigate Sibylle in the Indian Ocean in 1799, where the English Captain Edward Cooke was mortally wounded.

After the resumption of war against Napoleonic France in 1803 there was no early reason for celebrating a frigate action. In fact the first three possible frigate engagements of the war, all in 1805, gave just cause for concern. In February, 1805 the Cleopatre, commanded by Sir Robert Laurie was forced to surrender to a French frigate; five months later the Blanche, Captain Zachary Mudge, was captured by the Topaze. Finally, days after the loss of the Blanche, the Aeolus, commanded by Lord William Fitzroy, rather conspicuously and suspiciously avoided an engagement with the French frigate Didon.<sup>344</sup>

In July, 1806, however, another British Frigate also called the Blanche commanded by Captain Thomas Lavie captured the similarly armed French frigate Guerriere off the Faro Islands. Shortly after bringing his prize into Yarmouth, Lavie was given a knighthood. The reason for this distinction seems to have no direct bearing on the nature of the action itself - for it was not so different from earlier unmarked engagements. In this case it would seem that Lavie was honoured because of his success in completing a specific mission. The Guerriere was one of three French frigates sent into the waters between Iceland, Greenland and Spitzbergen to prey on British and Russian whalers. In spite of the Blanche's success and the fact that two other British frigates continued to hunt for the remaining French raiders, the French squadron continued its activities until September, having destroyed a total of 29 merchant vessels.<sup>345</sup>

In October, 1806, Captain Peter Rainier, of the 18-pounder frigate Caroline braved the overwhelming force of a Dutch light squadron off Batavia Road to capture the 12-pounder frigate Maria-Riggersbergen. Rainier, aged only 22 was the nephew of Admiral Peter Rainier, who had been Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies station until the previous year. As a prize the Maria-Riggersbergen was probably not so remarkable, but Rainier's action in taking her was. There

was no official recognition of this action - perhaps because Rainier was so young, and perhaps because he had been eased through the ranks so blatantly by his uncle.<sup>346</sup> There may be another reason, which will be explained after the next case.

In 1809, Captain Michael Seymour was granted a Baronetcy following his second capture of a French frigate in the Bay of Biscay within twelve months<sup>347</sup>. Seymour was one of only two frigate Captains to have been so honoured for a single ship action during the whole course of the wars. In fact, Seymour was the last frigate Captain to be honoured at all until 1813 when Philip Broke took the Chesapeake, for which he also received a Baronetcy. Broke's case, is somewhat exceptional in that Britain was absolutely desperate for a naval victory against the big American frigates, and Broke provided the result so desperately craved. This is not to detract from the achievement of the Shannon, which was the result of a brilliant action, but merely to put the reaction to the event into context.

What will not be apparent from the information given, but will nevertheless be found to be true, is that with the exception of Broke and the Shannon, no honours were given to frigate Captains for actions on foreign stations. All were awarded for engagements around the coast of Britain or off the West coast of France. This might explain why Rainier and Bowen were not honoured for actions in the East Indies and Mediterranean respectively, although it does not explain why certain deserving frigate actions in "Home Waters" were not honoured; for example, Laforey was not honoured - as Castor was captured some 200 miles North West of Ferrol on the Spanish coast. Nor does it explain why Byam Martin was never honoured.

It is also curious that William Hoste, the Captain of the Amphion and Commodore of the victorious frigate squadron at the Battle of Lissa (in the Adriatic) in 1811 received no knighthood following an action which was widely regarded as brilliant at the time. He was made a Baronet in July, 1814, and then, at the beginning of 1815, he was made a Knight Commander of the new Order of the Bath .<sup>348</sup>

## Chapter 6 The Frigate Specialists.

In Chapter three it was shown that a small number of Captains were given extraordinarily long periods in command of frigates (table 3.9.). It was also shown that some Captains were still commanding frigates after they had been on the List of Post Captains for at least twelve years (table 3.8.), thereby reaching a position of some seniority on the list of Post Captains. In this Chapter those officers will be identified and their careers assessed. If the average length of frigate service was approximately 3.5 years and approximately 91% of frigate Captains served for not more than six years, it follows that the fifty-three remaining officers were extraordinary even if judged only by their frigate time.

**Table 6.1. Frigate Captains With More Than Six Years Frigate Service.<sup>349</sup>**

Name	Date posted	Frigate service (years)	Years between posting and end of frigate service*
Richard Goodwin Keats **	June, 1789	7.00	12
Charles Hamilton **	Nov, 1790	8.75	12
Thomas Williams **	" "	8.00	
Lawrence W. Halstead	May, 1791	7.25	
Harry Burrard Neale **	Feb, 1793	7.25	
Joseph Sidney Yorke **	" "	8.00	
The Hon. Arthur Kay Legge	" "	8.00	
Robert Barlow **	May, 1793	7.75	
Philip Charles Durham **	June, 1793	8.25	
George Cockburn **	Feb, 1794	8.75	
Thomas Graves (4) <sup>350</sup>	March, 1794	9.25	
Graham Moore **	April, 1794	8.25	
Richard King (2) **	May, 1794	7.50	
Edward James Foote **	June, 1794	8.00	
James Newman	Aug, 1794	7.25	
Philip Wilkinson	Sept, 1794	7.25	
Charles John Mansfield	Oct, 1794	7.00	
John Gore (2) **	Nov, 1794	9.25	
The Hon Charles Herbert	April, 1795	8.50	
Henry Blackwood **	June, 1795	8.25	
John Erskine Douglas	" "	9.25	
Ross Donnelly **	" "	10.00	12
Thomas Le Marchant Gossellin **	July, 1795	7.25	
James Macnamara (2) **	Oct, 1795	8.00	
Stephen Poyntz	Oct, 1796	7.00	
Robert Laurie	July, 1797	10.00	13
Edward W.C.R. Owen **	April, 1798	11.50	15
David Atkins	May, 1798	8.50	
The Hon Thomas Bladen Capel **	Dec, 1798	8.50	12
Charles Adam **	June, 1799	7.50	

Adam Mackenzie	Sept, 1799	8.75	14
Thomas James Maling	Sept, 1800	8.50	
George Wolfe	Dec, 1800	8.50	
William Selby	“ “	8.00	
George Mundy	Feb, 1801	8.00	
Henry Vansittart **	“ “	8.25	
Philip Bowes Vere Broke **	“ “	8.50	13
George Sayer (2)	“ “	7.25	13
Frederick L. Maitland **	March, 1801	8.00	
William Parker (2) **	Oct, 1801	7.50	
William Hoste **	Jan, 1802	7.75	12
Stephen Thomas Digby	April, 1802	8.25	12
The Hon Duncan P. Bouverie	“ “	7.50	
Richard Hawkins	“ “	7.00	12
Philip Somerville	“ “	11.75	12
Clotworthy Upton	“ “	7.50	
Bridges Watkinson Taylor	Aug, 1802	7.75	
Charles Malcolm **	Dec, 1802	7.50	12
The Hon George Elliott (2) **	Jan, 1804	9.25	
James Hillyar **	Feb, 1804	7.75	
Lord George Stuart (2)	March, 1804	8.75	
John Tower	May, 1804	7.25	
Fleetwood B.R. Pellew **	Oct, 1808 <sup>351</sup>	7.00	

\* where more than 12 years.

\*\* - after the name indicates the officer has an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books*).

Twenty-eight of the officers on this list are recognised in this fashion. Perhaps not surprisingly any student of naval history will recognise some of these names.

### Rate of Promotion, Social Background and “interest”.

Nearly half of the officers on this list were promoted from Lieutenant to Post Captain in less than six years, which would appear to have been about the average rate of promotion for a typical frigate Captain. (see Chapter 3). However the overall average rate of promotion for all of the officers on the list is 7 years, which confirms that the rate of promotion for this group was generally quite good. When considering the promotion rate of the DEF Officer Sample (Chapter 2), it was found that those officers who were passing for Lieutenant from 1790 onwards were passing from Lieutenant to Post Captain in between 4-7 years. With this list of frigate specialists, however, 67% were promoted in seven or less years and 34% in four years or less.

Several officers should be noted for their particularly rapid race through the ranks: George Cockburn (1 year), The Hon Charles Herbert (2 years), The Hon Thomas Bladen Capel (1 year), Charles Adam (1 year), William Parker (2 years).

It may be immediately apparent why some of these rapid promotions took place for they were extremely well connected with powerful interest.

**George Cockburn** was a favourite of Nelson and had won the approval of Jervis who was Commander in Chief in the Mediterranean, where Cockburn's promotions took place. Cockburn's rapid rise through the ranks was unquestionably based upon his abilities, particularly as a seaman<sup>352</sup>, and although he certainly had the patronage of Lord Hood when he entered the navy, much of his powerful interest was won by merit. Cockburn's father was an MP and some of his brothers had success in their own careers, e.g. his eldest brother became a General and later Governor of Bermuda; another brother, also a General became Governor of Curacoa and Honduras. Others achieved high rank in the church and consular service.

**The Hon Charles Herbert** was the second son of the Earl of Carnarvon and had a number of powerful connections, including the Byng family; whilst **The Hon Thomas Bladen Capel** was the youngest son of the Earl of Essex, and served as a Lieutenant under Nelson at the Battle of the Nile. It was Capel whom Nelson selected to deliver his dispatches overland after the battle, thereby marking him for extraordinary favour for, not only had Nelson promoted him Commander immediately after the battle, but by sending him home with dispatches, he ensured his protégé yet further promotion. The fact is that Capel had only been promoted Lieutenant in April, 1797. Nelson made him a Commander on 2nd October, 1798, and less than three months later he was a Post Captain.<sup>353</sup> This favour was however double edged, for when Capel as commander of the Mutine brig was sent to Naples to begin his journey overland to Britain, his second-in-command was Lieutenant William Hoste who, upon the departure of Capel, became a Commander and Captain of the brig.<sup>354</sup>

**Charles Adam and William Parker** both benefited from powerful naval interest. Charles Adam was the son of the Rt. Hon. William Adam, Lord Chief Commissioner of the Scottish Jury Court<sup>355</sup>. He also just happened to be the nephew of Admiral George Keith Elphinstone (Later Lord Keith) under whom he served and was promoted on several occasions. Adam's promotion might have been considerably faster. His Uncle, Elphinstone, promoted him to Acting Captain of the Carysfort frigate in the East Indies. Upon his return to England he was rather bluntly informed by Spencer that due to an irregularity in his certificates his Lieutenant's commission had been disallowed and he was actually only a Midshipman! He re-sat his Lieutenant's examination

the next day and in a short time became a Post Captain for the second time before the age of twenty.<sup>356</sup> **William Parker** was the nephew of **John Jervis** (later Earl St. Vincent) and although this may be sufficient to explain his rapid promotion it is worth noting that his early service, as a Midshipman, was in the West Indies where the mortality rate together with the necessity of placing Midshipmen in charge if Prizes meant that an energetic young officer would soon be noticed and promoted.<sup>357</sup> Parker does not seem to have been related to the contemporary flag officer of the same name, but there is evidence that he benefited from the interest of his grandfather, the Earl of Macclesfield.<sup>358</sup>

Being well connected may have played some part in the speed of promotion. Social background would obviously continue to have an effect throughout the Captain's career, notwithstanding the fact that he was on the automatic ladder of promotion. Interest could help to secure employment - but to what extent did this happen? If interest was the crucial factor which it is often made out to be, we would expect to see a concentration of well connected officers among the list of long serving frigate Captains.

In fact, among the 53 names now under discussion, there were certainly a number with strong interest behind them. Approximately eleven Captains were closely connected with the peerage or other ranks of the landed gentry. **Sir Harry Neale (aka Burrard)**, for example was the nephew of a Baronet (and actually inherited during the course of his career as a frigate Captain). **The Hon Arthur Kay Legge** was the son of the Earl of Dartmouth; **Sir Charles Hamilton** was related to the Duke of Brandon.<sup>359</sup> However, there were also Post Captains of aristocratic stock who did not flourish in their naval career<sup>360</sup> and as a consequence, the names do not appear on this list. For, whilst powerful landed interest could be enormously helpful, it was not enough on its own to guarantee employment. **Frederick Lewis Maitland**, for example, was well connected being a cousin of the Earl of Lauderdale. St. Vincent had been a friend of his late father, and as a consequence promised to promote him whenever the opportunity should occur.<sup>361</sup> But in addition to this, Maitland was an exemplary seaman and excelled as a cruiser both when a Commander and later, as a frigate Captain.

The issue of family connection is well illustrated in the example of a cousin of F.L. Maitland, **Captain John Maitland (2)**. John Maitland not only benefited from the family connection he was also the second Lieutenant of the Lively under the acting command of Captain **George Burlton**

when she encountered the French frigate Tourterelle. The following quotation from a letter dated 17th March, 1795, just a few days after the action, from the King to Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, illustrates the matter rather nicely:

*"...I am much pleased with the gallant action of the Lively with the Tourterelle French frigate transmitted to me by Earl Spencer, and with Captain Burlton having been in consequence promoted to the rank of Post Captain, and the First Lieutenant to that of Master and Commander. As the second Lieutenant Mr. Maitland conducted himself very well I trust he will soon meet with the same favour; being a man of good family will I hope also be of advantage in the consideration, as it is certainly wise as much as possible to give encouragement, if they personally deserve it, to gentlemen."*<sup>362</sup>

Maitland was subsequently made Commander in December, 1796! Which rather shows that even the King's interest might not override other considerations. However, the use of the provision ("if they personally deserve it") should not be overlooked. Whilst there is probably no reason for believing that Spencer was any less discriminatory about promotion than, say St. Vincent, there is no doubt that the latter was scornful about his record on this subject.<sup>363</sup> John Maitland later served as a frigate Captain for a total of just over five years.

The question of social background and frigate command is further illuminated in the correspondence of St. Vincent. In April, 1802, writing to Admiral Markham, he commented:

*"...Captain Capel will look to a higher rate than the Aurora: she will do for Captain Wolfe, Lord Spencer's friend, who I wish very much to employ.....Captain Fane has been very strenuously recommended for employment; he being an honourable, his fitness for a storeship is doubtful, therefore you had best put him in one of the vacant sloops....."*<sup>364</sup>

It was therefore not thought appropriate to keep well connected officers in the less glamorous ships of the service. Note also that **George Wolfe** ( who also features in the list of the longest serving frigate Captains) had attracted St. Vincent's attention in addition to, or in spite of, the fact that he was 'Lord Spencer's friend'.

One other factor which should be mentioned about Maitland is the fact that his father was also a naval Captain. At least six of the names on the above list were the sons of naval officers.<sup>365</sup> Seven more had very strong naval connections. **William Parker** (nephew of St. Vincent); **Charles Malcolm** (nephew of Admiral Thomas Pasley); **James Newman** (related to the Hood family); **Philip Wilkinson** ( Nephew to Sir Philip Stephens, Secretary to the Admiralty, and



related to Viscount Ranelagh)<sup>366</sup> ; **Stephen Poyntz** (distantly related to the Spencers); **Charles Adam** ( Grandson of Lord Keith); and **George Wolfe** (who had the strong patronage of Lady Spencer in particular).

A number of the other officers on the list provided details of their family background to John Marshall for his *Royal Naval Biography*. The Church, Army, Public Office (including Parliament) and Medicine are represented among the occupation of the fathers concerned. Others are less clear. What, for example, does one make of the fact that **Captain Thomas Maling's** father was "Mr Maling of West Donnington, County Durham".<sup>367</sup> Others simply do not seem to have wanted to provide information about their family background (e.g. **Richard Hawkins, James Hillyar**).<sup>368</sup> Only eight of the Captains on the list were sufficiently involved in politics to become members of parliament and half of these were elected to parliament some time after the end of the Napoleonic War.<sup>369</sup>

#### Posting and appointment.

Contrary to expectations, comparatively few of the officers on this list were posted on foreign stations by the direct patronage of the station commander. In the case of at least 60%, promotion to Post Captain came by order of the Admiralty. In only about seven cases did promotion arise because of the patronage of the local station commander, the majority of these occurring on the Mediterranean station. **George Cockburn** and **James Macnamara**, for example were promoted by Lord Hood in the Mediterranean 1794 & 1795 respectively; **George Elliott** was promoted by Nelson in 1804. In addition to these **Capel, Hoste** and **Hillyar** were posted by Admiralty Order whilst serving under Nelson's command on the same station and at Nelson's very direct intervention. **F. L. Maitland** was promoted by Lord Keith during his tenure as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean station.

**Lord George Stuart** and **Fleetwood Pellew** were both posted in the East Indies, the latter during his father's period as Commander-in-Chief. Other officers may have had strong family connections or patronage, but their elevation to Post Captain was not achieved on an overseas station.

Approximately 22% of the longest serving officers were posted direct into a frigate. Most of these promotions occurred in the years before 1796. Parker and Hoste were posted into frigates after between 4-6 months delay, later in the war; and during the second war, Charles Malcolm, The Hon. George Elliot, James Hillyar, Lord George Stuart and Fleetwood Pellew were all posted directly into a frigate. Such a posting depended on both a powerful friend and a recognition of ability. This is why many of the names on this list are recognisable. Some, because of their connection with Nelson, others because they earned a degree of fame. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that officers with little ability would probably not have remained in frigate command for long periods. Of the names on the list given here 27, i.e. 51%, were in continuous command of frigates, without break, which strongly suggests that they had considerable interest or ability, or both. A further six Captains experienced short breaks in between frigates, of between 6-10 months. At least nine others experienced longer breaks coinciding with the Peace of Amiens and, as already noted, their inactivity was more likely the result of wider de-commissioning of frigates than a conscious decision not to employ them. This leaves only 11 frigate Captains (21%) who actually served for significant periods in ships of other rates or were unemployed for long periods within the span of their frigate service. Furthermore, with the noticeable exception of Sir Robert Barlow who transferred from the 18-pounder frigate Phoebe to the 12-pounder frigate Concorde in 1801, every Captain on the list progressed from lighter to heavier frigates. This does need to be slightly qualified. There are several examples of brief, temporary commissions where the situation is different. The Hon Duncan Bouverie for example was given the 12-pounder frigate Braave for about three months in 1803. Upon leaving her he was unemployed for about 18 months until he was given the 9-pounder frigate Mercury. Thomas Gossellin, likewise, was given an 18-pounder frigate<sup>370</sup> for three months., but was then immediately given the 12-pounder frigate Syren, which he retained for five years. Ross Donnelley ended a very successful five year commission in the 18-pounder frigate Narcissus with a few months commanding the 12-pounder frigate Franchise. However, it must be re-emphasised that these exceptions were of minimal duration.

These Captains were therefore, by the criteria that has been analysed and defined earlier in this thesis, exceptional officers. This raises the obvious question of what it was that made them exceptional. It is at this point that deeper consideration has to be given to their active service.

## Station.

It is possible from the information derived from the Admiralty List Books, to obtain an approximate location for most of the navy's frigates during the wars. It has already been noted that the List Books are vague ( and sometimes out of date) on this matter; yet for a general review it is possible to identify roughly where a ship - and of course its Captain - was in each month. At **Appendix 6.1** at the end of this chapter, the reader will find a schedule detailing this information.

The schedule of stations on which each specialist frigate Captain served during his frigate service reveals a number of interesting points. Firstly it is noticeable that in most cases these frigate Captains were sent to the same station several times in succession or appear to have been retained in one area. This is particularly true of officers commanding in home waters (i.e. North Sea, Channel, and coast of Ireland)<sup>371</sup>,

**Richard Keats, Thomas Williams, Philip Durham, Richard King (2), Edward Owen, George Wolfe, Joseph Sidney Yorke, The Hon A.K. Legge and Frederick Maitland** all appear to have served more or less exclusively in home waters (which admittedly covered a huge area) and on convoy or patrol work .

**Robert Barlow** could also be added to this list for, of his 7.75 years frigate service, all but about a year were spent either in home waters, or on cruising/convoy duties. This included, incidentally a two and a half year spell serving in the Western Squadron under both Pellew and Warren. His year away from England was not uneventful; On a dark night in February, 1801, Barlow in the 36-gun 18-pounder Phoebe encountered the 40-gun French frigate Africaine just east of Gibraltar. After a two-hour close engagement the French frigate struck and Barlow brought his prize into Port Mahon a fortnight later. It has to be said, incidentally, that this was probably one of the bloodiest frigate actions of the war. The Africaine was carrying troops bound for Egypt, and the gunnery of the Phoebe caused devastation on her opponents decks. Even the historian William James had to remark that the French casualties were "truly dreadful" suffering, as she did, 200 killed and 143 wounded.<sup>372</sup> Marshall tells us that "*...For his courage and excellent conduct on this occasion Captain Barlow was deservedly rewarded with the honor of a knighthood, [on] June, 16, 1801....*"<sup>373</sup> Several months later he was given the smaller 12-pounder frigate Concorde, spending several months on the Newfoundland station.

Alternatively to the concentration on service in home waters, many of the longer serving officers were repeatedly sent to one particular station - or at least served there in several successive ships. **George Cockburn**, for example commanded both the Meleager and the Minerve in the Mediterranean, between late 1794 and November, 1801. **Edward Foote** commanded the Niger and the Seahorse on that station between December, 1796 and September, 1800. **Henry Blackwood** commanded the Penelope in the Mediterranean between October, 1799 - February, 1802; and was back there again in the Euryalus towards the end of 1805.

**Robert Laurie** commanded three different frigates off of Nova Scotia and North America between 1801 and 1810. His only other station was the Channel for several years at the start of his frigate service. **Clotworthy Upton** served on the Cork station on three different occasions: in the Lapwing in 1805; the Sybille both from February, 1808 - February, 1809, and again between 1810 - 1813.

Service off of the Texel also seems to have retained several frigate Captains. **Philip Somerville** commanded both the Nemesis and the Rota frigates there between November, 1808 and the end of 1809. **Lord George Stuart** similarly commanded the Aimable and the Horatio frigates at the Texel between 1809 - 1813.

### Career consideration.

A survey of the careers of these frigate Captains begins to reveal a range of distinct features, that is, activities which are almost peculiar to frigate service, and which they all experienced to some degree<sup>374</sup>. These can be summarised as follows:-

1. Significant engagement with an enemy frigate usually, but not necessarily, resulting in its capture. (Sometimes this might be in company with other ships).
2. Capture of significant number of enemy armed vessels and privateers.
3. Consistently successful cruiser.
4. Direct assistance in military operations with land forces.

5. Zealous blockade and patrol duty in the Channel.

6. Command of a frigate squadron.

To this list could perhaps be added the acquisition of Prize Money, but as that is really a direct consequence of activities already identified, it could simply confuse matters. Furthermore, Prize Money was not an accurate yardstick against which to measure the calibre of a frigate Captain. Luck and skill were of equal importance in obtaining Prize Money and a lucky Captain might potentially get prizes with the minimal application of skill. An unlucky Captain could not make up in skill for not being in the right place at the right time!

It will probably already have been realised that the six categories given above would begin to suggest a set of criteria for defining the successful frigate Captain. Indeed one of the categories actually uses the word “successful”, however no attempt has been made at this stage to define success. That will follow. The term is used in reference to cruisers because that is how they are sometimes referred to by John Marshall. Unfortunately, Marshall himself did not try and explain how this was measured.

#### 1. Engagement with the enemy.

The possibility of meeting and taking an enemy frigate in a single-ship action was without doubt one of the great motivators of the young officers aspiring to frigate command. Indeed it could sometimes become almost an obsession<sup>375</sup>, which perhaps explains the extraordinary condition of the Shannon under Captain Philip Broke. Broke’s attitude is best revealed in the letters he wrote home to his wife. On one occasion, in the depth of depression, he wrote:

*“....I would give any of the French frigate Captains all the prize money I should obtain by taking him if he would only come out voluntarily to give me an opportunity of going home with honor...but I must stay by old Shannon so long as she will bear with me and perhaps she may be gracious enough to make me some return for my constancy - either in laurels or in lucre...”<sup>376</sup>*

**Philip Broke** was one of the officers here identified as a frigate specialist. His inclusion in this section is primarily because of the action between the Shannon and the American frigate Chesapeake. Since this action is probably the most famous, and in many ways the most sensational single-ship action of the period it is probably not necessary to comment further. However, it must be said that Broke also inspired a generation of naval officers in gunnery practices. Unfortunately, Broke himself was so severely wounded in the action that he was never really able to serve again, and was able to benefit little from the acquisition of the laurels he so craved.

The engagement between the Unicorn, Captain **Thomas Williams**, and the French frigate Tribune, was discussed in the last chapter. The British frigate was heavier than the French but, as was common at the time, French frigates carried a considerably larger crew (339 men and boys to 240 in the Unicorn) and this gave additional benefits, especially if the opponent could be boarded. In this case however, Williams and his crew skilfully brought the French ship to close quarters, inflicting severe damage on her without letting her get close enough to board. The action was comparatively short and the Unicorn's gunnery "well directed". The result was that the Tribune was obliged to strike, whilst Unicorn suffered no casualties at all. This action says much about Williams. According to the official account the crew of the Unicorn gave three cheers before opening fire,<sup>377</sup> which would suggest a crew well motivated for the action. However, such claims are common, and may reflect some form of patriotic wishful thinking.<sup>378</sup> The Unicorn was only two years old and its crew had been under the command of Williams for eleven months at the time of the engagement. A naval officer writing some twenty years later, who served under officers who had themselves served with frigate Captains during the Great Wars, stated that it took up to twelve months for a newly commissioned ship to become fully efficient. Most of the first six months of any commission usually being taken up by the need to find a full crew, then a further six months to train that crew in gunnery and seamanship.<sup>379</sup> Whilst this may have been true for line-of-battle ships, it is more than likely that frigates could be worked-up much quicker. Nevertheless, within eleven months Williams appears to have got his crew working well, both in its gunnery and its ship handling.

The action between the French frigate Africaine and the Phoebe, under the command of Captain **Robert Barlow**, has already been described. Barlow and his crew had been together just over five years at the time of this action. Both ships suffered severe damage as a result of the action.

While the Royal Navy's tactic of aiming shot at the hull, rather than the rigging of an enemy vessel, may well account for the disparity in casualties, the discipline of the crew of the Phoebe remained intact after two hours close action, whereas the crew of the Africaine were unable to sustain the action.

Barlow, like Williams, was knighted as a result of this action. This was not, however, Barlow's first successful frigate action. In 1797, several years before the action with the Africaine, Barlow in the Phoebe had captured the 12-pounder 36 gun French frigate Nereide during a night action in which the French ship had the advantage of the weather gauge.<sup>380</sup> Phoebe was however a heavier frigate, being armed with 18-pounder guns, and after several hours the damage and casualties on board the Nereide forced her Captain to strike. William James, in unusually complimentary fashion, noted of this action: "...The relative proportion of loss proves, however, that, had more been required of, more could have been performed by, Captain Barlow, his officers and ship's company.." <sup>381</sup> At the time of this engagement Barlow had had the Phoebe for approximately two years, and once again the action seems to confirm the state of preparedness in both ship and crew.

Charles Adam in the Sibylle also scored a success in capturing the French frigate La Chiffonne by St. Anne's Island in the Seychelles, in April, 1801. Sibylle had a major advantage in that her opponent was actually moored close to the shore with her foremast out at the time. However, Adam had to navigate through a difficult channel to approach his opponent, who was supported by a shore battery. The ensuing action lasted less than twenty minutes, but it was the skill required to make the attack, together with the dangers that might have followed had the Sibylle grounded, that earned Adam and his crew the credit that they received. Especially as they were actually able to bring their prize away and she was purchased for use in the Royal Navy.

The Phoebe seems to have been a lucky frigate, for in 1814, under the command of James Hillyar, she was involved in an engagement with the American frigate Essex. The Essex had been sent into the Pacific Ocean to create havoc among the whaling grounds, where rich prizes in oil were to be made. Hillyar in the Phoebe, together with the 18-gun ship sloop Cherub, was sent to find her, which he did after a long search cornering her in the harbour of Valparaiso. The Essex was very heavily armed with 32-pounder carronades which, at close quarters, would have a devastating effect upon an opponent, and four 12-pounder long guns; the Phoebe was still armed with 18-pounder guns.

For several weeks Porter, Captain of the Essex, remained at anchor, naturally reluctant to leave shelter, but eventually a strong wind led to the frigate dragging an anchor, and Porter was forced to put to sea chased by the Phoebe and Cherub. When the Essex anchored once again close to the shore, the two British ships kept sufficient distance to avoid carronade fire, but close enough to gradually destroy the Essex with their long guns. Casualties on the Essex were controversially high.<sup>382</sup> However, the point is that Hillyar was sensible enough to avoid rushing into an engagement at close quarters - the most popular method of attack - thereby preserving the main advantage he possessed over his opponent. The casualties on the Phoebe were, consequently, far lighter.

Hillyar had achieved post rank after the immediate intervention of Nelson. The circumstances themselves are telling. In January, 1804, Nelson wrote to St. Vincent:

*".....At twenty-four years of age, when I made him a Lieutenant for his bravery, he maintained his mother, sisters and a brother. For these reasons he declined the Ambuscade which was offered him; because, although he might thus get his rank, yet, if he were put upon half-pay, his family would be the sufferers.....I beg leave to submit, as an act of the greatest kindness, that as the Niger is a very fine fast frigate, well manned, and in most excellent condition, she may be fitted out with the Madras's 32 carronades, which are not so heavy as the present nine-pounders, and that your Lordship would recommend her being considered as a post-ship. Captain Hillyar's activity would soon complete the additional number of men, and she would be an efficient frigate..."<sup>383</sup>*

The reason why Hillyar declined the Ambuscade is clarified in another despatch of Nelson. On board the Niger was Hillyar's younger brother William, rated as a midshipman. If he had accepted the Ambuscade the chances are that, although he would have been confirmed as a Post Captain, he might have been removed from the frigate and left for some time without employment. If this had occurred the chances are that William might also have lost his position, a much more serious problem for a Midshipman. The situation was resolved in August, 1803, when Nelson promoted William to the rank of Lieutenant for his bravery in fighting off an attack by a Greek vessel. Thereafter he was independent of his older brother<sup>384</sup>.

Before the end of February Hillyar had been made a Post Captain and the Niger had been re-rated as a 32-gun frigate. Hillyar's career certainly delivered the promise which Nelson clearly anticipated, for not only did he capture the Essex, but in 1810 he was part of Commodore



Rowley's squadron at the reduction of the Isle de France; an action which went some way to redeem what can only be described as a disastrous frigate squadron action . Later, in 1811, the Phoebe with Hillyar still in command, was part of a frigate squadron under the orders of Captain Charles Marsh Schomberg, in a lively engagement with a French frigate squadron off Madagascar.<sup>385</sup>

Of course a successful single ship action brought rewards of its own and the above list does not contain the names of every officer who fought these or captured an enemy frigate. (See next Chapter) It must also be observed that a successful frigate engagement could also, in a curious way, damage an officer's career. Possibly the most ironic example of this is that of Charles Cunningham. In August, 1799, Cunningham in the Clyde captured the slightly smaller French frigate Vestale. Unfortunately through no fault of Cunningham's, his Commander-in-Chief, Lord Keith, decided to write a rather over-excited dispatch to the Admiralty when he heard about the capture. It is possible that Keith hoped to bask in some of the glory of his junior; however, his description was somewhat excessive, claiming "*...one of the most brilliant transactions which have occurred during the course of war...*". Unfortunately for Cunningham, this breathless dispatch reached the King when he happened to be in the theatre and, halting the performance, he read the dispatch out to the audience who then worked themselves up into a frenzy, demanding that "Rule Britannia" be played repeatedly.<sup>386</sup> When the reality became known there was some embarrassment and Cunningham reaped little reward for his action. The Vestale was too badly damaged to be brought into the navy, and the disparity between the two frigates did not warrant Cunningham a knighthood. Nevertheless, Cunningham, who was undoubtedly a fine sea officer continued his career and by the Peace of Amiens he was commanding a squadron of eight frigates off the coast of France.<sup>387</sup>

## 2. Capture of enemy armed vessels and privateers.

A successful single ship action would of course attract attention. But such an action was only really regarded as being of note if the British frigate were of equal size or at least smaller than its opponent. From the case of Charles Cunningham it can be seen that action with a smaller ship was regarded as carrying less kudos. Yet the number of what can be defined as "proper single ship actions" constitutes only a very small minority of the actions in which frigates became engaged. The basic bread-and-butter duties of the frigates were to undertake patrols,

safeguarding British trade and harrying that of the enemy. Much of this could be carried out in the form of “close-blockade” of the French channel ports where they could not only watch enemy naval movements, but also intercept coastal traffic. A natural corollary of this was the engagement and capture of the smaller enemy armed naval vessels and privateers. In fact this particular function became increasingly important for, as the line of battle ships of the French navy successively failed to escape from blockade or were defeated in major fleet actions, and the coastal blockade denied an adequate supply of imports, the French resorted to raiding tactics, utilising their smaller armed ships and those subsidised by French Privateering interest. In fact, right at the start of the war in 1793, the French Convention took steps to encourage such activities by abandoning the State’s right to a share of Prize money, offering a premium for the fitting out of corsairs, compensating for losses; and shortly thereafter, exempting prize goods from any form of duties.<sup>388</sup> The opening years of both wars saw an eruption of Privateering activity, but this usually settled down again, though reaching significant peaks in 1797 and 1810.<sup>389</sup>

To some extent, therefore, the mark of a good frigate Captain could be gauged by his success in taking enemy vessels. Whilst virtually all captures could be condemned as prizes, thereby earning the captors monetary reward, the capture of an armed vessel had to carry greater weight because of the risk involved in taking her. Furthermore, it is clear that the Captains of many French privateers were highly experienced seamen, who even after being captured, could return again and again to their activities in the employment of different merchants. The bravery and skill of the privateer commanders and crews should not be underestimated. Privateers were known to ferociously resist capture and their Captains often had superior knowledge of the waters in which they were sailing. It has to be admitted that in contemporary sources there is little discussion on this point. Frigate Captains do seem to have been primarily interested in the glory associated with a single ship action or the possibility of a quick fortune that a lucky prize might bring. Whilst an individual Captain may have taken a certain amount of pride in capturing a smaller armed vessel, it was not likely to attract a great deal of public attention.

Notwithstanding, it has to be suggested that someone in seniority did take notice of this sort of success, because nearly 30% of the officers in the list of specialist frigate Captains appear to have excelled in this activity. There might have been a pecuniary motive behind this; an officer who had a record for capturing enemy vessels was also more likely to bring in the prizes, and it would be in the interest of a station commander to have that Captain under his command.

**Richard Keats**, Marshall tells us, as Captain of the Boadicea, “...distinguished himself as an indefatigable cruizer, and captured several very formidable French privateers....”<sup>390</sup> These included l’Invincible Buonaparte, L’Utile and Le Requin; and the Milan which were captured by Boadicea alone; but there were others which were captured in consort with other frigates.

**Charles Hamilton**, who commanded the Melpomene for approximately seven years, most of which was spent in the Channel on patrol and convoy duties, captured nearly fifty enemy vessels.<sup>391</sup> These included the privateers Triton, and the Auguste which was captured after a chase of sixty hours.<sup>392</sup>

**Thomas Williams** was fortunate in that he was appointed to command the Lizard 28 just before the outbreak of war. Dispatched to patrol in the Channel to provide protection to unsuspecting merchant vessels he was also on station to capture several privateers before May, 1793, and then patrolling off Rotterdam in the same year he captured the Trois Amis. In, April, 1798, patrolling off Madeira in the large 24-pounder frigate Endymion, he captured the 100 ton Revanche;<sup>393</sup> and in May, 1800, he captured the Bordeaux raider Scipion Francais.

**Joseph Sidney Yorke** likewise was given a frigate at the beginning of the conflict and was able to take a number of privateers in the Channel. (See comment below)

If the beginning of the war was a particularly rich period for taking enemy privateers, 1797-98 was also notable. In fact French privateering enterprise peaked during this period.<sup>394</sup> **The Hon. Arthur Kaye Legge**, stationed on the coast of France in the Cambrian captured several large privateers, including the Caesar and Pont de Lodi both of which were taken in March, 1797.<sup>395</sup> **Robert Barlow** in the Phoebe also captured several privateers in 1798; John Marshall tells us that this included 3 French privateers, mounting in all 58 guns; and in March, 1800, L’Heureux of 22 brass 12-pounder guns.<sup>396</sup>

The operation against privateers was not confined predominantly to the period immediately after the outbreak of either war, or to the first war. **George Wolfe** in the Aigle captured, among others, an 18-gun French privateer off the Western Isles in September, 1810, after a 134 mile chase lasting thirteen hours.<sup>397</sup> The privateer in this instance was the Phenix, commanded by the highly experienced Jacques Perraud who had only recently been released from prison in Britain

after being captured by the Powerful 74, off the coast of Ceylon. Further afield, Stephen Poyntz in the Solebay captured a number of privateers in the West Indies and later in his career, in 1805 whilst Captain of the Melampus, he captured a 28-gun Spanish private ship of war, the Hydra.<sup>398</sup>

Possibly one of the most successful frigate Captains in this field was Charles Malcolm in the Rhin. Of his captures, the San Joseph had been a highly successful privateer, making a profit of 94,599 francs from one of its captives alone. When Malcolm took her in September, 1810, he found on board a complete set of signal books issued for use by French telegraph stations along the coast.<sup>399</sup>

Other names associated with the capture of privateers include Philip Durham, John Erskine Douglas, Duncan Pleydell Bouverie, Frederick Maitland, Graham Moore, George Cockburn, Edward Foote, David Atkins, John Gore and John Tower. Before moving to the next feature of the frigate Captains' careers it is worth noting that many of those Captains who were successful against privateers, spent long periods commanding frigates in the waters around the British Isles. This is crucial, because if one of the advantages possessed by privateer commanders was their (often pre-war) knowledge of the Channel and North Sea waters, gleaned because of their peacetime merchant marine careers - the same experience seems to have been acquired, albeit more slowly, by frigate Captains who were retained in the same waters during the wars. They were thus able to develop their own knowledge and familiarity with the areas in which they were to patrol.

### 3. Successful cruisers.

A frigate Captain who was successful in capturing privateers was also likely to be successful as a cruiser. But the definition of success is not necessarily as straight forward as it might seem. A cruiser might have been successful because he prevented enemy coastal shipping from sailing. This would be a success in terms of longer term strategy, however it is doubtful if this is the meaning of the term when used by, for example, John Marshall.

Almost certainly, to their contemporaries, the frigate Captain who was a successful cruiser was the one who consistently captured enemy vessels and had them condemned as prizes. Certainly at least ten of the names on the list of frigate specialists appear to have scored considerably in this

capacity. Of course, to a certain degree, taking prizes involved luck. Thomas Byam Martin writing in his journal of Charles Rowley, the Captain of the Boadicea in 1801, observed that although he (Rowley) had been at sea consistently since 1793<sup>400</sup>,

*"...cruizing with a zeal and activity that deserved better luck, for according to his own words 'he had never seen a shot fired in anger, or even the flag of an enemy'. And I do not recollect any instance of his being more fortunate after he left my squadron..."*<sup>401</sup>

How then, are we to define a consistently successful cruiser? One of the Captains to whom John Marshall applied this term was Joseph Sidney Yorke. The extent of his success as a cruiser is undeniable. Steel's Prize Pay List records Yorke's prizes as follows:-

**Table 6.2. Prizes Taken By Captain Joseph Sidney Yorke In The Frigates Circe, Stag And Jason During The War Against Revolutionary France.**

<u>Date of capture</u>	<u>Prizes or salvage</u>	<u>Net Value</u> <sup>402</sup> (To nearest Pound) <u>Where Known</u>
March, 1793	Salvage for the <u>Pelican</u> , Danish brig	
March, 1793	<u>Diane, Vaudreuil &amp; Jeune Felix</u> merchantmen.	£12,470
May, 1793	<u>Didon &amp; L'Auguste</u> privateers	£1,838
May, 1793	<u>Le Courier</u> privateer (Taken with HMS <u>L'Aimable</u> , Capt. H.B. Neale)	
Oct, 1793	<u>Reunion</u> French frigate	£5,318 (part)
Nov, 1793	<u>L'Espiegle</u> French sloop of war. (Taken with HMS <u>La Nymphe</u> )	£1,267
Jan, 1794	Salvage of <u>Venus</u> brig, and <u>Ant</u> sloop	£190
Aug, 1795	Ordnance stores of the <u>Alliance</u> , Dutch frigate (taken with HMS <u>Reunion, Vestal and Isis</u> )	£1,424
Feb, 1796	Salvage of the <u>Betsey</u> (shared with rest of squadron)	)
March, 1796	<u>La Bonne Citoyenne</u> , French corvette (shared with rest of squadron)	)£1,748
Nov, 1796	<u>Le Franklin</u> , French privateer (shared with Vice-Admiral Colpoy's fleet)	) £30
Feb, 1797	<u>L'Appocrate</u> French privateer & salvage of the ship <u>Sarah</u>	£1346
Feb, 1797	Salvage of the <u>Swallow</u> (taken with HMS <u>L'Unite</u> ) & French privateers <u>L'Ypocrate</u> and <u>Hirondelle</u>	£524
Feb, 1797	<u>Atlantic</u> (American ship for which compensation was paid to <u>Stag</u> and her crew)	£81
Feb, 1797	Salvage of the <u>Recovery</u>	£62
July, 1797	<u>Bothcraft/Bothchaff? Maria</u>	£368
Sept, 1797	<u>Chasseur, Brunette, Indien, &amp; Decouvert</u> , French privateers	

Sept, 1797	Salvage of the <u>Adamant</u>	
Sept, 1797	Salvage of the <u>Nordstern</u> and proceeds of the <u>Coccyte</u> (both taken with HMS <u>Phaeton</u> , Capt. The Hon. R. Stopford)	
Oct, 1797	Salvage for <u>Le Venus y Cupido</u>	
Oct, 1797	Salvage of the <u>Arcade</u> (and possibly another ship called <u>Recovery</u> )	
May/June, 1798	<u>Maria Perotte/Rustia</u> & an unnamed sloop; salvage of the <u>Sea Nymph</u> and the <u>Mary</u> , sloop.	£1007
June, 1798	<u>Jonge Marcus</u>	
Aug, 1798	<u>La Francine</u> , chasse maree (taken with HMS <u>Ambuscade</u> , Capt. Henry Jenkins, and <u>Nimrod</u> hired cutter).	£76
Nov, 1798	<u>L'Hirondelle</u>	
Nov, 1798	<u>Resolu</u>	
Nov, 1798	Salvage of the <u>Fame</u>	
Dec, 1798	<u>Resource, Faucon &amp; Sans Soucie</u>	
April, 1799	<u>Nymph</u> (American ship taken with HMS <u>Phaeton</u> )	£708
Oct, 1799	Salvage for the <u>Sarah</u> and the <u>James</u>	
Oct, 1799	<u>Amiable Maria, La Paz &amp; L'Heureux Premier</u>	
Jan, 1800	<u>Ursula</u> (taken with several others)	£105
Jan, 1801	<u>Venus</u>	
April, 1801	Salvage for the <u>Trafficker</u>	
May, 1801	<u>Dorade</u>	
?, 1801	<u>Le Poisson Volant</u> , French Privateer	

In addition, the Greenwich Hospital Accounts record the following payments which it is not possible to allocate to the above table;

17 Sept - 20 Oct, 1797	"Various prizes"	£993
- - -	"For five ships"	£986
- - -	The <u>Ursula</u>	£105
- - -	The <u>Elizabeth</u> .	£1073
- - -	<u>The Two Brothers</u> .	£347.

(Source: Steel, *Prize Pay Lists and Greenwich Hospital Treasurer's Accounts*. ADM68/314-316).

To understand this table it is essential to remember that salvage money was paid for any vessel retaken after capture by an enemy privateer or man of war. In all, whilst in command of frigates Yorke was centrally involved with the capture of at least fifty-six vessels in an eight year period i.e. on average seven per year. Prize money for just thirty-four of these vessels totalled nearly £30,000.<sup>403</sup> Although it was not a pre-requisite for cruising success Yorke spent virtually all of his frigate career in home waters or on convoy escort duties,. James Macnamara, apparently cruised with great success off Jamaica which, as has already been noted above, could be a very rich area for prizes. On the other hand, there were poor areas. It was sometimes thought that the Channel could be a poor area for cruising, particularly after the initial year of a war, and frigate

Captains like William Hoste, patrolling for unenviable periods in the Adriatic, were obliged to burn most of their prizes because they lacked sufficient crew to man them, and because of the very practical difficulties of getting them to an Admiralty Court. Whilst the value of all of these prizes has not been ascertained, it must be assumed that Yorke was able to amass substantial income from them. Certainly, for most officers, what mattered was the value of the prizes that they took. It has already been shown that prize money was generally accepted as a legitimate method of supplementing a Captain's income. In fact it was rigorously defended. A common complaint of sea officers was that their reward was over-exaggerated and that others questioned the right of Captains to gain from it. In 1811 an anonymous Post Captain wrote;

*"....What must an indifferent person think, ...when he is told, that a common clerk in the Admiralty or Navy Office, or even the porter at any of the dock-yards, who has no responsibility attached to his situation, who has no laborious duty to perform, no sleepless nights to disturb his quiet, no anxiety from storms or tempests, no danger to apprehend....has more of the public money than a Captain commanding the largest frigate in His Majesty's navy.....and, if such be the state of a Captain's pay in general, what must it be in the West Indies; more particularly now, when the little chance of success, by prizes, is totally at an end?"*<sup>404</sup>

In 1808, Captain William Hoste, ruminating from his cabin in the Amphion in the Adriatic, responded to news of the Admiralty's decision to cut the Captain's share of prize money:

*"....A parcel of old fograms who are very quietly seated over their Christmas fire, do not allow for many a sleepless night of watching and anxiety that we have. They forget that in our service, when others take it by turns to watch, the Captain must always be on the alert, and that if the chances are in his favour in the prize way, it is more than over-balanced by constant anxiety and care."*<sup>405</sup>

Of the frigate squadron under the command of Captain Graham Moore which in September, 1804, captured a squadron of Spanish treasure ships carrying at least three million dollars in specie, two out of the four frigate Captains involved feature on the list of frigate specialists. (Moore and John Gore). ( Another, Samuel Sutton may well have retired on the proceeds, as there was a gap in his naval service until he reached flag rank many years later!).<sup>406</sup>

#### 4. Direct assistance in military operations with land forces.

The incidence of naval co-operation with land based forces, either in terms of direct co-operation with the army or utilising both seamen and marines, is realistically a subject which demands attention in its own right. It must be observed however, that this aspect of naval activity has been largely unacknowledged and probably continues to be underestimated. Indeed one historian has recently noted that *"Some writers on the army in the Napoleonic Wars suggest that landings and amphibious operations were rare."*<sup>407</sup>

In actual fact amphibious operations were undertaken almost continuously throughout the wars, (See Appendix 6.2.). These could be strategic operations on the scale of major troop landings ( e.g. an army of approximately 40,000 troops was landed in the Helder in 1799 in an attempt to drive the French from Holland; 16,000 men were landed in Egypt in 1800 to defeat the remnant of Napoleon's Nile Campaign army and in 1809, 40,000 troops were landed in the Scheldt during the disastrous Walcheran expedition). However, there were many smaller expeditions. Often these were initiated by frigate Captains seizing an opportunity which arose because they were on the spot. A very good example of this is the capture of Palinoro in the Gulf of Salerno, by **The Hon Henry Duncan** in the Imperieuse and **Charles Napier** in the Thames, with troops of the 62nd Regiment from Sicily.<sup>408</sup>

Frigates were certainly deeply involved in smaller operations against Mauritius and Reunion in 1810, and Java in 1811,<sup>409</sup> and there were many expeditions against hostile islands in the West Indies.<sup>410</sup> Frigates were also employed in operations with foreign troops. e.g. **Sir John Borlase Warren's** frigate squadron attempting to land arms and supplies and French Royalists in the Quiberon Peninsular in 1795. Later, during the Napoleonic War, frigates were regularly used to provide assistance to Spanish irregulars or to Italian regulars, and this sort of naval support for land forces literally peppers the careers of many of the frigate Captains who were mainly active during the Napoleonic War. In fact nearly 30% of the specialist frigate Captains played an active part in amphibious operations. These activities were particularly common along the coast of Spain and Southern Italy where difficult interior terrain meant that roads tended to concentrate along the coast-line. Frigates could anchor close to the shore and open fire with their broadsides onto the coast roads - thus providing a fire power which, in calm weather, was probably more effective than many army batteries could provide. In 1806, for example, **Captain William**



Hoste in the frigate Amphion intercepted a French column advancing along the coast road between Catanzaro and Crotona in Calabria, Southern Italy. Anchoring close to the shore the Amphion's broadsides soon broke the French column who were forced to flee inland up the mountainside to avoid the effect of Amphion's guns.<sup>411</sup>

The officer most famous for this sort of activity was Lord Cochrane, Captain of the Imperieuse frigate who during 1808 carried out a series of raids upon the Catalan coast. In July of that year, following an appeal from Spanish guerrillas who were investing the coastal fort of Mongat, Cochrane destroyed the roads leading to the fort, so that the besieged French troops could neither escape nor receive reinforcements. Having left the French to ponder their possible fate at the hands of the Catalan guerrillas Cochrane returned the following day and succeeded in obtaining the surrender of the fort after “..a couple of well-directed broadsides.”<sup>412</sup> Cochrane was little short of a specialist at this sort of operation, for he appreciated the possibilities which his frigate gave him. In his autobiography he commented:

*“.....It is wonderful what an amount of terrorism a small frigate is able to inspire on an enemy's coast. Actions between line-of-battle ships are, no doubt, very imposing; but for real effect I would prefer a score or two of small vessels, well handled, to any fleet of line-of-battle ships.”<sup>413</sup>*

Cochrane's role was enthusiastically endorsed by the Naval Chronicle which commented, following the attack on the French Fleet in Basque Roads:

*“..Seeing what Lord Cochrane has done with his single ship upon the French shores, we may easily conceive what he would have achieved if he had been entrusted with a sufficient squadron of ships, and a few thousand military, hovering along the whole extent of the French coast, which it would take a considerable portion of the army of France to defend. Thus, and thus alone, may Spain be saved:”<sup>414</sup>*

Cochrane in the Imperieuse was often able to act alone, that is without the assistance of allied forces, against enemy land forces. He was not alone in this. Captain Frederick Watkins of the frigate Nereide scored a spectacular success, almost by accident in September, 1800. Ordered to cruise in search of a French frigate south of Jamaica, the Nereide with a schooner in company, arrived off of the Dutch-held island of Curacao. Shortly after his arrival Watkins received a deputation from the inhabitants who were alarmed at the depredations of Republican forces in the west on the island. It transpired that the Dutch colonists had decided that capitulation to the

British was to be preferred to falling into the hands of the French. Watkins was somewhat taken aback, as he had no troops with which to hold or defend the colony, but he agreed upon terms with the Government of the Island, and accepted its capitulation formally on behalf of His Britannic Majesty.<sup>415</sup>

Cochrane and Hoste are both well known to naval historians for amphibious operations, but other less well known frigate Captains, whose names feature on the list of specialists, were also deeply involved in this at different times. Right at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Captain Charles Hamilton in the 28-gun frigate Dido in company with the Aimable Captain Harry Burrard (Neale), acted in consort with 300 Corsican irregulars to attack a French held fort and the latter was also involved at the siege of Bastia. Later, in the Melpomene, he was given command of a number of ships with responsibility for landing troops in the Helder.<sup>416</sup> Thomas Williams in the Endymion provided active assistance to the army in suppressing the Irish rising of 1798.<sup>417</sup> Captain Philip Durham in the razeed frigate Anson, was part of Warren's frigate squadron in the attempt to assist Chouan rebels in Brittany. Following the destruction of the Royalist forces, after a confused and half-hearted attempt by the émigré officers to raise a revolt, Warren became so depressed that he sent Durham back to England to explain to the Admiralty the cause of the failure of the exhibition.<sup>418</sup> Thomas Le Marchant Gosselyn, Captain of the Syren frigate was part of the small squadron under the command of Lord Hugh Seymour, sent to take Surinam in 1799.<sup>419</sup> James Macnamara, the Captain of the Southampton frigate, a close friend of Nelson, served in Nelson's squadron and gave active assistance under Nelson's orders to the Austrian and Sardinian armies in 1794/95. Macnamara was also among the officers under Nelson's command involved in landing troops on Elba in 1796 to take possession of Porto Ferrajo.

Less well known than Macnamara was George Mundy, son of an MP for Derbyshire. Mundy served under Samuel Hood in both the Juno and Aigle frigates and was present as a Midshipman at the sieges of Calvi and Bastia. posted in 1801 he was sent once again to the Mediterranean where Collingwood described him in glowing terms<sup>420</sup> By 1808, Mundy in the Hydra frigate was deeply involved in assisting Spanish guerrillas on the coast of Catalonia. Operating with guerrillas at Badalona, Mundy seems to have become deeply sympathetic to their struggle, so much so as to become involved with them politically.<sup>421</sup> Other specialist frigate Captains who were actively involved along the Spanish coast were William Parker in the Amazon ( especially

around Galicia and Ferrol where, on one occasion he landed at the head of a party of his own seamen - a task which was usually delegated to the First Lieutenant of a frigate); **Duncan Pleydell Bouverie**, (MP for Downton in Wiltshire), in the Medusa frigate, serving under the orders of Home Popham;<sup>422</sup> and **John Tower** in the Curacoa on the coast of Catalonia.<sup>423</sup>

Four of the specialist frigate Captains were actively involved in the attack on Java in 1811. **James Hillyar** in the Phoebe, **George Sayer** in the Leda, and **Fleetwood Pellew** in the Phaeton and, perhaps most significantly, **The Hon. George Elliot** in the Modeste. Sayer actually had command of the squadron blockading Batavia in advance of the arrival of the main expeditionary force.<sup>424</sup>

Elliot's role is remarkable because the whole expedition was only really successfully launched by the enthusiasm of Elliot's father, Lord Minto, Governor General of India. Minto not only pressed forward with the expedition against the reluctance of the Commander in Chief (Admiral Edward O'Bryen Drury - who fortuitously died a few months before the departure of the expedition), he decided to accompany the expedition in person, travelling on his son's frigate. It was fortunate that he did so, for the acting Commander-in-Chief, Commodore William Broughton, seems to have been just as reluctant as his predecessor. In fact Broughton was certainly a cautious navigator and was reluctant to endanger the expeditionary force in what were largely uncharted waters. He sent the Minto schooner ahead to explore the waters to the west of Borneo but then refused to accept the reports that he received from her commander.<sup>425</sup> According to **George Elliot's** own account of the expedition, it seems that Broughton, who was known to be a difficult senior officer, resented Minto's intervention in the affair and decided to vent his anger on Elliot himself. The outcome of this was that, on the return of the Minto schooner, it was the Modeste frigate carrying the Governor General, which was sent into the unknown waters (as Broughton regarded them) regardless of the possible dangers. The farcical element here was compounded by the fact that Elliot was also ordered to approach Batavia to ascertain whether a superior force of French frigates had arrived there as suspected.<sup>426</sup>

The relationship between Elliot and Broughton actually worsened as the attack on Batavia developed. Elliot personally took command of the right wing of the British forces during the attack. This, as we have seen was not unusual although it might have been argued that it was a little irresponsible; however, when Broughton heard of Elliot's whereabouts, he immediately ordered him back on board of the Modeste. To Elliot's clear jubilation, Broughton was

superseded next day by Admiral Robert Stopford, who promptly returned Elliot to his shore duties.

Finally, before leaving this section, it should be noted that **Philip Somerville** commanded the Rota in the expedition against the Scheldt in 1809; and **Lord George Stuart (2)** who commanded the Horatio frigate, led a party of seamen and marines against French troops near Cuxhaven in 1809, thus enabling the Duke of Brunswick's forces to embark safely.<sup>427</sup>

One of the frigate commanders who excelled in combined operations was **Philip Beaver** of the Nisus frigate. Unfortunately, Beaver died as a result of an illness whilst in command of that ship, after an aggregate of five year's service, and so does not feature in the list of long-serving Captains.<sup>428</sup>

##### 5. Zealous blockade and patrol duty in the Channel.

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that a number of the longest serving frigate Captains served almost exclusively in the waters around the British Isles and the Bay of Biscay. Additionally, at least 21 (40%) of the Captains on the list served for noticeably long periods in these waters.

Blockade duty was considered by many officers as one of the most punishing, unrewarding of duties. **John Surman Carden**, Captain of the Macedonian, was ordered to join **Sir Philip Durham's** squadron, blockading Rochefort in 1811. He wrote of this:

*"....I was to keep just outside the range of shot and shell of the Isle of Aix; sometimes I had a small cruiser under my orders, but generally alone. - And though I can aver that at no time did I ever feel a hardship in the execution of my Orders received....Yet I must say this was the most harassing Duty I had at any time to perform. - All night we had to row guard to meet the probability of Fire Vessels, or Rafts, & and all day Boats & Ship under weigh to intercept the Coasting Trade..."*<sup>429</sup>

**Sir Andrew Snape Douglas** who was given command of a frigate squadron in the Western approaches in 1793, described his duties as *"..very fatiguing..."*,<sup>430</sup> and indeed this appears to have been the common experience of those engaged on blockade work. Then there was the ever present danger of accident at sea, a worry never far from the minds of frigate Captains. Some of

the anxiety this could cause is evident in the following letter from **Captain William Prowse** of the Sirius , which was blockading Brest, to his Commander in Chief, Cornwallis, in July, 1803:

*"...It is with great concern I have to acquaint you that yesterday, in Company with his Majesty's ship Boadicea,...with a moderate breeze, the ships about three cable's length distance, when the Sirius' situation required her to be tacked, and having stern way...the Boadicea standing under her stern, with a strong weather tide, which set her on board the Sirius .....I am exceedingly sorry to state that, from this unfortunate accident, his Majesty's ship under my command had her rudder broken off about five feet from its head and entirely torn from the stern-post, part of the quarter galleries and the upper part of the stern frame materially damaged.....I shall proceed without a moments loss of time to Plymouth."*<sup>431</sup>

Prowse had only been in command of the Sirius for nine months when this accident occurred and, it being his first frigate command, one can understand that he might have been somewhat anxious about Cornwallis' response.

Ship-keeping in these conditions was undoubtedly fatiguing as Douglas put it, but it also could lead to nervous conditions and what we would probably recognise today has extreme levels of stress. Added to the worries of ship-keeping responsibility was that wider responsibility that blockade duty signified. This concern was undoubtedly in **Edward Pellew's** mind when on 16th December, 1796, Vice-Admiral de Galles fleet departed from Brest during a stormy night carrying French troops bound for Bantry Bay. Pellew in the Indefatigable, accompanied by his old friend **Frank Cole** in the Revolutionnaire, and the Duke of York Lugger watched as 29 warships and several other storeships set sail under cover of darkness. Pellew first sent the Lugger to warn Sir John Colpoys, commanding the offshore squadron and then sent the Revolutionnaire with fresh intelligence of the enemy's activity. The Lugger found Colpoys and passed on the message from Pellew, but **Cole** was completely unable to locate the offshore squadron - and the latter simply did not appear. Pellew with his small force was left alone to attempt to frustrate the French fleet. To make matters worse, Pellew then lost contact with the French and could only surmise that they had headed south for Lisbon or the Mediterranean. He dispatched the Lugger again to warn the Admiralty and himself headed south.

*"...God knows...if I shall be doing right, but left in a wilderness of conjecture I can only say that the sacrifice of my life would be easy if it served my gracious King and my country.....I trust myself to you, my Lord [Spencer] , upon this perhaps the most important crisis of my life..."*<sup>432</sup>

During the War with Napoleonic France and the serious threat of an invasion being launched from the French Channel ports, the intensity of the blockade increased. **Graham Moore, Philip Wilkinson, Henry Blackwood, Ross Donnelly, Thomas Gossellin, Stephen Poyntz, David Atkins, Adam Mackenzie, George Wolfe, George Mundy, Henry Vansittart, Philip Broke, Duncan Pleydell Bouverie, Philip Somerville** and, of course, **Edward Owen** all commanded frigates in the Channel from the outbreak of the Napoleonic War until the end of 1805, when the destruction of the French fleet at Trafalgar effectively ended the invasion threat. Some of these officers went on to continue with blockade work in the Channel or North Sea.

Of this list it could justifiably be claimed that **Edward C.W.R. Owen** was the blockading frigate Captain *par excellence*.

**Owen** was the son of a naval Captain and the godson of Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Rich. His name was apparently entered on the books of the Enterprize when he was only four years old - though, it should be noted that his rate of promotion was formally no faster than average; however, although he was not posted until April, 1798, he was actually appointed Acting-Captain of the Impregnable 98, carrying his Godfather's flag, in 1796.<sup>433</sup> He appears to have become unpopular with seamen during the Spithead mutiny in 1797, and this almost certainly delayed his appointment to further command for a time.<sup>434</sup> For although he seems to have enjoyed the strong support of Sir John Colpoys, who chose him as his Flag Captain immediately after the Nore Mutiny, the fact that Colpoys' flag ship was the London, which had been at the centre of the mutiny, led to Owen's appointment being countermanded. He was given command of a division of gun brigs at the Nore later in 1797, but his really noteworthy service began from 1801 when he was given command of the Nemesis frigate. From that point onwards he was employed almost continuously in the Channel where he was attached to the Dungeness squadron which had the responsibility for watching Boulogne and the other Channel ports. At the end of 1805 he was made Commodore of the squadron in which he had served for so long. Owen had certainly attracted the attention of his senior officers; Lord Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote of him to Keith in October, 1804:

*"...I have taken a very strong prepossession in his favour and would always conceive any business to be in safe hands that is entrusted to him..."*<sup>435</sup>

From his appointment to the Nemesis in 1801, Owen served continually in command of frigates until the middle of 1813 - a period of approximately twelve and a half years. This factor makes him not only one of the longest serving frigate Captains, but also one of the most senior, for by the time he left the 18-pounder frigate Inconstant, he had been a Post Captain for some 15 years. As will be explained shortly, this meant that he was allowed to remain in command of a frigate for several years beyond the norm - a clear sign that he was very highly regarded.

There is other evidence for his popularity and success. Abraham Crawford, who served with him, records that Owen was permitted to take his entire crew from one frigate to another on three separate occasions.<sup>436</sup> Almost more remarkably, his crew had to suffer the long tedium of blockade work with little chance of prize money to compensate them. Immortalite was engaged on the coast of France for nearly two years without real respite, regularly carrying out attacks on the French invasion flotillas which Crawford described as “*a very tedious piece of work.*”<sup>437</sup> An attempt was made to reward them with a 9-10 week cruise to the west of Havre much, Crawford recalled, to the delight of the crew:

*“...War had been declared for some months with Spain, and the newspapers teemed with accounts of the Spanish prizes and their riches, which were almost daily arriving in England. It was with joyful hearts and fond anticipations of success that we started upon this cruise. Besides, we began to be weary of a service where nothing was to be got but deuced hard knocks and a very profitless share of honour, which we all, at least the greater part of us, would very willingly exchange for a few of the doubloons that were showering so plentifully upon the more fortunate cruisers<sup>438</sup> to the westward.”<sup>439</sup>* Sadly for the crew of the Immortalite they succeeded in taking a small Spanish privateer only.

Owen's abilities and undoubted knowledge of the French coast led to his being chosen to test Fulton's experimental “torpedoes” and to lead attacks using Congreve's rockets against the French invasion flotillas. It is perhaps not surprising that Crawford should have held Owen in great esteem. After all, it was the Captain's responsibility to inspire and enthuse the young gentlemen and junior officers serving with him. Crawford elaborates on this saying that Owen, *“...possessed himself of a vast fund of professional knowledge, both practical and theoretical, he was ever ready and happy to impart instruction to those who sought it. To the youngsters of the ship he was of incalculable benefit; and I have never met an officer who took the same pains*

*or possessed the same happy method of instilling knowledge of their duty into the minds of his young evels as Captain Owen...*<sup>440</sup>

There were of course other officers who had a reputation for troubling with the training of their midshipmen and with making a powerful impression on the young. One can think immediately of the relationship between Nelson and William Hoste (amongst many others); Cochrane and Frederick Marryatt; Captain Philemon Pownoll with the young Edward Pellew; Samuel Hood and Thomas Byam Martin. Other Captains, like Robert Barlow and Ross Donnelly, were renowned for being good Captains with the result that there was some competition to have one's son or near relation placed aboard their frigates; and Pellew himself employed a teacher on board of his frigate.

It is perhaps also a sign of Owen's ability as a frigate commander that Sir William Hotham, who was at one time Owen's senior officer as Commodore of the frigate squadron blockading Boulogne, should in referring to the latter's keenness to engage the enemy, follow an acknowledgement that he was an *"...able and skilful officer.."* with the acid observation, *"....It is melancholy to perceive what men will do for the sake of a little popularity, and how many valuable officers there are who upon this point are weak enough to forget what they owe to their own characters and the real benefit of the service..."*<sup>441</sup> Success clearly also had its price.

## 6. Command of a frigate squadron.

At least nine of the officers on the list of frigate specialists were given command of their own frigate squadrons at some time during the wars<sup>442</sup> (at least two others commanded "light" squadrons). This promotion usually took place about seven years after posting, though in some cases it was after eleven years, when the Captains concerned were really quite senior officers. Owen commanded a squadron just eight years after being posted - and that in spite of several years without employment. Sir Charles Hamilton, moreover, seems to have commanded a frigate squadron off of Corsica in 1794, the year after he was posted.<sup>443</sup>



### Limiting the length of frigate service.

It must now appear quite clear that many officers were aware of the attraction of frigate command and those who were ambitious and successful, in whatever sense, pressed the Admiralty or their patron for command of one of the better 5th or even 6th rate ships. It has been observed that the rate of pay of the Captain of a frigate was considerably lower than that of the Captain of a ship of the line, and it is suggested that this differential was maintained to encourage good Captains into the, frankly, less attractive side of sea command. It is, however, quite possible that this financial inducement was insufficient to draw the good commanders into the battle fleets and that, as a consequence, the Admiralty had to impose some form of semi-official and arbitrary limit on the length of time a Captain could command a frigate. Although it has not been possible to find any official record of an Admiralty decision restricting the length of frigate service, the fact is that towards the end of the second war, Captains began referring to a limit. There are other oblique references to the policy.

In July, 1813, Sir John Borlase Warren wrote to Captain Philip Broke of the frigate Shannon:

*"... I suppose you do not wish to change the Shannon for the Chesapeake, as your time of service in a frigate is so near over....."*<sup>444</sup>

In November of the same year Broke himself received a letter from Captain D. P. Bouverie:

*".....You may have heard that I continued in my old ship<sup>445</sup> on our old station, and without having any reason to complain of my luck till the spring, when it was voted that I had been long enough in a frigate, and I was offered a seventy-four; but I thought it a favourable time to get a little respite, and I have since been a gentleman at large, and wandering about the country. Now, however, we are likely soon to be fixed, I having bought a small place near Lymington...."*<sup>446</sup>

It certainly seems possible that the Admiralty fostered the belief in some form of official limit, because it could then be conveniently used to remove Captains from frigates where desirable. For example in March 1810 trouble erupted on board the Naiad frigate leading to a petition from petty officers and crew stating their refusal to put to sea under the command of the frigate's new Captain, Henry Hill. This was not a very unusual occurrence but was often a symptom of a poor commanding officer. At the subsequent Court Martial eight of the crew were tried for inciting mutiny and most were reprieved. Marshall tells us,

“...In the following year, Captain Hill left the *Naiad*, having arrived at that standing on the list which precluded his continuing any longer in the command of a frigate. He has not since been afloat.....”<sup>447</sup>

By this time Hill had been a Post-Captain for ten years and whilst many frigate Captains had their frigate time terminated by this time, quite a few served longer. (see following table). In fact Hill’s removal sounds suspiciously like a “rule” being invoked as a convenient method of removing him without causing him a major embarrassment or giving rise to a dangerous precedent in visibly giving in to the crew’s demand. This is especially likely as, according to O’Byrne, Hill was frequently winning the approbation of the Admiralty and was, much later (in 1845), granted the Good Service Pension.

One method of testing whether some sort of ruling was being operated is to list all of those Captains with average or above average frigate service<sup>448</sup> according to their year of posting, and then see how many years passed between their posting date (when they would have been placed on the Captains List) and the date on which their frigate service finished.

**Table 6.3. Number Of Frigate Captains According To A). The Number Of Years They Had Been On The List At The End Of Their Frigate Command, And B). The Year In Which They Were posted.**

Year posted	Number of Years on the List by the end of frigate service.											
	> 6	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16/17
1782									3	2	2	3
1783								4	4	2	2	2
1790	1	3	2	3	2	1	3	2				
1791	1						1					
1792												
1793	3	1	5	5	13		1					
1794	6	3	8	7	2	4	4	1				
1795	3	5	14	2	4	3	3	1	1			
1796		2			3	6	2	1				
1797	7		1	1	1	3	6		1			
1798	4			4	2	3	2	3	1		1	
1799	1	2				4	4			1		
1800	1		2	1		5	7					
1801	1			1	3	6	5	1	3			
1802	2	2	1	6	6	3	6	10				
1803			1			3	1					
1804	2		4		1	6						
1805					3	1						
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

(N.B. The statistics for this table do not include Captains with less than two years frigate service, or those Captains who died in service.)

(Source: Data drawn from *Admiralty List Books*).

The object of this table is to test whether or not the Admiralty were operating some form of time limit for frigate service, based on seniority on the List of Post Captains. If such a scheme were being operated on a comprehensive basis it would show here, because there would be a consistently high number of officers whose frigate service ended at the same time. Of those officers posted in 1793 thirteen (i.e. 46%) ended their frigate service in the same year. But that year was 1802, right in the middle of the Peace of Amiens and, as already noted, a number of Captains were placed on half pay at this time, either temporarily or permanently. Again, for the year 1795, fourteen Captains (i.e. 39%) are shown to have ended their frigate service seven years later, that is, once again in 1802.

Although Philip Broke received his letter from Sir John Borlase Warren twelve years after being posted; and Bouverie after eleven years. Hill had the “rule” applied to him after ten years. Referring to the above table again it is evident that the vast majority of Captains ended their frigate service before ten years had passed; however, noting the time limit that seems to have been applied to Broke, Bouverie and Hill, it is possible that, ordinarily, a flexible time limit of 10-12 years was operating. This conclusion is reinforced by a comment made in the Memoir of Robert Dudley Oliver, written by his nephew, Viscount Lifford.<sup>449</sup> Lifford explains that following Trafalgar, Collingwood offered Oliver the command of the Mars 74;

*“...He accepted this offer, as he was within a few months of having been ten years Post Captain, when it was usual to oblige a Captain to take a line-of-battle ship...”* - or at least, to leave his frigate!

Of those Captains posted from 1790 onwards, there is only one example of a Captain still serving in frigates fifteen years after posting - the maximum that has been found.<sup>450</sup> One or two officers were serving approximately thirteen years later, but then there are, in nearly every year, a number of Captains who ended their frigate service between ten and twelve years after posting. Since this also happens to be several years before they were likely to reach (or reached) Flag Rank, it would

seem that ten years after being placed on the List of Post Captains, they would be removed from frigates.

For the purposes of this study therefore, it would be necessary to look among those officers who were still serving in frigates ten years after posting and who had longer than average frigate service, to identify officers exhibiting special qualities.

It is also worth now making the point that if, as stated earlier, an officer became a Post Captain between the age of 25-30 years, it must follow that he would be removed from frigate service at between the age of 35-42 years. In fact the age tended to be higher for those officers posted before or at the beginning of the war. This is partly because of the comparative shortage of experienced Captains at the beginning of the war but also probably because there was less pressure to move them on and fewer Captains on the List. Of the nine officers posted between 1794-1796 who served in frigates for over 5.5 years, all ended their frigate service between the ages of 32-37. (1x32, 2x33, 1x34, 3x35, 1x36 & 1x37).

## Chapter 7. More Fighting Captains.

In the previous two chapters an attempt has been made to identify those officers who were in some way frigate specialists. In particular the frigate service record of all frigate commanders was used to provide a measure of this specialism. However, it will also have been noticed that in the course of the discussion reference was made to several names which did not feature in the long service list. This is because there are other means of identifying frigate commanders who came to prominence for one reason or another. **Philip Beaver**, was mentioned, for example, because he was repeatedly called upon to assist with combined operations and specifically troop landings. **Sir John Borlase Warren** and **Edward Pellew** were mentioned because of their command of frigate squadrons on the Channel Station. **Sir Andrew Snape Douglas** in the Phaeton was mentioned because of his record of securing prize money and one can never ignore **Lord Cochrane** for his guerrilla warfare against the French military and their trade and coastal installations.

The most immediate indication of success as a frigate commander though, was success in a single ship engagement, yet many of those Captains who fought successful frigate engagements between 1793-1815 do not feature in the list of officers with long service.<sup>451</sup> It is important to remember at this point that in order to set a level for long service, an aggregate of more than six years was chosen, this identifying the top 9% . However, the list actually contains only officers with a minimum of seven years<sup>452</sup> - and even this demarcation is arbitrary to a certain extent. For example the case of **Sir Edward Pellew**. As previously noted, Pellew was famous for commanding the Nymphe in the first frigate action of the period. Undoubtedly a skilled seaman and vigorous frigate Captain, his aggregate frigate service was approximately six and a half years. By the time he was ordered to relinquish command of the Indefatigable in February, 1799, he had been a Post Captain for nearly seventeen years. In Chapter 3, it was argued that the Admiralty was invoking a twelve-year rule, beyond which most Post Captains were not permitted to serve in frigates. In the case of Pellew, and regardless of the fact that much of his earlier career as a Post Captain was spent during the peaceful years preceding 1793, it can be seen that he was a fairly senior Captain by the time of his removal from his last frigate.<sup>453</sup>

**Table 7.1. Captains Engaged In Successful Frigate Actions, Not Featured On Long-Service List.**

Name	Date of action	Frigate Service	Years between posting and end of frigate service
Sir Edward Pellew	June, 1793. <sup>454</sup>	6.50	17 years
Sir James Saumarez	October, 1793 <sup>455</sup>	2.25	13 years 1 month
Francis Laforey	May, 1794 <sup>456</sup> & May, 1798 <sup>457</sup>	6.50	7 years 8 months
Lord Henry Paulet (aka Powlett)	April, 1795 <sup>458</sup>	4.00	4 years 5 months
Thomas Byam Martin	June, 1796 <sup>459</sup> & October, 1798 <sup>460</sup>	6.25	8 years 3 months
Lord Amelius Beauclerk	June, 1796 <sup>461</sup>	6.25	8 years 5 months
Richard Bowen	October, 1796 <sup>462</sup> & December, 1796 <sup>463</sup>	2.75	3 years 3 months <sup>464</sup>
David Milne	June, 1798 <sup>465</sup> & August, 1800 <sup>466</sup>	5.75	6 years 4 months
Henry Lidgburd Ball	February, 1799 <sup>467</sup>	4.50	6 years 4 months
Edward Cooke	March, 1799 <sup>468</sup>	4.00	5 years 1 month <sup>469</sup>
Charles Cunningham	August, 1799 <sup>470</sup>	6.00	8 years 7 months
Thomas Baker	August, 1805. <sup>471</sup>	6.75	10 years 8 months
Thomas Lavie	June, 1806 <sup>472</sup>	1.00	6 years
Peter Rainier (2)	October, 1806 <sup>473</sup>	4.75	9 years <sup>474</sup>
Michael Seymour	November, 1808 <sup>475</sup> & April, 1809 <sup>476</sup>	4.50	10 years 6 months
Edmund Palmer	March, 1814 <sup>477</sup>	0.50	6 years 5 months.

( Source: Data extracted from *Admiralty List Books*.)

Several of these require initial comment. Edmund Palmer's frigate service was short because it coincided with the end of the war. Although posted in October, 1807, he does not appear to have been given a command until January, 1814, when he was given the new yellow-pine built frigate Hebrus, carrying 36 18-pounders. Hebrus's successful capture of the French frigate Etoile is the

more remarkable in that both **Palmer** and the crew had been together in the ship for such a short time.

The other curious case is that of **Thomas Lavie**. posted in January, 1801, he seems to have fallen victim to the onset of the Peace of Amiens, for he was not posted to a command. However he did have a powerful patron in **Earl St. Vincent** who, on his appointment as First Lord of the Admiralty, expressed a wish to find him employment.<sup>478</sup> His first command was the 12-pounder frigate **Iris** which he commissioned at the end of 1805, serving for approximately six months in the Channel Fleet. He was then given the bigger and more powerful 18-pounder frigate **Blanche**. On 18th July, 1806, he captured the superior French frigate **Guerriere** off of the Faro Isles and was knighted on his return to Yarmouth Roads with his prize. His First Lieutenant, **Henry Thomas Davies**, was promoted. In March, 1807, whilst en route from Spithead to join the squadron of **Sir James Saumarez** which was blockading Brest, the **Blanche** ran across a reef near l'Aber-Wrac'h and broke up during a storm. The cause for this was attributed to a navigational error arising from extensive ironwork in the ship affecting the compasses. In addition it was subsequently realised that a substantial quantity of small arms had been stowed near the compass which might have added to the problem.<sup>479</sup> Most of the crew and officers, including Lavie, scrambled to safety but were imprisoned by the French. Lavie does not seem to have been employed thereafter during the war.

With the exception of **Palmer** and **Lavie**, whose careers terminated early because of the end of the war or imprisonment; and **Cooke** and **Richard Bowen** who were both killed in action whilst commanding frigates, the remaining officers on this list were available for employment. The question to be asked therefore is why, since these Captains were successful, they did not have longer careers as frigate Captains?

**Sir James Saumarez** was a very senior Post Captain by the outbreak of war in 1793. He had been posted in February, 1782, when he was given command of the **Russell 74**. In spite of the peace he was briefly given command of the **Ambuscade** frigate in 1787<sup>480</sup> and then the **Raisable** at the time of the Spanish Armament. Saumarez had earned the patronage at an early age of both Admiral **Sir Peter Parker (1)** and Rear-Admiral **Sir Hyde Parker(2)**. Immediately before the outbreak of war he was appointed to the **Crescent** frigate and was, consequently, ready for sea within three weeks of war being declared. His patron, **Hyde Parker**, sent him on a cruise off of the

Channel islands, with orders to seize or destroy all French ships that he fell in with. This was a clear sign of enormous favour. In October, 1793, he captured the French frigate Reunion off of Cherbourg and was rewarded with a gift of plate from the City of London and the honour of a knighthood. By June, 1794, Saumarez had command of a small frigate squadron operating off of the Channel Islands <sup>481</sup>. On the 8th of that month, in company with the frigates Druid, Captain Joseph Elliston and Euridice, Captain Francis Cole, Saumarez's squadron encountered a superior French squadron and stood a very real chance of suffering very heavy casualties, if not the loss of at least one of its frigates. The squadron managed to escape largely as a result of the Crescent's turning to engage the pursuers single handed, and then by Saumarez's superb display of seamanship in manoeuvring his frigate through a narrow rocky channel known only to local seamen.

Saumarez had by this time been a Post Captain for thirteen years - the point at which many frigate commanders were removed. In fact, according to his biographer, Saumarez had already requested transfer to a line-of-battle ship as "*Sir James always preferred the command of a ship of the line to a frigate, notwithstanding the chances of prize-money are in favour of the latter.*"<sup>482</sup> No explanation is given for this but Saumarez was now 37 years of age and had married a Guernsey heiress before the war. It is possible that he did not need the financial reward of frigate command and that he no longer desired the rigours associated with cruising and blockade work. In 1794 Saumarez was given command of the Marlborough 74 and then several line of battle ships until he reached flag rank in 1801.

Francis Laforey distinguished himself by the capture of the French frigate Castor in 1794, and the destruction of the Confiante in 1798. He appears to have been a very well respected and popular officer, certainly earning rare credit from the historian William James.<sup>483</sup> Laforey's promotion to Post-Captain was directly due to his father's (i.e. Vice-Admiral Laforey's) influence, as Francis was sent home by his father bearing dispatches following the capture of Tobago in 1793. After six and a half years frigate service during which he served both on the Leeward Islands Station (which he knew well) and the Channel, he was given the Powerful 74 in the Baltic. There is no obvious reason for Laforey's transfer from frigate command but he remained an active officer commanding at least three ships of the line during the remainder of the war. However, in February, 1801, when he relinquished command of the Hydra, he had been a Post Captain for approximately seven and a half years.



**Lord Henry Paulet (or Powlett)** was the youngest son of the 12th Marquis of Winchester. As a member of the aristocracy he had interest and his speed of promotion ( 3 years 10 months) was somewhat quicker than the typical frigate Captain of the period. (see Chapter 4). Marshall<sup>484</sup> records that he commanded the Nautilus sloop in Vice-Admiral Laforey's squadron at the capture of Tobago in 1793.<sup>485</sup> He was still serving in the West Indies in January, 1794 when he was posted and immediately became Captain of the Vengeance 74, flying the flag of Commodore Charles Thompson in the expedition against Martinique. Within six months he was given command of the Astrea, an older 12-pounder frigate. His first three months of command were spent on independent cruising or convoy duties but he was then attached to the Channel Fleet, engaged on blockade duties and patrol work in the Channel. In April, 1795, Astrea was part of Sir John Colpoy's squadron of five ships of the line and three frigates, when they encountered three French frigates. Astrea outsailed the other two British frigates and engaged one of the enemy ships, the heavier frigate Gloire , for an hour until she struck. A month later, Paulet was rewarded by being given the 18-pounder frigate Thalia, in which he served firstly in the Bay of Biscay in Sir James Saumarez's squadron and then later in the Mediterranean. In the middle of 1798, when he had been a Post Captain for four and a half years, he was transferred to command of a line of battle ship and continued in active service until 1812 when he reached flag rank. He served on the board of Admiralty for three years but was forced to resign through ill health in 1816.

Paulet's frigate service was comparatively short, and whilst it would be unfair to say it was undistinguished, because of the highly creditable action with the Gloire, it was relatively uneventful. He was in command of a ship of the line at Copenhagen in 1801, but was part of Hyde Parker's division which did not take part in the action. In 1806 he was in Sir Richard Strachan's Squadron during the unsuccessful search for Willaumez's Squadron in the Atlantic. There would, therefore, appear to be little more that could be added to a commentary on Paulet's career in this context.

The case is vastly different with **Thomas Byam Martin**. Martin was the son of a naval Captain who became Resident Commissioner at Portsmouth in 1780. In 1786 Martin joined the frigate Pegasus which was commanded by Prince William Henry (later William IV)<sup>486</sup> He was employed almost constantly throughout the peace and immediately after the Spanish Armament in 1790, he

was appointed as Lieutenant to the Juno commanded by Captain Samuel Hood. As noted earlier in this thesis, Hood was a consummate seaman and it was almost certainly under his command that Martin honed his ship-keeping skills. In his journal Martin commented of the Juno under Hood's command:

*"...if the salvation of the kingdom had rested on this single ship she could not have been kept more constantly at sea. Summer or winter, blow high, blow low, she was always cruising, and often went out for no better purpose than that of fighting with the winds in the Channel."*<sup>487</sup>

In 1794 Vice-Admiral Lord Hood appointed him to the Modeste, a recently captured French frigate. He was 21 years of age but had impressed by his "judgement and skill"<sup>488</sup> and then, in the following year he was given temporary command of the Artois frigate in the absence of her real Captain, Edmund Nagle. Martin quickly won the approbation of Sir John Borlase Warren who commanded one of the frigate squadrons on the French coast. After his term in the Artois came to an end he requested to be able to serve in Warren's Squadron once again. His request was not granted until several years later, however he was given the St. Margarita and sent to the Cork station instead. In June, 1796, whilst North West of Scilly, Martin in the St. Margarita and Captain Thomas Williams in the Unicorn encountered two French frigates and a corvette. The British frigates gave chase and eventually the St. Margarita captured the French frigate Tamise after a close action of just twenty minutes. In spite of the length of the action the Tamise was considerably damaged by the gunnery of Martin's ship, which was manoeuvred with great skill.<sup>489</sup> Williams in the Unicorn captured the French frigate Tribune on the same occasion and in his Gazette Letter he described how "*...I had the pleasure to see Captain Martin manoeuvre his ship with the greatest judgement...*" to avoid being raked.

Appropriately, Martin was honoured with the Freedoms of both Dublin and Cork for this action and the usual gift of plate from the City<sup>490</sup>. Before the year was over Martin had come to further attention, firstly by capturing a Dutch frigate which had mutinied and had anchored in the Clyde and then by capturing a well manned 16-gun privateer in the channel. In December, 1796, Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote appointing Martin to the Tamar, commenting:

*"...I hope your having the command of her will be the means of enabling you to pursue with success the course you have so fortunately begun, and entitle you to further distinction and credit,"*<sup>491</sup> he added the Tamar was "*one of the finest frigates in the navy*" and indeed although she was fir built, she was one of the crack Artois class frigates.<sup>492</sup> Martin however was not happy

with the change nor does he appear to have been overjoyed to find that the Tamar was bound for the West Indies as part of Rear-Admiral Harvey's squadron. He complained about this, the ship and its crew and received an almost acid response from Spencer. In the West Indies Martin distinguished himself in combined operations with Abercromby's forces in the attack on Porto Rico and in capturing enemy privateers, for which the interested parties of Antigua, Martinique and Barbados awarded him plate, two presentation swords and 300 guineas.

In November, 1797, Martin's health broke down and he exchanged into the 64-gun Dictator in order to return to England for recuperation. By September of the following year his health had recovered and he was appointed to the 38-gun frigate Fisgard. Fisgard had been captured from the French in 1797 and was found to be an experimental design frigate, having a sharp hull profile and screwjacks so that the rake of the fore and main mast could be adjusted. In some conditions she was probably fast but, typical of many French frigates, she pitched and rolled heavily in bad weather. She was also prone to leaks.<sup>493</sup> Martin was able to turn over many of his best seamen from the St. Margarita<sup>494</sup> a clear indication that he was well favoured as some had also been able to follow him from his previous frigate the Tamar. Even the Fisgard's new First Lieutenant, John Surman Carden was impressed at the readiness of the ship when she sailed to search for a large privateer operating somewhere off of Brest in the mid-October, 1798. According to Carden:

*"...We met with strong gales, when we made Ushant on the French Coast, and then stretched out into the Atlantic Ocean . - We every day made much progress in the organization of our crew at the Great Guns &c., at which our Gallant Captain shewed much tact and experience, which gave to all confidence.....".*<sup>495</sup>

At dawn on the 20th October, the Fisgard espied the larger French frigate Immortalite armed with 24-pounder guns and gave chase. By mid-day the two frigates were engaged in close action, but after 25 minutes the gunnery from the French frigate had cut Fisgard's stays, braces and running rigging to such an extent that she became uncontrollable. The commander of the Immortalite decided to make off rather than take advantage of the British frigate's desperate situation. This turned out to be a serious mistake, for within half an hour the finely honed skills of the seamen on the Fisgard had repaired the damage sufficiently for her to renew the chase. As the chase continued Martin himself supervised the firing of the bowchasers, and it was through his skill or luck that at least one of his shots damaged the Immortalite sufficiently to enable the British frigate to catch up. The action recommenced and the spirit on both sides was so stubborn that by

3pm both ships had sustained heavy damage, the Fisgard, having received many shot below the water line and having six foot of water in the hold. Throughout the action Martin closely directed the manoeuvres of his frigate until Carden was able to lead a boarding party to take the opponent. Both ships limped back to port and Martin received further acclaim, a whole service of plate from the City of London, and the Freedoms of both Exeter and Plymouth. In accordance with the usual practice, Carden was made a Commander.<sup>496</sup>

In 1800, Martin realised his wish to serve under Warren once again when Fisgard, was appointed to his squadron on blockade duty. On several occasions during that year Martin and his crew, together with the people from other ships in the squadron, demonstrated great skill and courage in cutting out enemy shipping.<sup>497</sup> However, the squadron's good fortune ran out in July, 1800 during a cutting out expedition on the Isle of Noirmoutier. The combined boats of the squadron had, on this occasion, been sent in to take three armed vessels together with fifteen French merchantmen. Unable to remove the vessels, they were destroyed and the party began its return journey, only to find that the tide had dropped unexpectedly fast and they were high and dry. The party now came under heavy fire from both troops and shore batteries, and had to recourse to dragging one of the French vessels some two miles across the mudflats. Half of the party were able to escape but they left 92 seamen, marines and officers behind, some wounded, to be taken prisoner.<sup>498</sup>

Martin continued on very active service in the Fisgard until the Peace of Amiens. In February, 1802, having been a Post Captain for 8 years and 4 months, he relinquished his command of the Fisgard at Plymouth, and so ended his career as a frigate commander, although his naval career continued for many years with great distinction and he gained the curious distinction of gaining a Swedish Knighthood before being rewarded with English honours in 1814.

**Lord Amelius Beauclerk** was another Captain whose frigate service was of reasonably long duration at 6.25 years. Highly connected, being the 3rd son of the Duke of St. Albans, his promotion was accelerated. He entered the navy in 1782 and served almost continuously throughout the peace. He was promoted to Lieutenant at the time of the Spanish Armament in 1790, and was posted by Lord Hood in the Mediterranean in September, 1793, at the age of approximately 25 years.<sup>499</sup>

For several months he served as Hood's flag Captain aboard the Victory, but in May, 1794, he was given the Nemesis, a small 28-gun 9-pounder frigate. Three months later the 12-pounder frigate Juno became vacant following the transfer of Captain Samuel Hood, and Lord Hood gave Beauclerk the command. Beauclerk distinguished himself in the Juno, firstly by beating off a greatly superior force off the Hyeres Islands near the French coast in March, 1795; and then, in the following September, Juno was part of the escort to a convoy sailing from Gibraltar to England when the convoy was attacked by a French squadron. The Juno, in company with the Argo, managed to save half of the convoy and deliver it to England. Thirty out of the 31 other ships were taken by the French.<sup>500</sup>

Probably as a result of the skill shown on this occasion he was given the 18-pounder frigate Dryad in December of the same year, and stationed off the coast of Ireland. Six months later, in June, 1796, south of Cape Clear, the Dryad engaged and captured the slightly smaller French frigate La Proserpine.<sup>501</sup> Additionally, according to Marshall, Beauclerk had considerable success cruising against Privateers.<sup>502</sup> Certainly Steel's Prize Pay List records the capture of three Privateers and the sinking of a fourth.<sup>503</sup>

In December, 1798 he left his last frigate, the Fortunee and does not seem to have been given further employment until December, 1800, when he commissioned the heavier 44-gun frigate Fortunee. In this he was stationed in the Channel and seems to have been selected to attend the King at Weymouth, an honour which some frigate Captains regarded as a dubious privilege. In spite of this, Beauclerk continued his success in April, 1801, capturing two further privateers, Le Masquerade and Le Renard. By 1802, Beauclerk had been a Post Captain for eight and a half years. Upon the outbreak of War with Napoleonic France, he was immediately given command of a 74-gun ship and continued in service until the end of the war. By 1809 he was commanding a blockade squadron in the Bay of Biscay and was nominated a Colonel of Marines in 1810.

David Milne, the son of an Edinburgh merchant, joined the Navy in 1779 and saw considerable action during the American War. Seeing no prospect of employment after the war, and probably lacking any real interest, he entered the merchant service apparently in the East India Trade.<sup>504</sup> On the outbreak of war in 1793, he was employed on the Boyne, the flagship of Sir John Jervis and took part in the expedition to the West Indies where, in January, 1794, he became Lieutenant of the Blanche frigate under the command of the energetic Robert Faulknor. At the end of the

same year, the Blanche became engaged in a fierce action with the French frigate La Pique, during which Faulknor was killed. Command devolved on the First Lieutenant Frederick Watkins (who was also to become famous as a result of a frigate action) but Milne also distinguished himself during the action, which eventually resulted in the capture of the enemy frigate.<sup>505</sup> His involvement was particularly personal, for the Blanche's boats were all destroyed in the action and when the Pique surrendered Milne swam across to her to take possession, apparently followed by his Newfoundland dog.<sup>506</sup> Four months later, and as a result of this action, Milne was promoted to Commander of the Inspector sloop in the West Indies. He was regarded as highly valuable by his Commander in Chief, Sir John Laforey, for when Milne was ordered to escort a convoy home, Laforey persuaded him to relinquish command and remain on the promise of the first Post vacancy to arise. This probably explains the unusual rapidity with which he was posted, just six months later. He then commanded several frigates for brief periods until, in January, 1796, and apparently at his own request,<sup>507</sup> he was given the Pique, the ship he had helped to capture.

The Pique was stationed at Demerara to protect the trade, but in July, 1796, he took the unusual step of leaving his station to escort a convoy of merchant vessels who had missed the official rendezvous. Immediately upon his arrival he wrote to the Admiralty to explain why he had taken this step, enclosing letters from the Governor and Merchants of Demerara lobbying him for assistance. Perhaps surprisingly, the Admiralty expressed their approval of his action on the basis that, although he had left his station, he had been fulfilling his orders to protect British trade.

Pique was attached to the Channel Fleet where it nearly became involved in the mutiny at Spithead, however, Milne took prompt and decisive action against the most active mutineers and the crew returned to their duties. Then in June, 1798, the Pique engaged the French frigate Seine in a muddled and costly engagement, during which the Pique ran aground and was bilged and the British frigate Jason was severely damaged and also ran aground. The situation was critical until the arrival of the Mermaid frigate, at which point the Seine surrendered. By any reckoning this was a hard fought action, the Seine alone losing 170 killed and 100 wounded, many of whom were soldiers returning from the West Indies. The action was given rapturous coverage, notwithstanding the loss of the Pique. Indeed, *The Times* commented dryly that "*La Pique was a very old and crazy ship and her loss is to be estimated as little more than the value of her old iron...*"<sup>508</sup> A report in the same paper claimed that the Seine was carrying a considerable amount

of treasure. If this was the case it would no doubt explain the gleeful letter that Milne received from his Prize Agent, James Halford, the day after the Seine was moored at Portsmouth.

*"...I most sincerely congratulate you on your gallant action and success....The public hold your conduct in proper estimation but will never be able to reward you according to your merits. Your claim to command the Seine is so good that no one doubts it. Your application to Lord Spencer and Mr. Dundas therefore will I flatter myself produce a favourable answer by this Post. I know the latter expressed himself in such a way at dinner yesterday....."*<sup>509</sup>

Milne was appointed to the Seine in December, 1798. Again he was to have success, for in August, 1800, he captured another French frigate in the Channel, this time the heavier Vengeance.<sup>510</sup> This was another hard fought action and, similarly to the engagement between the Pique and the Seine, was characterised by a long period of close range gunnery, resulting in heavy French casualties. Even the saturnine William James admitted that it was *"as pretty a frigate-match as any fought during the war.."*<sup>511</sup> Milne received no substantive reward for this action and continued to command the Seine in the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico until the Peace of Amiens, when she was paid off.

It is probably an indication of the favour in which he was held that in April, 1803, with the resumption of war, Milne was again appointed to command the Seine. Just three months later she was wrecked off of the coast of Holland as a result of the neglect or incompetence of two pilots she had on board.<sup>512</sup> Milne was honourably acquitted but was not immediately appointed to another frigate, although he had only been a Post Captain for just under seven years. Instead he was placed in command of the Sea Fencibles at Forth for several years. Although this might seem something of an anti-climax there may have been an element of personal choice in this as, in the following year, he married the daughter of the Baronet Sir Alexander Purves. In 1811 he was again in acting command, but this time of a line of battle ship, and his naval career was thenceforward almost continuous until his death in 1845. It is possibly just too much of a coincidence that his frigate career ended after a shipwreck and just before his marriage. His eldest son was born in 1805, and one must suspect that Milne's credit was sufficient to earn him a relatively peaceful few years in Scotland during the early years of his marriage. His frigate career had certainly been active and he had been exposed to the peril of both the sea and enemy action. One could not blame him if he did decide to opt for a few quiet years.

Henry Lidgburd Ball passed for Lieutenant in April, 1778 but then waited fourteen years to be promoted to Commander; a further three years passed before he was posted. This length of time was longer than the average for both the frigate and the DEF Sample ( see Chapter 3) and suggests that Ball was not strongly patronised. Although posted in July, 1795, he had by this time commanded the 18-pounder frigate Flora at Portsmouth for seven months. The fact that his command of her ended at the same time that he was posted, suggests that she had been temporarily down-rated. His first Post command was the 24-gun Ariadne but, after about a year, in March, 1797, he was given the Daedalus a small 12-pounder frigate. During the middle of that year Daedalus was occupied with cruising and convoy duties, and then attached to the Channel Fleet. From December, however, the frigate was sent on what are quaintly described by the Admiralty Clerks as “particular services”. In this case Ball was attached to a squadron intended for the Red Sea to counter any steps Napoleon’s army of the Nile might make in the direction of India.

In February, 1799, whilst carrying stores for the Red Sea squadron, the Daedalus encountered the French frigate Prudente off of the east coast of what is now South Africa and after a close engagement lasting just over an hour, forced her to surrender. The Daedalus received considerably less damage than her opponent, which suggests that the gunnery of the British frigate was better than that of her opponent - although James does point out <sup>513</sup> that whilst the hull of the French frigate was badly damaged, it was the rigging of the British ship that received damage. The result may equally have been a testimony to the superior British tactics of concentrating fire on the opponent’s hull.

Unusually, the First Lieutenant of the Daedalus, Nicholas Tucker, was not promoted following the action and the Prudente , upon arrival at Table Bay, was condemned as being irreparable. Ball seems to have received little recognition for his service, and continued in the Daedalus , on the East Indies station, primarily involved in the blockade of Batavia. Then, in November, 1801, Admiral Peter Rainier (Commander in Chief of the East Indies station) transferred him to the Trident 64. Following which he was employed almost continuously for the rest of the war. His frigate service was somewhere between 4.5 - 5 years, depending on the interpretation of the command of the Flora. However, he was removed from frigate command after just six and a half years as a Post Captain. One would have to observe that the capture of the Prudente attracted



comparatively little attention, probably because the British frigate carried a slightly heavier armament and this probably explains the lack of reward following the action.

**Charles Cunningham**, was born in 1755 and first went to sea<sup>514</sup> in the merchant service.<sup>515</sup> At the age of 20 he transferred to the Royal Navy as a midshipman in the frigate Aeolus, serving almost continuously through the American War, after which he was paid off. In October, 1790, he was promoted to Commander and given the Ariel sloop until June, 1791. This was followed by a period of unemployment until he was given the Speedy sloop towards the end of 1792. The DNB entry suggests that Cunningham had the active support of Cornwallis but as the latter did not reach Flag Rank until the beginning of 1793, his influence may have been minimal.<sup>516</sup> The Speedy was sent to join Hood's squadron in the Mediterranean at which point the records regarding Cunningham's service become confused. There is no doubt that Cunningham was posted in October, 1793. According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he was posted into the frigate Unite, followed by the Lowestoft in April, 1794. He served with Nelson at the siege of Calvi, and was then given the Clyde frigate in April, 1796. The Admiralty List Books make a passing reference to his command of the Trent frigate for a month in April, 1796, and then confirm the command of the Clyde. They make no reference to the other frigates. The most accurate source is probably to be found in the Cunningham Papers, where a Navy Office Certificate<sup>517</sup> gives Cunningham's commands as follows:

Imperieuse - October, 1793 - March, 1794.

Lowestoft - March, 1794 - August, 1794.

Clyde - April, 1796 - June, 1802.<sup>518</sup>

Cunningham was 38 years old when posted, a sea officer of considerable experience and there is some evidence that he was popular as a Captain. Among the Cunningham Papers at the National Maritime Museum is a Log of the Clyde<sup>519</sup> which records few punishments and none at all during the first four months of Cunningham's command. Furthermore Cunningham seems to have exercised considerable restraint and consistency when it came to ordering floggings as punishment. In 1797, the Clyde became involved in the mutiny at the Nore, but unlike many officers who were removed by their crew, Cunningham was allowed to remain on board<sup>520</sup>. In fact he was treated with respect on all occasions and when a seaman was found stealing from his shipmates, he was handed over to Cunningham for punishment, receiving a dozen lashes. After

17 days, the crew of the Clyde decided (or were persuaded) to abandon the mutiny and together with the frigate St. Fiorenzo, Captain Harry Burrard Neale, slipped away from the mutinous fleet, with guns run out in case they were discovered and fired upon. For this service both men received the thanks of the Marine Society and a gift of £100 for the crews.<sup>521</sup> Two years later, in the Bay of Biscay, the Clyde captured the smaller French frigate Vestale. The disastrous enthusiasm with which Lord Keith reported this action has already been described, but Cunningham's innocence in the misunderstanding was clearly supported by William James.<sup>522</sup> Cunningham's reward may have been lost amidst a significant embarrassment when it was realised that the opponent was only a twelve-pounder frigate - yet he was rewarded, for by 1800 he was commanding a powerful squadron of eight frigates off of the coast of France.<sup>523</sup>

During the Peace of Amiens Cunningham, who had now served in frigates for an aggregate of 7 (probable) years was superseded and placed on half pay. He had been on the list of Post Captains for nearly nine years. With the resumption of war he was given a ship of the line, but appears to have retired from active service after less than a year. By 1804 Cunningham was 49 years of age and although this was far from old when compared to other officers in the service, this may have been the reason behind his retirement.

**Thomas Baker** , born in 1774, entered the navy as a Midshipman in 1789 and then apparently served for some time in the East India Company before the outbreak of war in 1793.<sup>524</sup> Promoted to Lieutenant quickly by 1792, he reached the rank of Commander by the end of 1795. He served briefly as Flag Captain to Sir John Orde following the mutiny at the Nore. Two years later he was given the Nemesis frigate and sent to the North Sea. In July, 1800, he became involved in a serious diplomatic incident when, in attempting to board a convoy sailing under neutral Danish colours, the convoy's escort vessel, the frigate Freya , fired upon the Nemesis. Several broadsides were exchanged and seamen killed before the Freya surrendered.<sup>525</sup> A major political row developed, undoubtedly contributing to the entry of Denmark into the Confederacy of Armed Neutrality against Britain.

Baker, however, had acted according to his standing instructions and the Admiralty, probably in order to be seen supporting its sea officers, rewarded him by giving him a larger 18-pdr frigate Phoebe. He commanded her until May, 1802, when during the Peace of Amiens he resigned the command to travel abroad. On the renewal of war he returned to England and wrote to the

Admiralty stressing his “*extreme anxiety to partake any of the most active services*”.<sup>526</sup> He was immediately given the 18-pdr frigate Phoenix. In August, 1805, patrolling in Biscay he encountered the French frigate Didon. Baker had disguised the Phoenix as a smaller ship and approached the Didon from an angle calculated to hide the English frigate’s real nature. The Didon was considerably larger than the Phoenix, her broadside weight being 563lbs to Phoenix’s 444lbs and she carried 330 men to Phoenix’s 245. Didon several times managed to manoeuvre to rake Phoenix and eventually attempted to board over the starboard quarter. Baker, however, had had the window sills in his cabin lowered in order that a gun could be run out of them and his men now attempted to do just this, but it was suddenly realised that there were no gun tackles long enough to move the gun to its new position. The gun had to be pushed by the gun crew, actively assisted by Baker and his officers, through the Captain’s cabin whilst the French marines poured an incessant musketry in through the stern windows. Eventually the gun was secured and several rounds of grape cleared the fo’c’sle of the French frigate.

Overall the gunnery of the Phoenix was quicker than that of the Didon and, after the latter lost her foremast she surrendered. Both ships had received substantial damage in the action. As frigate actions went, this was an admirable victory over a heavier frigate. *The Times* took a particular interest. News of the victory reached England before August 29th but on that date the Newspaper reported:

*“...The few details of the capture of the Didon, which have reached us, reflect the highest credit on the determined bravery of Capt. Baker and his gallant crew. We trust that we shall have the pleasure of congratulating him, upon his bringing his hard-earned prize into port: but considering the track in which he was, and his disabled state, we cannot dissemble our fears for his safety. Should any of the French look-out ships get sight of him and his capture, there is little doubt but both of them would fall an easy conquest.”*<sup>527</sup>

The fact was that no-one knew what had happened to either the Phoenix or the Didon, which the former had in tow. Baker had intended making for the Tagus, but after several hard days, the wind changed and he decided to sail north for England instead. Eventually the two ships arrived at Plymouth on 6th September, *The Times* again reporting:

*“...they arrived safe, after beating about the Chops of the Channel in this disabled state three weeks, La Didon not a stick standing, and the Phoenix’s lower masts so much wounded that she*

*could carry but little sail with such a heavy ship in tow: they went up the harbour amidst the exulting shouts of numerous spectators, who lined the rocks on the occasion.*"<sup>528</sup>

For some curious reason, Baker never really received the accolade he truly deserved for this action<sup>529</sup> and his letter to the Admiralty was heavily edited before forwarding to either *The Times* or the *London Gazette*, cutting out his generous praise of his officers and crew - an injustice against which William James railed loudly.<sup>530</sup> Baker was rewarded by being given command of the captured Didon, however it seems as though she was found to be too badly damaged and this plan was abandoned. Baker, however, was clear about what he wanted: *"...I trust their Lordships will be pleased to consider the very great disappointment it is to me to lose, at this time, so fine a frigate, and will I hope, favour me with an appointment to any other frigate they may please to consider me worthy of".*<sup>531</sup>

As Michael Seymour will be considered in detail in the next chapter, Peter Rainier (2) is the last frigate Captain to be considered here. Rainier was in many ways the epitome of the young "star-Captains". Born in 1784, nephew of both Admiral Peter Rainier and of Captain James Vashon, he was well connected for a career in the navy. At the age of 10<sup>532</sup> he went to sea with James Vashon in the Pompee and also served in frigates under Captain A. K. Legge and Captain Charles Adam, both of whom were very highly regarded as frigate commanders. He passed for Lieutenant in January (?) 1802, at the age of eighteen and was given command of the sloop Dasher in December, 1804. Dasher was stationed in the East Indies where Rainier's Uncle, Admiral Peter Rainier was Commander-in-Chief - but only just. Sir Edward Pellew had been dispatched to the East Indies to supersede him and, literally, within the last three months of his command the Admiral made his nephew firstly a Commander ( of the Dasher) and then, in February, 1805, posted him as Captain of the frigate Dedaigneuse. Within a month, at the age of just twenty-one years, he had been transferred to command the 18-pounder frigate Caroline. The Caroline was a fine, fast frigate of the Phoebe class with generally good manoeuvrability although she performed less well in heavy weather.<sup>533</sup> For a young junior Captain she was certainly a prize in her own right.

In October, 1806, the Caroline was part of Sir Thomas Troubridge's squadron blockading Batavia where a large Dutch squadron had been threatening East India Company ships. On the morning of 18th October, the Caroline captured a 14-gun Dutch brig and, as she was in the

process of securing the prize, saw a Dutch frigate running for Batavia. Rainier ordered sails set in chase. Entering Batavia road however, he encountered four Dutch vessels; a 14-gun ship corvette, a brig, an 18-gun ship belonging to the Dutch East India Company, and the Dutch 36-gun frigate Maria-Riggersbergen. Undeterred by the enemy's superiority Rainier brought the Caroline to within a half-pistol shot of the Dutch frigate and then commenced a heavy cannonade. After half an hour the Dutch frigate struck her colours, despite the apparently ineffectual support from the other Dutch vessels.<sup>534</sup> The Maria-Riggersbergen was a smaller frigate than the Caroline, carrying only 12-pounder guns, but this did not deter The Madras Courier from heralding Rainier's success:

*"...As the records of the deeds of valour performed by our Navy must be ever highly interesting to an English reader, and in Justice to the brave Tars by whom our Naval Superiority is maintained, we hasten to lay before the Public the official letter of Captain Rainier of H.M. Ship Caroline, to his excellency Sir Thomas Troubridge.....The Maria Riggersbergen is bought into His Majesty's Service for 18,000£ and is Commissioned by the name of the Java..."*<sup>535</sup>

Such was the efficiency of the Caroline's guns, the Maria-Riggersbergen was significantly damaged during the engagement. Nevertheless the purchase of the frigate was financially good news for Rainier and his crew. Rainier's good luck continued when, in January, 1807, the Caroline captured a Spanish Philippines Company ship carrying a cargo of enormous value<sup>536</sup>. Several months later Rainier succumbed to a serious illness - probably the fever that was associated with unhealthy conditions at Batavia - and was forced to return to England, arriving in the Downs in April, 1807. It is unclear how long Rainier took to recuperate, but according to a note in the Rainier papers he made repeated applications to the Admiralty for a command but was unsuccessful until June, 1813, when he was appointed to a new pine-built frigate, the 36-gun 18-pounder Niger.<sup>537</sup> The Niger was one of the heavy (i.e., over a thousand tons) 18-pounder frigates hurriedly built in response to the outbreak of war with America in 1812. As a command they were highly desirable and were certainly given to some of the finest frigate Captains.<sup>538</sup> Rainier's inclusion in the list of favoured officers is a very clear indication that his abilities had been recognised. Initially Rainier was sent carrying specie and to escort a convoy to Spain, but he was then sent to the Texel with the 18-pounder frigate Fortunee also under his command, to search for two French frigates. Bad weather prevented the two forces meeting, but did not prevent Rainier capturing an American schooner. In December, 1813, the Niger sailed from Plymouth with a convoy bound for the Cape. Just off of Brest, Rainier re-captured the Brig Adventurer, and

then on 5th January, 1814, with Philip Pipon in the frigate Tagus under his command, the convoy attracted the attention of two French 40-gun frigates, the Ceres and the Clorinde. The British frigates gave chase and the Niger was able to close with them after Rainier ordered his crew to throw eight hundred shot overboard. Niger and Ceres exchanged ranging shots with bowchasers and sternchasers respectively until at 7.30pm a change in wind direction enabled Tagus also to close with the Ceres and the two frigates were able to capture her two hours later.<sup>539</sup> Whilst one would have to applaud both Rainier and Pipon for the zeal with which they set about engaging two heavy French frigates - which were obviously intent on commerce raiding - the fact is that they left their convoy and followed the Ceres and Clorinde for 23 hours, covering a distance of at least 138 miles.<sup>540</sup> There was a considerable danger in this, especially as the Clorinde escaped. Nevertheless, Rainier successfully delivered his convoy and was then allowed to cruise in the South Atlantic for some weeks.

In 1815, along with many other Captains, Rainier was awarded a C.B. for his services. Although he was clearly highly regarded<sup>541</sup> the end of the war overtook his career as a frigate Captain, and his name does not feature on the list of the longer serving frigate Captains. In spite of this, his energetic career as a frigate Captain and his age (he was only 31 when the war finished) marked him out as a notable example of the frigate commander.

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In virtually all of the above cases the Captains' careers as frigate commanders terminated for identifiable reasons. Pellew and Saumarez were moved to Line of Battle Ships almost certainly because of their Seniority - or, at least in the former's case, this was the reason given. Five of the officers named experienced a career change during the Peace of Amiens and, as has been noted earlier in this thesis, the peace together with the change in both Government and Naval Administration probably combined to prevent many Captains returning to the frigate service. Two frigate Captains were killed in action, which is perhaps not surprising for officers who gained a reputation through engagement with the enemy.

## Chapter 8. In Command.

Ultimately it has to be remembered that, to achieve success, a frigate Captain had to possess the skills and abilities necessary to enable him to 'command'. Two hundred years later these attributes would be recognised as "leadership" skills; but this word is certainly not one commonly found in the naval writings of the period.

By the time an officer was promoted to Post Captain during the Great Wars with France, he would probably have spent some twelve years in an environment from which he was expected to learn how to command both officers and men. Although there were attempts to provide formal training for officers in the guise of the Naval College at Portsmouth, the focus there was heavily on seamanship, navigation, mathematics, physics etc. - all aspects relating to the practical side of fighting and ship handling.<sup>542</sup> There was nothing to assist the young officer in understanding how to command people. Such understanding was therefore supposed to be assimilated through experience during the six years as a 'young gentleman', Midshipman or Master's Mate, followed by the four to five years as a Lieutenant. At the end of this period of time the fortunate ones were appointed Commander of their own vessel - but a small vessel with a small crew. Usually only by having proven their abilities at this level did they gain Post rank and the command of a rated ship with a crew of two hundred or more.

It is possible to see in this structured system a training process at work, but the process was heavily dependent upon good role models. The examples of Lord Cochrane, Ross Donnelly and Edward Owen have already been noted in this capacity - though one would also have to acknowledge Nelson's huge contribution in this area. If there was little formal training in 'command' there were certainly tools to assist. The oldest of these were the *Regulations and Instructions relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea*.<sup>543</sup> These actually contained little guidance about handling either men or officers, although they did insist for example that a Captain was never "by his own authority, to discharge a commission or warrant officer, nor to punish or strike him".<sup>544</sup> However a Post Captain could suspend or confine one of those officers pending Court Martial, which suggests that the Regulations existed to literally 'regulate' the powers of the commanding officer rather than to encourage good relations with his officers. The real value of these regulations is demonstrated by the fact that Regulation IV, restricting the ability of any

commander to inflict more than twelve lashes, was regularly ignored. The *Regulations* were amended by Sir Charles Middleton (Lord Barham) in 1806, possibly in an attempt to instil a degree of acceptable practice and uniformity to ship management - but, once again, there was little to give direct guidance to the commanding officer.

The reason for this absence of advice probably lay in the reluctance of the Admiralty to trespass onto the quarter deck of individual Captains. That senior officers in the navy were conscious of the difficulty that existed here is evident from, for example, a chance remark in a letter from Lord Keith to Admiral Markham in 1803 : "*Captain Mitford is a gentleman, but, I have heard, a little harsh in his command. It is a difficult subject to mention or I would [talk] to him on the subject; it is of high importance to keep men in temper at this time.*"<sup>545</sup> Mitford was not a frigate Captain, but the reference indicates the difficulty that senior officers experienced in tackling severity among their officers, especially when there was no official framework or detailed rules and regulations to guide officers in the practice of command.

In spite of this apparent reluctance - and one might understand why many Admirals would have been reluctant to trespass in this area - it is clear that the issue was one of which a number of commanding officers were themselves aware. It may have been this which prompted David Steel in 1804 to publish a volume by an anonymous '*Captain in the Royal Navy*' entitled "*Observations and Instructions for the use of the commissioned, the junior and other officers of the Royal navy on all the material points of professional duty.....*"<sup>546</sup>

The Anonymous Captain was in reality Commander John Davie, who was posted in 1809, and had served for a number of years as First Lieutenant under Captain Jonathan Faulknor in the frigate Diana. It is more than possible, therefore, that Davie was writing with the benefit of first hand experience.

What is particularly important about this work is that almost from the beginning it gave voice to some of the issues relating to command:

*"The first object of every Captain in His Majesty's navy on his appointment to a ship must be to have those officers with him whose dispositions he is acquainted with, and upon whose abilities and attention his<sup>547</sup> character, comfort and happiness are, in a great measure, dependant".<sup>548</sup>*

Davie went on to explain that if the Captain was not able to choose his own officers he would be "*tenacious of his authority*" and afraid to delegate. Furthermore, only a Captain fully satisfied



with his First Lieutenant *"upon whose abilities the whole movement of the ship depends"* would be able to leave the *"whole internal management to his direction"*. The point of this was to enable the Captain to retain a certain amount of distance, enabling him to concentrate without the encumbrance of the 'day-to-day'; again, in modern management terms this would be recognised as a valid technique, sometimes referred to as 'helicopter vision'. The author went on to explain further: *"Every Captain of a ship of war should recollect....that the exertions of [the First Lieutenant]..will be in proportion to the confidence reposed in him, and that interference in his department, and unnecessary orders, are the most certain means of damping his zeal and ardour"*.<sup>549</sup> Furthermore, it was the duty of the First Lieutenant to manage the other officers and, through the divisional system, the crew. Under this system the crew were literally divided into Divisions, each being the responsibility of a junior Lieutenant, assisted by Midshipmen and Warrant Officers. It was the duty of these to ensure the care of the seamen, inspecting their clothing, bedding, food and ultimately their health. The Divisional system, therefore, represented a management hierarchy. Although a number of enlightened officers had already tried and adopted the system, it was not formally recommended until the amended *Regulations* of 1806. However, Davie was certainly advocating it in 1804, noting that *"an officer who commands seamen should make himself acquainted with their dispositions and character, in preference to any other consideration. By this he will be enabled to improve every favourable opportunity of rendering the discipline subservient to his command."*<sup>550</sup> Vitally, Davie was not concerned simply with maintaining discipline, he was also concerned about motivation. He advocated, for example, officers taking every opportunity to encourage young seamen to improve their skills, thus raising their status within the ship - and therefore the wider seafaring community. In what would appear to be almost revolutionary thinking he noted that the largest part of the crew, i.e. the afterguard and waisters, were the ones upon whom *"the whole drudgery of the ship devolves. These men have not only the burden, but every dirty and inferior duty to execute; to them I conceive an officer's principal attention should be directed, and every encouragement and inducement made use of to reconcile them to the service, and to acquire a knowledge of seamanship"*.<sup>551</sup> There is, here, more than a whiff of that philosophy of self-improvement which became so prevalent later in the 19th-century. Here, seamanship is seen as the means of self improvement, but what is really important is the recognition of the relationship between low-status/low self-esteem, and the need for an officer to play an active role in encouraging men to rise above this situation.

The Divisional System, therefore, was included in the amended *Regulations* of 1806 because it was already being operated by a number of Post Captains. The *Regulations* also attempted to encourage a degree of uniformity between the regimes on different ships. One of the major causes of grievance and disruption occurred when a new commanding officer assumed his position and introduced his own particular rules for the internal discipline and management of the ship. It often took some time to become familiar with changes to routines which may have been in operation for many years, and the result was often an increase in punishments.<sup>552</sup> In his study of discipline on the Leeward Islands Station, Byrn noted that “74% of the men flogged within the first six months of the arrival of a fresh Captain had no previous history of disciplinary problems on their ships”.<sup>553</sup>

The influence of a new Captain upon those under his command cannot be over-emphasised. The case of Captain Henry Jenkins, of the Ambuscade serves as a good example here. Jenkins was posted in 1795 and, within a year was given command of the Carnatic 74. In April, 1798, he was transferred to the 12-pounder frigate Ambuscade. On 14th December, he encountered the French frigate Baionnaise and during the course of the ensuing engagement, the crew of the British frigate suddenly lost both morale and discipline and abandoned their guns, enabling French boarders to take the ship. According to William James<sup>554</sup> the crew of the Ambuscade were in a very bad state of discipline which had not been improved by Jenkin’s behaviour since taking command. The latter had brought with him, from his previous ship, a party of favourite seamen whom he nominated the “Gentlemen Carnatics” - whilst the frigate’s crew he publicly termed the “Blackguard Ambuscades”. This thoughtless and provocative treatment obviously created serious divisions among a crew who should have been working closely as a team. The result was disaster. Jenkins probably survived the consequent Court martial only because his judges were unable to decide which half of the crew to blame, and the fact that he looked so ill, still suffering the effects from the wound he had received during the action.

### Captains Order Books

The particular requirements of a new Captain were generally presented in the form of the Captain’s Order Book containing what was often referred to as his ‘standing orders’. A number of these have survived, and in many cases they prefigure both the work of John Davie and the amended *Regulations*. The contents of the Captains Order Books tend to be similar,

concentrating on the role and duties of the First Lieutenant, Officer of the Watch etc. There is usually a surprising degree of concern with seamen's clothing, bedding and the need to keep the 'tween decks dry and aired for health reasons. Individual Captains brought their own style to the Orders. Captain Edward Riou's Order book for the frigate Amazon in 1799, for example, was very detailed, containing 64 different orders<sup>555</sup>. Those of William Parker, who followed Riou in command of the Amazon were much shorter<sup>556</sup>.

There is also no noticeable difference between the orders of a frigate Captain and those of the Captain of a ship of the line. The concerns are largely the same. However, to a certain degree this may depend on the type of duty on which the ship was engaged. Edward Griffith of the 90-gun London, included an order that, when at sea he was to be informed "*should we at any time lose sight of the Commr in Chief or his lights*".<sup>557</sup> A concern which was less likely to be of concern to a frigate on a cruise! Similarly, J.C. Purvis of the Princess Royal 90 included orders to ensure that at the change of watch, the relieving Lieutenant signed the log to confirm that he had had the exact position and distance of the ship ahead made clear to him.<sup>558</sup>

Some of the Order Books drawn up for frigates do contain elements suggesting an awareness of crew management, particularly when it came to the relationship between the Captain and his First Lieutenant. The management of officers was probably much more important than management of the crew, since the latter were commanded through the former and getting this wrong could be a serious problem. Charles Dashwood, who was later to command frigates for a period of five years, experienced just this problem when commanding the sloop Sylph in 1800. Dashwood was concerned about the behaviour of his First Lieutenant, a Lt. Pyne. Following an ugly incident involving dockyard artificers who had boarded the sloop to carry out repairs, Pyne was found guilty of maltreatment and Dashwood reported to his Commander-in-Chief: "*...I have had many opportunities of observing the great warmth of temper of that officer, and I am as apprehensive of unpleasant consequences from his violent and unconciliatory mind, the harmony and discipline of the Sylph having suffered much since his appointment to the situation of Senior Lieutenant....*"<sup>559</sup>

Frederick Hoffman, First Lieutenant of the Diamond provides an example of a poor relationship between Captain and First Lieutenant. In August 1806, the apparently easy-going Captain Thomas Elphinstone of the frigate Diamond was replaced by Captain George Argles.

*“unfortunately for himself and in some measure for the service, [he] courted a kind of left-handed popularity among the seamen, and neglected the officers. The consequence was, that in less than two months the discipline of the ship became so relaxed that the crew, from being one of the smartest in the fleet, was now the slackest.”*<sup>560</sup> In this quotation it is clear that the vital relationship and confidence between the commissioned officers on the ship had disintegrated and Hoffman, for one, felt that his authority had been undermined.

In his order book Edward Riou, commanding the frigate Amazon, placed great emphasis on the importance of the First Lieutenant in the command structure: *“The duties of the First Lieutenant depend so much upon the zeal, activity and strength of constitution of the officer that it is impossible to point out how much, and what is or what is not expected of him”* To this end the relationship between the Captain and his First Lieutenant were to be made clear: The latter *“ought to be made acquainted with every direction the Captain may give...”* but in return *“.. by no means should he adopt an erroneous system too prevalent amongst officers of that rank, of carrying on the duty and ordering the different services in the ship to be performed according to their own ideas of propriety without previously acquainting, and with a proper deference obtaining the consent or orders of the Captain”*.<sup>561</sup> Here then it can be seen that Riou recognised the importance of keeping his First Lieutenant fully informed, but at the same time, emphasised where authority lay; and, to emphasise this point, Riou repeated it in the next paragraph of his orders. The First Lieutenant would, in commanding the junior officers, have the benefit of the Captain’s confidence, thus reinforcing his own authority over the rest of the crew. But, on the other hand, it was clear who was the Captain.

Obviously not all Captains kept such close control, and the response of Lieutenants to the relationship varied. When Lieutenant Frederick Hoffman had joined the Diamond frigate in March, 1806, he found the situation on board rather strange. His new colleagues informed him that the Captain, T.E. Elphinstone, *“...was highly nervous, and that he left everything to the First Lieutenant, except the discipline of his cook”*. Furthermore, *“he was not fond of punishment with the cat...”*<sup>562</sup> The culture of command on the frigate was therefore clearly different to Hoffman’s previous experience. Whether this was genuinely because Elphinstone lacked confidence, as Hoffman implies, or because he adopted a more delegated command style, is now difficult to say. However, Elphinstone was an older, experienced, Captain who had commanded the Diamond for over three and a half years by the time that Hoffman joined.<sup>563</sup> After

three and a half years he may well have felt pretty secure in his command and therefore may have had no difficulty in delegating some of his authority, particularly as ( according to Hoffman) he said he would leave sailing to the First Lieutenant, whilst he would be the fighting Captain.

When William Parker, assumed command of the Amazon, after the death of Riou in 1801, he issued his own orders and these included a section specifically written for the seamen themselves. In other words, whereas the common practice seems to have been to provide one set of orders for the use of both Officers and men, Parker provided a specific section of nine simply written orders which addressed the people directly and was headed *Regulations to be observed by the Ship's Company of HMS Amazon*". . The first of these, for example stated: "*When any Duty is ordered, every man is to go as fast as possible to the station appointed to him, and there wait in silence for the orders of his officers, which he is to obey as briskly and as well as he can without speaking, for the men are to be properly silent whenever Duty is performing*".<sup>564</sup>

Another order allows a glimpse of Parker's philosophy and also his attitude to punishment: "*The ship's Company are always to keep their Hammocks very clean and well lashed up (A sure sign of a good seaman). The men of every mess are to keep their Berths clean; they are never to throw the Bones or any part of their provisions about the Deck and they are never to Piss on the Decks or to throw dirt of any kind over the gunwhale nor out of the Ports, the Head is the place for such purposes - If any man is found making a dirt below, he will be made to sweep all the decks, until he finds another equally neglectful of this order.*"<sup>565</sup>

There is evidence here of a very enlightened culture of command, made even more remarkable by the fact that Parker was just twenty-one years of age and had been promoted with great speed. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he met with the enthusiastic approval of both Nelson and Sir John Borlase Warren, under both of whom he served.<sup>566</sup> Parker was to have a long and distinguished period of frigate command (nearly eight years) and was clearly influenced to some degree by Captain Edward Foote of the Niger frigate under whom he served for some time.<sup>567</sup>

### Attitudes to Discipline.

In the example of Parker, it is perhaps possible to see a new attitude towards the maintenance of discipline. The example of Thomas Elphinstone in 1806 has already been noted above. In the same year the seaman Robert Wilson recorded in his journal the arrival of Captain Patrick

Campbell on board the Unite frigate in 1806 and commented: *"...We soon found the good effects of his joining us, for he ordered no sticks, etc., to be used by the Boatswain and his Mates, and no person to be punished without his knowledge, and did away with the formality of touching our hats at quarters, except when particularly spoken to. At the same time the ship's company were kept in their good state of discipline with less severity, for the crew did their duty more cheerful."*<sup>568</sup>

To some degree this change in attitude may have been a consequence of the presence of growing numbers of young aristocrats in the navy as the war progressed<sup>569</sup>. Consider, for example, Sir William Hotham's recollection of his time as a Lieutenant on board the Inconstant frigate commanded by Captain Augustus Montgomery, the "natural" son of Lord Pembroke. *"...I always have, and always shall, look back upon my being under the command of this officer as the happiest period of my professional life.....and it was a very curious thing, and I think unique in the service, that the four commissioned officers of the 'Inconstant' frigate were all public school-men.....The ship was in a state of discipline highly creditable to the service, nothing like severity appeared; and the quarter-deck was the parade of gentlemen, without, to those under them, any worrying tricks of brief authority....."*<sup>570</sup> According to Linda Colley<sup>571</sup> the British ruling elite underwent a major transformation at the end of the 18th century as it became increasingly aware that political, industrial and economic development in Europe and North America threatened to undermine its continued existence. As one of the main roles of the aristocracy had always been to provide leadership in time of war, the Great Wars against France provided a stage on which the young men of the ruling class could act out their role and reassert their collective position. In doing so in the officer corps of the navy new role models were created and changes became apparent in attitudes towards command.

Probably one of the most famous role models was that provided by Lord Cochrane whose very noticeable style of command involved 'leading from the front' and not asking those under his command to undertake any task he would not do himself. This meant, in effect, he had to be (and be seen to be) as skilled as those he commanded in order to win their trust and respect.<sup>572</sup> The impact of this style of leadership is well illustrated by one of his protégé's, Frederick Marryatt. In 'Frank Mildmay', Marryatt described Cochrane (whom he names 'Lord Edward'), as follows:

*"Lord Edward was a sailor every inch of him, he knew a ship from stem to stern, understood the characters of seaman, and gained their confidence. He was, besides, a good mechanic - a*

*carpenter, rope-maker, sail-maker, and cooper. He could hand, reef, steer, knot and splice; but he was no orator - he read little, and spoke less. He was a man of no show. He was good tempered, honest, and unsophisticated, with a large proportion of common sense. He was good humoured and free with his officers; though if offended he was violent, but soon calm again; nor could you ever perceive any assumption of consequence from his title of nobility".<sup>573</sup>*

The understanding that lay behind this approach to leadership was clearly expressed by Basil Hall: *"...it is very well known that much instruction in the difficult art of command may be taught through the medium of obedience alone. For the mere knowledge of what is required to be done, will not always be accompanied by an acquaintance with the best way of accomplishing a given piece of service. We must understand the nature of the instruments by which the work is to be executed, otherwise our force is wasted, our tools blunted, and the whole task bungled. Unless, indeed, a commanding officer have learnt, from actual experience, what it is to feel as a subordinate, not once or twice, but on a great variety of occasions, he will hardly be able to turn the capacities of those under his command to their full account. Instead of cementing his crew into one compact mass, and so bringing their united forces to bear upon the objects required by the public service, he will waste and dissipate their strength by misdirected applications of their divided and often conflicting energies, while his own temper may too frequently be lost in punishments, which might have been spared, had he only learned, by personal experience, what were likely to be the feelings and wishes of his inferiors.*

*But an officer who, in his own person, has gone through a full course of rigid obedience.....will be able, under like circumstances, to produce very different results from those just described. He will find little or no difficulty in divining the feelings of those under his orders; and though, if the number of his crew be great, there must ever be a considerable diversity of sentiment amongst them, yet, in most cases, he will be enabled to strike a pretty fair average as to the general wish, and thus secure the hearty co-operation of the majority of those he desires to put in motion."<sup>574</sup>*

The weakness of Hall's point of view is that although experiencing discipline "as a subordinate" was a part of the every day training of all 'young gentlemen' in the navy it did not prevent the development of a number of brutally severe officers. To 'experience' had to be added a different attitude towards the people below deck. Changing attitudes may perhaps be ascribed to two factors: firstly an application of the concept of *noblesse oblige* and, secondly, an ability or

willingness among some officers to begin seeing the seamen under their command as fellow, if not quite equal, human beings. As the officer corps became more class conscious as a result of the growing presence of young aristocrats, it also became more paternalistic towards the common seaman. Thus we find officers like Captain Philip Beaver of the Acasta frigate writing to another officer:

*"...Recollect ..that numbers of your people have been impressed, and are the unwilling victims of our temporal, though urgent interests. Such considerations, added to the tantalising breaches of the ties of home, which the very nature of the services renders necessary, should make every good officer desirous of establishing the comfort of his crew....Endeavour to grant some respite in port, if the tenour[sic] of your instructions will admit it. The refitting, stowing stores, squaring yards, working boats, and drying sails, with all the minor minutiae, leave but little leisure....Jack knows well enough what is necessary, and therefore does not relish a too frequent mustering of hammocks and bags, polishing of iron work, and other artificial modes of teasing the time...."<sup>575</sup>*

Another frigate Captain, Anselm Griffiths, went much further, producing a manual for all aspiring officers and advised,

*"If in the management of a ship's company after the attainment of all the essentials of discipline, activity, sobriety and obedience, &c. they were left more to themselves, there would not be any thing which bore even the semblance of... [Mutiny]*

*Much dissatisfaction does arise from a too constant interference with them, from the attempt to keep them fidgeting about trifles and works of supererogation, all with a view to employ their minds. This seems a want of knowledge of human nature. Such perpetual fiddle faddle and interference only disgusts. The experience of many years has taught me, that if dealt with kindly, they may safely be left in their leisure hours from their duty, to their own resources and amusements."*<sup>576</sup>

Griffiths, commanded frigates for over five years and wrote his manual immediately after the war. His attitude towards command was clearly not unique

To a certain degree as class consciousness increased among the officer corps, growing numbers of officers saw it as being in their own interest to keep the quarter-deck the preserve of Gentlemen. This was rationalised, again by Basil Hall: *"...The opinion will hardly be controverted, that persons who are the most gentlemanlike in their habits of thought, in sentiment, and in manners*



*- supposing their talents and opportunities alike - generally speaking, make the best officers.....what is indispensably required in the naval profession, above all others,.....[is]the essential spirit, if I may so term it, of a gentleman. This quality in the character of an officer must, by some means or other, be made to predominate, and, as it were, to exalt all the others...*

*....the power placed in an officer's hands...is of such a nature, that, unless it be regulated by the principles which form the distinguishing features in the character of a gentleman, it is apt to degenerate into tyranny and oppression."*<sup>577</sup>

In other words, the best commanders were those who were impelled by a character that was determined by their social and cultural background. This would seem to be where *noblesse oblige* is activated to the benefit of the crew and it is interesting that Hall juxtaposes the "character of a gentleman" with "tyranny and oppression". Of course there were examples of titled commanders who were the antithesis of the character that Hall advocates - **Lord William Fitzroy**, for example - but the point is that Hall is talking about the principle and good future practice of command, rather than an exposition of past bad practice<sup>578</sup>. Hall was also able to add a justification for the need for the Gentleman Officer, and this was quite possibly grounded in real experience. *"The sailors, who are very quick-sighted to the merits and faults of their officers, and form critics of great correctness, understand the distinction perfectly between a well-bred or high-caste officer, and one who, not having been born in a class where good manners are an essential characteristic, has not contrived to adopt them from others. Above all things, a ship's company like to be commanded by gentlemen; and there is nothing they hate or despise in an officer so much as that coarseness of thought and behaviour which belong to their own class."*<sup>579</sup>

Hall, though, is writing after the war. Changing attitudes to command were certainly evident earlier, particularly when it came to the application of discipline, and flogging. Some officers, even before 1797, had learned to handle their crews in a manner which brought them both loyalty and respect. One of the best examples is that of **Captain Philip Cunningham** who has already been cited several times in this thesis. During the mutiny at the Nore in 1797, the crew of Cunningham's frigate were torn between their loyalty to their Captain and the cause of the mutineers. In the end, forced to make a choice between the Delegates and Cunningham, the crew chose the latter. Writing some time later, Cunningham commented that *"...In those ships too, where good discipline was maintained, the general behaviour of the Crews, during these turbulent scenes, was marked with the least violence...In a ship so managed, where strict*

*discipline is enforced, the good men have confidence in their commander, and even feel a positive obligation to him for the protection he affords them against those who would be guilty of theft, drunkenness, idleness or want of cleanliness, were they allowed to commit such offences with impunity, and to pass unnoticed.*"<sup>580</sup>

Throughout the mutiny the crew of the Clyde had carefully retained the disciplinary structure on board ship, even handing a miscreant over to Cunningham for punishment. This respect and desire for order would appear to have been common on the lower deck and is well explained by Cunningham. However, it is crucial to understand what is meant by "*strict discipline*" - for it is easy to confuse this with harsh discipline. Anselm Griffiths commented on the difference:

*"Severity of punishment defeats its own object, and only tends to harden and disgust. To award a given number of lashes to any particular crime, is like administering the same medicine to all constitutions. Character should have its full effect, and on different men the punishment in severity is very unequal. Eight or nine lashes to one man, being as much as twenty to another. I am quite of opinion.....that it is not severity of punishment, but the certainty that some punishment will attach to certain crimes, which has the desired effect."*<sup>581</sup>

Not all Captains were willing to go as far as Griffiths, but there is clear evidence that for some officers, severity was not considered a useful tool in crew management.

### **The evidence of the ships logs.**

Having considered the evidence of officers' and seamen's' memoirs, the other major contemporary source for crew management is that represented by the disciplinary regime on board a ship<sup>582</sup> as recorded in the log books kept by the Captain, the Master and the (usually) First Lieutenant. The maintenance of these records was compulsory as they had to be submitted to the Admiralty at the conclusion of each commission if not more frequently. The difficulty with the logs is that, apart from the routine information about navigation and weather conditions, there was no official guidance about the contents. This was particularly the case when it came to recording the infliction of punishment. The *Regulations and Instructions*, had forbidden any Captain from ordering a flogging of more than a dozen lashes. The amended regulations', issued in 1806, deleted this prohibition but added the looser encouragement to commanders to avoid being more severe than was necessary.<sup>583</sup> In reality the prohibition was simply ignored, probably on the basis that it was impracticable, and this may explain the change introduced in 1806. Furthermore a

comparison of ships logs often reveals very wide variation in what officers from the same ship thought worthy of record, or how and when it was recorded.<sup>584</sup>

But even this cannot overcome problems of interpretation. Whilst it is evident that there were recognised categories of misdemeanour (see below Table 8.2.) there is no indication of how these were defined. For example, what exactly was meant by “Neglect of duty”. In his study of crime and punishment on the Leeward Islands station, Byrn concluded that this largely depended on the rank of the offender<sup>585</sup>. A seaman charged with neglect was more likely to have been found guilty of inattention e.g. by losing clothing or in the case of a marine, not keeping his musket clean, than a failure which could lead to serious danger to the ship. Likewise “Disobedience of Orders” seems to have referred less to a wilfully mutinous act, as to a failure to observe standing orders, such as those contained in the individual Captain’s Order Book.

In spite of these difficulties, comparisons between different ships can be made, and this can prove quite revealing. For this purpose, samples have been taken from the logs of seven frigates, under seven different commanding officers, during different periods of the war. The officers, and their details are as follows:

### Seven Frigate Captains Compared.

**Table 8.1. Seven Frigate Captains Compared.**

	Date posted	Rate of Promotion (Lt-Captain)	No. of Frigates Commanded.	Length of Frigate Service	Years on List at end of Frigate Command.
James Newman	Aug., 1794.	4 yrs 10 mnths	4	7.25 yrs	7.5 yrs
Henry Blackwood	June, 1795	4 yrs 8 mnths	3	8.25 yrs	9.5 yrs
Sir Henry Digby	Dec, 1796	6yrs 2 mnths	3	2.75 yrs	5.25 yrs
Thomas Baker	June, 1797.	4yrs 9 mnths	5	6.75 yrs	9.25yrs
Michael Seymour	Aug, 1800.	9yrs 11 mnths	2	4.5 yrs	10.5 yrs.
Philip Broke	Feb, 1801.	3 yrs 7 mnths	2	8.5 yrs	13 yrs
Anselm Griffiths	May, 1802	11yrs 5 mnths	3	5.25 yrs	11+

(Source. Data extracted from the *Admiralty List Books*)

It will be seen, that with the exception of **Sir Henry Digby**, these officers were all to command frigates for at least the average period, and three of those included were among the list of frigate specialists. **Seymour** has been included because he will feature in the next chapter. It will be seen from the following table that, using this sample, punishments were ordered on average of once every 12 days, but there was wide variation. The key factor, however is not the frequency of punishments but the number of lashes inflicted. Here there is a problem because the logs do not always record the number of lashes - this is particularly the case with the logs for the Amethyst under **Seymour**. It is therefore essential to compare the percentage of lashes inflicted where known, and this is given in the following table .

**Table 8.2. Comparison of Punishments, (frequency and severity).**

	<b>Ceres (Newman)</b>	<b>Penelope (B'wood)</b>	<b>Aurora (Digby)</b>	<b>Phoenix (Baker)</b>	<b>Shannon (Broke)</b>	<b>Topaze (Griffiths)</b>	<b>Amethyst (Seymour)</b>
Days in sample	225	457	365	173	163	365	781
Punishments /day	1 in 16	1 in 13.5	1 in 18	1 in 14	1 in 12.5	1 in 4.5	1 in 7
<b>Number of Punishments by Number of Lashes (Number &amp; %)</b>							
<b>Lashes</b>							
3						2 (3%)	
5						1 (1.5%)	
6	1 (8.3%)			1 (9%)		4 (5.5%)	3 (12%)
7						1 (1.5%)	1 (4%)
8			1 (5.5%)			1 (1.5%)	
10		1 (.3%)					
11							1 (4%)
12	6 (50%)	3 (9%)	14 (78%)	1 (9%)	3 (25%)	43 (58%)	11 (44%)
18	3 (25%)	12 (35%)	1 (5.5%)			8 (11%)	2 (8%)
19				1 (9%)			
20						2 (3%)	
24	2 (16.5%)	6 (17%)	1 (5.5%)	6 (54%)	8 (66%)	9 (12%)	7 (28%)
26		1 (0.3%)					
28				1 (9%)		2 (3%)	
						1 (1.5%)	
36		9 (26%)			1 (8%)		
39			1 (5.5%)				
48		2 (6%)		1 (9%)			

(Source: Log Books HMS Amethyst ADM/L/A/118, ADM51/1807 & ADM51/1859; HMS Penelope ADM/L/P/85 & ADM51/1377; HMS Topaze ADM/L/T/154 & ADM51/1673; HMS Aurora ADM/L/T/240 & ADM51/1231; HMS Phoenix ADM51/1532 & ADM.L/P135;. HMS Shannon ADM51/2861; HMS Ceres ADM51/1256.)

This quickly suggests who are the more severe commanders. For example, **Henry Blackwood** ordered 36 lashes in 26% of punishments and 48 in a further 6%. By far the severest in the sample and confirming a view of him at the time as a hard commander.<sup>586</sup> **Philip Broke** also appears to have been a sharp disciplinarian, 74% of his punishments being for 24 lashes or more (though the sample is small).

If we compare the percentage of punishments inflicting a dozen or less lashes, it can be seen that the most lenient commander was **Sir Henry Digby** (83.5%), followed by **Anselm Griffiths** (71%) and **Michael Seymour** (64%). Given Griffiths pronouncements upon crew management, it is interesting to note the variety of punishments that he ordered - though one of these, it is clear, was a punishment that was stopped because of the illness of the recipient.<sup>587</sup> Overall, it would appear from this sample that the majority of frigate Captains tended to give not more than 24 lashes for an offence and that probably about half of them tended to give not more than a dozen.

**Table 8.3. Type Of Misdemeanour ( In Number And Percentage).**

	<b>Ceres (Newman)</b>	<b>Penelope (B'kwood)</b>	<b>Aurora (Digby)</b>	<b>Phoenix (Baker)</b>	<b>Shannon (Broke)</b>	<b>Topaze (Griffiths)</b>	<b>Amethyst (Seymour)</b>	<b>Byrn's Findings 588</b>
Uncleanness						2 (2%)	5 (5%)	5%
Theft	2 (12%)	1 (3%)	1 (4%)			7 (8%)	10 (10%)	6.7%
Drunkenness	2 (12%)	18 (50%)	5 (20%)	5 (42%)	5 (38.5%)	15 (17%)	41 (40%)	27%
Quarrelling & Fighting	4 (24%)	2 (5%)	4 (16%)		1 (7.5%)	1 (1%)	9 (9%)	6.3%
Neglect of duty/ Disobedience of orders	3 (16%)	14 (39%)	7 (28%)		1 (7.5%)	55 (64%)	28 (27.5%)	33.8%
Desertion	2 (12%)		1 (4%)	4 (33%)			-	5.6%
Insolence & Contempt	2 (12%)		4 (16%)	2 (17%)	5 (38.5%)	6 (7%)	9 (9%)	11.2%
Plundering Prisoners			1 (4%)					
Striking a Superior officer or Mutiny/ Mutinous expressions	2 (12%)		2 (8%)	1 (8%)	1 (7.5%)			2.5%
Blasphemous expressions		1 (3%)						

(Source as for 8.2)

Bym's study of all rates of ships on the Leeward Islands station found that Drunkenness was the biggest single misdemeanour followed by Neglect of duty/Disobedience of orders. Certainly these two categories were the major problem faced by **Blackwood, Digby, Griffiths and Seymour** although the precedence varied. The fact that **Baker's** command did not appear to suffer from Neglect or Disobedience might reflect the size of the sample rather than anything else, so should be treated with caution. However some other observations can be made with more confidence. Knowing the **Henry Blackwood** had a reputation for being hard on his crew<sup>589</sup>, it is not surprising to find that within the sample there were no punishments for misdemeanours which could be described as challenges to authority, that is, mutinous conduct or striking a superior officer. It is possible that **Blackwood's** crew knew better than to risk that sort of behaviour but, since he had commanded the frigate for over two and a half years by the sample period, it is more likely that between crew and commander a more co-operative relationship had developed, especially as the Penelope was a highly successful frigate.<sup>590</sup> More surprising is the high level of Insolence and Contempt aboard the Shannon. Given **Broke's** reputation and the outstanding quality of his crew, this finding is incongruous and even paradoxical. It may, however, serve as a warning about an over-reliance on the log books as evidence for crew management. The comparatively even spread of punishments on board the Ceres commanded by **Captain James Newman**, is interesting because his regime was criticised by a fellow frigate Captain. Introducing a different perception of the same crew also enables us to see the differences between the frigate commanders.

#### The case of James Newman and HMS Ceres

In April, 1797, **Captain Robert Otway** superseded **Newman** on the Ceres, exchanging commands in order that **Newman**, who was suffering from malaria could return home. **Otway** was far from happy with the state of affairs on board the frigate. A month later, at the end of May, 1797, **Otway** ran the Ceres aground in the West Indies. He wrote to **Hyde Parker**:

*"...on taking command of the Ceres I found a great want of regularity in her, the Ship's Company were accustomed in a great measure, to do as they pleased, and Drunkenness, seldom considered as a crime, having from my infancy trained up in the Service with different ideas; - I of course was endeavouring to put a stop to such pernicious example; not having been but a Month on board, when she struck, I was able to effect but little, I then seriously felt the want of*

*a disciplined ship's company, little or no attention paid to my Orders, not the smallest exertion: The Spirits broached, and the greatest part of them Drunk, and at a time, when the water was gaining on the pumps, seven men cut the Barge adrift and made their escape to the shore,....*

*I much dispare with such a crew, it will be some considerable time before the Ceres will be fit for service.....As you may be led to imagine...that I am a well man'd ship I have selected a List of Old Men, Boys, and Foreigners that form a great part of this Ship's Company.”<sup>591</sup>*

It is curious that Otway should complain about drunkenness on board the Ceres , for as a misdemeanour it does not appear to have been a greater problem for Newman than other offences. This may confirm Otway's allegation that Newman was considerably more lenient on this issue than the officers with whom he is compared. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Otway was attempting to lay the blame for grounding the ship on his crew. But this does not sound like the same crew which had saved the ship in a furious hurricane six months earlier, keeping her afloat through sheer courage, skill and hard work<sup>592</sup>. Newman's new frigate was the Mermaid and her log reveals that two days after commissioning her, Newman received ten men from the Ceres. It is possible that more transferred with him and that Ceres was left with a weak crew. The Mermaid's Log for the period 25th April, 1797 - 11th July, 1798<sup>593</sup>, ( a period of 252 days) records no punishments at all. It is hard to believe that no punishments were inflicted during this period but the frigate was very active on the Channel Station during this period, taking a number of prizes and later, engaging the Loire in October, 1798.

Although there may be some justification for questioning Newman's regime in the Ceres on the basis that he might not have been firm enough, there is definitely a sense in which he appears to have been just. (The small and consistent number of lashes inflicted, for example). There are also indications that he was caring of the men under his command. For example in January, 1798, he wrote to the Admiralty on behalf of Sam Wilkinson, an Able Seaman who had been sentenced at a Court Martial in the previous November, to 300 lashes for desertion. Half of the punishment had been inflicted, and presumably Wilkinson was in the process of recovering from this when the Mermaid was ordered to sea. Newman wrote that Wilkinson was still on board and “ *he has been released several times when the ship was cleared for action, and always went cheerfully to his duty.*

*I am therefore induced to request that their Lordships will be pleased to remit the remainder of the punishment and also that they will be further pleased to give direction for him to be*

*entered on the ship's books from the time he was punished at Spithead, as the Inclemency of the weather rendered it absolutely necessary to supply him with a considerable quantity of slop cloathing since that time and he has no wages due to pay for them.*"<sup>594</sup>

It is quite possible that Newman had problems maintaining an adequate level of discipline with the harder members of his crew. His usual punishment was 12 lashes and even an unrepentant marine, Daniel Murphy, received only 18 lashes for his third offence (during this period). This may have given some of the crew the opinion that Newman was a 'soft' Captain - by many accounts something despised by seamen in general - and would perhaps explain Otway's complaint. What contradicts this is the extraordinarily high level of seamanship displayed by Newman and his crews on many occasions.<sup>595</sup>

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The issue of discipline and crew management is a complicated one and it is not possible to cover all aspects in a single chapter of a thesis. There are important factors which need to be researched, particularly in relation to frigate command. For example, there is almost certainly a relationship between Station and disciplinary problems; a commanding officer's regime probably changed as he became more confident about command or more successful - and conversely, consideration should be given to the consequences of a commanding officer who was unsuccessful or became ill. An interesting example here may be that of Sir Edward Hamilton, commander of the frigate Surprise. In October, 1799, Hamilton personally led a very enthusiastic boarding party to cut out the ex-British frigate Hermione from the Spanish held port of Puerto Caballo. There can be little doubt from the account of this incident given by William James<sup>596</sup> that Hamilton was at this time a popular and successful frigate commander. However he also had a reputation for severity and ultimately, in January, 1802, was court martialled and dismissed the service for cruelty.<sup>597</sup> There remains a paradox in this example. If Hamilton was so severe, why was it that his crew did not turn on him and his officers as had the crew of the Hermione, the very frigate they so successfully and enthusiastically cut out?

Another aspect which cannot be analysed without considerably more work is that of the relationship between number of lashes and type of misdemeanour. For example, it can be seen from the table 8.1 above that Captain Henry Digby ordered a dozen lashes to be inflicted on 14



different occasions (78% of punishments). But it is also clear that no single misdemeanour dominated on board the Aurora. Therefore, Digby seems to have applied a consistent leniency across the board when it came to severity of punishment, regardless of the crime. Anselm Griffiths on the other hand, as he himself claimed, judged each case and each miscreant individually, hence the wide range in the number of lashes inflicted on board the Topaze.

For the final chapter of this thesis, attention will focus on one Captain, Sir Michael Seymour, and this will allow a more detailed study of a frigate under one commander.

## Chapter 9. A Case Study: Captain Michael Seymour and the Frigate Amethyst.

In previous chapters the frigate Captains of the Royal Navy have been surveyed in terms of length of frigate service and the type of action in which they were involved. This allows for little in the way of more detailed study and the object of this chapter is to consider just one Captain in some detail and, in particular, to study his activities over a short period of time in order to obtain a fuller view of the role and career of the frigate Captain.

The officer chosen for this study is Michael Seymour and the period which will be considered in depth covers his command of the frigate Amethyst from April, 1808, to May, 1809. Seymour has been selected for a number of reasons. Firstly, his aggregate frigate service was over 4.5 years, thus he commanded frigates for slightly longer than the average of 3.5 years. His frigate service ended at the beginning of 1811, when he had been a Post Captain for 10 years and three months. He was not therefore an officer who was allowed to remain in command beyond the twelve year limit, however his standing exceeded the average of 8.5 years. Seymour's frigate command was both spectacular, as will be seen, and yet at the same time the service on which his was primarily engaged was routine - and this above all else makes him an interesting case for detailed study. He was also one of the few frigate Captains to be honoured with a Baronetcy as a result of a frigate action.

### Early Career.

Seymour was born in November, 1768, in County Limerick, the son of a clergyman. There is no evidence that he was closely related to the other naval family of the same name, and there is little indication of why he chose to enter the Navy.<sup>598</sup> In 1780 his name was entered on the books of the Merlin sloop, commanded by the Hon. James Luttrell, (third son of the Earl of Carhampton) and Seymour was certainly serving on board that ship when Luttrell was posted, for in 1781, he followed him to the 50 gun Portland and then again to the 44-gun frigate Mediator, serving in the Channel. This early patronage was fortunate, for Luttrell's sister married the Duke of

Cumberland and Seymour was certainly able to appeal to the Duchess for support a short time later following the death of Luttrell himself in 1789.

Seymour followed Luttrell again to the Ganges 74, until September, 1783, but the latter suffered from poor health, having contracted consumption, and was forced to resign the command soon after. However Luttrell recommended his protégé to Captain Michael de Courcy<sup>599</sup>, commanding the Europa 50 bearing Vice-Admiral Gambier's Flag, and Seymour then joined her. The Europa was sent to the Jamaica station but, a short time after, Seymour was transferred to the Antelope sloop. Fortunately for Seymour, in July, 1784 he was transferred again, this time to the 44 gun frigate Janus, for the Antelope was lost with all hands in a hurricane off Jamaica on the 30th of July.<sup>600</sup>

In September, 1785, Seymour became a victim of yellow fever and was invalided home. By the time he recovered, Luttrell was no longer well enough to provide real assistance, but one of Luttrell's close friends, Captain George Cranfield Berkeley, MP for Gloucester, took up his cause and became his very active patron<sup>601</sup>. This probably explains why Seymour was employed during 1786-1787 when so many other officers were languishing on half-pay. Seymour served firstly on the Pegase 74, guardship at Portsmouth, and then on the Magnificent 74, guardship at Weymouth, in which he was also made Master's Mate. The *Memoir* also suggests that Berkeley may have been able to attract support for Seymour from Earl Spencer who became First Lord of the Admiralty in December, 1794. On passing his Lieutenant's examination in October or November,<sup>602</sup> 1790, at the age of 22, he was appointed to the Magnificent once again until October, 1791.

In March, 1793, Seymour was 5th Lieutenant of the Marlborough 74, of which Berkeley was the commander and was consequently present at the Battle of 1st June, 1794, in which the Marlborough took a severe pounding after engaging two French line of battle ships simultaneously and had to be towed out of the action.<sup>603</sup> During the course of this Seymour's left fore-arm was broken by grapeshot and, concerned about his future career prospects, Seymour refused to have the lower arm amputated, with the result that gangrene set in and he had to lose more of his arm than might originally have been necessary.<sup>604</sup> The pain of his wound, combined with worry about the possibility of future employment, appear to have affected him severely, for an acquaintance meeting him in London in the following month described him as "*a melancholy object*".<sup>605</sup>

Possibly because he was only the junior Lieutenant of the Marlborough, Seymour did not benefit from the general promotion following the battle, in spite of lobbying from Berkeley. In poor health, and probably suffering from depression, Seymour returned to his parent's home in Ireland. In February, 1795, Berkeley was appointed to the 90-gun Formidable and offered Seymour employment. It is unclear what Seymour's response to this was but it seems likely that his health had not sufficiently recovered for, instead of being able to take up his position on board, he was sent to Gloucester to try and raise volunteers for the Formidable. It was not improbable that Berkeley thought that the presence of the wounded 26 year old Lieutenant would touch some patriotic nerve in his constituency.

In August, 1795, Seymour was promoted Master and Commander, almost certainly as a result of Berkeley's lobbying, but he received no employment until June, 1796, when a temporary vacancy arising for Captain of the Fly sloop, he was given that command. One of the difficulties faced by junior officers in the Royal Navy was that they were rarely able to show how well they could perform in command of a ship until literally given that position of responsibility. This was particularly the case with an officer who was disabled before reaching the rank of Master and Commander. Seymour was clearly an officer who blossomed when given his own ship. His command of the Fly was considered a success for he was shortly after given the Spitfire sloop in the Channel operating under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth, initially Admiral Sir Richard King and subsequently Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Pasley. Pasley in particular seems to have appreciated Seymour's skills and abilities, particularly as the Spitfire was adept at taking prizes and, more specifically, enemy privateers. In a despatch to the Admiralty dated 7th April, 1799, for example, Admiral King forwarded a letter from Seymour reporting that he had taken the French Privateer Resolu of 14 guns., "*perfectly new, being her first cruise, 2 days from St. Malo's, with no captures*".<sup>606</sup> In fact this was just the first of a series of despatches drawing the Admiralty's attention to Seymour's activities - most of which were then forwarded to the *London Gazette* as well as being covered by the Plymouth Correspondent of the *Naval Chronicle*<sup>607</sup>. It is worth noting that in this letter Seymour mentions that the Resolu had taken no British merchant, or other, vessels. Since French privateers were a major worry to British mercantile interests, their capture was a clear indication of the Navy fulfilling its role in Trade Protection. This may explain the Admiralty's keenness to send such letters to *The Gazette* - it was extremely good public relations; and the fact that the Resolu had been taken even before she could inflict any damage

was doubly so. In June, 1800, Pasley had occasion to write again to the Admiralty: *"I have the pleasure to enclose...a letter which I have received from that very active officer Captain Seymour...stating his having captured a very fine Brig privateer with which he arrived here this morning."*<sup>608</sup>

The Lieutenant of the Spitfire (almost certainly Edward Hawker<sup>609</sup>) later wrote:

*"...His vigilance was such, that scarcely any vessel, which was met with, night or day, was passed by without examination. Captain Seymour was very much on deck, his glass constantly in his hand, observing every vessel in sight, and he was almost always the first to notice any one of suspicious appearance, when not a moment was lost pursuing her. It was especially on the coast of France, near to the Isle of Bas, that the activity of the Spitfire was conspicuous; that part of the French coast is dangerous from the number of rocks and the rapidity of the tides;..... he would frequently take the charge out of the pilot's hands, place his book of charts (which had been taken in a Privateer) upon the Capstan, and steer the ship himself, often taking her inside the rocks, and running her close in to the shore, even in the night....."*<sup>610</sup>

Described in these terms it is easy to forget that Seymour was disabled. His close involvement in pilotage and navigation is however not so surprising. Seymour's patron, Berkeley, had served under Captain James Cook during the surveys of Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The active nature of the Spitfire and the conditions under which her crew operated are revealed by comments made in a report from her carpenter, Thomas Hunt, who in July, 1799, reported on her condition. In a good state of repair she was a real flyer<sup>611</sup>, but she was worked hard and became a very wet ship as the timbers worked badly. Conditions on the lower deck were difficult *"When blowing fresh in a continual float, water coming through the ceilings in all parts [so]....that the people cannot sleep or Mess in their Berths"*. And conditions were no better for the officers: *"When blowing fresh, the officers cannot sleep in their cabins or the People in the inside Berths. Caulking being of no effect owing[sic] to the weakning of the frame having been caulked three times within six months"*<sup>612</sup> In fact the ship leaked almost continually washing the ballast into the pump wells, which could be hazardous. Nevertheless, she was a successful ship and took prizes which would have done something to counter the discomfort of her crew. Indeed the 'Memoir' records that the Prize Money received at this time enabled Seymour to live both respectably and comfortably.<sup>613</sup>

The records of the Greenwich Hospital Accounts<sup>614</sup> record some of Spitfire's prizes and their value:

<u>Prize</u>	<u>Actual or (Nett) Payment</u>
Jacoba	£13,473
Aimable Mariette, La Trompeur, (both French privateers, and their prize) Hannah & Rodney.	£1,660
Incroyable (French Privateer)	£323
Les Bons Amis	£230
Concordia	£6,000 (Nett)
Concordia (2nd payment)	£10,608
Argos	£7,953

Other prizes not accounted for are the Appollo Danish brig, L'Allegro French brig, the Sally, the Jeune Catharine, L'Actif French brig and salvage of the Wilding, La Resolu; and the Gute Hoffnung Brig and the Heureux Societe French Privateer, both of which were taken in company with other smaller vessels. Even without these, the crew of the Spitfire had made nearly £40,000 in prize money, of which Seymour's share would have been approximately £10,000. The prize money realised for the Jacoba and the Concordia indicate that these were extraordinarily good prizes, as the average value of privateers taken as prizes seems to have been in the region of only £1,000 net (inclusive of Head Money).<sup>615</sup> Curiously this activity carried little weight in certain quarters - it was not regarded as having the kudos of a frigate action, for example. Indeed, one biographer wrote of him that "*...during this period of active service we have no extraordinary tales of wonder to relate, nor praise to bestow...*"<sup>616</sup>

By August, 1800, Seymour had served as a Master and Commander for five years, during four of which he had been actively employed. Five years was quite a long time for an energetic and capable officer to be in this rank without promotion and in August, 1800, he wrote to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Spencer, soliciting promotion. It is possible that his old patron, Berkeley who was now a Vice-Admiral<sup>617</sup>, also lobbied on his behalf, for three months later, in November, Seymour was promoted to Post Captain at the age of thirty-two. As a reward for his services the promotion was double edged, for as was customary, Seymour was obliged to leave the Spitfire but was not appointed to another command.

Attempts to lobby the First Lord for a command met with no success and then, in the early part of 1801, Spencer retired. Seymour, who had to some degree depended on Spencer's interest for his

previous promotions, now felt that his hopes had been dashed, especially as St. Vincent, who became First Lord, had a well known reputation for responding curtly to requests for employment. Ironically, whilst St. Vincent had acquired a reputation for being cool to such requests, he was also willing to consider promoting deserving and energetic officers.<sup>618</sup> Possibly because of his record in the Spitfire Seymour was given an acting command of the Ville de Paris in October, 1801. This period of Seymour's career coincided with the Peace of Amiens and, like many other officers, his chance of employment was seriously affected at this time. The following period, totalling four and a half years, was a time of frustration and disappointment for Seymour who, on no less than six successive occasions was given temporary command, mainly of line of battle ships. The exception being a four month spell in command of the Fisgard, Thomas Byam Martin's frigate. Most of these commands lasted less than four months, a period of command too short to enable the Captain of a ship to develop a good relationship with his crew or, unless he was particularly lucky, to distinguish himself in action against the enemy. Seymour's morale must have sunk further when on 13th March, 1806, his younger brother Richard, First Lieutenant of the Amazon frigate, was killed during an engagement with the French frigate Belle Poule.<sup>619</sup> The two had been very close, both living on shore together and serving together as junior officers.

In February, 1806, Lord Grenville was returned as Prime Minister and, given Berkeley's earlier patronage it is hardly surprising that three months later Seymour received a permanent commission, as Captain of the frigate Amethyst.

### H.M.S. Amethyst.

The Amethyst was designated as a 36-gun 18-pounder frigate and on this basis a very desirable command. There were, in 1806 forty-five twelve-pounder frigates and even nine 28-gun ships still in service<sup>620</sup>. Seymour might hardly have expected more than one of these, although he had been on the List of Post Captains for over five years. The Amethyst was one of three Penelope class frigates designed by Henslow. She was built at Deptford Dockyard and therefore probably thought to be well constructed,<sup>621</sup> in spite of the evidence of corruption in the Royal Yards. Launched in April, 1799, she was a comparatively new frigate.

By the time that Seymour commanded her, her armament was arranged as follows:

Quarter deck - 2 x 9-pounder long guns and 10 x 32 pounder carronades.

Upper deck - 26 x 18-pounder long guns.

Forecastle - 2 x 9-pounder long guns and 2 x 32-pounder carronades.<sup>622</sup>

In terms of sailing quality few reports have survived but the Penelope class is said to have had the longest and shallowest hull form of any frigate designed by the Navy Board Surveyors.<sup>623</sup> To a certain degree these characteristics made her similar to French frigate designs and - as was noted in Chapter 1 - although tending to be fast they were not renowned for their seaworthiness in hard weather. This also was true of the Amethyst.

Her official complement was 274 Officers, men and boys, and, she could carry sufficient victuals for 4 months which was fairly average for a frigate of this size. This was a critical factor for a cruiser, as it meant that she could only cruise independently for a limited time and was restricted in the range of her activities unless replenished. In fact Amethyst spent most of her career close to home waters <sup>624</sup> (as did her sister ship Jason; Penelope, on the other hand, served for some time in the Mediterranean).

By the time that Seymour joined her, many of the crew would have been familiar with the task of working a frigate in home waters. Seymour had also acquired an extensive knowledge of the Channel coasts and this may be the reason that he was appointed to her. From May, 1806 until November, 1807, Seymour continued the frigate's duties on the Cork station, calling at Plymouth on several occasions to refit. Soon after assuming command Seymour had to request a Court Martial on his Sergeant of Marines, Andrew Robson, who was subsequently reduced to the ranks for Drunkenness and insolent behaviour.<sup>625</sup> Although a more detailed discussion will follow on the subject of discipline on the Amethyst, this early reference to difficulty is worth noting. The Court Martial probably took place in October, 1806, when Amethyst moored at Plymouth. Seymour had reported his concern over damage to the knee of the ship's head and the Shipwrights there were ordered to carry out an inspection. Subsequently Seymour was ordered to take the ship to Portsmouth so she could be docked for repair.<sup>626</sup>



By May, 1807, Amethyst was again at Plymouth, this time being re-coppered. Whilst she was there, Seymour wrote to the Admiralty asking that Lieutenant Edward Crouch of the Warrior be appointed to the Amethyst as his Third Lieutenant; the request was approved and Crouch continued as Lieutenant of the Amethyst at least until June, 1809.

In November, 1807, Amethyst was ordered south to carry out blockade duties off of Brest. In fact, this cruise of the Amethyst falls into two distinct sections. In the first, Amethyst was stationed along a stretch of coast from the Basque Roads, (the inlet to La Rochelle and Rochefort), in the north, and the Verdon Roads (the estuary to the River Gironde and Bordeaux) in the south. For the second part of the study Amethyst was cruising off of L'Orient, on a coastline stretching from the Penmarcks in the north-west, to the island of Hoedic in the south east. However, events were to lead Seymour and his crew south again later as will be seen.

Some general points need to be made at this point, about Biscay, its importance and the conditions experienced on that station. Biscay sweeps in a large flat-bottomed semicircle from Ushant in the extreme north-west (where the Channel and Biscay intersect) to Cape Finisterre in the South West. The whole flattened area to the south constitutes the northern coast of Spain, and does not really come into this study, but the northern arc represents the west-coast of France with its important ports of (from north to south) Brest, L'Orient, Nantes, La Rochelle, Rochefort and Bordeaux. Brest and Rochefort were important naval bases; Nantes and La Rochelle were important for French trade with the West Indies, whilst Bordeaux and L'Orient in particular were important for the French East Indies trade.<sup>627</sup> Although most privateer activity originated from the French channel ports and St. Malo, privateers also operated from almost all of the main Biscay ports, and also smaller ports like Concarneau. Along the northern half of the French coast lay a number of islands; Glenan; the Ile de Groix off of L'Orient; Belle-Ile (with the smaller islands of Houat and Hoedic) off of Quiberon Bay; Noirmoutier which lies to the south of the Loire but so close to the land to be almost a peninsular; the Ile d'Yeu; the large Ile de Re, off of La Rochelle on which was located the Baleines light and which, with the Ile d'Oleron to the south, formed the jaws of the entry to Basque Roads, inside which lay the small island of Aix with its important French naval anchorage. Between Oleron and the coast was a narrow passage, the Marennes passage. Six or seven miles south of this lay the entrance to the Gironde, in the centre of which lay the small island most frequently known by its lighthouse, the Cordouan (or Cordovan).

A number of these islands formed welcome barriers against prevailing storms, under which the blockading squadrons could shelter without slipping far from their stations - particularly Glenan and Groix, near L'Orient. The other important factor relating to these islands was that both Hoedic and Glenan had fresh water supplies and upon which, given suitable weather conditions, ships boats could land casks to replenish supplies.

As noted earlier many frigate Captains regarded the blockade of the enemy ports between Brest and Bordeaux, as a tough and rarely rewarding duty. Biscay has always been regarded as a heavy-weather station, suffering from prevailing winds onto a lee shore. The northern coast of the Bay, that is the south coast of Brittany, is extremely rocky. Furthermore, storms further out in the Atlantic are usually presaged in Biscay by a deep rolling swell which worked ships hard. Seymour's log frequently mentions the fact that Amethyst was "working" hard under these conditions - a reference to the movement of the ship's timbers relative to each other. In these conditions some frigates leaked badly and conditions below decks could become intolerable, with the crew, their clothing and hammocks, perpetually wet. Furthermore, weather conditions could change with wearying speed. A comparatively light or moderate wind in the morning could whip up to a strong gale by the end of the day, and then subside in hours. For the officers and men of a frigate attempting to maintain its station, these conditions were extremely wearing. Increasing wind force usually meant sending men aloft to reef sails, or even more exhaustingly, to strike top-masts and yards. Equally, the relaxation of a gale usually required a reverse of the procedure. In certain weather conditions, and at particular locations the procedures would have to be repeated numerous times during the course of a single day. Added to this the appearance of a suspect vessel might require the pressing on of more sail, resulting in heavy pitching and even more dangerous conditions for the crew.

The Biscay coast was, of course, France's most important seaboard. Furthermore, given the difficulty of moving goods internally by road, French domestic trade had to be maintained along the coast. In addition to the major ports there were a string of smaller ports and small coastal convoys could slip, often under cover of darkness, from port to port. Hugging the coast also enabled them to take advantage of the narrow, shallow channels that existed, e.g. the Marennes or Maumusson Passage between Oleron and the mainland, which frigate Captains would rarely risk attempting. By 1808, a string of telegraph stations had been built by the French to report the

presence of a hostile frigates on the coast, and there were numerous coastal batteries, under which French shipping could seek shelter if necessary. French ships would frequently run themselves on shore (preferably under a gun battery) when pressed by a British frigate. The frigate would then have to send in boats to try and seize the ships or destroy them. If the French ships managed to get in to one of the smaller ports, the British boat crews would attempt to board them (usually at night) in an attempt to cut them out.

It should also be noted that the amount of trade going in the coastal waters at this time is astonishing. Seymour, with unsurprising diligence, inspected every vessel sighted unless weather and wind made it impractical. The majority of daily entries in the frigate's log, therefore, refer to a ship being chased (or "chaced" to give it it's contemporary expression). The Amethyst chased vessels on more than 77 different occasions during 266 days at sea, so most of them have not been included in the account which follows.

#### Activities of HMS Amethyst: January 1808 - June, 1809.<sup>628</sup>

At the beginning of 1808, Seymour had been in command of the Amethyst for nearly 18 months and was actively engaged in patrolling off of Brest. In January Amethyst fell in with two French frigates, 23 leagues off of Ushant. Seymour presumed that these had broken out of Brest and so chased them for several days in the hope that he would be joined by another cruiser, thus making it feasible to engage. The French ships, despite their superiority, seemed anxious to avoid an engagement with the Amethyst, and Seymour reported to the Admiralty that he thought them bound for the West Indies with supplies. He encountered no fellow cruiser and eventually, with some reluctance he was forced to abandon the chase. In April, Amethyst left Plymouth again with the gun-brig Consort. and was joined a week later, in a heavy gale, by another gun-brig, the Conflict which had also been placed under Seymour's orders. The three ships kept a very close watch of coastal trade and sought intelligence on French naval activity.<sup>629</sup>

The Captain's log for this period is peppered with accounts of chasing potential prizes, many of which appeared to have been ships on legitimate business, which were released as, for example on the 8th May when Conflict brought-to a Hamburg galliott bound from London to Charente. The log records no action being taken against the galliott.<sup>630</sup> Or on 14th May, when a Bremen Brig was stopped bound from Charente to Bristol<sup>631</sup> These ships were clearly not subject to the

usual rules of blockade. Occasionally genuine enemy ships were found but these often ran under the shelter of shore batteries as on 12th May, when Amethyst gave chase to a small convoy close to the Ile d'Oleron which slipped into port safely. On the following morning two vessels were seen departing from Oleron, and Seymour dispatched two of the ship's boats to intercept them. Suddenly Amethyst was struck by a shot fired from a shore battery, and Seymour ordered the boats' recall.

Seymour sailed northwards again to reconnoitre the anchorage at Aix Roads and to test the information that he had been given by the Master of the Active that a French ship of the line had been fitted out and brought down the Charente from Rochefort; as usual the Guardship was at anchor, but it had now been joined by the Line of Battle ship which certainly appeared to be fitting out for sea. The following day he wrote to Admiral Gambier reporting that the ship, a large two-decker appeared to be getting her guns in and preparing for sea. The frigate managed to speak to a neutral vessel who confirmed that the ship, the Patriote, had been towed down the river Charente on the 12th, but that such was the haste to get her to sea, she still had scaffolding around her hull with caulkers still at work. Seymour also learned that the French dockyard at Rochefort had launched the 84-gun Warsaw a few days previously, and that another ship, the Jemappe, was indeed in dock for repairs. Two other line of battle ships were under construction.<sup>632</sup>

On the 8th July, the Amethyst sailed southwards of Cordovan, and in company with Growler, chased a sail which turned out to be Jersey privateer. Resuming her station near the Cordovan Light, a small flotilla was sighted in the north near Pointe de la Coubre. Amethyst gave chase and eleven vessels were identified. Seven of these ran themselves on shore as the frigate approached, but the remaining four attempted to escape. Several guns were fired to bring them to and the frigate anchored whilst the boats were lowered to take possession of the prizes. Later in the day Growler too joined company, and boats were sent to try and get off the vessels which had run themselves on shore. This resulted in a partial success as two Chasse Maree were refloated. Eventually prize crews of four men under the command of a petty officer, were placed on each prize. Seymour reported to Gambier:

*"...I turned in through the Martelier Channel and having anchored brought off two of them in good order, one of 40 tons laden with stores, the other in ballast, into which I have put some materials, of the five others which were filled with water from the surf and having been rendered unserviceable - and send these two vessels to Plymouth".* <sup>633</sup>

Boats were sent back on shore on the following day to finish the destruction , during which proceeding, HMS Indefatigable and the Conflict brig appeared. Possibly with their assistance, the hull of one of the grounded vessels was refloated and brought alongside the Amethyst which took off the captured cargo and stores. Indefatigable parted company to continue her cruise and Seymour now set sail to the north with his small flotilla of prizes. Off of Ile d'Yeu they were joined by the Impeteux and Pompee. The latter sent over a number of supernumeraries, which must have been highly welcome as nearly forty of the Amethyst's crew had now been put on board prizes. Another welcome addition must have been unspecified stores taken from a privateer.

The Amethyst continued north and west beginning the voyage back towards Plymouth. On the 14th July, a fleet of sails were seen in the north east, which signals soon indicated to be a squadron of the Channel Fleet under Lord Gambier, six miles west of Ushant. Amethyst was supplied with fresh water and remained in company with the squadron for several days. However, this was not a time of rest for the frigate's crew, for the Amethyst was repeatedly sent to inspect any strange sail that hove in view. None of these turned out to be enemy vessels, and twice turned out to be sloops or brigs bearing dispatches. On 20th July, still off of Ushant, the weather began to deteriorate, with rain and a heavy swell. Amethyst's topsails were repeatedly damaged in the wind and the Captain's log records the conditions with stark clarity as, for example, on the 22nd, "*10pm. ship pitching very much*". Next morning the crew were exercised at great guns and small arms in spite of squally rain and the deck rolling in the swell, now from the north west.

Later that same day the Amethyst was ordered to stand in to Douarnenez Bay, to reconnoitre activity at the entrance to Brest. Seymour anchored in 21 fathoms, ignoring shells fired at the frigate from batteries on both the north and south shores of the bay. Nine French men of war (5 of the line, 3 frigates and a brig) were observed and then the Amethyst was taken out to clearer waters. Having completed this task, Amethyst was ordered back to Plymouth, anchoring in the Sound on 26th July. For the next two weeks the crew, with assistance from dockyard artificers, began stripping the ship for a thorough clean and re-stowing. There was clearly no relaxation for the hands during these weeks, and for the sake of clarity it is easier to list the tasks that were undertaken each day as recorded in the log. Work started on the same day that the ship dropped anchor.

- Day 1.** Lower masts and top yards struck.  
Survey on Surgeon's medicines etc.  
Delivered stores.  
Received water.
- Day 2.** Cleaned the hold.  
Survey on Boatswain's stores.  
Sails and condemned rigging sent to the dockyard.  
Salt water started, 5 tons of water received.  
Received a new mast.  
Crew employed on rigging.  
Company mustered
- Day 3** Shrouds sent to dockyard.  
Maintop brought down.  
Bowsprit gammoned afresh and bobstays set up.  
Salt water started from ground tiers.  
Artificers on board.  
The ship is careened to repair copper on the Larboard side.  
Empty casks taken to the dockyard.
- Day 4.** Work on ground tiers completed.  
Received 5 tons water.  
Lower rigging fletted and overhauled.
- Day 5** As on previous day, although 2 tons of water is taken on board.
- Day 6.** Sunday. Company is mustered by Divisions.  
The ship's yawl is discovered stove at the moorings and full of water. It is sent to the dockyard.
- Day 7.** Topmast is swayed up and rigged.  
Yards crossed.  
Sundry stores and spars received from Dockyard.  
The launch is sent with a petty officer to assist HMS Mediator.  
Water received, empty casks sent ashore.
- Day 8.** A lighter delivers supplies, including 200 bread bags, 224 gallons of wine, 1,697 Gallons of rum.
- Day 9.** Beer and water taken on board.  
Sails received from the Dockyard.  
Crew employed ratting down the rigging.  
The yards painted black.
- Day 10.** More stores delivered.  
Crew employed painting the ship, blacking the bends etc.
- Day 11.** Hawse cleaned.

Day 12. Sunday. Company Mustered.

Day 13. Water and coals received on board.

The fourteenth day was August 9th, and the Amethyst was unmoored prior to weighing her best bower anchor. The two weeks at Plymouth had clearly been a busy period, with parties of seamen working at the dockyard, in addition to shipboard work, on many of the days. During this period the frigate Indefatigable had arrived with a prize, a French Corvette, an event which was clearly thought worthy of note in the log. In spite of the list of tasks, it is clear that this was not a major refit, merely a replenishing of supplies, worn rigging and sails. At 1pm on 9th August, Seymour ordered the anchor to be weighed, and under double reefed topsails, the Amethyst, sailed out into the channel amidst squalls.

Seymour was now ordered to join Lord Amelius Beauclerk's<sup>634</sup> squadron blockading L'Orient. Amethyst was now to patrol between Glenan and Belle-Ile. Glenan appears to have been a favourite anchorage of blockading ships, lying some 16 miles west of L'Orient. Although the Ile de Groix offers shelter immediately opposite L'Orient the former seems to have been preferred, possibly because it gave any blockading squadron the advantage of reaching to windward of any French vessels attempting to escape.

At the end of August, Amethyst was joined on her cruising ground by the frigate Emerald, commanded by the Hon Frederick Lewis Maitland. Seymour was later to state that Maitland was the best cruiser he had ever met with<sup>635</sup> It was noted earlier in this thesis that the crews of frigates working together often developed close relationships and this would appear to have been the case with the Amethyst and Emerald also. The two ships certainly agreed to share prize money and Seymour's log indicates that they tended to cruise as a pair.<sup>636</sup>

On 23rd September, a period of heavy weather set in which continued with only the occasional short respite until 28th November. In fact 20 of the following 35 days were to be dominated by gales with hard squalls of rain. Although the number of vessels chased seems to have declined during this period - (only five days of the 35 saw a chase) - shipboard activity seems to have continued as normal, and punishments were inflicted on five occasions. The most serious affect seems to have been on gunnery practice which, it was previously noted, usually took place every two weeks. Because of the storms, the crew of the Amethyst were put to exercising the great

guns on only two occasions in over five weeks, although it is noticeable that as soon as the storm abated on 28th November, Seymour set the crew to work on the great guns.

At the beginning of October, Seymour rendezvoused with the *Emerald* again and looked into L'Orient. The two frigates kept company for 24-hours during which parties moved between the frigates. Then *Amethyst* sailed north to report to the squadron at Glenan. Later, on 7th October, a fresh gale set in once again and the *Amethyst* weighed anchor to ride the storm for two days. On 10th, with the return of calm weather, chase was given to a sail in the north west. This appeared to be a schooner, however thick squalls came in and the frigate lost sight of her several times. With the wind growing *Amethyst* was forced to lower her topgallant yards. Seymour was clearly pressing after the chase for, shortly after, the frigate's fore topgallant yard was sent up again. Then disaster struck, the main topgallant yard was carried away and split the main topgallant. In desperation, perhaps also in frustration, two guns were fired at the chase, but she rapidly disappeared from sight under Belle-Isle. Repairs continued until the next day. At the end of the month the two frigates rendezvoused again off of L'Orient.

On 9th November, *Amethyst* was patrolling north of the Ile Groix. The memoir quotes Seymour: *"...At sunset the Amethyst was in 15-fathom water within a long gun-shot distance of the mortar battery on the NE point of Isle Groix. At six p.m. being quite dark, on this same November 10, I wore, to the great relief of the master's and pilot's mind...."*<sup>637</sup> According to the log, at this moment the crew heard the report of two guns being fired from the south east, possibly from the French battery referred to above. An hour later a sail was seen running to the westward, all sails were set in chase and the ship was cleared for action, although the exact nature of the chase was probably not really known for an hour when the two ships began to exchange fire with sternchasers and bowchasers respectively.<sup>638</sup> Warning rockets were set off to attract the attention of other English ships, and the crew of the *Amethyst* saw three flashes in response from somewhere in the north east. The chase was the French 40-gun frigate *Thetis*, carrying troops and provisions for Martinique. In terms of combatants, the *Thetis* was greatly superior, having 436 men on board, as opposed to the *Amethyst*'s 261, and having a greater broadside weight. By 9.30 p.m. the two ships were in close action with the French Captain repeatedly trying to take advantage of his larger manpower by boarding the *Amethyst*. These attempts at boarding were repelled but by midnight the two ships had become locked together in heavy action. Shortly after 12.20am Seymour ordered his men to board the French frigate, which was now on fire in several



places, and the Thetis surrendered. The Amethyst had suffered considerable damage during the action, and now had 3ft 6 ins of water in her hold. The human cost had also been severe; Amethyst had suffered 70 killed and wounded, whilst the crowded decks of the Thetis had suffered a terrible carnage, there being 236 killed and wounded, more than half of her complement.

Seymour's first task after the surrender of the Thetis was to bring both ships to a secure standstill. A number of prisoners were transferred to the Amethyst which was a comparatively simple task as both ships were locked together. However the anchor of the prize was lowered first to stop her drifting and to bring her to, whilst the Amethyst was broken free. She also then anchored close by. This was accomplished twenty-five minutes after the action ceased.

At this point a ship was observed approaching from the north east - the general direction of L'Orient. Alarm set in when it failed to reply to the recognition signal and it was identified as a ship of the line. The vessel however proved to be the 74-gun Triumph commanded by Capt. Thomas Hardy, which hove to and provided surgical assistance with the wounded.

By 2 a.m. the prize had lost all of her masts and the Shannon, commanded by Philip Broke, also arrived to give assistance. By the evening of 11th November, the efforts of seamen from all three ships working on the Thetis had completed temporary repairs and rigged jury masts. She was taken in tow by the Shannon, who parted company on the afternoon of the 12th November, to begin the journey back to Plymouth.

On the morning of the 12th, having completed their first priority of securing the prize, the crew of the Amethyst concentrated on getting their own frigate back into order - especially as Amethyst was still making water at the rate of 5 inches an hour. Later that afternoon the Amethyst's dead were buried and all possible sail was made in the wake of Shannon and the prize<sup>639</sup>. On the afternoon of the 14th November, Amethyst neared Plymouth Sound with signals flying for assistance, and by 5.40 p.m. she was securely lashed alongside the hulk Tholen.

On her previous visit to Plymouth, Amethyst was refitted in 14 days. This second visit was a much different matter. Amethyst was to be out of action for 71 days, nearly half of these being in dock. Three tasks were undertaken with greatest priority. Firstly the wounded seamen and marines were removed to hospital. Two midshipman had also been severely wounded in the action, one of them, Richard Gibbings, had received a mortal head wound, a musket ball fired

from the rigging of the Thetis having entered his skull, exiting from his right eye. Gibbings, a relative of Seymour, had been one of the leading boarders. Both men were taken to Seymour's own home to be nursed by his wife Jane, but Gibbings survived just ten days.

Meanwhile some of the crew of the Amethyst were taking down the frigate's upper rigging, masts and spars. Whilst this was going on, others were employed on the probably more important but macabre task of cleaning the ship, probably to remove the remainder of the gore that had not been completely erased in the immediate aftermath of the action. The situation on the Thetis at this time must have been considerably worse, although no account of this seems to have survived. (However, there is an account of the state of the American frigate Chesapeake after its delivery to Halifax following the engagement with the Shannon, several years after this.<sup>640</sup>) On the second day in port the crew began the long task of clearing the ship of prisoners, stores, empty casks, guns and carriages, gunners stores, wounded spars, rigging and shingle ballast. This took eleven days, although it would appear that on Sunday 27th the crew were allowed to rest after being mustered for Divine Service, at which Seymour also read the Articles of War.

Whilst the frigate was being repaired and refitted, Seymour paid a short visit to London but on his return his attention was again drawn to the welfare of his crew. On 4th January he wrote to their Lordships at the Admiralty explaining that nineteen of his crew had "*lost their beds overboard, some in the action, and some from their destruction from shot, and having been laid on by the wounded, on the night of 10th November last..*" His specific request was that the frigate's purser be directed to make good the losses without charge to the individuals concerned, "*..as usual I understand in such cases....*".<sup>641</sup> The Purser was so directed.

On 25th January, 1809, Amethyst slipped from her moorings in Hamoaze and joined six other frigates anchored in the Sound, including her consort Emerald. The following day the crew were paid and supernumeraries for the Caesar and Valiant were taken on board for passage to Biscay. In fact, by this time the frigate was crowded with baggage and personnel. For eleven days Amethyst lay at anchor receiving provisions for herself and ships on station off L'Orient. In addition to stowing the stores the crew had to contend with gales and a heavy swell and, repeatedly, attention had to be given to the anchors and cables which both became damaged as a result of the constant movement of the frigate.

On 7th February, Seymour was ordered to sail, and the Amethyst left her moorings in the afternoon, in squally conditions. By 5.20 p.m. Amethyst had run into fresh gales and a heavy swell. But the events of the next few days are best told by Seymour himself in another letter to Hawker.

*"...My dear Edward, - Of "Naval Story", concerning our movements, and the prize ships arriving here, I can give you a detail not uninteresting to a friend, though tedious to an indifferent person. I sailed on February 8 with Admiral Stopford on board, his furniture, stock, band, secretary, flag and one other Lieutenant, Captain of Marines, Chaplain, twelve Midshipmen, two mates, his gig's crew, servants, &c, stores also for the ships here,....and sixty-three supernumeraries on board from Plymouth Sound, with forty-eight also of my own crew in the sick list, an entire raw crew of marines, the old having been promoted and cut up, and badly replaced, and lastly with a fair easterly wind, as that night it blew heavy;....next day, off Ushant, it came to the Southward and blew strong and on its nearing westward, wearing, and pushing to get round Saints for my passage to this station, I first heard from my amiable excellent Admiral that he meant to call at Glenans to give the L'Orient squadron...some orders.. I pushed for Glenans, in a heavy gale, and as we hourly expected to make the land, it came as thick as mustard, and blew tremendously, on which we hauled off....and on its clearing in an hour saw Glenans and Penmarcks, but the pilot thought too late to run in before dark. That night very bad weather. Bullocks on the main-deck, in addition to the above; next day stood in, but so thick and heavy a gale could not run, though tried it three times on clearing a little, so at night gave it up, and ran to round the Roches Bonnes, under reefed courses, and close reefed two top-sails, with new rigging, and terrible sea; next morning a clear strong gale, bore up and made the Banche Vertes breakers close to us, the men at the mast-heads not having reported them, so many heavy seas in motion not distinguishing them, we hauled round off, and sounded thirty-four fathoms; but before we saw the breakers (three heavy ones), we had some tremendous, unusual tumbling seas and then the breakers a musket-shot from us, not more. Having passed clear, we soon after saw the immense breakers of the Roches Bonnes, and taking our departure, ran for Pertuis Breton <sup>642</sup>, where we hoped to find Commodore Hotham...which we did not. Three days we lay there till the weather moderated, having had a good set up, and got six inches of the standing part of our lower rigging, and found, on getting off Chassiron<sup>643</sup>, the above squadron...in Basque Roads, when I put my Admiral etc. etc. on board their respective ships*

*with great satisfaction, though the Admiral, who is a perfect gentleman, put up with a be-devilled ship very kindly, for I did my best to please him.*

*L'Aigle, unfortunately, was sent some days before off Bordeaux, where I was to have gone; but..I was to remain till she returned, losing by it the best part of the winter.”* <sup>644</sup>

What Seymour did not mention in the letter was that as Amethyst lay at anchor in the western end of the bottle-neck that is the passage of Pertuis Breton, they had observed a French squadron of three sail of the line at anchor some six or seven miles to the south east.<sup>645</sup> It was probably with some relief therefore that the weather moderated the next day and the frigate weighed and sailed west around the Baleines light and in to the Basque Roads where lay the English squadron of at least two frigates and three 74's, watching a slightly larger French squadron in Aix Roads. Seymour's first task was to deliver the fresh vegetables and beef to the squadron; his own crew having enjoyed the luxury of freshly slaughtered beef every day since leaving port. This work continued the next day when Stopford, his staff and supernumeraries went on board his flagship, the Caesar . Although successful in delivering the Admiral and supplies to the squadron, the arrival in Basque Roads also contained a severe disappointment for Seymour and his crew, which is referred to in the final part of his letter to Hawker. Seymour had sailed with orders to deliver Stopford and the stores, and then to proceed to his former cruising ground off of the Gironde to intercept a French East Indiaman which was expected heading for Bordeaux. The delays in reaching the squadron, caused by the bad weather, meant that Amethyst was late, and the frigate Aigle , Capt. George Wolfe, was sent instead.

On 21st February the weather suddenly worsened with squalls blowing in from the North West to North East. The squadron weighed to work its way out of the Basque Roads and Amethyst lay South West of the Baleines light house by 3.40.p.m. The same wind that had driven Stopford's squadron off of the Basque Roads also enabled a powerful squadron of 8 ships of the line and two frigates, under the command of Rear-Admiral Willaumez, to break out of Brest. The French squadron was observed by the 74-gun Revenge who immediately sailed South East to warn the British Squadron off of Glenan which was blockading L'Orient. Thus, unbeknown to either party, by the late afternoon of 21st February, both Stopford's and Willaumez's squadron were sailing towards each other.

Willaumez's orders<sup>646</sup> were to drive the British squadron away from L'Orient, in order that a French squadron of three sail of the line and five frigates, could escape and join him. He was then to drive the British Squadron away from the Basque Roads, where he was to anchor off of Ile d'Aix and await further instructions - which were to be to make his way to Martinique and save it from an impending British attack. On the morning of 22nd February, the winds had dropped and Amethyst had hove to about ten miles out of Basque Roads, almost centrally between the Ile de Re and the Chassiron Light. The rest of the British squadron were approximately six miles to the South East, and the frigate's crew were employed rattling down the rigging and drying the storm sails.

Willaumez's Squadron, which was now being shadowed by the British L'Orient squadron were off of Ile de Groix, largely becalmed by the light winds, but on the 23rd, the wind freshened and the French squadron continued South East for the Baleines Light. Willaumez ordered a brig to reconnoitre ahead into the Basque Roads. Meanwhile Stopford's squadron had anchored, leaving Amethyst to patrol further out by Baleines light. At midday, Seymour took the Amethyst in to join the squadron to receive oatmeal, beef, sugar from the frigate Naiad and then resumed his station off of the Baleines Light. At about 8 p.m. the Amethyst observed a sail in the North East which was identified as a brig and gave chase, and at 9 p.m. several more sail were seen standing round Baleines. Seymour immediately fired a gun to warn the squadron and, simultaneously, the brig launched rockets.

Seymour now brought the Amethyst in to the squadron to speak to Stopford on the Caesar and then, with Emerald in company, made all sail in chase of the ships which were identified as 10 men of war. Stopford's squadron immediately weighed and gave chase to the French in an attempt to stop them entering Basque Roads. However the French squadron entered Basque Roads at dawn on the 24th and Amethyst and Emerald were recalled. Stopford had by this time dispatched the frigate Naiad, Capt. Thomas Dundas to inform Gambier of the situation, but she had only sailed a few miles when she observed three French ships approaching from the North West. These had already been seen by Seymour and turned out to be the frigates Italienne, Calypso and Cybele which had been shadowed during the night by the frigate Amelia, Capt. The Hon. Frederick Paul Irby, together with the brig-sloop Doterel. They dropped anchor under the protection of shore batteries off of Sable d'Olonne on the French mainland between the Ile d'Eu and Ile de Re. Stopford's squadron had also seen them and, leaving Seymour and Maitland to

guard Willaumez's squadron, engaged the French frigates where they lay at anchor at 11.30 a.m, continuing until they were eventually forced to run themselves on shore. The Amelia frigate now joined Amethyst and Emerald at the entry to the Basque Roads.

Seymour maintaining his station, was able to watch as on 26th February Willaumez's squadron worked closer to the anchorage under Ile d'Aix. This was not achieved without difficulty as one of the French frigates ran aground and had to strike her topmasts. Amethyst's consorts were kept busy over the next day chasing strange sail, leaving Seymour and his crew alone within sight of the French squadron. With what must seem a degree of nonchalance, Seymour set his men to work painting the ship. One of the ships chased by the French frigates was a British cutter which brought news that Gambier had sailed with the Channel Fleet from Torbay on 20th February, the day before Willaumez broke out of Brest. The '*Memoir*' quotes a letter from Seymour to Hawker written at about this date:

*".....Of Lord Gambier no tidings whatever since the day he sailed, and we hourly look for ships from Portsmouth and Plymouth....Poor Amethyst, instead of getting the East Indiaman off Bordeaux, has the post of honour close in at anchor and daily reconnoitring in turn with Emerald . We were very near their frigates the other day, [i.e. 24th February] when they attempted to reconnoitre us, but hauling the main tack down made them move back, and Caesar [74] thought we were boyish enough to attack them, but the Admiral was much pleased to see us keep them at bay... By Emerald I heard of dearest Jane and my darling children, all quite well." <sup>647</sup>*

Together with the Emerald , Amethyst, maintained her station off of Basque Roads, taking turns to slip in close to Ile d'Aix to reconnoitre until 7th March, when Admiral Gambier joined the squadron with four more sail of the line, two frigates and several smaller ships. Seymour and Maitland were now rewarded for their activity by being sent on a one month cruise just to the south off of the Gironde. Amethyst completed re-watering on 9th March, and both frigates parted company with Gambier's fleet. On Thursday 10th March, Seymour mustered his ship's company at quarters. It was not a Sunday and there were no punishments to be administered. Unfortunately there is no record of why the crew were mustered, but it is not inconceivable that he chose this occasion to tell them of the cruise. In particular he may have been able to tell them that the newly built French frigate Niemen was expected to sail at any time from Bordeaux. The Niemen had been launched at the end of October, 1808, and the news of this had been picked up

by Capt. Rodd of the frigate Indefatigable, who had dutifully passed on the intelligence to The Admiralty.<sup>648</sup>

Between 14-21st March, Amethyst and Emerald took a number of prizes, including the French Schooner Serpent and then a French brig, the Caroline. In three days Seymour had sent 37 of his crew off in prizes, and had taken on board 97 French prisoners of war. Accommodation in the hold of the frigate was becoming seriously cramped and casks had to be broken down to create extra room for them. The situation was only temporary, for the following day Emerald resumed company and Maitland took out 24 of the prisoners.

On the 28th the two frigates gave chase to a strange sail. Seymour ordered the ship cleared for action, but the chase turned out to be the frigate Naiad. The encounter was not altogether to Seymour's satisfaction, as he wrote to Hawker;

*"...I met ill-sailing Naiad at sea, on my very own ground, with the same orders to intercept the Bordeaux frigate, and cruise as long as her water and provisions would last, and then replenish at Plymouth.....so without going to the fleet at all a complete cruise to the Acting Captain - a very good fellow I believe<sup>649</sup>, but hard upon the Emerald, and all the old blockading frigates, and me, I think, all things considered, who never got a cruise as an Acting Captain...."*<sup>650</sup>

Seymour had clearly not expected to find the Naiad on, what he describes as "his very own ground" (although he was happy to share it with the Emerald!). Cocks, the Acting Captain of the Naiad had almost certainly been given independent cruising orders, which entitled him to much greater freedom and potential profit than Seymour could achieve. This obviously rankled, for the Amethyst had been rewarded with the opportunity to try for the enemy frigate in response to her hard service off of the Basque Roads. They were therefore both competing in their cruise after the French frigate Niemen.

On 31st March, Naiad disappeared over the horizon and on the 5th April, in the middle of the morning, when both Emerald and Amethyst were approximately 100 miles due west of the Ile d'Oleron, a frigate was seen standing to the East South East. Emerald was, at this time to the North East, and with a fresh breeze whipped up by squalls, Amethyst made all sail in chase. Seymour pressed his frigate hard for the remainder of the day, at one point carrying away the jib boom, but rigging another and making even more sail. By evening it was clear that the Amethyst

was closing on an enemy frigate and Seymour ordered the ship cleared for action. By 7.25 p.m. Emerald had been left far behind and with darkness closing in there was a danger that Seymour would lose the enemy frigate. For some anxious time the chase was lost to view, but the sky clearing for a moment the frigate was seen beam-on running to the West. Both ships seem to have observed each other at the same moment, for the French frigate hauled her wind onto the larboard tack again and made all sail from the Amethyst. As if still doubting the evidence of his eyes, Seymour ordered the private signal to be made, but this was not answered, and at 10.30 p.m. Seymour ordered the bow-chasers to commence firing.

For three hours the chase continued with the two frigates firing bow-chasers and stern-chasers respectively. By 1.15 a.m. Seymour had brought the Amethyst to within a mile of his opponent and he luffed and fired the starboard broadside. The ships now commenced a close action. By 3.15 a.m. both frigates had lost main and mizzen masts, and the French frigate was on fire in several places. There was at this point some extraordinary confusion, for the officers on the Amethyst observed a light being lowered on the French ship and assumed that this was an indication that she had struck. Ten minutes later the English frigate Arethusa arrived; The French frigate suddenly hoisted her light again and fired two guns at her. The Arethusa fired a full broadside into the stricken French frigate, which promptly surrendered to her. The French frigate was in fact the Niemen and Captain Robert Mends of the Arethusa immediately sent a boarding party to take possession of her, at the same time sending their surgeon to assist on board the Amethyst. Mends described his arrival in a letter to another frigate Captain, Charles Adams of the Resistance, on the morning after: *".....Last night about One O'clock we observed a considerable firing to leeward evidently of ships engaging, which continued till past four, when we arrived up and found them to be two frigates, each with only her foremast standing, the action having nearly ceased left nothing for the Arethusa to do, but to fire a few shot, when the Enemy hoisted a light as a signal of having struck. On the return of the boat, I found the English frigate to be the Amethyst, Captain Seymour, who with his usual good fortune, zeal and ability had followed his chace tho' a dark night, beaten him, and needed not the aid of a Friend to complete his conquest....."*<sup>651</sup>

The Amethyst's chase of the Niemen had taken both ships approximately 140 miles south east across Biscay, and the final part of the engagement had taken place only about 12 miles off of the north coast of Spain.<sup>652</sup> The intervention of the Arethusa was in some ways unfortunate as it



enabled her Captain to lodge a claim for a portion of the Head Money, if not the Prize Money itself. Furthermore, the arrival of the second frigate encouraged the French Captain to claim that in fact the Amethyst had surrendered to him , but that he had then been forced to surrender ultimately to a fresh opponent. On this occasion, though, a serious dispute arose in spite of Mends' admission to Charles Adams. Mends immediately lodged his own claim to a portion of the prize money stating that the Niemen had only surrendered after he had fired several broadsides at her. However, the crew of the Amethyst had a standing arrangement with the frigate Emerald. Mends was subsequently to claim that the Emerald had played no part in the chase and, therefore, could lay no claim to the prize. Even as the three frigates lay close together following the action Mends attempted to take some advantage of the prize sending Seymour a letter which appears to have led to a major dispute. (See Appendix 9.1). The dispute with Mends rumbled on through the courts for well over three years<sup>653</sup>. However, what is important is the degree of integrity and loyalty which the incident illustrates in Seymour, both towards Maitland in the Emerald and to his own officers and crew.

Even whilst the repairs were going ahead off of the Spanish coast, Seymour found time to write a jubilant letter to Edward Hawker;

*"....You will be rejoiced to hear that Amethyst is in the habit of seeing and thrashing French frigates, though not of getting them to herself.....the flying Niemen, which is the fastest sailor I ever met with, and only the old luck, and keeping large after dark, after losing sight of her, and being beaten to pieces by the wind of her, and an admirable look out by Fair (the present Captain Fair<sup>654</sup>), who is a great treasure to me, gave us a view of him....."*<sup>655</sup>

The afternoon and evening of 6th April were spent clearing the wreckage of the fallen masts and rigging, repairing damage, and rigging jury masts. On the afternoon of 7th, the Amethyst was in a suitable condition to receive prisoners of war, and 66 men were transferred from the Niemen.<sup>656</sup> Repairs continued, as did the squally weather, until 9th April, when all possible sails were set to take the frigate back to Plymouth. The journey took four days and Amethyst anchored in Plymouth Sound at 10 a.m. on 13th April. On arrival there were some personnel matters to be dealt with. The First Lieutenant, William Hill, would undoubtedly be promoted; the Second and Third Lieutenants had not actually been on board the Amethyst during her recent engagement - one having not yet joined and the other being in charge of a prize - therefore Seymour was keen to ensure that his second Lieutenant, Edward Crouch, was duly promoted. James Gledstanes Jacob

was appointed Second and , by mutual request, Richard Inledon, who was acting Lieutenant, was promoted and appointed as Third to the Amethyst. There were other crew matters to be dealt with: William Ruler an “*infirm old seaman*” requested and was given leave to go to his home in Scotland in an attempt to recover his health, having a form of consumption and diseased liver.<sup>657</sup>

On the 23rd, a Sunday, the crew were mustered as usual for divine service. That same day Seymour wrote again to Hawker:

*“...Niemen not yet arrived,...but has been seen with Arethusa, all well. Dearest Jane, and all the flock well. Amethyst by the same hulk as five months ago, and tomorrow going to take out the old foremast etc...Bible pieces are putting in, and though the decks are so thin, the carronade trucks went through the forecastle and quarter-deck, they only put oak plank underneath them. She is rickety aloft, but tight, and sound below..”*<sup>658</sup>

It is entirely understandable that one frigate Captain writing to another should think first of all of sharing concerns about the prize.<sup>659</sup> There is a brief and passing reference to Seymour’s family, - which it should be emphasised would also have been of great interest to Hawker, given their relationship - and then attention returns to the more immediate and important matters of the ship.

At 3 p.m. on 23rd May, 1809, forty-one days after arriving at Plymouth the Amethyst weighed anchor in the Sound and set sail. The damage caused to the frigate by her action with the Niemen was obviously much less than that caused by the Thetis , but the repairs were also accelerated by the arrival of a package of sealed, secret orders, which Seymour believed would send him cruising independently to the West. He was to be bitterly disappointed however, for, before he could sail, he was asked to return the orders and sail for the Downs instead. There he was given a short cruise off of the coast of Holland, but was then ordered to convey Admiral Sir Richard Strachan to the St. Domingo off of Flushing. The Amethyst was then ordered to join the expedition to the Scheldt which Seymour considered a “*horrible place*” and longed to get back to cruising in the west, particularly to Biscay which he regarded as the best cruising station.

Following the disastrous Scheldt expedition, Seymour was appointed to the Niemen in October, 1809, and was permitted to take virtually all of his officers and crew with him - which as has been previously noted, was a clear sign of favour. In the Niemen, Seymour returned to his cruising ground in Biscay, and was to continue either there or off the coast of Ireland until May, 1812,

when he was transferred to a 74-gun ship. In 1814 Seymour was paid off and retired. Four years later, in 1818, he was appointed to command the Guardship at Sheerness. He eventually died in 1834 as Rear Admiral of the Blue and CinC at Rio de Janeiro.

### Seymour as a Seaman.

Fortunately for the researcher, Seymour was an expressive and articulate correspondent. The Memoirs produced after his death quote substantially from a valuable collection of correspondence (now lost) with his brother-in-law Captain Edward Hawker of the frigate Melampus. The written communication of two brother naval officers is uniquely interesting because it covers matters which would not have been written to family at home - both because it would have seemed neither interesting nor appropriate - and because it lacks the heavy formality of letters to the Commanders-in-chief or Lords of the Admiralty.

At the beginning of this chapter, Edward Hawker, who was serving as a Lieutenant with Seymour in the Spitfire, was quoted on the subject of Seymour's personal involvement in navigation. That he was still closely involved in the navigation of the Amethyst, ten years later, is confirmed, for example, by Seymour's own comment that on the afternoon of the engagement with the Thetis he took the frigate close inshore to the Isle Groix against the inclinations of the Master and a pilot. It is also worth noting that the Master of the Amethyst, Robert Fair, appears to have had a close relationship with Seymour and had probably served with him for some time. After the capture of the Thetis, Fair was offered promotion to a ship of the line if he wished - which would have meant better pay, but he decided to stay with Seymour, perhaps because the chance of prize money was greater. After the capture of the Niemen, he was promoted to Lieutenant, undoubtedly at Seymour's request.<sup>660</sup> This closeness implies a degree of professional empathy and mutual respect, particularly on the subject of seamanship.

In terms of more general activity, nobody could accuse Seymour of lack of energy. Of the 266 days on which she was at sea the Amethyst was engaged in chasing strange vessels on at least 77 days, i.e. 29% of her time at sea.<sup>661</sup> Damaged as she was after both engagements, the Amethyst would probably not have been able to chase strangers in the immediate aftermath of an action, so that proportionately even more of her available sea-time was occupied in intercepting unidentified

shipping. In addition to the chase, the Amethyst's boats were lowered and sent in pursuit of, or to cut-out, vessels nearer to the shore on more than eighteen occasions

Earlier it was noted that the Biscay station was renowned for its difficult weather: the Captain's Log records gales, heavy seas or other serious weather conditions on forty-one days at sea - in other words, 15% of her time at sea. Gales and high seas could make it too dangerous to exercise the great guns, but it did not necessarily mean that the Amethyst would avoid making as much sail as possible in chase of a stranger. As for example on 10th September, 1808, when, in a heavy to fresh gale the frigate Statira was chased unknowingly. Or on 10th October, when in thick squalls a schooner was chased until the Amethyst carried away her Main topgallant yard and split the sail.<sup>662</sup>

### The crew of HMS Amethyst and HMS Niemen.

It is certainly a mark of Seymour's favour, if not also his popularity with his crew, that some 222 people followed him from the Amethyst to the Niemen in October, 1809.<sup>663</sup> This turn-over included 44 Able seamen, 49 Ordinary Seamen, 47 Landsmen and 17 Boys. At least 123 of these had been serving with Seymour since before April, 1808, and would therefore have benefited from prize money during the actions against both the Thetis and the Niemen. The total crew of the Niemen was 252 plus marines. Of the 140 seamen on board, approximately 40 were Irish (32 of these having transferred from the Amethyst) and, given that the Captain, most of his midshipmen and several of his officers were Irish, it is perhaps appropriate that over 28% of the crew should share that nationality. It is also worth mentioning that there is little evidence that the Irish members of Seymour's crew caused any significantly disproportionate disciplinary problems. On the contrary, in addition to the officers and midshipmen, several Irish members of the crew held positions of some responsibility, including the Master At Arms, James Wade, and the Quarter Master, Thomas Hore. Furthermore, between July, 1806 - 8th July, 1807 and April, 1808, and May, 1809, for example, only four Irishmen were punished for drunkenness - a statistic which challenges continuing assumptions about that nationality. Indeed, although there may have been some concerns about Irish revolutionary groups, particularly after the events of 1797 and 1798, many seem to have regarded Irish seaman as particularly desirable crew members.<sup>664</sup> In addition to the Irishmen, the Amethyst had her share of foreign nationals, including ten

Americans, two Swedes, two Germans, a Fin, Dutchman and Prussian - and the rather unlikely Frenchman from Boulogne, Peter Baker.

The Muster Books record very few desertions, a fact which seems to be reinforced by the high number turned over and the apparently long period with which many of the crew seemed to have served under Seymour. Of course, desertion is partly determined by opportunity, and the Amethyst was a particularly active frigate. There were certainly a number of desertions during the first year of Seymour's command, but again these are few in number. Seymour joined the Amethyst in May, 1806, and the first desertions are recorded on 14/15th October, when four men ran from a boat in Cove Harbour. The only other incident of desertion occurred on 26th January, 1807 when three boys, including the marine drummer, ran from a boat at Spithead. Given that, in the first year of Seymour's commission, the Amethyst was at anchor or moored for 153 days out of 356, the desertion rate is low. This appears to be a consistent record because during October and November, 1809, for example, - a period when the Niemen spent a considerable period at Plymouth, only two people deserted. One was John Davis, an Ordinary Seaman and apparently the only pressed man on board. The other was fifteen year old Joshua Lenny, Boy Third Class. Neither were from the crew of the Amethyst and both were on the Niemen for a very short period.

### Seymour and Gunnery.

**Table 9.1. Active time at sea - HMS Amethyst.**

Period covered by the study	420 days	100%
In dock for repairs after taking the <u>Thetis</u>	98 days	
In dock for repairs after taking the <u>Niemen</u>	42 days	36.6% <sup>665</sup>
General refitting and restowing	15 days	
Active days at sea	266 days	63.3%

(Source. *Log Books HMS Amethyst*).

The log details for these days gives important information about Seymour and his management of the frigate. In the first place it is evident that Seymour was diligent in training his crew in weapons practice. This was not the first cruise of the Amethyst under Seymour - he had commanded her for nearly two years - yet on the ship sailing from Plymouth in April, 1808, he

wasted little time in getting the crew settled down to handling both the great guns and the small arms once again. In comparison with a frigate Captain like Philip Broke who is probably taken as the naval gunnery practitioner par excellence of this period, Seymour does not appear to compare particularly well. However, there is here a difficulty with the source material. William James, in The Naval History states that the crew of the Shannon were exercised at training their guns for about an hour and a half each morning and were exercised at small arms drill for the same period in the afternoon. Twice a week the crew fired at targets, and the ship was kept permanently stripped for action.<sup>666</sup> This would indeed have been an intensive regime and although the ship's logs do not exactly confirm James' claim it is very clear that weapons practice was unusually frequent.<sup>667</sup> For example, in the 72 days prior to the engagement with the Chesapeake, exercise at the great guns took place on seventeen occasions or on average, once every four days. (Including, incidentally, the morning of the engagement itself!). Small arms drill took place on eight occasions.<sup>668</sup> James seems to have had access to information other than the Log books. If this is the case it re-emphasises the difficulty of having to depend on the Logs - even when all of them are checked - and the implication must be that gunnery drill on the Amethyst, as well as the Shannon, was not always recorded. In the period between leaving Plymouth and capturing the Thetis, Seymour set his men to work the great guns on average once per fortnight, though the frequency appears to have been increased when the weather was fine. The average would work out at once every 25 days - but bearing in mind the length of time the Amethyst spent in port after her two actions, it could be argued that a more realistic figure would indeed be once every 14 days. Small arms were exercised on average every ten days, but usually in conjunction with work on the great guns. Although this does not compare well with Broke, it is probable that Seymour's record in arms drill is no worse and probably actually better than a great many other frigate Captains. The evidence for the strength of Seymour's training regime would seem to lie in the effectiveness of the Amethyst's gunnery and the capture of the two French frigates. Ironically, there is even the possibility that fortnightly training was considered inadequate. William James in the Naval History berated Captain John Phillimore of the frigate Eurotas for only setting his men to exercise the great guns once per week.<sup>669</sup> Yet there is no evidence that anyone criticised Seymour for less diligence.

### Seymour's Culture of command.

As stated earlier, the researcher is very fortunate in the case of Michael Seymour, because some very revealing personal correspondence has either survived or been published. The correspondence is also valuable because Captains had few people with whom they could share their feelings whilst at sea and Seymour, like Broke, allowed his personal feelings to vent themselves through his letters. In Seymour's case this is mainly in the form of letters to his friend, colleague and brother-in-law, Edward Hawker, and gives us unusual insight for example, into the state of Seymour's mind during battle. Two days after the Amethyst arrived at Plymouth with her prize, the Thetis, he wrote to Hawker: *".....You will give me credit for more honesty of heart than to suppose I would from any vain motive enclose you any printed panegyrics on my own or the dear Amethyst's conduct<sup>670</sup>, but give you a regular account of my own as facts occurred, had not your dearest mother and sister Jane, who are very well (but the latter's nerves a little shattered, as I'll explain) insisted on it.... Thanks to heaven, my mind was clear, and I felt during the greater part of the action delighted, at ease, under occasional anxiety, and on one or two critical occasions, under apprehensions..."*<sup>671</sup>

Seymour's sense of ease is confirmed by an anecdote related by Robert Fair, the Master of the Amethyst, to the author of the Memoir. Fair reported, *"...I was much struck when on the moon's rising at a most critical period of the fight and revealing the Thetis returning gallantly to the contest, he[ Seymour ] turned to me and said, "Look, Fair, what a subject for a painter!""*<sup>672</sup>

Both statements indicate a clear sense of detachment, and this may have been caused by a combination of supreme confidence and a state of mind invoked by adrenaline. But Seymour was also clearly sensitive. Two of the frigate's Midshipmen had been severely wounded during the action, and both were taken into Seymour's home at Plymouth to be nursed by his wife. One of them, Richard Gibbings, who was also related to Seymour, had received a mortal head wound whilst boarding the Thetis; a musket ball fired from the rigging of the enemy frigate had entered his skull, exiting from his right eye. Gibbings survived the wound just ten days. This explains Seymour's reference (above) to his wife's nerves being shattered. That Seymour himself was also deeply affected by Gibbings death is illustrated by the account he gave to Hawker on 18th November. It must be remembered, that this is a letter from one Naval Captain to another and that there would have been no requirement for Seymour to be open about his feelings:

*"..I have just closed a letter to the best of men, an uncle of my beloved Richard Gibbings, one of the mates who was mortally wounded among the leading borders - a relation of my own, the best of young men, with a heavenly disposition, and adored by all on board - relating, as I have daily done, his state and now his last moments. Dearest Jane loved him, and has had her share of affliction, for he is here, and to be buried on Monday, when I have the last sad office to perform to the bravest and best of youths. He is about eighteen..."*<sup>673</sup>

### Rewards.

Immediately after Gibbing's funeral, Seymour had gone to London, residing for several days at a house in Princes Street, off Hanover Square. It had been intimated to him that he might receive a knighthood if he appeared at Court, but he simply refused to go. Instead of the knighthood he was awarded a celebratory medal, thus becoming possibly the first officer to receive a medal for a frigate action. The rewards for the action followed a fairly predictable pattern. Most of the Amethyst's officers were promoted. Blennerhasset, the First Lieutenant, was promoted to Commander, though he never reached Post Rank.<sup>674</sup> The Second Lieutenant, William Hill, was promoted to First. The Purser was promoted to a ship of higher class, (where the remuneration of his profession would be that much greater). Seymour was invited to promote one of his midshipmen to be promoted Lieutenant, and the Master, Robert Fair, was to be removed to a vessel of a higher class if acceptable to him. Fair was, however, an old and loyal follower of Seymour, and the removal was clearly not acceptable to him.

There were cash gifts also, Lloyds presented the officers and crew who had been wounded with £625 and Seymour received £100. As was fitting for an Irishman, he was also presented with the Freedoms of Cork and Limerick. Perhaps less gratifying was a rather pompous letter from Lord Gambier, congratulating him and also reminding him:

*"..... we must not forget, Who it is that gives us the ability to contend with our enemies, and gives the victory; I therefore hope, if you have not already done so, that you will take the earliest opportunity when all your people return on board, to assemble them, and read the Thanksgiving After a Victory, and other suitable thanksgivings and Psalms:..."*<sup>675</sup>

Sadly Seymour's response to this letter is not recorded.



Within a few months, of course, Seymour and the Amethyst had taken their second enemy frigate. On this occasion though, a serious dispute arose. As noted previously, the frigate Arethusa, Captain Robert Mends, had arrived at the conclusion of the action. Mends immediately lodged his own claim to a portion of the prize money and stated that the Niemen had indeed only surrendered after he had fired several broadsides at her. However, the crew of the Amethyst had a standing arrangement with the frigate Emerald, commanded by Frederick Maitland. Mends was subsequently to claim that the Emerald had played no part in the chase and, therefore, could lay no claim to the prize. The dispute appears to have become bitter, with hostility between Mends and Seymour continuing after the war.

Finally, there is the question of the rewards for this second action. Seymour knew that the First Lieutenant, William Hill, would be promoted; the Second and Third Lieutenants had not actually been on board the Amethyst during her recent engagement - one having not yet joined and the other being in charge of a prize - therefore Seymour was keen to ensure that his second Lieutenant, Edward Crouch, was duly promoted. James Gledstones Jacob was appointed Second and , by mutual request, Richard Incedon, who was acting Lieutenant, was promoted and appointed as Third to the Amethyst. There were other crew matters to be dealt with: William Ruler an “*infirm old seaman*” requested and was given leave to go to his home in Scotland in an attempt to recover his health, having a form of consumption and diseased liver.<sup>676</sup>

Seymour wrote again to Hawker:

*“...All my friends in town are anxious for me to go up; but I decline, as the Admiralty have been very civil, and have done all that I have asked, except making Fair from November 10 last as I wished him 2nd<sup>677</sup>, but will make him....on his time being up, and passing.”<sup>678</sup>*

Seymour’s reference, once again, to the pressures placed upon him to show himself at Court reveal what might be an unexpected degree of modesty in a frigate Captain. On the following day Seymour learned that he was to be made a Baronet. He wrote to Hawker,

*“....So I am, you see, right in not going to town to beg - pressed as I have been by many to do so. To one in particular, I was compelled to reply, and truly said, that I went the last time “to do justice to an excellent set of officers and men, and now by letter, and promotion the Admiralty have done everything I could expect, I then did not ask anything, and have no idea of going to beg, and perhaps be disappointed”.*

*I have written my best thanks, and shall be off on leave to give personal thanks to my gracious Sovereign, and pay my fees (400L) I hear, by return of post on my leave coming down.”*<sup>679</sup>

Seymour's attitude could, of course, be attributed to personal pride - but what belies this is both his reference to his officers and men and the irony in his inclusion of the reference to the fees. Some months later, Seymour wrote again to Hawker on the subject:

*“.....my expenses are enormous, and I shall be a poor miserable rascal of a Baronet, nor be able to afford the woman I love most on earth a carriage which she ought to have, for she deserves every comfort I can afford her...and I do not want the cash to hoard it, for my boys must work their way.....I have no interest, and am treated respectfully and politely by all the folks...I am sure the middle line of life is the happiest, and moderate circumstances as to rank and state, though I love decency and comfort...”*<sup>680</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

This study of the career of Michael Seymour reveals that he was an officer subject to many of the factors that have been encountered in the general survey of frigate Captains - but here those factors can be seen in the context of a single officer's career. It is possible to see the role and importance of patronage or interest and how the value of this fluctuated according to political and administrative change at high level. Seymour personally suffered from three of the most - from a career point of view - negative factors that officers could experience; illness brought on by service in the West Indies, serious injury in action resulting in permanent disability, and unemployment. The study gives an insight into the operational activity of frigate command and, provides an unusual view of events - seen not from the macro point of view, but as experienced at 'sea level'. The best example here is the prelude to the action at Basque Roads and Seymour's encounter with Willaumez's Squadron. Bringing together operational details from the ship's logs, official and personal correspondence, provides a three-dimensional portrayal of frigate command. It is, for example, possible to draw together claims about Seymour's seamanship with examples of incidents which substantiate these claims and explanations for this ability. To complete this study fully a more detailed survey of the crews of the Amethyst and Niemen would have been ideal. Time and resources have not permitted this but it is hoped that related studies by others<sup>681</sup> may throw more light onto the crews of frigates. Perhaps most importantly, this study of

Seymour is also the study of a man who was not integral to the greatest naval events of the wars and whose fame was not going to reach the heights of other officers of high rank or flamboyance. To this extent Seymour was probably much more representative of the typical frigate commander who, being extremely capable and hard-working, also attracted fortune and following but whose fame would not long last the war itself.

## CONCLUSION

What emerges from this thesis is a somewhat different perception of the mechanisms operating within the Royal Navy than has previously been held. The importance of 'interest' cannot be denied, indeed it was a key principle of 18th and early-19th century society and permeated many aspects of social organisation. But what is also clearly the case is that while 'interest' could achieve promotion it did not command 'employment' to anything like the same degree. For all practical purposes the Navy needed men of particular ability in command of ships at sea, especially in frigates where the commanding officer was frequently alone and in a position of sole responsibility, dealing with a wide variety of challenges. The system whereby officers were promoted and employed may have been muddled, and there were certainly occasions when mistakes were made, but on the whole the system worked. The men who were given command of the 'cutting-edge' of naval warfare, i.e. the frigates, for the longest periods and in the most vital areas were, by and large, the most skilled and able officers on the List of Post Captains.

As the war progressed, this group of officers became more and more aware of their role and significance - that is, they became an elite upon whom the Admiralty could draw for special tasks, command of its squadrons and the ships of the line. There is clear evidence that officers were increasingly aware of this and that the frigate service engendered a form of camaraderie that acted as a powerful motivator from fo'c'sle to quarterdeck. Shortly after the war Basil Hall noted, with regard to the Navy's fighting efficiency, that

*"Officers who have served much afloat in old times, tell us that there was a great want of efficiency in that department of naval discipline which relates to the management of the great guns. Many ships, it is true, even during the early period of the last war, were brought into admirable fighting order by dint of the spontaneous exertions of their commanders. But in these instances, the result was generally due to the combined talents, experience, and industry of those particular officers, and owed hardly any thing to the merits of the general system in force throughout the fleet".<sup>682</sup>*

By the later part of the Napoleonic War such a professional commitment to fighting the war was becoming more widespread or, one might say, may have been more systematic. But such professionalism was forged during the course of twenty three almost continual years of naval warfare. Once the war was over the impetus declined and in the popular mind what remained was the memory of the great events.

Basil Hall had noted that naval victory had been dependent upon the “*combined talents, experience, and industry of ..... particular officers*”. Several chapters later in his *Fragments of Voyages and Travels*, he cited Philip Broke and Samuel John Pechell as examples of these particular officers. Both were frigate commanders of considerable ability. In the field of naval history, Broke is famous; Pechell probably unknown. Pechell was several years junior, but served for a period in Broke’s squadron off the coast of North America and followed closely his ideas on gunnery. Broke is famous because of the stunning victory of the Shannon over the American frigate Chesapeake. Pechell commanded frigates for over five years and, although he shared in the capture of a French frigate, never fought a single-ship action. Both actually made a significant contribution towards the professionalism of the Navy, particularly in its gunnery. Furthermore, both were involved in discussions with other officers about fighting tactics which suggests a more serious perhaps even ‘scientific’ approach to naval strategy. But, to emphasise the point, it is Broke who is remembered because of the fight with the Chesapeake, and it is because of this that Broke’s name features in works on naval history of this period.

One of the main aims of this thesis has been to explore a method of identifying officers in such a way as to avoid the predominance of the frigate action as a factor in the evaluation of officers’ careers. In doing so it is, of course, impossible to ignore the importance of success in combat, which many Captains regarded as the ultimate test of their skills and character; the subject matter is, ultimately, that of a navy at war. Even so, Hall confirms that the ability to fight a frigate, though ultimately the most important, was not the only factor in achieving successful command. The less spectacular factors, for example, successful cruising, combined operations, prize-taking etc., were all regarded as important by the naval officers of the period. In retrospect, as stated earlier, other more humanitarian factors were recognised and employed in changing methods of command/leadership.

The system that brought young men into the navy as prospective officers was certainly haphazard. To a large degree, in spite of the Lieutenants Examination, their subsequent promotion was also subject to the vagaries of politics and ‘interest’. Employment, however, was much more closely controlled. As vague and fluid as the machinery of the Admiralty may at times have seemed, it was firm and detectable when it came to putting men of ability where they were most needed, in command at sea. This was not, of course, universally popular, especially to the 18th century mentality - witness the criticism levelled against St. Vincent during his tenure as

First Lord of the Admiralty - but it was essential to the successful prosecution of the war. Officers of often even outrageous behaviour would still be employed provided they demonstrated outstanding ability, for example Nelson, Sidney Smith and Cochrane. That ability was acquired and sharpened in frigate command because the frigates were, simply, the most active and challenging ships in which to serve.

However, the opportunity to command a frigate, let alone command a frigate for long enough to accrue a fortune, was the prerogative of a fortunate and talented few. It was noted early on in this thesis that nearly 30% of Post Captains were never given a sea command after posting and a further 19%, although given some command, were never given a frigate. Added to this the great majority of frigate Captains maintained that position for only a few years. Some, like Capt. Henry Digby, amassed a great deal of Prize Money during the brief period in which they commanded frigates. Digby was able to restore or rebuild the family seat and live in comfort for the rest of his life.

Others were equally, or perhaps much more able but found that circumstances worked against them. Sometimes there was a personal cost to them, not just in terms of wounds or longer term breakdown in health. Perhaps the cost is most fittingly illustrated by one of the most valuable frigate commanders of the period, Sir William Hoste. Hoste served in command of frigates for over seven years and carried out a highly successful campaign against enemy shipping in the Adriatic for most of the Napoleonic War. He was highly regarded (most noticeably by Nelson) and fought a spectacular frigate squadron engagement at Lissa in March, 1811. In spite of his lengthy service and spectacular victory, Hoste received little official or formal recognition and continued as the commander of a frigate squadron until virtually the end of the war. He was awarded a KCB at the end of the war, but so too were a great many other Captains and Hoste was left feeling bitterly betrayed. Hoste had taken an enormous number of prizes during his frigate service in the Adriatic, but many of these had had to be burnt simply because it was impractical to dispatch a prize crew from such a detached station.

Before the victory at Lissa, he wrote to his father in a rather prophetic mood:

*"..I think I could be happy at old Godwick<sup>683</sup> with a little [money]; and believe me, were duty put aside, no power on earth should make me go to sea again, for my health will not stand it.....If, therefore, a peace should take place, or any thing prevents my serving again, what*

*chance of comfort or happiness have I with the half-pay of a Captain in the navy? The generosity of our Government to those who are dragging on a solitary existence, and are fighting the battles of their country, has left no recompense for old age or disease; and the prime of life, spent in the service, is not well repaid by poverty and neglect".* <sup>684</sup>.

Tragically, the Prize Money that Hoste did acquire was squandered by his father and Hoste's dreams of retiring to the peace of Godwick Hall were destroyed when the family were quietly removed from their home to pay for outstanding debts. After the war Hoste's health gradually declined and in 1828 he eventually died of tuberculosis, his lungs having suffered frequently during the last years of the war. For hundred of others there was probably penury and obscurity.

Ultimately a number of factors coincided to bring about Britain's victory in the naval war against Napoleon. It would be ridiculous to overlook economic factors like industrialisation and in a similar vein, it would be wrong to overlook the contribution made by the many thousands of ordinary seamen. Within the world-wide operations that constituted the naval war the frigate fulfilled the role of the work-horse of British sea power and the contribution of their commanders was crucial. It is hoped that this thesis has identified both some of those commanders and the nature of their contribution.

**APPENDICES,  
NOTES  
AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1.1. Frigates Available To The Royal Navy For Each Year, By Number And Weight Of Guns.

No. of Guns	44	40 x 24	40 x 18	38 large	38 small	36 x 18	36 x 12	32 x 18	32 x 12	28	24
1793	0	0	0	1	7	9	4	0	38	23	6
1794	0	0	0	2	9	8	10	1	39	24	5
1795	3	1	0	4	16	9	9	7	41	23	4
1796	3	1	0	5	15	15	11	7	40	23	4
1797	3	1	0	7	17	16	15	7	44	23	6
1798	3	2	2	10	19	17	16	7	42	22	6
1799	3	2	2	10	16	16	18	6	40	21	5
1800	4	3	2	11	15	19	14	6	34	11	5
1801	4	3	2	13	15	24	14	5	30	11	6
1802	5	3	2	15	15	25	17	9	27	9	6
1803	5	2	2	14	13	25	10	9	20	8	4
1804	5	2	2	15	13	25	11	9	22	8	4
1805	4	1	4	15	13	24	14	11	26	10	5
1806	4	1	3	19	17	24	14	11	31	9	6
1807	4	1	3	31	17	24	15	10	31	9	6
1808	2	1	3	37	14	29	14	10	29	9	5
1809	2	1	3	38	14	31	14	11	28	9	4
1810	2	1	3	41	13	40	11	9	24	8	4
1811	2	1	3	43	10	43	7	9	19	5	3
1812	2	1	3	45	9	42	5	8	20	3	3
1813	2	2	3	43	6	41	3	7	14	1	4
1814	1	5	3	53	4	51	3	3	9	0	4
1815	1	6	3	55	4	49	1	1	4	0	3

(Source: Abstracts of William James' *A Naval History of Great Britain*).

**Appendix 1.2. Frigates Built For The Royal Navy In Year Order,  
Dockyard And Length Of Active Life.**

Ship	Year Built	Longevity (in years)	Shipyard
Tartar	1756	41	Rotherhithe
Lizard	1757	38	Rotherhithe
Southampton	1757	55	Rotherhithe
Aeolus	1758	38	Deptford
Alarm	1758	54	Harwich
Thames	1758	42	Bucklers Hard
Venus	1758	59	Liverpool
Maidstone	1758	0	Rochester
Niger	1759	51	Sheerness
Lowestoffe	1761	40	Deptford
Boston	1762	49	Rotherhithe
Pearl	1762	61	Chatham
Winchelsea	1764	41	Sheerness
Carysfort	1766	47	Sheerness
Amazon	1773	21	Rotherhithe
Ambuscade	1773	37	Deptford
Triton	1773	23	Bucklers Hard
Boreas	1774	23	Hull
Enterprise	1774	25	Deptford
Aurora	1777	37	Blackwall
Proserpine	1777	22	Harwich
Actaeon	1778	17	Rotherhithe
Medea	1778	17	Bristol
Pomona	1778	33	Northam
Resource	1778	26	Rotherhithe
Brilliant	1779	32	Bucklers Hard
Cleopatra	1779	35	Bristol
Cyclops	1779	21	Limehouse
Mercury	1779	35	Thames
Pegasus	1779	37	Deptford
Sibyl	1779	19	Bucklers Hard
Vestal	1779	21	Limehouse
Active	1780	16	Northam
Amphion	1780	16	Chatham
Assurance	1780	16	Rotherhithe
Daedalus	1780	23	Liverpool
Flora	1780	29	Deptford
Fox	1780	36	Bursledon
Iphigenia	1780	21	Mistleythorn
Juno	1780	31	Limehouse
Minerva	1780	18	Woolwich
Nemesis	1780	34	Liverpool
Orpheus	1780	27	Deptford
Andromache	1781	30	Deptford
Arethusa	1781	33	Bristol
Argo	1781	35	Howden Dock
Astraea	1781	27	E. Cowes
Ceres	1781	23	Liverpool
Diomede	1781	14	Bristol

Dolphin	1781	19	Chatham
Latona	1781	32	Limehouse
Perseverance	1781	42	Rotherhithe
Quebec	1781	35	Bursledon
Success	1781	33	Liverpool
Hermione	1782	23	bristol
Phaeton	1782	46	Liverpool
Resistance	1782	16	Deptford
Serapis	1782	13	Bristol
Syren	1782	23	Mistleythorn
Thetis	1782	12	Rotherhithe
Unicorn/THALIA	1782	32	Bursledon
Charon	1783	12	Bristol
Druid	1783	15	Bristol
Gladiator	1783	0	Bucklers Hard
Greyhound	1783	25	Mistleythorn
Heroine	1783	20	Bucklers Hard
Inconstant	1783	34	Deptford
Iris	1783	20	Deptford
Leda	1783	13	Rotherhithe
Penelope	1783	14	Liverpool
Phoenix	1783	33	Bursledon
Rose	1783	11	Sandgate
Thisbe	1783	32	Dover
Adventure	1784	5	Perry's, Blackwall.
Andromeda	1784	24	Liverpool
Crescent	1784	24	Bursledon
Dido	1784	20	Sandgate
Expedition	1784	14	Rotherhithe
Experiment	1784	11	East Cowes
Hussar	1784	12	Sandgate
Mermaid	1784	31	Woolwich
Castor	1785	34	Harwich
Chichester	1785	14	Itchenor
Circe	1785	18	Dover
Gorgon	1785	8	Blackwall
Hind	1785	26	Sandgate
Lapwing	1785	28	Dover
Melampus	1785	30	Bristol
Meleager	1785	16	Frindsbury
Romulus	1785	14	Deptford
Solebay	1785	24	Deptford
Terpsichore	1785	33	Mistleythorn
Woolwich	1785	9	Bursledon
Aquilon	1786	29	Thames
Blanche	1786	13	Burlesdon
Dover	1786	20	Bursledon
Severn	1786	18	Bristol
Alligator	1787	27	Sandgate
Blonde	1787	11	Burlesdon
Sheerness	1787	8	Bucklers Hard
Beaulieu	1790	16	Bucklers Hard
Pallas	1793	5	Woolwich
Bombay	1793*	20	Bombay
Alcmene	1794	15	Harwich

Apollo	1794	5	Blackwall
Artois	1794	3	Rotherhithe
Cerberus	1794	20	Bucklers Hard
Diamond	1794	18	Deptford
Diana	1794	21	Rotherhithe
Jason	1794	4	Deptford
Lively	1794	4	Northam
Seahorse	1794	25	Rotherhithe
Stag	1794	6	Chatham
Unicorn	1794	21	Chatham
Galatea	1794	0	Bursledon
Anson	1794?	0	Plymouth
Amazon	1795	2	Rotherhithe
Caroline	1795	20	Rotherhithe
Doris	1795	10	Gravesend
Dryad	1795	37	Deptford
Emerald	1795	41	Northfleet
Indefatigable	1795	21	Bucklers Hard
Maidstone	1795	0	Deptford
Phoebe	1795	31	Deptford
Magnanime	1795?	0	Deptford
Clyde	1796	18	Chatham
Glenmore	1796	0	Woolwich
Shannon	1796	6	Deptford
Tamar	1796	14	Chatham
Trent	1796	7	Woolwich
Triton	1796	4	Deptford
Acasta	1797	24	Rotherhithe
Boadicea	1797	57	Bucklers Hard
Cambrian	1797	31	Bursledon
Endymion	1797	0	Rotherhithe
Ethalion	1797	2	Harwich
Galatea	1797	12	Bursledon
Hydra	1797	15	Gravesend
Naiad	1797	50	Limehouse
Sirius	1797	13	Deptford
Amphion	1798	22	Betts, Mistlethorn
Penelope	1798	15	Bursledon
Active	1799	27	Chatham DY
Amazon	1799	18	Woolwich
Amethyst	1799	12	Deptford
Hussar	1799	5	Woolwich
Apollo	1799	0	Deptford
Blanche	1800	5	Deptford
Fortunee	1800	18	Blackwall
Jason	1800	1	Bursledon
Leda	1800	8	Chatham
Aigle	1801	52	Adams, Bucklers
Medusa	1801	15	Northfleet
Narcissus	1801	22	Deptford
Resistance	1801	2	Bursledon
Tartar	1801	10	Frindsbury
Aeolus	1801	0	Deptford
Ethalion	1802	21	Woolwich
Euryalus	1803	23	Bucklers Hard

Shannon	1803	1	Frindsbury
Tribune	1803	36	Bursledon
Circe	1804	10	Plymouth
Duncan	1804	7	Bombay
Hebe	1804	9	Deptford
Jason	1804	10	Woolwich
Lively	1804	6	Woolwich
Mediator	1804	5	Purchased E.I.Co
Pallas	1804	6	Plymouth
Hyaena	1804?	10	Purchased
Weymouth	1804?	7	Purchased
Apollo	1805	41	Bursledon
Minerva	1805	10	Deptford
Pomone	1805	6	Frindsbury
Resistance	1805	37	Rochester
Sir Francis Drake	1805	20	purchased
Thames	1805	11	Chatham
Alexandria	1806	12	Portsmouth DY
Lavinia	1806	30	Milford
Meleager	1806	2	Chatham
Shannon	1806	26	Frindsbury
Spartan	1806	16	Rochester
Doris	1807	22	Purchased
Horatio	1807	0	Bursledon
Hussar	1807	26	Bucklers Hard
Hyperion	1807	26	Hull
Leonidas	1807	65	Frindsbury
Proserpine	1807	2	Paul nr Hull
Statira	1807	8	Northam
Undaunted	1807	49	Woolwich
Bucephalus	1808	6	Newcastle
Cornelia	1808	6	South Shields
Iphigenia	1808	25	Chatham
Owen Glendower	1808	34	Paul near Hull
Semiramis	1808	19	Deptford
Belvidera	1809	37	Deptford
Curacoa	1809	22	Itchenor
Leda	1809	8	Woolwich
Malacca	1809	7	Penang
Manilla	1809	3	Woolwich
Nereus	1809	8	South Shields
Orpheus	1809	10	Deptford
Saldanha	1809	2	South Shields
Theban	1809	8	Warsash
Astraea	1810	13	Northam
Crescent	1810	30	Deptford
Galatea	1810	26	Deptford
Hotspur	1810	11	Warsash
Macedonian	1810	2	Woolwich
Menelaus	1810	22	Plymouth
Pyramus	1810	22	Portsmouth
Nisus	1810	0	Plymouth
Bacchante	1811	26	Deptford
Havannah	1811	49	Liverpool
Orlando	1811	8	Chatham

Maidstone	1811	0	Deptford
Barrosa	1812	11	Deptford
Briton	1812	48	Chatham
Lacedaemonian	1812	10	Portsmouth
Nymphe	1812	24	Warsash
Stag	1812	9	Deptford
Surprise	1812	10	Milford
Tenedos	1812	31	Chatham
Magicienne	1812	0	Fishbourne
Araxes	1813	4	Northfleet
Creole	1813	20	Plymouth
Cydnus	1813	3	Blackwall
Dartmouth	1813	18	Dartmouth
Eridanus	1813	5	Rochester
Euphrates	1813	5	Upnor
Eurotas	1813	4	Blackwall
Granicus	1813	4	Limehouse
Hebrus	1813	4	Limehouse
Ister (ex-BLONDE)	1813	6	Blackwall
Laurel	1813	51	Warsash
Lively	1813	18	Chatham
Meander	1813	4	Northfleet
Niger	1813	7	Blackwall
Orontes	1813	4	Frindsbury
Pactolus	1813	5	Deptford
Scamander	1813	6	Frindsbury
Sirius	1813	47	Bursledon
Tagus	1813	9	Fishbourne
Tanais	1813	6	Rochester
Tiber	1813	7	Fishbourne
Tigris	1813	5	Frindsbury
Forth	1813	6	Wigram, Blackwall
Severn	1813	12	Wigram, Blackwall
Liffey	1813	14	Wigram, Blackwall
Alpheus	1814	3	Wallis, Thames.
Brilliant	1814	94	Deptford
Confiance	1814	0	Lake Champlain
Forte	1814	30	Woolwich
Tartar	1814	16	Deptford
Glasgow	1814	15	Wigram, Blackwall
Liverpool	1814	8	Wigram, Blackwall
Sir Edward Hughes	?	1	Purchased E.I.Co

(Source: Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy, Vol 1*).

**Appendix 1.3. Alphabetical List Of Frigates Available To The Royal Navy Between 1793-1815, Showing Number Of Guns, Weight Of Armament, Year Built And, Where Appropriate, Year Captured From The Enemy.**

SHIP	GUNS	WEIGHT	WHENBUILT	CAPTD
Acasta	40	18-pdr	1797	
Actaeon	44		1778	
Active	32	12-pdr	1780	
Active	38	18-pdr	1799	
Adventure	44		1784	
Aeolus	32	12-pdr	1758	
Africaine	38	18-pdr		1801
Aigle	36	18-pdr		1782
Aigle	36	18-pdr	1801	
Aimable	36	12-pdr		1782
Alarm	32	12-pdr	1758	
Alceste	32	12-pdr		1793
Alceste	38	18-pdr		1806
Alcmene	32	18-pdr	1794	
Alexandria	38			1801
Alexandria	32	12-pdr	1806	
Alligator	28	9-pdr	1787	
Alpheus	36	18-pdr	1814	
Amaranthe	28	9-pdr		1799
Amazon	32	12-pdr	1773	
Amazon	36	18-pdr	1795	
Amazon	38	18-pdr	1799	
Ambuscade	32	12-pdr	1773	
Ambuscade	36	12-pdr		1798
Ambuscade	38			1811
Amelia	38	18-pdr		1796
Amethyst	36	18-pdr		1793
Amethyst	36	18-pdr	1799	
Amphion	32	12-pdr	1780	
Amphion	32	18-pdr	1798	
Amphitrite	40	24-pdr		1799
Amfitrite	38	18-pdr		1804
Amsterdam	32	12-pdr		1804
Andromache	32	12-pdr	1781	
Andromeda	32	12-pdr	1784	
Apollo	38	18-pdr	1794	
Apollo	38	18-pdr	1805	
Aquilon	32	12-pdr	1786	
Araxes	36	18-pdr	1813	
Arethusa	38	18-pdr	1781	
Arethuse	38	18-pdr		1793
Argo	44		1781	
Armide	38	18-pdr		1806
Artois	38	18-pdr	1794	

Assurance	44		1780	
Astraea	32	12-pdr	1781	
Astraea	36	18-pdr	1810	
Astree	38	18-pdr		1810
Aurora	28	9-pdr	1777	
Aurore	32			1793
Aurora	38	18-pdr		1814
Bacchante	38	18-pdr	1811	
Barbadoes	28	12-pdr		1803
Barrosa	36	18-pdr	1812	
Beaulieu	40	18-pdr	1790	
Belle Poule	36	12-pdr		1780
Belle Poule	38	18-pdr		1806
Bellona	28			1806
Belvidera	36	18-pdr	1809	
Blanche	32	12-pdr	1786	
Blanche	36	18-pdr	1800	
Blonde	32	12-pdr	1787	
Blonde	28			1793
Boadicea	38	18-pdr	1797	
Bombay	38	18-pdr	1793*	
Boreas	28	9-pdr	1774	
Boston	32	12-pdr	1762	
Bourbonnaise	38			1809
Braave	38	12-pdr		1796
Brilliant	28	9-pdr	1779	
Brilliant	36	18-pdr	1814	
Briton	38	18-pdr	1812	
Brune	38	18-pdr		1808
Bucephalus	32	18-pdr	1808	
Cambrian	40	24-pdr	1797	
Carmen	36	12-pdr		1800
Caroline	36	18-pdr	1795	
Carrere	38	18-pdr		1801
Carysfort	28	9-pdr	1766	
Castor	32	12-pdr	1785	
Celebes	36			1806
Cerberus	32	18-pdr	1794	
Ceres	32	12-pdr	1781	
Charon	44		1783	
Chesapeake	38	18-pdr		1813
Chichester	44		1785	
La Chieftain	36	12-pdr		1801
Circe	28	9-pdr	1785	
Circe	32	12-pdr	1804	
Clara	38	12-pdr		1804
Cleopatra	32	12-pdr	1779	
Clorinde	38	18-pdr		1803
Clyde	38	18-pdr	1796	
Concorde	32	12-pdr		1783
Confiance	36	24-pdr	1814	
Convert	36			1793
Coquille	36			1798
Cornelia	32	18-pdr	1808	
Courageux	32			1799



Creole	38			1803
Creole	36	18-pdr	1813	
Crescent	36	18-pdr	1784	
Crescent	38	18-pdr	1810	
Cuba	32	18-pdr		1806
Curacoa	36	18-pdr	1809	
Cyclops	28	9-pdr	1779	
Cydnus	38	24-pdr	1813	
Daedalus	32	12-pdr	1780	
Daedalus	38	24-pdr		1811
Danae	32	9-pdr		1779
Dartmouth	36	18-pdr	1813	
Decade	36	12-pdr		1798
Dedaigneuse	32	12-pdr		1801
Desiree	36	18-pdr		1800
Diamond	38	18-pdr	1794	
Diana	38	18-pdr	1794	
Dido	28	9-pdr	1784	
Didon	38	18-pdr		1805
Diomede	44		1781	
Dolphin	44		1781	
Doris	36	18-pdr	1795	
Doris	36	18-pdr	1807	
Dover	44		1786	
Druid	32	12-pdr	1783	
Dryad	36	18-pdr	1795	
Duncan	38		1804	
Dunira (Immortalite)	38			1814
L'Egyptienne	44	24-pdr		1801
Emerald	36	18-pdr	1795	
Endymion	44	24-pdr	1797	
Engageante	38			1794
Enterprise	28		1774	
Eridanus	36	18-pdr	1813	
Espion	32	12-pdr		1794
Ethalion	38	18-pdr	1797	
Ethalion	36	18-pdr	1802	
Euphrates	36	18-pdr	1813	
Eurotas	38	24-pdr	1813	
Eurus	32	12-pdr		1796
Euryalus	36	18-pdr	1803	
Expedition	44		1784	
Experiment	44		1784	
Fama	36			1804
Felicite	36			1809
Fisgard	38	18-pdr		1797
Flora	36	18-pdr	1780	
Florentina	36	12-pdr		1800
Forte	50	24pdr		1799
Forte	38	18-pdr	1814	
Fortunee	36	18-pdr	1800	
Fox	32	12-pdr	1780	
Franchise	36	12-pdr		1803
Frederickstein	32	12-pdr		1807
Frederickswaern	36			1807

Freya	38	18-pdr		1807
Furieuse	38	18-pdr		1809
Galatea	32		1797	
Galatea	36	18-pdr	1810	
Garland (see Sibyl)				
Gentile	40			1795
Gladiator	44		1783	
Glenmore	36		1796	
Gloire	40			1795
Gloire	36	18-pdr		1809
Gorgon	44		1785	
Grana	28			1781
Granicus	36	18-pdr	1813	
Greyhound	32	12-pdr	1783	
Guelderland	36	18-pdr		1808
Guerriere	38	18-pdr		1806
Halstarr	32			1807
Hamadryad	36	12-pdr		1797
Hamadryad	36	18-pdr		1804
Harfruen	36			1807
Havannah	36	18-pdr	1811	
Hebe	36			1782
Hebe	32	12-pdr	1804	
Hebrus	36	18-pdr	1813	
Heldin	28	12-pdr		1799
Hermione	32	12-pdr	1782	
Heroine	32	12-pdr	1783	
Hind	28	9-pdr	1785	
Horatio	38	18-pdr	1807	
Hotspur	36	18-pdr	1810	
Hussar	28	9-pdr	1784	
Hussar	38	18-pdr	1799	
Hussar	38	18-pdr	1807	
Hyaena	28		1804?	
Hydra	38	18-pdr	1797	
Hyperion	32	18-pdr	1807	
Immortalite	36	18-pdr		1798
Immortalite	38			1806
Imperieuse	38	18-pdr		1793
Inconstant	36	18-pdr	1783	
Indefatigable	28	?	1795	
Iphigenia	32	12-pdr	1780	
Ipgigenia	38	18-pdr		1804
Iphigenia	36	18-pdr	1808	
Iris	32	12-pdr	1783	
Iris	44	18-pdr		1807
Ister (ex-BLONDE)	36	18-pdr	1813	
Janus	32	12-pdr		1796
Jason	38	18-pdr	1794	
Jason	36	18-pdr	1800	
Jason	32	12-pdr	1804	
Java	32			1806
Java	38	18-pdr		1811
Jewel	38	18-pdr		1809
Juno	32	12-pdr	1780	

Junon	36			1809
Junon	38	18-pdr		1810
Lacedaemonian	38	18-pdr	1812	
Lapwing	28	9-pdr	1785	
Latona	38	18-pdr	1781	
Laurel	36	18-pdr		1809
Laurel	38	18-pdr	1813	
Lavinia	48	18-pdr	1806	
Leda	36	18-pdr	1783	
Leda	38	18-pdr	1800	
Leda	36	18-pdr	1809	
Leonidas	36	18-pdr	1807	
Lively	32	18-pdr	1794	
Lively	38	18-pdr	1804	
Lively	38	18-pdr	1813	
Lizard	28	9-pdr	1757	
La Loire	40	18-pdr		1798
Lowestoffe	32	12-pdr	1761	
Lutine	36	12-pdr		1793
Macedonian	38	18-pdr	1810	
Madagascar	38	18-pdr		1811
Meander	38	18-pdr	1813	
Magicienne	36	12-pdr		1781
Mahonesa	36	12-pdr		1796
Maidstone	32	12-pdr	1795	
Malacca	36	18-pdr	1809	
Manilla	36	18-pdr	1809	
Matilda	28			1794
Medea	28	9-pdr	1778	
Medee	36			1800
Mediator	44		1804	
Medusa	32	18-pdr	1801	
Melampus	36	18-pdr	1785	
Meleager	32	12-pdr	1785	
Meleager	36	18-pdr	1806	
Melpomene	38	18-pdr		1794
Menelaus	38	18-pdr	1810	
Mercury	28	9-pdr	1779	
Mermaid	32	12-pdr	1784	
Mignonne	32			1794
Milan	38	18-pdr		1805
Minerva	38	18-pdr	1780	
Minerve	38	18-pdr		1795
Minerva	32	12-pdr	1805	
Modeste	36	18-pdr		1793
Modeste	38			1814
Naiad	38	18-pdr	1797	
Nyaden (aka	36	18-pdr		1807
Narcissus	32	18-pdr	1801	
Nemesis	28	9-pdr	1780	
Nereide	36	12-pdr		1797
Nereide	38			1810
Nereus	32	18-pdr	1809	
Niemen	38	18-pdr		1809
Niger	32	12-pdr	1759	

Niger	38		1813	
Niobe	38	18-pdr		1800
Nymphe	36	12-pdr		1780
Nymphen	36	18-pdr		1807
Nymphe	38	18-pdr	1812	
Oiseau	36	12-pdr		1793
Orlando	36	18-pdr	1811	
Orontes	36	18-pdr	1813	
Orpheus	32	12-pdr	1780	
Orpheus	36	18-pdr	1809	
Owen Glendower	36	18-pdr	1808	
Pactolus	38	18-pdr	1813	
Pallas	32	18-pdr	1793	
Pallas	32	12-pdr	1804	
Palma	38	18-pdr		1814
Pandour	44			1799
Pearl	32	12-pdr	1762	
Perlen	38	18-pdr		1807
Pegasus	28	9-pdr	1779	
Penelope	32	12-pdr	1783	
Penelope	36	18-pdr	1798	
Perseverance	36	18-pdr	1781	
Phaeton	38	18-pdr	1782	
Phoebe	36	18-pdr	1795	
Phoenix	36	18-pdr	1783	
Piemontaise	38	18-pdr		1808
Pique	36	12-pdr		1795
Pique	36	18-pdr		1800
Pomona	28	9-pdr	1778	
Pomone	44	24-pdr		1794
Pomone	38	18-pdr	1805	
Poulette	28			1793
President	38	18-pdr		1806
Prevoyante	36	12-pdr		1795
Princess	28			1795
Princess Charlotte	38	18-pdr		1799
Proselyte	32	12-pdr		1796
Proserpine	28	9-pdr	1777	
Proserpine	36			1798
Proserpine	32	18-pdr	1807	
Prudente	36	12-pdr		1779
Psyche	32	12-pdr		1805
Pyramus	36	18-pdr	1810	
Quebec	32	12-pdr	1781	
Rainbow	28	32-pdr		1809
Renommee	38	12-pdr		1796
Resistance	44		1782	
Resistance	36	18-pdr	1801	
Resistance	38	18-pdr	1805	
Resolue	36			1798
Resource	28	9-pdr	1778	
Reunion	36	12-pdr		1793
Revolutionaire	38	18-pdr		1794
Rhin	38	18-pdr		1806
Romulus	36	18-pdr	1785	

Rose	28	9-pdr	1783	
Rota	38	18-pdr		1807
Sagesse	28			1803
Santa Dorotea	34	12-pdr		1798
St Fiorenzo	36	18-pdr		1794
Santa Gertruyda	36			1804
Santa Margarita	38	12-pdr		1779
Santa Teresa	30	12-pdr		1799
Saldanha	40	18-pdr		1796
Saldanha	36	18-pdr	1809	
Scamander	36	18-pdr	1813	
Seahorse	38	18-pdr	1794	
Seine	38	18-pdr		1798
Seine	38	18-pdr		1814
Semiramis	36	18-pdr	1808	
Sensible	36	12-pdr		1798
Serapis	44		1782	
Severn	44		1786	
Shannon	32	12-pdr	1796	
Shannon	36	18-pdr	1803	
Shannon	38	18-pdr	1806	
Sheerness	44		1787	
Sibyl	28	9-pdr	1779	
Sybille	44	18-pdr		1794
Sir Edward Hughes	38		?	
Syren	32	12-pdr	1782	
Sir Francis Drake	38		1805	
Sirius	36	18-pdr	1797	
Sirius	38		1813	
Solebay	32	12-pdr	1785	
Southampton	32	12-pdr	1757	
Spartan	38	18-pdr	1806	
Stag	32	18-pdr	1794	
Stag	36	18-pdr	1812	
Statira	38	18-pdr	1807	
Success	32	12-pdr	1781	
Surprise	38	18-pdr	1812	
Surveillante	36	24pdr		1803
Tagus	36	18-pdr	1813	
Tamar	38	18-pdr	1796	
Tanais	38	18-pdr	1813	
Tartar	28	9-pdr	1756	
Tartar	32	18-pdr	1801	
Tartar	36	18-pdr	1814	
Tenedos	38	18-pdr	1812	
Terpsichore	32	12-pdr	1785	
Thalia (see Unicorn)				
Thames	32	12-pdr	1758	
Thames	32	12-pdr	1805	
Theban	36	18-pdr	1809	
Thetis	38	18-pdr	1782	
Thisbe	28	9-pdr	1783	
Thulen	36			1796
Tiber	38	18-pdr	1813	
Tigris	36	18-pdr	1813	

Topaze	38	12-pdr		1793
Topaze	38	18-pdr		1814
Tourterelle	28	9-pdr		1795
Trave	38			1813
Trent	36	18-pdr	1796	
Tribune	34	12-pdr		1796
Tribune	36	18-pdr	1803	
Triton	28	9-pdr	1773	
Trton	32	12-pdr	1796	
Undaunted	38	18-pdr	1807	
Unicorn/THALIA	36	18-pdr	1782	
Unicorn	32	18-pdr	1794	
Unite	32	12-pdr		1796
Uranie	40	18-pdr		1797
Venus	32	12-pdr	1758	
Venus	36	18-pdr		1807
Vestal	28	9-pdr	1779	
Vindictive	28	9-pdr		1796
Virginie	38	18-pdr		1796
Virtue/Vertu	40			1803
Vlieter	40			1799
Volontaire	38	18-pdr		1806
Weser	44			1813
Weymouth	36		1804?	
Wilhelmina	32	12-pdr		1798
Winchelsea	32	12-pdr	1764	
Woolwich	44		1785	
Anson	44		1794?	
Magnanime	44		1795?	
Nisus	38	18-pdr	1810	
Apollo	36	18-pdr	1799	
Maidstone	36	18-pdr	1811	
Magicienne	36	18-pdr	1812	
Galatea	32	18-pdr	1794	
Aeolus	32	18-pdr	1801	
Maidstone	28	9-pdr	1758	
Forth	44	24-pdr	1813	
Severn	44	24-pdr	1813	
Liffey	44	24-pdr	1813	
Glasgow	44	24-pdr	1814	
Liverpool	44	24-pdr	1814	
Leocadia	36	12-pdr		1781
Chiffonne	36	12-pdr		1801
Prompte	28	9-pdr		1793
Undaunted	28	9-pdr		1794

(Source: Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy, Vol 1*).

## Appendix 1.4. List Of Frigates Lost By The Royal Navy Between 1793-1815, By Year.

Key: -bu = broken up, wrkd = wrecked.

SHIP	HOWEND	END
Thames	Capt'd	1793
Castor	Capt'd	1794
Convert	wrkd	1794
Rose	wrkd	1794
Amethyst	wrkd	1795
Nemesis	Capt'd	1795
Diomedé	wrkd	1795
Active	wrkd	1796
Amphion	Blown up.	1796
Arethuse/Undaunted	wrkd	1796
Hussar	wrkd	1796
Leda	foundered	1796
Poulette	burnt	1796
Reunion	wrkd	1796
Amazon	wrkd	1797
Artois	wrkd	1797
Hermione	Capt'd	1797
Hamadryad	wrkd	1797
Mignonne	burnt	1797
Tartar	wrkd	1797
Tribune	wrkd	1797
Aigle	wrkd	1798
Ambuscade	Capt'd	1798
Coquille	Burnt	1798
Jason	wrkd	1798
Lively	wrkd	1798
Pallas	wrkd	1798
Pique	wrkd	1798
Resistance	blown up	1798
Sibyl/Garland	wrkd	1798
Nassau (troopship)	wrkd	1799
Apollo	wrkd	1799
Blanche	wrkd	1799
Espion	Wrkd	1799
Ethalion	wrkd	1799
Lutine	wrkd	1799
Proserpine	Aband	1799
Stag	wrkd	1800
Forte	wrkd	1801
Success	Capt'd	1801
Ambuscade	Fndrd	1801
Jason	wrkd	1801
Lowestoffe	wrkd	1801
Meleager	wrkd	1801
Proselyte	wrkd.	1801
Sensible	wrkd	1802
Circe	wrkd	1803
Resistance	wrkd	1803

Seine	wrkd	1803
Shannon	burnt	1803
Creole	Foundere	1804
Hussar	wrkd	1804
Severn	Aband	1804
Apollo	Wrkd	1804
Cleopatra	Capt'd	1805
Blanche	burnt	1805
Doris	wrkd	1805
Sheerness	wrkd	1805
Blanche	wrkd	1807
Java	foundered	1807
Orpheus	wrkd	1807
Anson	wrkd	1807
Astraea	wrkd.	1808
Crescent	wrkd	1808
Greyhound	wrkd	1808
Leda	wrkd	1808
Meleager	wrkd	1808
Alcmene	wrkd	1809
Flora	Aband	1808
Junon	recapture	1809
Alcmene	wrkd	1809
Proserpine	capt	1809
Solebay	wrkd	1809
Lively	Aband	1810
Magicienne	Aband	1810
Nymphe	wrkd	1810
Nereide	Capt'd	1810
Iphigenia	Capt'd	1810
Africaine	Capt'd	1810
Ceylon	Capt'd	1810
Pallas	wrkd	1810
Sirius	Aband	1810
Amethyst	wrkd	1811
Dover	wrkd	1811
Pomone	wrkd	1811
Saldanha	wrkd	1811
Tartar	Aband	1811
Barbadoes	Aband	1812
Guerriere	Captured	1812
Java	captured	1812
Laurel	wrkd	1812
Macedonian	captured	1812
Manilla	wrkd	1812
Southampton	wrkd	1812
Daedalus	Aband	1813
Confiance	Captured	1814
Statira	wrkd	1815

(Source: Hepper, D. *British Warship Losses in the Age of Sail*).



## Appendix 2.1. Post Captains Without Commands. ( DEF Sample Only)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date posted</u>	<u>Deceased</u>
Joseph Fraine	December, 1759	1802
Charles Ellys	May, 1762	1794
Robert Fanshawe(1)	May, 1768	1823
John Ford	June, 1763	1796
Thomas Dumaresq	January, 1775	1802
Henry Duncan (1)	February, 1776	1814
William Dudington	September, 1777	1817
William Fooks	May, 1779	1798
William Daniel	September, 1781	1800
Thomas Durell (2)	May, 1782	1804
Sir William Henry Douglas	May, 1782	1809
Hon. Matthew Fortescue (2)	May, 1782	1842
James Dundas	September, 1790	1811
Charles Dixon	November, 1790	1804
Henry Evans <sup>685</sup>	June, 1797	1840
Sir Joseph Eyles	December, 1799	1806
Charles Elphinstone	February, 1801	1807
Henry Farnall	May, 1801	1806
William Day	February, 1802	1806
W.H.Daniel	April, 1802	1838
Henry Duncan (2)	April, 1802	1802 drowned
James Dalrymple (2)	April, 1802	1803
T. P. Durell	April, 1802	1836
Daniel Dobree	May, 1802	1814
Stephen Folvil <sup>686</sup>	May, 1802	1833
Archibald Duff	January, 1806	1858
Philip Dumaresque	Sept, 1806	1819
Joseph Edmonds	February, 1807	1818
Cuthbert F. Daly	August, 1808	1851
William Don	October, 1809	1816
James Deacon	October, 1809	1813
James Donnor	April, 1810	1814
Matthew Flinders	May, 1810	1814
William Foote	October, 1810	1844
Robert Evans (2)	October, 1810	1828
Isaac Ferrieres	October, 1810	1820
Francis Douglas	October, 1810	1842
Sir Bentinck Cavendish Doyle	April, 1811	
Robert Merrick Fowler	April, 1811	1860
William B. Dolling	August, 1811	1834
Edward Ellicott	August, 1812	1847
Edward A. Down	August, 1812	1855
William Westcott Daniel	December, 1813	1833
Thomas Fife	December, 1813	1829
H.T. Davies	February, 1814	1869
Peter Fisher	February, 1814	1844
Joseph Drury	February, 1814	1835
John Ellis (2)	June, 1814	1840
Watkin Evans	June, 1814	1817

Thomas Everard	June, 1814	Killed in Action: N.America.
Alexander Fraser (2)	June, 1814	1819
Edward Flin	June, 1814	1820
Henry Fanshawe	June, 1814	1856
Richard Foley	June, 1814	1828
Hon. Frederick Fitzhardinge	June, 1814	1867
Samuel B. Deecker	June, 1814	1835
William Dowers	September, 1814	1816
George William D'Aeth	June, 1815	1873

**Appendix 3.1. Number Of Officers And Average Frigate Service  
According To Year Commissioned Lieutenant.**

<b>Year Passed for Lieutenant.</b>	<b>Number of Officers</b>	<b>Average Frigate Service in years.</b>
1776	15	2.20
1777	31	2.88
1778	43	2.46
1779	20	3.31
1780	22	2.88
1781	18	3.72
1782	32	3.97
1783	18	3.24
1784	5	3.10
1785	5	4.30
1786	0	0
1787	5	6.05
1788	5	4.65
1789	17	5.33
1790	89	3.35
1791	11	3.20
1792	2	6.1
1793	51	3.35
1794	41	3.15
1795	27	3.39
1796	25	2.99
1797	24	3.53
1798	12	3.05
1799	19	2.68
1800	17	1.94
1801	18	2.99
1802	14	2.25
1803	5	2.60
1804	16	2.26
1805	11	2.27
1806	2	2.60

(Source: Data extracted from *Admiralty List Books*).

**Appendix 5.1. Prize Agents' Accounts - Greenwich Hospital Treasurer' Accounts (1793 - Mid-1798 Approx).**

Captor	Prizes	Nett Proceeds	Actual pay
Orpheus 32 (Henry Newcombe)	Helene, Jeune, Iphigenie, La Surprise, La Desir	2,132-3-2	2123
Leopard 50 (J. Maude)	La Victoire	8,243-6-6	8031
Boyne 98	La Guidelou	1,437-19-8	1367
Flora 36 (J.B. Warren)	Republique Francais	156-19-0	
Assistance 50 (A.K.Legge) Lapwing 28 (Henry Curzon) Fury 16 (J. Hanwell) Scout 16 (Frank Sotheron)	Salvage of the brig Saltom	1,012-0-0	
Edgar 74 (A. Bertie) Bedford 74 (R. Mann)	La Reine de Goleande, Providence, and Thomas & Sally salvage.	5,406-17-0	
Juno 32 (Sam Hood)	L'Entreprenant	116-9-2 (includes HM)	
Phaeton 38 (Sir A.Douglas) Weazle 12 (W.Taylor)	Prompte Privateer  Plus HM to Phaeton only =	6,437-0-0  601-1-0	
La Nymph 36 (Sir E. Pellew) Venus 32 (J. Faulknor)	La Sans Cullottes French privateer + HM	297-9-17  265-4-10	275
La Nymph 36 (Sir E. Pellew)	La Cleopatre + HM	8,250-0-0	7,798-17-1
Crescent 36 (Saumarez) Circe 28 (J.S. Yorke)	La Reunion + HM	5,318-9-11	5239
Spitfire 16 (P.C. Durham)	King George - a recapture	802-15-0	
Spitfire 16 (P.C. Durham)	Afrique + HM; St. Jean, St. Marguerite	257-5-3	
Phaeton 38 (Sir A. Douglas) Weazle 12 (W. Taylor)	Poisson Volant	514-0-0	266  138
Cleopatra 32 (A.J. Ball)	Brig Peggy - salvage	473-8-8	462-7-8
Tisiphone 20 (A. Hunt)	L'Outarde	1,400-0-0 1,327-11-9	920

Juno 32 ( <i>S. Hood</i> )	Penthievre	2,000-0-0 (part)	1306
Leopard 50 ( <i>J. Maude</i> )	La Constitution	40,000-0-0	38,467
Childers 14 ( <i>R. Barlow</i> )	Le Patriote, Le Triton	178-0-10	
Boston 32 ( <i>G.W.A. Courtenay</i> )	L'Hirondelle Privateer	710-10-2	611
Lizard 28 ( <i>T. Williams</i> )	Sans Culotte, Valiant Custine Allen & Dorothea, 2 cargoes of wheat, Endraught	293-16-0 471-3-0	273 435
La Nymphé 36 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> ) Circe 28 ( <i>J.S. Yorke</i> )	L'Espiegle	1,267-11-5	1212
Circe 28 ( <i>J.S. Yorke</i> )	Le Didon, L'Auguste Diane, Le Vaudreuil Le Jeune Felix	1,313-3-10 3,360-7-2 3,401-18-6	1542
Hannibal 74 ( <i>J. Colpoys</i> )	L'Etoile du Matin	1,077-12-8	967
Melampus 36 ( <i>T. Wells</i> )	La Pomone, La Babette, L'Engageante + HM	2,752-8-8	2561
Concorde 36 ( <i>Sir R. Strachan</i> )	Meriam - salvage	72-0-0	53-13
Thetis 38 ( <i>J. Hartwell</i> )	Mongoff George	22,850-14-0	21378
Arethusa 38 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> )	La Pomone, La Babette (Nymphé & Melampus in Comp'y)	2,769-2-8 (part)	2582
Flora 36 ( <i>Sir J. B. Warren</i> )		2,672-1-1 (part)	2598
Concorde 36 ( <i>Sir R. Strachan</i> )		2,478-1-8 (part)	2384
Juno 32 ( <i>S. Hood</i> )	Le Palme Le Penthiouse	530-18-8 1,867-19-2	342 1239
Powerful 74 ( <i>W.A. Otway</i> )	Ship George - salvage	641-17-4	530
Hebe 38 ( <i>A. Hood</i> ) Southampton 32 ( <i>Hon. R. Forbes</i> )	Experiment - recapture	243-4-9 236-17-10	224
Leopard 50 ( <i>J. Maude</i> )	La Constitution (see above)	70,140-18-8	28,422
Venus 32 ( <i>W. Brown</i> )	Mary of Bristol - recapture	202-13-2	
Blonde 32 ( <i>J. Markham</i> )	Lady Washington & cargo	1383-0-1	
Vanguard 74 ( <i>J. Stanhope</i> )	Le Blonde	484-9-8	

Bellerophon 74 ( <i>T. Pasley</i> ) Phoenix 36 ( <i>Sir R. Strachan</i> )	Le Blonde (Phaeton & Latona in Comp'y)	486-12-7 306-12-1	419 213
Nymphe 36 ( <i>G. Murray</i> )	La Pomone, La Babette, L'Engageante	2,585-3-0 (Proportion)	2417
Flora 36 ( <i>Sir J.B. Warren</i> ) Arethusa 38 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> ) Concorde 36 ( <i>Sir R. Strachan</i> )	La Pomone, La babette, L'Engageante	2,071-13-2 2,150-6-5 1,913-18-4	1947 2039 1806
Flora 36 ( <i>Sir J. B. Warren</i> ) Sheerness 44 ( <i>W.G. Fairfax</i> )	La Vipere,(Druid, Fury & Echo in Comp'y)	975-17-8 621-6-0	943
Nymph 36 ( <i>G. Murray</i> )	La Gute Hoffming ( a note as with * above)	201-8-0	180
Bellona 74 ( <i>G. Wilson</i> ) America 64 ( <i>Hon. J. Rodney</i> ) Severn 44 ( <i>G. Tripp</i> ) Carysfort 28 ( <i>F. Laforey</i> ) Hornet sloop 16 ( <i>C. Pul</i> )	Lust en Vleyt - Dutch recapture. (Alfred in Comp'y)	1,079-8-0	
Ceres 32 ( <i>R. Inledon</i> )	Catherine - recapture; Petite Victoire + HM	446-10-10	362
Phoenix 36 ( <i>Sir R. Strachan</i> )	La Pauline	14,447-15-3	14,198
Scourge 16 ( <i>G. Brisac</i> )	Sans Cullotte + HM La Bonne Mere	781-12-8 2,619-2-9	703 2,373
Ganges 74 ( <i>Adml A. Molloy</i> ) St. George 120 ( <i>Gell: Capt</i> ) ( <i>A. Dickson</i> )	St. Jago & Gen'l Dumourier	47,779-7-1	42,006
Edgar 74 ( <i>A. Bertie</i> ) Phaeton 38 ( <i>A. Douglas</i> )	St. Jago & Gen'l Domourier	46,219-18-4 20,906-2-2	43,110 16,291
Flora 36 ( <i>Sir J. B. Warren</i> ) Arethusa 38 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> ) St. Margarita 36 ( <i>E. Harvey</i> ) Artois 38 ( <i>E. Nagle</i> ) Diamond 38 ( <i>Sir Sidney Smith</i> )	Queen., Donna Maria brig, - recapt'd on Comp'y with Diamond & Diana		519-1-6 542-17-3 524-5-9 484-11-9 541-19-2

Nymph 36 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> )	For return of Duty's <u>only</u> for La Cleopatre & L'Espiegle		287-9-2
Arethusa 38 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> )	La Revolutionnaire (Diamond in Comp'y)		2,534-2-6
Artois 38 ( <i>E. Nagle</i> )			2,391-16-10
Galatea 32 ( <i>R.G.Keats</i> )			2,301-16-1
Diamond ( <i>Sir Sidney Smith</i> )			2,559-18-1
Alcide 64 Lowestofte 32 ( <i>W. Wolseley</i> ) Illustrious 74 Leda 36 ( <i>G. Campbell</i> ) Colossus 74 Vulcan Fireship Conflagration fireship Camel storeship Victory 100 Agamemnon 64 Leviathan 74 L'Aimable 36 ( <i>Sir H. Burrard/ Neale</i> ) Robust 74	L'Eclair, Vrai Patriote		72-18-9 49-19-9  82-17-4 49-13-3  110-3-5 40-14-8 43-9-5  36-0-5 122-12-1 101-18-0 101-8-2 52-18-9  71-19-5
Niger 32 ( <i>R.G. Keats</i> ) Nimble cutter ( <i>Lt. J. Smith</i> ) Nimble cutter ( <i>Lt. J. Smith</i> )		Krone Van Bremen, Catherine - recapture  Pettite Victore	1,000-0-0  47-3-6  33-16-0
Ardent 64 St. Albans 64 Castor 32 ( <i>T. Troubridge</i> ) Mermaid 32 ( <i>J. Trigge</i> )	Sacra Famiglia		115-17-8 204-14-8 110-14-3  129-12-3
Flora 36 ( <i>Sir J.B. Warren</i> ) Arethusa 38 ( <i>Sir E. Pellew</i> ) St. Margarita 38 ( <i>E. Harvey</i> ) Concorde 32 ( <i>Sir R. Strachan</i> ) Melampus 36 ( <i>T. Wells</i> )		Drooning Gaard, Brig Triumph	
Orion 74 ( <i>Vice-Adm Sir A. Gardner</i> )	Sans Cullottes	152-1-1	

Fleet under the command of Lord Howe in the Channel	Sans Pareille, Juste, Northumb'd, Achille, Impeteux, America, with others	201,096-13-0	
Pomone 44 ( <i>Sir J.B. Warren</i> ) Galatea 32 ( <i>R.G. Keats</i> ) Anson 44 ( <i>P.C. Durham</i> ) Artois 38 ( <i>E. Nagle</i> )	Jean Bart Corvette		2,011-4-2
La Pomone 44 ( <i>Sir J. B Warren</i> )	Prizes taken between 13 Feb - 2 March, 1795 Phoenix, Le David, L'Oimontaise	4,151-16-8 1,919-12-8	
Alligator ( <i>W. Affleck</i> )	Sans Pareil & Fiend Tout		252-2-6
Nymphe ( <i>G. Murray</i> )	Pomone & Babet (22.1.95) Engageante		953-0-9 970-18-2
Venus ( <i>J. Faulknor</i> )	Sans Cullotte		232-11-9
Aimable ( <i>H. Burrard</i> )	La Moselle April-July 95		973-14-6
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> ) Circe ( <i>J. Yorke</i> )	Venus & Ant, Jan 1794		232-2-11 190-0-3
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> )	Experiment, March, 1794		231-16-10
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> ) Weazle	Prompte, Poussaint Vollante, May-June, 1795		212-1-5 88-7-11
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> ) Weazle	Genl Washinton		128-10-6 61-12-4
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> )	Geb'l Dumourier & St Jago (1st) Blonde		31,601-17-5 301-18-10
Galatea ( <i>R. Keats</i> ) Artois ( <i>E. Nagle</i> )	Revolutionnaire (2nd) 14th June- 4th Sept		1121-6-8 1197-1-3
Diana ( <i>J. Faulknor</i> )	Queen & Donna Maria 9.3.95		477-10-2
Crescent ( <i>Saumarez</i> ) Hind ( <i>A. Cochrane</i> )	Espoir 29.6.95	443-14-8	
Crescent ( <i>Saumarez</i> ) Lively Privateer	Club de Cherbourg	113-14-9	



Latona ( <i>E. Thornborough</i> )	Ambiteux (2nd)		140-9-2
Lively ( <i>G. Burlton</i> )	Joseph, ) Favorius, ) (1st) Tourterelle)		924-10-11 571-12-10 6,588-3-5
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> )	St. Jago (2nd)	14,725-17-9	
Aimable ( <i>H. Burrard</i> ) Dido ( <i>C. Hamilton</i> ) Lowestofte ( <i>B. Hallowell</i> )	La Mozelle		215-4-4
Leda ( <i>J. Woodley</i> )	Sybille, Cerasine, Adele, Beste		4,087-18-6
Melampus ( <i>R. Strachan</i> ) Seaflower Sprightly Daphne	Sundry captures 3.7.95. with Hebe in Co.		1485-7-6  238-13-4 189-19-10 132-1-9
Pomone ( <i>J.B. Warren</i> )	Prizes 12 Feb-12 March, 95; Phoenix, Le David; L'Omontaine Expedition, Maria Francois, Fidelle;		4,151-16-8  1,919-12-8  592-5-3
Artois ( <i>E. Nagle</i> )	Expedition Maria Francois, Fidelle		525-10-7
Artois ( <i>E. Nagle</i> )	Quartide, Hassinglande Revolutionnaire (3rd) Head Money of "		78-3-5 534-9-8 351-8-1
Concorde ( <i>A. Hunt</i> )	Prizes 9th March.95 Phoenix, David, L'Omontaine		1,734-3-6 1,732-8-7
Aigle ( <i>S. Hood</i> )?	L'Elaine June-July, 1793		52-2-7
Nemesis ( <i>S.H. Linzee</i> )	L'Elaine & Vrai Patriot		50-9-3
Tisiphone	Vanneaux, June-July, 1793		15-10-3
Meleager ( <i>C. Tyler</i> )?	Vanneaux, L'Elaine & Vrai Patriot June-July, 1793.		75-5-5
Lowestofte ( <i>W. Wolseley</i> ) Dido ( <i>C. Hamilton</i> ) Swallow Imperieuse ( <i>C. Cunningham</i> ) Scout	Jacobin, May, 1794.		138-4-0  110-5-7  12-6-9 97-19-7  105-11-6
Tartar	Gen'l Washington Privateer		135-14-2
Lowestofte ( <i>W. Wolseley</i> ) Dido ( <i>C. Hamilton</i> )	Mozelle, may, 1794		1021-6-5  896-15-2

Diana ( <i>J. Faulkner</i> )	Quartide, Hacsingland Sept, 1794.		62-13-9
Cleopatra Thetis V. Adm Murray	Cargo of the Bacchus (Taken West Indies)		1048-18-3 1192-8-8 362-10-2
Thetis Hussar ( <i>Lord Garlies</i> )? Esperance V. Adm Murray	Cargo of the Hamilton and retaken snow Charlotte		188-2-10 159-8-3  119-10-4 71-18-6
Crescent ( <i>Saumarez</i> ) Hind ( <i>A. Cochrane</i> )	Club de Cherbourg		443-10-10
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> )	Dumourier & St. Jago (3rd)		3,874-1-0
Hebe ( <i>P. Minchin</i> )	7 Prizes (Vasure, Maria Louisa, Pencheur etc) July, 1795.		1,528-9-10
Pomone ( <i>J.B. Warren</i> ) Galatea ( <i>R. Keats</i> ) Anson ( <i>P. Durham</i> ) Artois ( <i>E. Nagle</i> )	Jean bart (2nd)		851-9-5
Romney ( <i>F. Sotheron</i> ) Phaeton ( <i>R. Stopford</i> ) Latona ( <i>A.K. Legge</i> )	Bonne Citoyenne Corvbettes & Betsey Brig March, 1796.		2,037-14-1  1,761-4-10  1,789-19-7
Pomone ( <i>J.B. Warren</i> ) Anson ( <i>P. Durham</i> ) Galatca ( <i>R. Keats</i> ) Swinger Teaser Penelope cutter	Kent recapture Oct, 1795.		703-14-9  708-12-6  593-19-7  80-12-3 100-18-7 73-19-2
St. Margarita ( <i>E. Harvey</i> )	Alert, Espion, Volontaire Aug, 1794		79-2-3
Galatea ( <i>R. Keats</i> )	Revolution HM		421-12-11
Flora ( <i>J.B. Warren</i> )	St. Joseph June, 1793.		3,436-1-0
Aimable ( <i>H. Burrard</i> ) Juno ( <i>S. Hood</i> )	Boncaux, Harnoll, Hamilton, La Maria Agathe, April, 1793.		184-3-6  207-6-3

Aimable ( <i>H. Burrard</i> )	La Courier, May, 1793		105-19-6
Beaulieu ( <i>J. Salisbury</i> )	America (recapt) Dec, 1793		472-15-7
Argo ( <i>R. Burgess</i> )	Unite & Virginie, April, 1796.		2,103-11-5 707-17-7
Stag ( <i>J.S. Yorke</i> )	Betsy & Bonne Citoyenne		1,748-8-11
Concorde ( <i>A. Hunt</i> )	Kent (Recapt)		580-3-2
Arethusa ( <i>E. Pellew</i> )	Phoenix, David & L'Ormentaire Revolutionnaire (2nd) Revolutionnaire (3rd) Quartide & Haesingland		1,836-8-7  1,220-15-1 530-7-7 81-17-9
Indefatigable ( <i>E. Pellew</i> )	Gentille, Temeraire, Minerve, Unite & Regeneration (1st)  (2nd)		1,011-5-11  916-19-6
Indefatigable ( <i>E. Pellew</i> ) Amazon ( <i>R.C. Reynolds</i> ) Concorde ( <i>A. Hunt</i> ) Revolutionnaire ( <i>F. Cole</i> )	Unite & Virginie		4,205-19-6  3,929-2-10  3,401-4-2  3,862-16-9
Phaeton ( <i>A. Douglas</i> )	Dumourier & St. Jago (4th)		1,204-6-0
Iphigenia ( <i>P. Sinclair</i> )	Elizabeth. Fr privateer		109-7-3
Tartar ( <i>T. Freemantle</i> )	Sybille, Alebe, Betsy		3,142-11-8
Warren's Sq	Robuste 1.12.96 Etoile		2,861-11-0 2,467-2-6
Dryad ( <i>Beauclerk</i> )	Voteur		1,039-10-0
Cleopatra	Sundry prizes		331-19-0
Melampus	Etna		4,917-11-4
Sybil ( <i>C. Jones</i> )	Diana aka Vesta		134-18-10
Phaeton ( <i>R. Stopford</i> )	L'Anne, Nov 1796.		109-5-9
Southampton ( <i>Forbes</i> )	Experiment		232-17-9
Venus ( <i>W. Brown</i> )	Mary		171-10-3
Jason ( <i>C. Stirling</i> )	Gentille Marie, Union, Bonette Jean Marie (share) Robuste Tartar		1,777-11-7 816-7-3 188-6-2 684-13-10 1,279-11-3

Stag ( <i>Yorke</i> )	Approcate, Sarah		1,346-7-0
Niger ( <i>Footie</i> )	Natalia Caradad		8,014-10-0 3,082-7-7
Latona ( <i>A.K. Legge</i> )	Jean		107-6-8
Diamond ( <i>R. Strachan</i> )	Amarante Esperance PereMaria		4,266-19-3 92-12-2 272-11-4
Diana ( <i>J. Faulknor</i> )	Alert, Volontaire, Espion Comet Cromhout (1st) Cromhout (2nd) Abielle	482-19-2 1,319-4-2 5,946-4-4 2,051-4-10 286-16-0	
Quebec ( <i>J. Cooke</i> )	Aspie	933-12-1	
Unicorn ( <i>T. Williams</i> )	Cromhout (2nd) Rover Eclair		2,042-13-5 104-2-1 362-12-7
Phoebe ( <i>R. Barlow</i> )	Atlanta		3,413-14-3/4
Syren ( <i>Gosling</i> )	SansPeur Robinson		133-4-3 178-4-2
Arethusa ( <i>T. Wolley</i> )	Gaite, Aug 1796.		4,514-1-2
Cambrian ( <i>A. Legge</i> )	Betsey Oct, 1797.		348-11-0
Phaeton ( <i>R. Stopford</i> )	L'Actif, March 1797		940-19-0
Flora ( <i>R. Middleton</i> )	Incroyable, April, 1797.		1,293-19-4
Latona ( <i>A.K. Legge</i> )	Tartare Feb, 1797.		61-1-5
Stag ( <i>Yorke</i> )	Alliance		1,243-5-1
Minerve ( <i>Cockburn</i> )	Mutine de Regla Felice Belerno Marseilleise	19,649-0-0 6,921-8-0 3,693-4-0 68,483-7-0	
Pique ( <i>D. Milne</i> ) Charon	Lacedaemonian, March 1796		269-19-1 145-15-9
Stag ( <i>Yorke</i> )	L'Yppocrate & Hirondelle, Franklyn Swallow		443-10-8 29-18-9 81-8-11
Proscarpine ( <i>W. Lake</i> )	Unity & Concorde		2,174-7-4
Stag ( <i>Yorke</i> )	Prizes 17 Sept-20 Oct 97		993-17-4
Melpomene ( <i>C. Hamilton</i> )	Espiegle		114-13-5
Jason ( <i>C. Stirling</i> )	Revanche & Queen of Naples		47-5-10

Aimable (Lobb)	Triumphant	3,794-5-3	
Scourge (Warren)	Lc Chasseur	517-14-9	
		1,657-16-7	
Phoenix (Halstead)	3 prizes (La Dificile)		694-0-6
Spitfire (Seymour)	Jacoba		13,473-4-10
Stag (Yorke)	Recovery Brunette, Indien, Decouverte, Adamante, Arcade, Recovery		62-14-3 986-2-0
Anson (Durham)	Jason Belleisle		1,475-7-6 75-11-4
Magnanime (De Courcy)	Echo		513-2-8
Shannon (A. Frascr)	Dugay Trouin		2,445-13-1
Magnanime (de Courcy)	Tierelete		304-1-2
Niger (E. Griffith)	Danerhafte, May, 1798		198-18-3
Arethusia (T. Wolley)			227-10-8
Melpomene (C. Hamilton)	Triton		892-19-7
Phaeton (R. Stopford)	Chasseur, Brunette & Converte Adamant & Arcade		867-18-0 1,168-14-9
Melpomene (C. Hamilton)	Friendship Dec, 1797.		1,471-6-0
Jason (C. Stirling)	Courier, Golden Grove Benton La Marc Several 12-28 Aug, 97		3,146-2-4 1,745-18-2 441-1-8
Phoebe (R. Barlow)	Nereide July, 98.		13,018-6-2
Stag (Yorke)	Alliance		178-2-4
Pique (D. Milne)	Recovery Oct 1797.		103-9-3

\* - A note here explains that "Mr. Toulmin being a Bankrupt" £57-10-4d must be paid to the Hospital from his Commission.

(Source. *Greenwich Hospital Treasurers Accounts* . PRO. [ADM68/314]).

## Appendix 5.2. List of Frigate Engagements

- 27th May, 1793      Venus, Capt. J. Faulknor, engages the French frigate Scmillante.
- 18th June, 1793      Nymphe, Capt. Edward Pellew, captures the French frigate Cleopatre.
- ...June, 1793.      Boston, Capt. George William Augustus Courtenay engages the French frigate Embuscade. Courtenay is killed.
- October, 1793      Crescent, Capt. James Saumarez captures La Reunion
- 24th October, 1793.      Thames, Capt. James Cotes, engages and drives off the Uranic, but is then captured by a French squadron.
- 29th May, 1794.      Carysfort, Capt. Francis Laforey captures the Castor
- 8th June, 1794.      A British squadron close to Guernsey is saved from a superior French squadron by the Druid, Capt. Sir James Saumarez
- 30th December, 1794.      Blanche, Capt. Robert Faulknor, captures La Pique. Faulknor is killed but but Lieutenants Frederick Watkins and David Milne assume command.
- 10th April, 1795.      Astraea, Capt. Lord Henry Paulet, captures La Gloire
- 24th June, 1795.      Dido, Capt. George Towry, and Lowestoffe, Capt. Robert Middleton, capture the French frigate Minerve
- 28th September, 1795      Southampton, Capt. James Macnamara, engages the Vestale.  
20th April, 1796.      Indefatigable, Capt. Sir Edward Pellew, and Amazon, Capt Robert Reynolds, and Concorde, Capt. Anthony Hunt, capture the Virginie .
- 08th June, 1796      Santa-Margarita, Capt. Thomas Byam Martin, captures the French frigate Tamise .
- 08th June, 1796      Unicorn, Capt. Thomas Williams, captures the Tribune .
- 09th June, 1796.      Southampton, Capt. James Macnamara, cuts out a Corvette in the Mediterranean.

- 13th June, 1796 Dryad, Capt. Lord Amelius Beauclerk, captures La Proserpine
- 13th October, 1796. Terpsichore, Capt. Richard Bowen, captures the Spanish frigate Mahonesa.
- 13th December, 1796 Terpsichore, Capt. Richard Bowen, engages the French frigate Vestale, which escapes after striking.
- 07th January, 1797 Indefatigable, Capt. Edward Pellew, and Amazon, Capt. Robert Reynolds, attack the Droits-de-L'Homme. Amazon and Droits-de-L'Homme are wrecked.
- 30th May, 1798 Hydra, Capt. Sir Francis Laforey destroys the French frigate Confiante (fr).
- 23rd June, 1798. Seahorse, Capt. Edward Foote captures the Sensible.
- 29th June, 1798 Pique, Capt. David Milne, captures the Seine
- 20th October, 1798 Fisgard, Capt. Thomas Byam Martin, captures the Immortalite
- 14th December, 1798 Ambuscade, Capt. Henry Jenkins captured by the French frigate Baionnaise.
- 9th February, 1799 Daedalus, Capt Henry Lidgbird Ball takes the Prudente.
- 1st March, 1799. Sibylle, Capt. Edward Cooke, captures La Forte.
- 20th August, 1799. Clyde, Capt. Charles Cunningham, captures Vestale
- 20th October, 1799 Cerberus, Capt. James Macnamara, attacks a squadron of 5 Spanish frigates.
- 01st March, 1800 Nereide, Capt. Frederick Watkins, captures the Vengeance privateer.
- 20th August, 1800 Seine, Capt. David Milne, takes the Vengeance frigate.
- 16th February, 1805 Cleopatre, Capt. Sir Robert Laurie, taken by the Ville-de-Milan.
- 19th July, 1805 Blanche, Capt. Zachary Mudge, captured by Topaze and two other French ships.
- 29th July, 1805 Aeolus, Capt. Lord William Fitzroy, avoids an engagement with French frigate Didon.
- 10th August, 1805. Phoenix, Capt. Thomas Baker, captures La Didon.
- 18th June, 1806 Blanche, Capt. Thomas Lavie, takes Guerriere
- 18th October, 1806 Caroline, Capt. Peter Rainier, attacks Dutch squadron and captures the frigate Maria-Riggersbergen.

- 10th November, 1808      Amethyst, Capt. Michael Seymour, captures the Thetis just before the arrival of the Shannon, Capt. Philip Broke.
- 10th January, 1809      Horatio, Capt. George Scott, with others takes the Junon
- 05th April, 1809      Amethyst, Capt. Michael Seymour takes Nieman
- 13th December, 1809      Junon, Capt. John Shortland, taken by four French frigates. Shortland is killed.
- 12th September, 1810.      Africaine, Sir Robert Corbet, surrenders to two French frigates. Corbet killed.
- 19th August, 1812      Guerriere, Capt. James Dacres, taken by the USS Constitution
- 25th October, 1812      Macedonian, Capt. John Carden, taken by the USS United States.
- 29th December, 1812      Java, Capt. Henry Lambert, taken by the USS Constitution
- 06th February, 1813      Amelia, Capt. Hon. Frederick Paul Irby, engages the French frigate Arethuse .
- 01st June, 1813      Shannon, Captain Philip Broke captures the USS Chesapeake
- 05th January, 1814      Niger, Capt. Peter Rainier, and Tagus, Capt. Philip Pipon, capture the French frigate Ceres.
- 15th January, 1814      Endymion, Capt. Henry Hope encounters the US frigate President and nearly forces her to surrender. President escapes, only to surrender to other ships hours later.
- 08th February, 1814      Phoebe, Capt. James Hillyar, captures the USS Essex
- 25th February, 1814.      Eurotas, Capt. John Phillimore, engages the French frigate Clorinde which later surrenders to Dryad
- 26th March, 1814      Hebrus, Capt. Edmund Palmer, captures the Etoile .

(Source: James, W. *Naval History of Great Britain*).



**Appendix 6.1. Service Details Of Longest Serving Frigate Captains.**

Captain	Frigate	Approx. dates	station
Keats, R.G.	Niger	1.93 - 3.93	c/c
	Galatea	6.94 - 12.95	c/c
		1.96 - 5.97	Warren's Sq.
	Boadicea	7.97 - 2.01	Channel
Hamilton, C.	Dido	5.93 - 12.93	Channel
		1.94 - 11.94	Med
	Melpomene	5.95 - 11.01	c/c & Channel
		2.02 - 8.02	Lcwd I
Williams, T.	Lizard	1.93 - 5.94	c/c
	Daedalus	8.94 - 7.95	c/c
	Unicorn	7.95 - 2.97	Cork
	Endymion	5.97 - 12.97	Home waters
		1.98 - 5.99	Cork
		7.99 - 2.01	c/c & Channel
Halstead, L.	Venus	1.95 - 10.95	Home Waters
	Phocnix	11.95 - 8.97	Home Waters
		9.97 - 8.98	Coast of Wales
		9.98 - 5.99	Cork
		6.99 - 5.02	Med
Neale, H.	Aimable	3.93 - 3.95	Med
	St. Fiorenzo	7.95 - 10.00	Home Waters
Yorke, J.S.	Circe	2.93 -	Home & various
	Stag	-2.00	Home & various
	Jason	4.00 - 4.01	c/c
Legge, A.K.	Niger/Latona	7.93 - 4.97	Home & various
	Cambrian	5.97 - 8.01.	Home Waters
Barlow, R.	Pegasus	7.93 - 7.94	Home waters
	Aquilon	8.94 - 10.95	Home Waters
	Phoebe	11.95 - 4.98	Western Squadron
		5.98 - 3.99	Channel & c/c
		4.99 - 5.01	Cork
	Concorde	8.01 - 11.01	Newfoundland
		2.02 - 5.02	Home Waters
Durham, P.	Hind	11.93 - 10.94	Channel & c/c
	Anson	11.94 - 2.96	Channel
		2.96 - 2.98	Western Squadron
		3.98 - 11.99	Channel
		12.99 - 4.01	Channel & c/c
	Endymion	5.01 - 11.01	Secret service & c/c

		2.02 - 5.02	Home Waters
Cockburn, G.	Meleager	9.94 - 2.97	Med
	Minerve	3.97 - 11.01	Med
	Phaeton	8.03 - 11.03	c/c
		2.04 - 11.05	EI
Graves, T.	Venus	11.95 - 4.96	N.Sca
		5.96 - 2.00	Nwflnd**
		3.00 - 11.03	Lewd I.
		2.04 - 8.05	Cork
Moore, G.	Syren	8.94 - 7.96	Channel
	Melampus	8.96 - 4.98	" "
		5.98 - 8.98	c/c
		9.98 - 3.00	Cork
		4.00 - 11.01	Jmca
	Indefatigable	8.00 - 8.04	Channel
King, R.(2)	Aurora	11.94 - 7.95	Channel
	Druid	9.95 - 2.97	" "
	Sirius	6.97 - 8.02	Home Waters
Foote, E.	Niger	8.94 - 11.96	Channel & c/c
		12.96 - 4.97	Med
	Seahorse	4.98 - 9.00	Med (mainly)
		1.01 - 5.01	c/c
		2.02 - 8.02	East Indies
Newman, J.	Vestal	9.94 - 7.95	Home Waters & c/c
	Ceres	9.95 - 8.97	Med (mainly)
	Mermaid	9.97 - 8.98	Jamaica
		9.98 - 3.99	Channel
	Loire	4.99 - 2.02	Channel & c/c
Wilkinson, P.	Hermione	12.94 - 7.97	Jamaica
	Success	7.97 - 11.97	N.Scotia (& Jamaica?)
		12.97 - 3.99	Channel & c/c
	Unicorn	4.99 - 5.01	Channel
	Naiad	8.01 - 11.01	Channel
	Hussar	8.02 - 2.04	Channel
Mansfield, C.	Andromache	4.95 - 8.96	Lewd I
		11.96 - 6.98	Med
	Dryad	12.98 - 5.02	Cork
Gore, J.	Triton	10.96 - 4.01	Med
	Medusa	8.01 - 11.04	Med
		5.05 - 2.06	EAST INDIES
Herbert, C.	Amphitrite	9.95 - 8.97	Channel (mainly)
	Amelia	9.97 - 2.02	Channel

	Uranie	11.03 - 8.04	Jamaica
		1.05 - 8.05	c/c
Blackwood, H.	Brilliant	5.96 - 2.98	N.Sea
		4.98 - 10.98	Nwflnd
	Penelope	11.98 - 9.99	Channel
		10.99 - 2.02	Med
	Euryalus	8.03 - 8.05	Cork & Channel
		8.05 - 11.05	Med
Douglas, J.E.	Jason	6.94 - 12.94	c/c & fitting
	Garland	8.95 - 12.97	N.Sea
	Boston	1.98 - 4.99	Channel
		5.99 - 11.04	N.Scotia
Donnelly, R.	Pegasus	7.95 - 3.96	c/c
		5.96 - 12.96	N.Sea
	Maidstone	5.98 - 1.00	Jamaica
		2.00 - 12.01	Channel & c/c
	Narcissus	12.01 - 2.05	Med
		2.05 - 5.05	Home waters
		8.05 - 11.05	Lewd I
		2.06 - 8.06	c/c & Cape
Gossellin, T.	Diamond	5.96 - 1.98	Channel
		4.98 - 1.00	Lewd I
		2.00 - 11.00	Channel
		1.01 - 5.01	Jamaica
	Syren	8.01	Jamaica
	Melampus	2.02 - 5.02	Jamaica
	Latona	11.04 - 8.06	Channel
Macnamara, J.	Southampton	7.94 - 7.97	Med
	Cerberus	2.98 - 3.01	Cork
		8.01 - 2.03	Jamaica
Poyntz, S.	Solebay	11.97 - 4.99	Lewd I
		5.99 - 9.00	Jamaica
	Beaulieu	1.01 - 2.02	Channel
	Melampus	11.05 - 8.07	Channel & c/c
Laurie, R.	Andromache	12.98 - 8.01	Channel
		8.01 - 2.04	N.Scotia
	Cleopatra	2.05 - 5.05	" "
	Milan	8.05 - 5.08	" "
		8.08 - 7.10	N.America
Owen, E.C.W.R.	Nemesis	1.01 - 5.02	Channel/Nelson's Sq
	Immortalite	8.02 - 2.06	c/c & N.Sea
	Clyde	5.06 - 1.11	Channel & Texel
	Inconstant	1.11 - 1.13	Texel

Atkins, D.	Iris	5.02 - 8.02	Channel
	Ambuscade	11.02 - 11.03	" "
	Seine	2.04 - 1.11	" "
		(2.05 - 11.06)	WI
Capel, T.B.	Melcager	11.00 - 11.01	Jamaica
	Revolutionnaire	8.02	c/c
	Phoebe	11.02 - 11.05	Med
	Endymion	2.06 - 5.08	Med
		8.08 - 7.10	c/c
Adam, C.	Sybille	2.02 - 2.03	EAST INDIES
	Chiffonne	8.03 - 5.05	N.Sea
	Resistance	11.05 - 1.10	Channel & c/c
Mackenzie, A.	Brilliant	11.01 - 2.02	Nelson's Sq.
	Magicienne	8.03 - 8.04	Channel
	President	2.08 - 7.10	S.America
	Undaunted	11.10 - 1.11	c/c
	?Venus	1.11 - 7.13	Leeward Islands & Leith
Maling, T.	Diana	11.01 - 8.03	Med
		8.03 - 5.04	Channel & c/c
		8.04 - 2.06	Jamaica
		5.06 - 5.07	Cork
		8.07 - 1.10	c/c & Portugal (1808)
Wolfe, G.	Galatea	5.02 - 11.02	Cork
	Aigle	2.03 - 1.11	Channel
Mundy, G.	Carysfort	5.02 - 11.02	c/c
	Hydra	11.02 - 8.04	Channel & c/c
		11.04 - 7.10	Med
Vansittart, H.	Magicienne	8.02 - 11.02	Channel
	Fortunee	2.03 - 5.04	Channel
		8.04 - 8.06	West Indies
Broke, P.B.V.	Druid	5.05 - 5.06	Channel & Cork
	Shannon	8.06 - 1.11	Channel & N.Sea
		3.11 - 1814	N.America
Sayer, G.	Galatea	11.05 - 2.09	Lewd I
	Leda	1.10 - 1.14	EAST INDIES
Maitland, F.L.	Loire	11.02 - 8.06	Cork
	Emerald	2.07 - 2.09	Channel
		2.09 - 1.11	Cork
Parker, W.	Alarm	5.02 - 11.02	Channel
	Amazon	2.03 - 11.05	Med

		11.05 - 1.10	Channel
Hoste, W.	Greyhound	5.02 - 2.03	Med
	Amphion	2.06 - 1.11	Med
	Bacchante	7.12 - 1.14	Med
Digby, S.T.	Vestal	5.05 - 5.06	N.Sea
	Argo	8.06 - 2.08	c/c
		5.08 - 8.09	Jamaica
		11.09 - 7.10	c/c
	Theban	11.10 - 7.13	Channel & c/c
Bouverie, D.P.	Braave	2.03	Cape
	Mercury	11.04 - 8.05	Channel
	Aimable	11.05 - 2.06	“ “
	Medusa	5.06 - 11.06	Channel & c/c
		2.07 - 11.07	Cape & S.America
		2.08 - 1.13	Channel & c/c
Hawkins, R.	Minerva	5.07 - 7.12	Channel
		1.13 - 1.14	N.America
Somerville, P.	Nemesis	8.02 - 8.05	Channel & c/c
		11.05	N.Scotia
		2.06 - 11.07	Nwflnd
		5.08 - 8.08	c/c
		11.08 - 2.09	Texel
	Rota	5.09 - 1.10	Texel/fitting
		7.10 - 1.11	Ireland
		7.12 - 1.14	Channel & c/c
Upton, C.	Lapwing	2.05 - 8.05	Cork & N.Sea
	Aimable	5.06 - 5.07	N.Sea
	Sybille	8.07 - 11.07	c/c & Gambier's Sq
		2.08 - 2.09	Cork
		5.09 - 8.09	Newfoundland
		1.10 - 1.13	Cork/Ireland
		7.13	Newfoundland
Taylor, B.W.	Thames	2.06 - 2.07	N.Sea
		5.07 - 11.07	c/c
		2.08	Med
	Apollo	5.08 - 1.14	Med
Malcolm, C.	Chiffonne	2.03	EAST INDIES
	Narcissus	11.06 - 8.09	Channel
	Rhin	8.09 - 1.13	“ “
		7.13	Leeward Islands I
Elliott, G.	Maidstone	2.04 - 11.04	Med
	Aurora	8.05 - 2.06	Newfoundland
		5.06	Med

	Modeste	5.07 - 7.12	EAST INDIES
	Hussar	1.13 - 1.14	EAST INDIES
Hillyar, J.	Niger	5.04 - 11.07	Med
	Phoebe	11.09 - 1.10	Baltic
		7.10 - 1811	Cape
		7.12	c/c
Stuart, G.	Sheerness	5.04 - 2.06	EAST INDIES
	Duncan	5.06 - 2.07	EAST INDIES
	Aimable	8.07 - 5.08	N.Sea & c/c
		2.09 - 7.10	Texel
	Horatio	11.10 - 1.13	Texel
		1.13 - 1.14	Channel
Tower, J.	Iris	8.06 - 11.09	Channel
	Curacoa	1.10 - 1.11	“ “
		7.12 - 1.14	Med
Pellew, F.B.	Psyche	2.08 - 11.08	EAST INDIES
	Phaeton	7.12	EAST INDIES
	Resistance	1.13 - 1.14	Med

(Source: *Admiralty List Books*).

## Appendix 6.2. Combined Operations 1793-1815.

	Object	Commanded By	Frigates involved
1793	West Indies	Rr-Adm Gardner	Heroine (A.H. Gardner) Iphigenia (P. Sinclair)
	Forrelli	Commodore Linzee	Lowestoffe (W. Wolseley) Nemesis (Lord A. Beauclerk)
1794	Martinique & Guadeloupe	Vice-Adm Jervis	Beaulieu (J. Salisbury) Assurance (V.C.Berkeley) St.Margarita (E. Harvey) Solebay (W.H.Kelly) Blonde (J.Markham) Winchelsea (Lord Garlies) Quebec (J. Rogers) Ceres ( R. Incledon) Rose (E.Riou/M.H. Scott) Blanche (R.Faulknor) Terpsichore (S. Edwards)
	Port au Prince	Commodore Ford	Penelope (B.S.Rowley) Hermione (J. Hills) Iphigenia (P. Sinclair)
1795	Quiberon Bay	Commodore J.B.Warren	Pomone (Warren) Anson (Durham) Artois (Nagle) Arethusa (M.Robinson) Concorde (A.Hunt) Galatea (Keats) Jason (C. Stirling)
1796	St. Lucia	Rr-Adm Christian	Charon (J. Stevenson) Beaulieu (L.Skinner) Arethusa (T.Wolley) Hebe (M.H.Scott) Undaunted (H.Roberts) Astrea (R.Lane) Laurel ? (R.Rolles)
	Colombo	Capt. A.H. Gardner	Heroine (A.H.Gardner)
1797	Santa Cruz, Teneriffe	Rr-Adm Nelson	Seahorse (T.Freemantle) Terpsichore (R.Bowen) Emerald (J. Waller)
	Trinidad	Rr-Adm Harvey	Arethusa (T.Wolley) Alarm (E. Fellowes)
	Porto Rico	" " "	Tamer (T.B.Martin) Arethusa (T.Wolley)
1798	Ostend	Capt. H. Popham	Circe (R. Winthorpe) Vestal (C.White)
	Minorca	Commodore Duckworth	Argo (J.Bowen) Aurora (J. Caulfield)
1799	Transport of Russian troops to Revel, Holland.		Hebe (W.Birchall) Romulus (J.Culverhouse) Ulysses (T. Pressland) Blonde (D.Dobree) Niger (J.Larmour) Espion (J.Rose)

	Helder, Texel.	Vice-Adm Mitchell	Melpomene (Sir C.Hamilton) Latona (F.Sotheron) Shannon (C.D.Pater) Juno (G.Dundas) Lutine (G.Monkton)
April 1800	Secret Expedition		10 frigates armed en flute
1800	Quiberon Bay & Belleisle	Sir Ed. Pellew	Amethyst (J.Cooke) Fisgard (T.B.Martin) Amelia (Hon. C.Herbert) Diamond (E.Griffiths) Doris (Lord Ranelagh) Thames (W.Lukin)
	Ferroll	Rr-Adm J.B.Warren	Indefatigable (Hon.H.Curzon) Amelia (Hon.C.herbert) Amethyst (J.Cooke) Stag (R.Winthorpe) Brilliant (Hon.C.Paget)
1801	Baltic	Parker	Desiree (H.Inman) Amazon (E.Riou) Blanche (G.E.Hammond) Alcmene (S.Sutton)
	Neutral Islands in the West Indies	Rr-Adm Duckworth	Diana (J.P.Beresford) Unite (T.Harvey) So'ton (J. Harvey) Andromeda (J.Bradby) Amphitrite (C.Ekins) Proselyte (G.Fowke)
1803	Leeward Isles	Commodore Sir S. Hood	Emerald (O'Bryen)
1804	Goree, Coast of America	Capt. E.Stirling Dickson	Inconstant
1806	Buenos Ayres	Capt. Hone-Popham & Maj-Gen Beresford	
	Cape	Capt. Home-Popham	
1807	Copenhagen		
	Madeira	Sir S. Hood & Maj-Gen Beresford	Africaine, Shannon Alceste Success
	Monte Video	Rr-adm G. Murray & Lt-Gen Whitelocke	
	Alexandria	Capt B.Hallowell & Maj-Gen Fraser.	
1809	Rio	Capt. Yeo	
	Withdrawal from Corunna	Rr-Adm Sir S. Hood	
	Calabria	Rr-Adm G. Martin & Sir John Stuart	
	Ras al Khyma, Persian Gulf	Capt Wainwright & Lt-Col Smith	La Chiffonne Caroline (Gordon)
	Martinique	Rr-Adm Sir A. Cochrane & Lt-Gen Beckwith	Acasta (Beaver) Penelope Aeolus Cleopatra



	Vigo	Capt Crawford	Venus (Crawford) M'Kinley (lively)
	Walcheran		
1810	Amboyna & Banda Neira, East Indies	Adm. Drury	Dover (Tucker) Cornwallis (Montagu) Caroline (C.Cole) Piedmontaise (Foote?)
	Isle de Bourbon	Capt. J. Rowley	
	St. Maura, Mediterranean	Capt G. Eyre	Belle Poule Leonidas (Griffiths)
	Guadeloupe	Sir A.Cochrane & Lt- Gen Beckwith	
1811	Batavia, East Indies	Rr-Adm Stopford & Lt- Gen Auchmuty	Leda (sayer) Nisus Caroline Phoebe Cornelia Modeste
	Cadiz	Sir R.G.Keats & Lt-Gen Graham	Druid St.Albans (Brace)
	Madura, East Indies		
	Palinoro	Capt. Duncan	Imperieuse(Duncan) Thames
1813	Pietra Nera	Capt R. Hall & Maj-Gen Stewart	
	Ponza	Capt Napier & Lt-Col Coffin	Thames (Mounsey?)
	St.George	Capt Hoste & Capt. Lowen (army)	Bacchante (Hoste)
1814	Baltimore	Sir A. Cochrane & Maj- Gen Ross	
	Genoa	Sir J. Rowley & Lt-Gen Lord W. Bentinck	Iphigenia
	Oswego, North America	Sir J. Yeo	
	Ragusa	Capt W. Hoste	Bacchante (Hoste)
	Washington	Sir A. Cochrane	
1815	Guadeloupe	Adm Sir. P.C.Durham & Sir James leith	
	New Orleans	Sir A.Cochrane & Maj- Gen Hon Sir E. Pakenham	Seahorse (Gordon)

## Appendix 9.1. Correspondence Between Seymour And Mends On The Morning Following The Capture Of The Niemen.

Robert Mends to Seymour. 7th April, 1809.

*".....have this morning sent a Lieut. and fifteen more seamen on board to fish her [i.e. Niemen's] foremast which is badly wounded and get up a jury fore topmast, which I perceive they are about; yesterday they reemed her guns and cleaned her decks. I apprehend that she had a great many men killed as a number of bodies were thrown overboard by our people.... As I suppose you were furnished with a complete set of Maps out of the Thetis, I should (not having any) very much like to have these [i.e. from the Niemen]. The private stores of the Captain and officers we had better divide between the two ships, then each party might do as they wished with their own share. Oil, paint and nails, of neither of which have we any, I should propose doing the same thing with; nor have we one broom or scrubbing brush in the ship. I should like to send for three or four pipes of the ship's wine to serve out to the prisoners, which the Purser shall account for at what the rest might sell. We have no candles on board and will fairly account for what we could be supplied with, but I believe all I have as yet mentioned would only go to waste. The cushions on the lockers in the Cabin would suit me very well if you do not want them yourself or if any value be sent on them I will become a purchaser. If you want them take them: I have not yet put my cabin to rights as Indeed I have not had workmen to spare from the ship's duty....*

*I caught a cold in my eyes yesterday which has made me very blind today, and afraid to show my head on deck. I wish to have my surgeon on board as soon as he can be spared in case of accident and should a ship of force come in sight having the appearance of an enemy, shall be under the necessity of withdrawing (for the time being) my people....."<sup>687</sup>*

Seymour, knowing that his colleagues in the Emerald were equally, if not more, entitled to a share of the prize money for the Niemen and its contents, seems to have sent back an icy reply, for Mends responded:

*"My dear Seymour, I agree with you respecting the private stores, let them remain where they are and be brought to account that way. Tis to me exactly the same thing. I mentioned receiving from Le Niemen what might have been accommodating to my officers, more on their account than my own. I also agree with you on the almost mispropriety of removing any thing from a prize for our own use. As it generally leads to a belief on the part of the people that they are not dealt justly by, but then my regulation in such cases is that whatever might be so taken, even poultry, is to be paid for at a market price. As you do not want the charts for yourself, Hill's claim<sup>688</sup> in this instance will I hope not be done injustice to if it yields to mine, as had the condition of our two ships been reversed I should unquestionably have held yours next in priority to my own. If you prefer those on board her to what you have, send for them, take your choice.....I am glad to hear you say that few French wines fetch such a good price at Plymouth and think our [author's emphasis] prize will turn out a very good one.....Believe me Seymour I am much more pleas'd at your not acceding to my proposal in the manner you have, than to have done so with reluctance."<sup>689</sup>*

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## NOTES

- 1 For an account of this action see James. *The Naval History of Great Britain*. 1, 106.  
 2 Edward Osler. *Life of Admiral Viscount Exmouth*. 91.  
 3 Thomas Haliburton, "The Arrival of the Chesapeake in Halifax in 1813", *American Neptune*,  
 57, 2. pp161-165.  
 4 *The Times*. January 21st, 1797.  
 5 Linda Colley. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. 180.  
 6 Hornblower, Ramage, Aubrey, Bolitho - all the fictional heroes of hugely selling modern  
 novels which are based (at least at first) on this image.  
 7 James. *Naval History*, i, 452  
 8 E.P. Brenton. *Naval History of Great Britain*. i, 37.  
 9 Lavery. *Nelson's Navy*, 40.  
 10 Henderson. *The Frigates; An account of the lesser warships of the great wars. 1793 - 1815*.  
 11 David Lyon, *The Sailing Navy List*, pxii.  
 12 See also discussion in Robert Gardiner. *The First Frigates: Nine-Pounder and Twelve-  
 Pounder Frigates 1748 - 1815*. 42.  
 13 See below for discussion on the role of the frigate. It is worth noting at this point, however,  
 that frigates could be adapted at comparatively short notice for troop carrying duties. On the  
 whole this did not affect their nomenclature, and after a particular expedition the ship would  
 revert to its normal duties. With some of the older ships however, they became redesignated or  
 down-rated to Troopships and did not return to their previous duties. Here there was often a  
 change in Commander and often a reduction both armament and complement. Therefore  
 where a ship is permanently reduced from frigate duties it has been disregarded.  
 14 Jean Boudriot. *History of the French Frigate 1650 - 1850*.  
 15 Gardiner, *The First Frigates*, 8.  
 16 Boudriot *History of the French Frigate*, 122.  
 17 Peter Padfield. *Tide of Empires*. ii, 195.  
 18 *The First Frigates*. pp10 - 12, 22; and Gardiner's chapter on Frigates in *Line of Battle*.  
 pp36 - 37.  
 19 Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 85.  
 20 The Fir built Unicorn frigates were all launched in 1757. Hussar was captured by the French in  
 1762. Boreas was sold as 'useless' in 1770. Shannon was broken up in 1765. Actaeon was  
 sold as unserviceable in 1766. Trent was sold as unserviceable in 1764.  
 21 Gardiner, *The First Frigates*, p17.; or Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 85.  
 22 This was actually the Clyde of 1796, rebuilt. Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 118.  
 23 Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 128.  
 24 See for example Gardiner. *The Heavy Frigate*. 34.  
 25 See comments in *The Line of Battle: The Sailing Warship 1650 - 1840*. 122.  
 26 *First Frigates*. pp18-19.  
 27 Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 9  
 28 See Lavery. *Line of Battle*, 38.  
 29 There is good evidence that the Southampton class were regarded as very good sailers in their  
 time and highly manoeuvrable. Southampton herself continued in active service until she  
 was wrecked on the Bahamas in 1812 under the command of Captain Sir James Yeo. See  
 Gardiner *The First Frigates*, 98.  
 30 Curiously, the longest surviving ships of each of these classes, the Southampton (see above)  
 and the Boston from the Richmond class, which was broken up in 1811, were built by the  
 same yard, Inwood's at Rotherhithe, and were the only ships in either class built by that yard.  
 See Gardiner, *First Frigates*, 24 and 27.; and Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, pp82-83.  
 31 *Line of Battle*, 37.  
 32 Hepper, *British Warship Losses in the Age of Sail*. 99.  
 33 Gardiner. *First Frigates*. 42.

- 34 Gardiner, *First Frigates*, 18.
- 35 Gardiner, *The Heavy Frigates*, 12.
- 36 This problem was solved by simply building frigates with a slightly longer gundeck, starting with the Artois class of 1793. Gardiner, *Heavy Frigates* pp28 - 33.
- 37 See table at Appendix 1.
- 38 See Gardiner. *Heavy Frigates*. 28.
- 39 La Forte was 170' in length; L'Egyptienne 169'8". The largest British built frigate was probably the 24-pdr gun, 1,277 ton Endymion at 159' 2 3/8", launched in 1797. But she was a one-off until five more, fir-built, versions of her class were built in 1813/14. Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 262.
- 40 Boudriot. *History of the French Frigate. 1650 - 1850*.
- 41 James, *Naval History of Great Britain*. vi, pp132 ssq.
- 42 See J.J. Colledge. *Ships of the Royal Navy*.
- 43 Gardiner, *First Frigates*, pp111 - 116.
- 44 Ibid. pp94 - 96.
- 45 Ibid. 95.
- 46 Of course one cannot still rule out the possibility that the Captain filing his report retained a degree of bias against his French built frigate.
- 47 ibid. 95.
- 48 Boudriot, *History of the French Frigate*, 191.
- 49 Ibid. 137.
- 50 Lyon refers to the belief in French design and build superiority as a "half truth of diminishing validity" during the course of the 18th century. *The Sailing Navy List*, 9 n.21
- 51 Gardiner, *First Frigates*, Chapter 12.
- 52 See *The Naval Chronicle*, ii, 1799, , pp585 sqq. This is probably another article by Sir John Borlase Warren. Note particularly the reference to the French Frigate Iphigenie on p590.
- 53 See D.K. Brown. "Speed of Sailing Warships 1793 - 1840" in *Les Empires En Guerre et Paix: 1793 - 1860*. Iles Journees franco-anglaises d'histoire de la marine. 1990. 160.
- 54 Ross, *Life of Saumarez*, pp216-7.
- 55 In March, 1800, the 18-pounder 36-gun frigate Penelope, Captain Henry Blackwood, engaged the French 80-gun Guillaume Tell for nearly five hours during the night, until British battle ships could approach close enough to join the engagement. James, *Naval History*, ii, pp440 - 444.
- 56 Ibid. ii, pp12 - 17.
- 57 The most well known of these were the squadrons commanded by Sir Edward Pellew and Sir John Borlase Warren, operating out of Falmouth between March 1796 and August, 1798. At their height, these consisted of eleven frigates between them.
- 58 Complement of ships as at 1807:
- |             |         |                   |
|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| First Rate  | 837     | Officers and men. |
| Second Rate | 719-738 | " "               |
| Third Rate  | 491-640 | " "               |
| Fourth Rate | 284-343 | " "               |
| Fifth Rate  | 195-264 | " "               |
| Sixth Rate  | 135-155 | " "               |
- (Source: Brian Lavery. *Nelson's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organisation, 1793 - 1815*. pp328 - 329.
- 59 This does need to be treated with some caution. If fir frigates could be produced quicker than hardwood ships it was more likely because the timber was available and ready sooner. Nevertheless the evidence does suggest that softwood was easier to work and this gave marginal advantage to fir-build construction. The construction times of the Artois class in 1794-1797 illustrates this. For example:-

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Laid down</u>	<u>Launched</u>	<u>Months</u>
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<u>Clyde</u> (Fir)	June, 1795	March, 1796	9
<u>Tamer</u> (Fir)	June, 1795	March, 1796	9
<u>Artois</u>	March, 1793	January, 1794	10
<u>Diana</u>	March 1793	March, 1794	12
<u>Diamond</u>	April, 1793	March, 1794	11
<u>Apollo</u>	March, 1793	March 1794	12.

(See Gardiner. *Heavy Frigates*, pp33 - 35; Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 118..

They were Carysfort, built in 1766; and Ambuscade, built in 1771;

See Capt. A. T. Mahan. *The influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire*, 1793 - 1812. ii, 220.

See the career of, for example, Captain Lord Cochrane (*Autobiography of a Seaman*, Chapter 14); Murray Maxwell (*Royal Naval Biography*, ii, 797); Thomas Byam Martin (*Royal Naval Biography*, i, 491) , for illustrations of this.

See Piers Mackesy, *War in the Mediterranean*. pp 113-115.

Although Admiralty policy on this changed during the course of the war. St. Vincent, for example, as First Lord of the Admiralty was strict about keeping ships out of harbour as much as possible.

For further discussion on the definition of the frigate see; Robert Gardiner. *The First Frigates*; Robert Gardiner, *The Heavy Frigates; Eighteen-Pounder frigates*, Volume 1, 1778-1800; David Lyon, *The Sailing Navy List*.

J.J. Colledge. *Ships of the Royal Navy*, Vol. 1. London. 1987.

Lyon. *The Sailing Navy List*.

Robert Gardiner, both *The First Frigates* and *The Heavy Frigates*,.

James, *Naval History*, i, Abstract 1.

See the ADM8 series List Books in the Public Record Office. These supply a monthly list of ships in Commission for most of the war, in bi-Annual volumes.

James, *Naval History*. Abstracts to each volume.

Admiralty List Books. Public Record Office. ADM8 series.

For more information on this problem see R. Morris. *The Royal Dockyards during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*.. Chapter 6.

See Gardiner op cit. and Lyons op cit.

See for example Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 274.

Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 80.

Lyon, *Sailing Navy List*, 233.

Gardiner. *Heavy Frigates*. pp30 - 31.

Wrecked - Alcmene 32, Solebay 32, Lively 38, Sirius 36, Magicienne 32, Nymphe 36 and Pallas 32 .

Captured - Proserpine 32, Junon 38, Nereide 36, Africaine 38(temporarily), Iphigenia 36, and Ceylon 32 .

( Hepper. *British Warship Losses in the age of sail 1650 - 1859*).

It is important that this is noted, because the tables of Analyses provided by David Hepper seem to deduct re-captured ships from the total of losses.

Lewis. *A Social History of the Navy 1793 - 1815*, 442.

Public Record Office. ADM8 series.

Middleton had been an experienced sea officer. In 1778 he became Comptroller of the Navy Board, and quickly earned a reputation as one of the most hard working and ablest administrators of his time. Described by N.A.M. Rodger as "one of the greatest civil leaders the Navy has ever had". (*The Admiralty*, 80).

Middleton Papers NMM Mid/103/22.

Laughton, *Barham Papers*, ii, pp365 - 367.

See in particular M. Duffy. *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*..

- 87 See Northcote Parkinson. *War in Eastern Seas, 1793 - 1815*. for a detailed overall account of this station.
- 88 Laughton, *Barham Papers*, ii, pp412-3.
- 89 N.B. For the purposes of these tables only, ships of between 20-24 guns have been included as "frigates", as the tables are intended to show all rated ships.
- 90 Mackesy, *War in the Mediterranean*, pp8 - 12.
- 91 This latter includes enemy Channel Ports and the Channel Islands.
- 92 See for example the activities of the Western Squadrons described in C. Northcote Parkinson's biography of *Edward Pellew, Viscount Exmouth*. pp99-138.
- 93 D.Syrett & R.L. DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy - 1660-1815*. NRS. (Aldershot. 1994)
- 94 Commander C.G.Pitcairn Jones. *List of Commissioned Sea Officers*. National Maritime Museum. Ref. GRE 359(42) (083.81).
- 95 John Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, (London. 1825); William O'Byrne, *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*, (London. 1849).
- 96 For a general background see M. Lewis, *England's Sea Officers*. and his *A Social History of the Navy: 1793-1815*.
- 97 For example, the Hon. George Elliott who, in July, 1800, went for his Lieutenant's examination in London, with a certificate stating he was 21 years of age; ".I was sixteen and four days.." Hon Sir G Elliott,. *Memoir of Admiral The Hon Sir George Elliott*, 25.
- 98 Ultimately there can be no doubt that being the son of a peer could give a distinct advantage when it came to early promotion to Lieutenant. For example, The Hon. Henry Duncan passed aged 17; the Hon. G. Cadogan at a very questionable 14 years.
- 99 See the Pitcairn-Jones List of Commissioned Sea Officers at the National Maritime Museum. Pitcairn Jones drew his information from the *Admiralty List Books* (see next chapter) Lists for the month of July each year. The disadvantage of using his list of Commissioned Sea Officers, however, is that he does not give any indication of the length of time an officer commanded any particular ship and records only the first entry.
- 100 Several names were not found in Pitcairn Jones list, these include Thomas Drury, W. Dudington, and W.B.Dolling.
- 101 For example, William Daniel who was posted in 1781, or William Fooks who was posted in 1779. Both of whom were alive well into the Revolutionary War. See *List of Commissioned Sea Officers*.
- 102 Thomas Fellowes, for example. posted in March, 1811, was given command of the Fawn sloop.
- 103 Although this could, in certain circumstances, be deleterious. See the career of Sir William Sidney Smith.
- 104 Pitcairn-Jones noted that in Steel's Navy List it was not uncommon for Captains' names to be listed two or three times, against different ships for the same month of the year. The most likely explanation for this was that Post Captains may often have been appointed to a new ship, and the news may have been broadcast, before he had returned his previous ship to port or been succeeded in his previous command. Pitcairn-Jones simply listed all of the names.
- 105 Eleven Percent commanded five ships; 15% commanded 6 or more ships.
- 106 That is 1774 Antelope, 1776 Greyhound, 1781 Dublin, 1787 Goliath, 1790 Captain.
- 107 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*. i, 332.
- 108 This has been done by taking *Steel's Navy Lists* for the year 1812, 1813 and 1814.
- 109 Windham Papers. British Library ADD 37,912. (f182). Letter from Lukin to Windham., dated 3rd November, 1795.
- 110 Philip D'Auvergne, The Hon. Michael de Courcy, Maurice Delgarno, Sir Archibald Dickson(1), Edmund Dod, John Leigh Douglas, Sir William Domett, Sir Andrew Snape Douglas, John Drew, Sir John Thomas Duckworth, Alexander Edgar, Edward Edwards, Sampson Edwards, Joseph Ellison, Robert Devereux Fancourt, Thomas Farnham, The Hon. Seymour Finch and Richard Fisher.
- 111 See An (Anonymous) *Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melville on the Present Condition of Officers in the Royal Navy*. By "A Post Captain", 49.

- 112 See Capt. W.H Smyth,. *The Life & Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, pp47 sqq.  
 113 Ignoring for the moment the rather exceptional William Don, who was 70 years of age.  
 114 See *The Private Correspondence of Admiral Lord Collingwood* ed. Edward Hughes. p 26.  
 115 Sir William Henry Dillon *A Narrative of my Professional Adventures (1790-1839)* Ed. M.A. Lewis, ii, pp99-100; *Service Afloat or The Naval Career of Sir William Hoste*, pp72-73.  
 116 See the case study of Captain Michael Seymour, in Chapter 9.  
 117 This estimate is based on the career information collected by John Marshall for those officer's whose surname begins with the letter D only.  
 118 See for example the career of Sir William Domett.  
 119 See Marshall *Royal Naval Biog. i* , 663.  
 120 The Earl's son John Astley Bennett may have been taken as a midshipman on Donnelly's ship.  
 121 Spencer may have considered it unseemly to promote one of his favourites before the usual one-year term as Commander had expired.  
 122 See Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, ii, 29.  
 123 See *Ibid.* x, 55.  
 124 The Admiralty List Books show that Hermione was in the West Indies continuously from July, 1793 until the mutiny in later, 1797. She had served on that station prior to that date also.  
 125 See D. Pope, *The Black Ship*.  
 126 W. H. Dillon' *A Narrative*, i, pp307-308.  
 127 Although not mentioned in the text, other officers suffered in various ways; Ross Donnelly, for example had to resign command of the Invincible 74 because of the onset of a cataract.  
 128 M. Lewis, *Social History of the Royal Navy*, pp402 sqq.  
 129 *The Naval Chronicle.* ix, 423.  
 130 See Vice-Admiral Elphinstone's return of officers promoted etc. PRO ADM6/65.  
 131 Capt. A. Murray. *Memoir of the Life and Services of Admiral Durham.* 62.  
 132 See Marshall, *Royal naval Biography*, x , 217.  
 133 *Ibid.*, ix, 136.  
 134 *Naval Chronicle.* xxxix, 264.  
 135 Lt John Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*  
 William O'Byrne. *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*.  
 136 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, iii 3, 411.  
 137 Even then Donnelly's promotion was not automatic. In spite of a number of representations on his behalf, including one by the Earl of Tankerville, he did not receive promotion to Commander until a month after the event. Whereas promotion was usually instantaneous.  
 138 Admiralty List Books. Books ADM8/69-ADM8/100  
 139 Ironically towards the end of the war the Government started producing its own version of the List of Commissioned Officers, with the result that Steel, who had provided the information throughout the War, eventually went bankrupt.  
 140 Commander C.G.Pitcairn Jones. *List of Commissioned Sea Officers.* National Maritime Museum. Ref. GRE 359(42) (083.81).  
 141 In actual fact, for the purpose of this thesis, approximately 100 additional names have been excluded because a). their command period does not exceed 1 month and b). their existence as Post Captains cannot be verified. In some cases doubtful names have been excluded.  
 142 Syrett & DiNardo, *The Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy; 1660-1815*,  
 143 1771 (1); 1772 (3); 1773 (5); 1774 (3); 1775 (2).  
 144 Troubridge was promoted from Midshipman to Post-Captain in approximately 1 year and nine months; Townshend in three and a half years. Peachey and Dunn took between five and a half and six years - however their frigate command would seem to have been of very brief duration.  
 145 However, of the five Lieutenants passing in 1787, Sir Harry Burrard/Neale was posted in 1793, Stephen Church and Matthew Henry Scott in 1794, Henry Blackwood in 1795 and John Wood(6) in 1800. Those passing in 1788 were posted as follows: W. Affleck in 1791; George

- Johnstone Hope and William Brown in 1793; James Macnamara(2) in 1795, and David Lloyd(3) in 1799.
- 146 The point does need to be made that there was a degree of dishonesty when it came to declaring age upon entry into the Navy. This being the case, some of the officers cited here would actually have been younger than estimated. See Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy*, pp 161-162.
- 147 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. i, 350.
- 148 M.A. Lewis, *The Navy In Transition 1814-1864: A Social History*. pp67-68.
- 149 Ibid.
- 150 Sir Edward Pellew, Sir Isaac Coffin, Sir Thomas Troubridge, John Markham, Sir Eliab Harvey & Sir William Sidney Smith.
- 151 The Treaty was signed on 27th March, 1802.
- 152 Once again, this is suggested by the fact that one of the Officers posted later, in this year on the 5th September, was the Hon Sir Anthony Maitland. Son of the Earl of Lauderdale who also became First Lord of the Admiralty in September!
- 153 The Hon Pownoll Bastard Pellew, The Hon Jocelyn Percy, Hon Sir Anthony Maitland, Hon Granville Proby.
- 154 Michael Lewis, *England's Sea Officers*, 138.
- 155 John Beeler, 'Fit for Service Abroad: Promotion, Retirement and Royal Navy Officers, 1830-1890', *Mariners Mirror*. 81. No 3. August, 1995. pp300-303.
- 156 See Pitcairn Jones List.
- 157 Dates for these calculations are taken from Syrett & DiNardo's list of *Commissioned Sea Officers*. It should be noted that the number in the sample corresponds to the number of Captains posted in that year. In some cases some of those may not have been included in this calculation of age, as the dates of their promotions may not have been known.
- 158 Where age can be calculated.
- 159 Obituary in the *Naval Chronicle*, xxvii, 176.
- 160 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, 83.
- 161 J. Pack, *The Man who burned the Whitehouse*, 30.
- 162 It wasn't always. See for example the cases of James Macnamara, John Cooke(2) and Charles Napier.
- 163 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, 577.
- 164 See also *Debrett's Complete Peerage*, 394.
- 165 Ibid., 552.
- 166 For the story of James Bowen's promotion see M. A. Lewis. *Social History of the Navy*, 54-55. However the reader is also referred to Syrett and DiNardo's *List of Commissioned Sea Officers* as there is a significant conflict over dates of Commissions.
- 167 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, ii, 123; William O'Byrne. *Naval Biographical Dictionary*. I, 490.
- 168 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, ii, 195; O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, i, 167
- 169 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. ii, 184.
- 170 The reader is directed to almost any biography of Nelson for a full account of this sorry tale.
- 171 To this list could also be added the Hon Sir Anthony Maitland, second son of Earl Lauderdale, posted in 1806 at the age of 21. See O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, ii, 712.
- 172 ADM8/69-100. PRO. Kew.
- 173 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, pp530 sqq.
- 174 There are one or two exceptions to this, where names contained in the List Books cannot be found in other sources.
- 175 They are John Erskine Douglas, Ross Donnelly, Philip Somerville, Thomas Graves 4), John Gore, Robert Laurie & E.C.W.R. Owen, Charles Adam and the Hon. George Elliott.



- 176 Sir Edward Pellew, posted in 1782 served as a Frigate Captain for approximately 6.5 years after the outbreak of the War with Revolutionary France. Jonathan Faulknor, posted in the same year served 6 years; Sir Alexander Cochrane served 5.75 years. Sir Richard Strachan, posted in 1783, served 6 years and the Hon Michael De Courcy, posted in the same year, served .5 years.
- 177 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, I, 635; O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, i, 207.
- 178 That is, Sir Edward Codrington, Bart.
- 179 Here the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the ADM8 records disagree. According to the Admiralty Lists, Codrington was replaced in command of the Druid by Sir Richard King. She became a troopship in 1798.
- 180 She became a troopship in 1798.
- 181 "I think my Master Codrington will be very glad to get rid of his Orion, for he hates the thing, and took the ship a` la maniere d'aquit, as many others have done." Admiral Markham to St. Vincent. 26th November, 1806. *Letters of Admiral Markham*, 63.
- Another reason for Codrington's reluctance may have been his marriage and the birth of a son whom he had not had to leave before. (See D & S Howarth, *Nelson the Immortal Memory*, 312.
- 182 Coffin had already been made Commander, but had no ship. See entry in *DNB*.
- 183 My emphasis.
- 184 A. M. Stirling. *Pages and Portraits From the Past*, pp31-32. In fact Hotham's opinion of Coffin did not improve with experience. It is clear that he despised Coffin for lacking the tact and manners of a Gentleman, yet he had to admit that not only was Coffin "one of the best practical seamen in the Navy" but he "...steered, reefed and hove the lead, better than any man on board his ship. He was thoroughly master of any business he undertook...". *Ibid.*, 34.
- 185 Amory, T.C. *The Life of Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Bart.* Boston. 1886. 54. Amory also records that Coffin was given command of the Venus frigate after 1796, but this is not recorded in the Admiralty List Books.
- 186 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, 386.
- 187 *Ibid.* ii, 60.
- 188 The Bien Venue was renamed the Undaunted.
- 189 *Ibid.*, I, 528; O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, i, 170.
- 190 See entry in *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 191 For example Samuel Ballard, who commanded the Pearl for six years; Philip Beaver who commanded the Acasta and the Nisus for a period of 5.25 years; Sir Philip Broke, commanded the Druid and then the Shannon for 8.5 years; or Richard Hawkins who commanded the Minerva alone for 7 years.
- 192 M. Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy. 1793-1815*, . Chapter 1.
- 193 Note the following statistics are taken from Lewis's Tables I & II, (pages 31 & 36 of *A Social History of the Navy*. The statistics have been re-grouped for the purposes of this thesis).
- 194 This includes 6.7% of "working class" origin.
- 195 For example, Marryatt gives a description of a frigate Captain with whom he served who was not a gentleman and then concludes: "Impressment and the want of officers at the early part of the war, gave him an opportunity of becoming a Lieutenant.....The service had received serious injury by admitting men on the quarter-deck from before the mast; it occasioned there being two classes of officers in the navy - namely, those who had rank and connections, and those who had entered by the "hawseholes", as they were described. The first were favoured when young, and did not acquire a competent knowledge of their duty; the second, with few exceptions, as they advanced in their grades, proved, from want of education, more and more unfit for their stations." Frederick Marryatt, *Frank Mildmay: or The Naval Officer*, pp167-168.
- 196 M. A. Lewis. *A Social History of the Navy*. Chapters 12-13.
- 197 *Ibid.*, 420.
- 198 James, *Naval History of Britain*, iii, 83.
- 199 See R. Gardiner, *The First Frigates*, 101.
- 200 James, *Naval History*, i, pp110-114.

- 201 **Edward Cooke** has been included here even though he died as a result of his wounds several  
 202 days after the engagement  
 203 James, *Naval History*. iv, pp328-9.  
 204 Ibid., vi, 186.  
 205 Dillon, W.H. *A Narrative*, 147.  
 206 *Naval Chronicle* , xxxi, 1814 , 352.  
 207 Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Half-Mad Lord*.  
 208 Dates given here are intended as a rough guide only. Gaps in service are ignored in this  
 209 table.  
 210 John Turnor actually died in 1801. See Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers*.  
 211 Cochrane's career was abruptly terminated (for a period) after being found guilty of a major  
 212 stock exchange fraud - in very questionable circumstances.  
 213 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, iv, 502.  
 214 The became known as the "Grand Fleet" during the second war.  
 215 The Western frigate Squadrons, for the duration of their existence, were Listed separately  
 216 from the Channel Fleet, even though geographically, they acted on the same station.  
 217 Duncan's Squadron was listed separately from the North Sea command. See PRO ADM8/75-  
 218 76.  
 219 The size of Warren's Squadron varied between 1-6 frigates, being at it's strongest from  
 220 March, 1796, to November of that year. Pellew's Squadron was never as large, averaging  
 221 three frigates, but consisting of five on three different occasions.  
 222 James, *Naval History*, v, pp293-294.  
 223 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, ix, 32. I am grateful to N.A.M. Rodger for suggesting  
 224 this interpretation.  
 225 C. Northcote Parkinson, *War in the Eastern Sea ; 1793-1815*,. Chapter Fourteen.  
 226 St. Helen's was the normal assembly place for Convoys or for ships about to depart from  
 227 Portsmouth. Wind conditions generally determined that there had to be a waiting period  
 228 here after sailing from Spithead.  
 229 Some statistics may not total exactly 100%.  
 230 Serrell certainly served in the Baltic towards the end of the second war, for some time.  
 231 Unfortunately his service there is not recorded in the List Books.  
 232 Stackpoole was certainly serving in American waters in 1814.  
 233 Gilpin, W. *Memoir of Josias Rogers Esq.* p54.  
 234 M. Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, pp106-114.  
 235 Gilpin. Op cit. 98.  
 236 For example, **The Hon Henry Curzon, Charles Ekins, Alexander Fraser**.  
 See Appendix 6.1. Even among the longest serving frigate Captains there was a tendency for  
 service in the West Indies to concentrate before the period 1793-1803.  
 1793-1794 Expedition under Sir John Jervis; 1795-1796 Expedition under Rear Admiral  
 Christian; and the Expedition of 1796-1797 under Admiral Harvey (then station  
 Commander in Chief).  
 Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, 155.  
 Including a landing against the port of Stralsund in 1807, which had been the base for a number  
 of privateers.  
 The Helder in 1799 and the Scheldt/Walcheran in 1809.  
 R. Seymour, *Memoir of Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Bart. KCB*,. 79.  
 See for example, O.A. Sherrard, *A Life of Lord St. Vincent*. Chapter X1.  
*Journals and Letters of Thomas Byam Martin*.,291.  
 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, iv, 619.  
 Warren was Commander in Chief of what became the Halifax, Jamaica and Leeward Island  
 station, from 1812-1814 when he was succeeded by Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane.  
 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, ii, 558. Also James, *Naval History*, v, 69.  
 Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy*, pp. 27 sqq.  
 However, note discussion in Chapter 3 of this Thesis.

- 237 Here one feels obliged to mention Christopher Cole again, who was a younger brother of Frank Cole, a close friend of Edward Pellew and had another brother serving as domestic chaplain to HRH the Duke of Clarence; and G. Harris, who was the son of the proprietor of the Covent garden Theatre.
- 238 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, ix, p4.
- 239 See Marshall “ “ “ “ .
- 240 Though sometimes even the best seamen Captains could fail to please. Among the papers of Samuel Hood at the National Maritime Museum is his letter book compiled whilst commanding the Juno and a small frigate squadron off the coast of Smyrna in 1793-94, and containing letters to his Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Lord William Hotham. One, a letter dated 24th November, 1794, positively howls with protest that he is not delaying putting to sea, and complaining of the poor local craftsmanship and lack of timber to replace two of his frigates' bowsprits. (NMM MKH/246).
- 241 See Chapter 1; and Gardiner, *The First Frigates*, 98.
- 242 R. Gardiner, . *The Heavy Frigate*, 93.
- 243 James, *Naval History*, i, 236.
- 244 Grenville Papers. British Library ADD 59004. Letter f184.
- 245 Whilst the Brilliant may have been small and comparatively lightly armed, and was neither fast nor able to bear a press of sail, she was highly manoeuvrable. All of her class were considered to be comfortable ships in heavy weather and it may be that it took a particularly good seaman to get the best out of her. This is ironic because Barrie was wrecked in the Pomone in October, 1811, as a result of the poor navigation of the Master..
- 246 Bayntun commanded five frigates in all during the war with Revolutionary France. The last two were, however, for very short periods. They were the Lowestoft 32 gun 12-pdr and the same sized Quebec which had also been the third Frigate he commanded.
- 247 This was the Indefatigable which was being razeed from a 64 gun ship at the time. It is possible that Robinson's commission was one of "caretaker" as it only lasted two months.
- 248 The Mediator.
- 249 The Lavinia launched in 1806 and one of the heaviest frigates built for the Royal Navy.
- 250 The Sir Francis Drake; purchased from the East India Company.
- 251 In 1812 briefly commanded the Salsette/Doris for some months before being given the Endymion.
- 252 The Mediator launched in 1804.
- 253 Montagu's second frigate was actually the purchased East Indiaman Marquis Cornwallis. By 1806 it had been down rated to a Troopship and renamed Akbar. According to the Admiralty List Books, it was rated as a 5th Rate. Because of this ambiguity it has not been included in this table.
- 254 It has been assumed that a gap of up to 6 months might be the result of delays in communication. Any gap longer than this has been taken as a definite indication of unemployment (unless contradicted by Pitcairn Jones).
- 255 Pitcairn Jones *List of Commissioned Sea Officers*..
- 256 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, 548.
- 257 G.E. Manwaring and B. Dobree, *The Floating Republic*, pp. 81 et seq.
- 258 The Niger's crew refused to join the mutiny despite being present at the Nore.
- 259 Although Pitcairn Jones thought that Jonas Rose may have commanded a 26-gun ship during this time.
- 260 See Chapter 1. Statistics from Admiralty List Books. ADM8 series.
- 261 An example of this is found in the career of John Phillimore, who was given the troopship Diadem in 1810. Captain Andrew Drew, who wrote an obituary of Phillimore commented that the Diadem was "not a very agreeable service for a dashing young officer" but as aspiring officers tended to refuse the lesser commands the Admiralty made troopship command a stepping stone to promotion "...and with Post Captains the high road to the command of a frigate."

A. Drew, 'Memoir of John Phillimore'. in *United Services Journal*. June. 1850. Part 2. 276.

- 262 In fact all three were posted in 1790, the same year as Sir Edward Buller. Pitcairn-Jones  
thought that Cole might have commanded the *Eurydice* 24 at the beginning of the war.
- 263 Those two being Thomas Harvey(2) who reached flag rank in 1821, and Hugh Downman  
who did the same in 1825. See Syrett & DiNardo. *Commissioned Sea Officers*.
- 264 See for example: R. Hill, *Prizes of War*, M.A. Lewis, *A Social History of the Royal Navy*,  
pp316- 330; G.J. Marcus, *Heart of Oak*, pp124-126.; D. Pope, *Life in Nelson's Navy*, pp231-  
241; B. Lavery, *Nelson's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organisation: 1793-1815.*, pp109-110, et  
al;
- 265 NMM Letterbooks 58/1-1. For example Letter 280, 9 April, 1811; Letter 359, 28 May, 1813.  
266 He reached Flag Rank in 1799. Syrett & DiNardo. *The Commissioned Sea Officers of the  
Royal Navy*.
- 267 First Lord of the Admiralty, 1788-95.  
268 *Correspondence of Lord Collingwood*, 23.  
269 Ibid. 26.  
270 "...Their most common employment is the convoy, which is a constant worry: in the line  
they are the weakest ships, for which reason when any detachment is made they are the  
ships..". Ibid.
- 271 Collingwood's first frigate was the *Pelican*, a 24-gun post-ship which foundered in August,  
1781. In 1782/83 he also commanded the new 44-gun frigate *Mediator* for a brief time.  
Both commands were in the West Indies.
- 272 It should be remembered that Collingwood was writing at the time of the Spanish Armament  
and, therefore, it was anticipated that hostilities would break out with Spain, leaving the rich  
South American trade routes open to attack. Elsewhere in the letter Collingwood expresses a  
fear that he might be sent to the East Indies where no prizes would be available since the  
Spanish had comparatively little interests there, their main interest being the Philippines.  
Although many Captains may have dreamed of capturing one of the Spanish 'Manila'  
treasure ships, their voyages were infrequent.
- 273 This increase in pay seems to have been effective from September, 1806.  
274 Daily pay for this period is based on a division of the given annual figure before deduction of  
income tax but after deductions of 3d per Pound for the widows fund, 1s per month to the  
Chest and 6d per month for the Royal Hospital. See *Steel's Navy List*, August 1810.
- 275 Lewis, M. *A Social History of the Navy*, 296.  
276 Although this would not have prevented him taking merchantmen.  
277 That is, Junior on the list of Captains. Martin is not implying that all Captains of line of  
battle ships are junior to frigate Captains.
- 278 *Journals and Letters of Sir Thomas Byam Martin*. iii, 342.  
279 Capt. W.H. Smyth. *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*. London. 1829.  
pp156-157.
- 280 The young The Hon George Elliott provides an interesting illustration of naval officers attitude  
towards maintaining adequate social standards in entertainment at sea. Elliott happened to be  
at a ball in Essex when his orders arrived to take command of the *Termagent* sloop in the  
Mediterranean. Elliott was at Portsmouth the next morning for a passage to his new command,  
pausing only to collect the unassembled cloth of his new uniform (it was stitched together by  
Marine tailors en route). On arrival he had no livestock, cutlery, plates or glasses. Fortunately,  
and perhaps not purely out of philanthropy, his brother Captains rallied round to give him the  
necessary equipment. Elliott records that amongst those helping him at this time were Thomas  
Hardy, John Gore, Ross Donnelly and Sir Richard Moubray. See *Memoir of Admiral The  
Hon. Sir George Elliott*, 37.
- 281 Rainier papers. National Maritime Museum. RAI/201. Also transcribed in C. Northcote  
Parkinson's *War in the Eastern Seas 1793-1815*. pp432-436.  
282 Gilpin. *Memoirs of Josias Rogers, Esq.* 88.  
283 Byam Martin, T. *Letters of Sir Thomas Byam Martin*. i. 157.

- 284 Seymour R. *Memoir of Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Bart. KCB.* pp58-59.  
 285 Captains could submit a claim for the reimbursement of costs when carrying important  
 passengers - but these claims were not always accepted.  
 286 See Gilpin. *Memoirs*, 69.  
 287 Ibid., 96.  
 288 Smyth *The Life & Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, 152.  
 289 Some other cases of this may be found, for example, in the careers of Charles Elphinstone  
 Fleeming, (Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, 577); James Hillyar, (Ibid., ii, 849);  
 George Hope, (*Naval Chronicle*, xxix. 1818, p424); Richard Goodwin Keats, (*Royal Naval  
 Biography*, i, 342); Francis Laforey, (*Royal Naval Biography*, I, 446); Henry Matson, (*Royal  
 Naval Biography*, ii, 743); Ben Hallowell, (*Royal Naval Biography*, i, 465). and arguably  
 Josias Rowley, (*Royal Naval Biography*, i, 622). In the latter case, however, there were  
 very specific reasons for his move to a frigate, this being to lead a frigate squadron in the Indian  
 Ocean, (See James, *Naval History*, v, pp.166-187: also Northcote Parkinson, *War in the  
 Eastern Seas*. Chapters XXI & XXII.).  
 290 In 1804, Sir Charles Middleton, previously a Commissioner of the Admiralty and shortly to  
 become First Lord (as Lord Barham) wrote recommending that Captain's Journals should be  
 frequently inspected to ensure that they were not straying from their stations in search of  
 prizes. See Letters and Papers of Charles, Lord Barham. NRS. 1911. p39.  
 291 Letter to Admiral John Markham in *Selections from the Correspondence of Admiral Sir John  
 Markham*, 60.  
 292 C. Northcote Parkinson. *Edward Pellew: Viscount Exmouth*, 196.  
 293 These are concisely included by Steel in the Prize Pay List.  
 294 Steel's Prize Pay Lists. London. 1802. pxii.  
 295 R. Hill, *The Prizes of War: The Naval Prize System in the Napoleonic Wars 1793-1815*. 246.  
 296 Dillon, *A Narrative*, i, 79.  
 297 A frigate sailing under the orders of a fleet or port Admiral lost one-eighth of its prize money  
 to that flag officer. See previous discussion.  
 298 Dillon, *A Narrative*, I, 77.  
 299 For the reader's information the comparative value of the pound with 1996 was as follows:  
     1793 - £48.06.  
     1800 - £26.98.  
     1810 - £25.63.  
 Figures supplied by the Bank of England Information Office. December, 1996.  
 300 Niger 32, A.K. Legge; Latona 38, Edward Thornborough; Pegasus 28, Robert Barlow;  
Phaeton 38, William Bentinck, Aquilon 32, Hon Robert Stopford; Southampton 32, Hon.  
 Robert Forbes; Venus 32, William Brown. Listed in Brenton, E.P. *The Naval History of  
 Great Britain*, i, pp. 143-4.  
 301 Hill suggests that approximately 20,000 Licences were issued annually up to, and including  
 1811. *Prizes of War*. 53.  
 302 James, *Naval History of Great Britain*, i. 100.  
 303 *The Naval Chronicle*, xxv, 357,  
 304 Douglas was sailing under the command of Rear-Admiral John Gell, bound for the  
 Mediterranean, however the prizes were taken on the Channel Station. Lord Howe,  
 Commander-in-Chief of that station would therefore have received £6,500.  
 305 The Channel Fleet.  
 306 *The Naval Chronicle* Ibid., 358.  
 307 Hill estimates that Pellew made a total of £300,000 in prize money during the war. *Prizes of  
 War*. 70.  
 308 Warren served 4.75 years; Strachan, 6 years & Pellew, 7 years.  
 309 Hill, *Prizes of War*, 194 & 179.  
 310 Northcote Parkinson. *Edward Pellew: Viscount Exmouth*. p184 sqq.  
 311 Cochrane. *The Autobiography of a Seaman*, 87.  
 312 Phillimore, Admiral Sir Augustus. *The Last of Nelson's Captains*, 123-4.

- 313 *Letters of Sir Thomas Byam Martin, I*, pp.177-191,  
 314 Seymour, R. *Memoir of Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour*, 61.  
 315 Sample figures are as follows: August, 1806 = 5%; August 1807 = 20%; July 1810 = 7%;  
 July 1812 = 8%; July 1813 = 9%.  
 All statistics drawn from the Admiralty List Books. PRO ADM/8 series.
- 316 Dillon, *A Narrative*, i, 101.  
 317 Ibid. i, 110.  
 318 Capt. A Crawford, *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer*, p30.  
 319 Capt. F. Chamier, *Life of a Sailor*, 170.  
 320 This is of course theoretically speaking. A Midshipman was usually only as wealthy as his  
 allowance made him, therefore, a Midshipman from a well-off family was likely to be well  
 provided for. On the other hand, of course, the autobiographical reminiscences of all officers of  
 this period associate the midshipmens' berth with long periods of poverty.
- 321 F. Marryatt, *Frank Mildmay or The Naval Officer*, 66.  
 322 J.S. Carden, *Memoir of Admiral Carden*, 153.  
 323 Sir Robert. Gardiner, *Memoir of Sir Graham Moore*, 14.  
 324 Crawford, *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer*, i, 65.  
 325 Northcote Parkinson, *Edward Pellew*, 213.  
 326 Dillon, *A Narrative* 1, 147.  
 327 Crawford, *Reminiscences*, I, 240.  
 328 Ibid. I, 242.  
 329 Although it is noticeable how many frigate officers lay stress on their own ability to go aloft  
 and carry out other manual tasks associated with seamanship. It may be that where there was a  
 tendency for all officers to "lend a hand" there was a blurring of social differences at sea among  
 the younger and junior officers - and that this might have contrasted strongly with life on board  
 a ship of the line.
- 330 It might also be noted that on those occasions when the Midshipmen from the Immortalite  
 went on a late night social spree, they do not appear to have been concerned about the seamen  
 having to wait in boats for them at the seashore. Crawford *Reminiscences*, i, 78.
- 331 Lord Radstock.  
 332 Nelson was knighted presumably because he carried the rank of Commodore and/or because  
 technically he was a Vice-Admiral. The knighthood was, therefore, a compromise.  
 333 See James, *Naval History of Great Britain*, i, 106.  
 334 Ibid. i, pp.114-116.  
 335 An interesting reminder of the 18th century practice of sinecures.  
 336 Ross, Sir John. *Memoirs and Correspondence of Admiral Lord de Saumarez*, I, 116.  
 337 Laforey inherited a Baronetcy a few years later on the death of his father.  
 338 James, *Naval History*, i, 316.  
 339 James notes that the cannonade between the Santa Margarita and the Tamise lasted twenty  
 minutes, whilst that between the Unicorn and the Tribune lasted 35 minutes; an odd disparity  
 given the relative broadside weights. But see also reference in the next chapter. See James,  
*Naval History*, i, p365 sqq.
- 340 Ibid. . i, 368.  
 341 Ibid. i, 399.  
 342 Ironically even William James later thought Bowen's treatment was unjust. Even Nelson's  
 later attempts to get a monument erected as a memorial to Bowen in St. Paul's Cathedral  
 were rejected as the attack on Santa Cruz had been a failure. Ibid. ii, 67.
- 343 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. i, 491.  
 344 James clearly felt that Fitzroy, son of the Duke of Grafton, had acted with less than the usual  
 zeal. Two months later the Aeolus was part of a squadron under the command of Sir  
 Richard Strachan which attacked a similar French squadron. James virtually accused Fitzroy  
 of cowardice as a result of both incidents and, in 1823, Fitzroy was forced to publish a pamphlet  
 refuting James' insinuations. James, *Naval History*, iv, pp56-64; and pp3-11.

Fitzroy was dismissed by Court Martial in April, 1811, for oppressive and tyrannical behaviour, but was quietly reinstated five months later. Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. viii , 448.

345 James, *Naval History*. iv , 162.

346 He was promoted Lieutenant in January , 1802. According to his own papers he was posted into the Dedaigneuse in February, 1805. (See NMM RAI/201/1-11). John Marshall states that his official Posting was on January, 17th, 1806. *Royal Naval Biography*, ii , 977.

347 See below Chapter 9.

348 A number of frigate Captains were honoured in June, 1815, including **Peter Rainier, John Phillimore and Edmund Palmer**.

349 A bracketed number following the name indicates that there were several naval officers with the same name. It has become the convention to identify the different officers in this fashion and I have followed the numbering allocated in the Syrett & DiNardo List of *Commissioned Sea Officers*. It should be noted that this system of numbering pre-dates the list and will be found in some contemporary sources.

350 It must be said that there may be some doubt about Thomas Graves' record. According to Pitcairn Jones, he commanded the Blenheim 74 in 1804. But the Admiralty List Books record his command of the Venus frigate for a further year. It has been difficult finding verification of his career record.

351 One of the difficulties with Fleetwood Pellew's records is that he was promoted early by his father on the East Indies station, and the Admiralty List Books become confused about both his service and his promotion - as no doubt their Lordships themselves were!

352 See for example James Pack. *The Man Who Burned the White House*. pp29-30. Also see comments in R. Morris, . *Cockburn and the British Navy in Transition*. 1997. p28.

353 Syrett & DiNardo, *List of Commissioned Sea Officers*, 72.

354 Tom Pocock, *Remember Nelson: The Life of Captain Sir William Hoste*. pp79-80.

355 O'Byrne, *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*. i , 3.

356 Admiral Sir Augustus Phillimore,. *The Last of Nelson's Captains*, 74.

357 Phillimore, in his biography of Sir William Parker, makes this point and then qualifies it by adding that Parker had a good friend in his own Captain, Sir John Duckworth, who was also a friend of the family. Ibid. 60.

358 See a letter from St. Vincent quoted in Phillimore, Ibid. pp80-81.

359 Others include **The Hon Charles Herbert** (son of an Earl); **Sir Henry Blackwood** (son of an Irish baronet); **The Hon Thomas Bladen Capel** (son of the Earl of Essex); **Frederick L. Maitland** (cousin of the Earl of Lauderdale); **The Hon. Duncan Pleydell Bouverie** (son of the Earl of Radnor); **The Hon George Elliot** (son of the Earl of Minto); **Lord George Stuart (2)** (Grandson of the Marquess of Bute).

360 For example: The Hon. F. Aylmer, The Hon. J. A. Bennett (died 1812); The Hon William Cathcart; The Hon. Archibald Cochrane; The Hon. Lord Viscount Falkland (possibly insane and was killed in a duel in 1809); The Hon Robert Forbes (1); The Hon George Poullett.

361 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*, Vol...,p381.

362 Althorp MSS quoted in A. Aspinal. *The Later Correspondence of George III*, ii. 2. Cambridge. p328 n.1.

363 The following extract from a letter of St. Vincent to Sir John Carter, is fairly blunt.

"...The circumstances of the war, and numerous connexions of the Spencer Family, have contributed to swell the list of post-Captains and commanders to an enormous size, insomuch I have determined not to promote to those ranks, except in cases of extraordinary merit and service, until the worthy on half-pay are provided for...." *Letters of Lord St. Vincent 1801-1804*. i , 331.

364 *Letters of Admiral Markham*. 2.

365 The others being **Hamilton, Halsted, Durham, King, Owen** and of course **Fleetwood Pellew**. Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. I, 576.

366 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*, ii , 302.

368 For a wider discussion on this issue see M. Lewis. *Social History of the Navy, 1793-1815*.

pp27 sqq.

369

Members of Parliament and year of first election are as follows:

Charles Hamilton (1790/1801) - it should be noted that there is a dispute here between Syrett & DiNardo's dates and those given in Marshall; Sir Harry Neale (1790); Joseph Sidney Yorke (1790); Philip Durham (1830); George Cockburn (1818); The Hon. Charles Herbert (1806); George Mundy (1818); The Hon George Elliott (1832). See Syrett & Dinardo, *The Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy*.

370

The Diamond

371

However, please note the previous remark that the Channel Station extended down to the coast of Portugal.

372

James, *Naval History*, iii , 127.

373

Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*, ii , 44. See also, Capt. E. P. Brenton, *The Naval History of Great Britain* , i, 545, which also records that the Phoebe's First Lieutenant, John Wentworth Holland was promoted Commander and then, shortly after, Post Captain.

374

Unfortunately information on the careers of certain officers is rather scant. The case of **Captain Richard Hawkins** provides a good example. Hawkins had a fairly distinguished career as a Midshipman, and as Lieutenant of the Theseus 74, was wounded at the Battle of the Nile. He was posted in 1802 but given no command until 1807 when he was appointed to the frigate Minerve. Although he commanded her for seven years, it has been possible to find only one incident worthy of note; that being, the chase of a French brig in September, 1808. Even John Marshall had to finish his biographical entry with the rather despairing comment that Hawkins "...does not appear to have had any opportunity of distinguishing himself whilst in her[Minerve].." He was subsequently placed on half pay. John Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography* , iii , 329.

375

In another example Captain Henry Hope, (although not a frigate specialist as such), issued a challenge to the American frigate United States, to meet him in a frigate duel. The action was however forbidden by Hope's Commodore (Sir Thomas Hardy), because the United States was a much heavier frigate than Hope's Endymion.

376

Quoted in P. Padfield *Broke & The Shannon* . , 67.

377

James, *Naval History*, I , 367.

378

Cheering when going into action was also something of a British naval tradition. See, for example, the engagement between the Nymphe and the Cleopatre in June, 1793, in which the crews of both ships cheered before opening fire.

379

Capt. The Hon E. Plunkett. *The Past and Future of the British Navy*, 270.

380

The weather gauge (i.e. being to windward) was generally regarded as the best attacking position as it enabled the attacking ship to decide when or whether, to close with the enemy. It had some disadvantages however, if the wind strengthened to any degree the engaged guns were likely to spend longer pointing down towards the water as the ship heeled.

381

James. *Naval History*, ii , 105.

382

See comments in J. Henderson. *The Frigates: An account of the lesser warships of the great French Wars 1793-1815*, pp150-151.

383

See Letter quoted in Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. ii , 849.

384

Nicholas, Sir N. H. (ed.) *Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson*. IV, 186 & 384.

385

James. *Naval History*. v , pp283 sqq.

386

See James. *Naval History*. ii , pp384 sqq.

387

The ships in this squadron were Clyde (Cunningham), Loire (James Newman), Jason (Murray), Maidstone (Ross Donnelly), Trent (Sir Edward Hamilton), Lapwing (Edward Rotherham), Hydra (Captain Paget) and Tartar (John Walker). See the Cunningham papers. NMM CUN/1/55a.

388

For a detailed discussion on this subject, see Patrick Crowhurst. *The French War on Trade: Privateering 1793-1815*..



- 389 Crowhurst. *Ibid.* A clear indication of the level of activity can be seen in the statistics for the number of French seamen captured in privateers for each year of the war. Given in Crowhurst's Appendix 1.
- 390 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography.* i , 342.
- 391 *Ibid.* i , 411.
- 392 Crowhurst, . *French War on Trade.* p116.
- 393 *Ibid.* 66.
- 394 *Ibid.* 36.
- 395 See *Steel's Prize Pay List 1793-1802.*, 45.
- 396 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography,* ii, 44.
- 397 *Ibid.* ii , 310.
- 398 *Ibid.* i , 753; O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary,* ii , 921.
- 399 Crowhurst. *French War on Trade,* 102.
- 400 Revealingly, Rowley had commanded two frigates for a total two and a half years by the time he was given the *Boadicea*. His total frigate service was only about 3 years and three months!
- 401 *Letters of Thomas Byam Martin.*, i , 77.
- 402 *Greenwich Hospital Treasurer's Accounts.* PRO. ADM68/314-315.
- 403 *Ibid.* PRO. ADM68/314 - 316.
- 404 Anon. "A Letter to the Rt. Hon Lord Viscount Melville on the Present Condition of Officers in the Royal Navy..... By a Post Captain".
- 405 *Service Afloat* , 132.
- 406 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography.* ii , 104.
- 407 Lavery, Brian. *Nelson's Navy: The Ships, men and organisation. 1793-1815.* , 310.
- 408 James, W. *Naval History,* v , 259.
- 409 Northcote Parkinson, *War in the Eastern Seas, 1793-1815.* Chapters 11 & 12.
- 410 For these see Duffy. *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower;* and Northcote Parkinson *War in the Eastern Seas.*
- 411 *Service Afloat* , 122.
- 412 Cochrane. *The Autobiography of a Seaman.* 144.
- 413 *Ibid.* 148.
- 414 *Naval Chronicle.* xxi , 1809, 372.
- 415 James, *Naval History,* iii , pp38-9.: Also, Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower,* pp317-18.
- 416 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography,* i , 411.
- 417 *Ibid.*, i , 387.
- 418 Capt. A. Murray, *Memoir of the Naval Life and Services of Admiral Sir Philip Durham.* 36.
- 419 O'Byrne , *A Naval Biographical Dictionary.* i , 415. : Duffy, . *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower,* pp314-5.
- 420 "...His vigilance and activity are exemplary; he is a clever young man..." Collingwood to Nelson. Quoted in Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography.* ii , 333.
- 421 According to Marshall, *Ibid.*, Mundy became the advocate of the Simotines of Badalona, adopting the role of their advocate and having to deal with what he considered to be the imbecilic leadership of the Spanish Junta.
- 422 For an example of Pleydell Bouverie's activity during this period see Hugh. Popham, *A Damned Cunning Fellow: The Eventful Life of Rear-Admiral Sir Home Popham,* 205.
- 423 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography.* iv , 897.
- 424 James. *Naval History.* v , pp295 sqq.
- 425 Northcote Parkinson. *War In the Eastern Seas.* 415.
- 426 *Memoir of Admiral The Hon. Sir George Elliot.* 75.
- 427 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography.* i , 864.
- 428 Following his successful co-ordination of landings in the West Indies, General Maitland wrote of him: "...His arrangement, and presence of mind, render him peculiarly qualified for joint operations...." and Sir Alexander Cochrane wrote, "...the direction of all the naval operations connected with the army was left entirely with Captain Beaver, of the *Acasta*, who conducted

*the service with all the correctness and celerity which I expected of him.”* *Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, 189.

Beaver was also centrally responsible for the success of Abercrombie's landing at Aboukir Bay, and his journal description of this event is vivid. *Ibid.* p143-146.

429 *Memoir of Admiral Carden*, 252.

430 *Naval Chronicle* , xxv , 353.

431 *Blockade of Brest*. letter 81, 104..

432 Quoted in C. Northcote Parkinson. *Edward Pellew: Viscount Exmouth*, 169.

433 See *Dictionary of National Biography*.

434 Crawford, *Reminiscences* , i , 57.

435 *The Keith Papers*. Vol. 3. Ed C. Lloyd. NRS p97.

436 Crawford. *Reminiscences*. i , 65.

437 *Ibid.* . 119.

438 This may well be a reference to the capture of a squadron of Spanish treasure ships by Sir Graham Moore's frigate squadron in 1804. See James *Naval History*. iii , 278.

439 Crawford. *Op Cit.* i , 159.

440 *Op cit.*, i , 72.

441 Sir W. Hotham, *Pages and Portraits from the Past.* i , 204. This type of comment is reminiscent of similar attitudes struck by other officers towards that other most active frigate Captain - Lord Cochrane.

442 Captain Edward Owen was made Commodore of a frigate squadron just eight years after Posting. Sir Charles Hamilton who was posted in 1793 was given command of a small frigate squadron off the coast of Corsica in 1794. Sir Thomas Williams, posted in 1790, was given command of a frigate squadron stationed at the entrance to St. George's Channel at the beginning of 1798. Lawrence Halsted , posted in 1791, he was commanding a squadron of frigates blockading Elba by the latter part of 1800. Sir Graham Moore, was in command of a frigate squadron in 1804 when he captured three Spanish treasure ships. He was posted in 1794. Ross Donnelly, posted in 1795, had command of a squadron in the Mediterranean around 1802. Thomas Gossellin, posted in 1795, had charge of an in-shore squadron in 1805. Philip Broke, posted in 1801, commanded a frigate squadron off of the American coast by 1812. Sir William Hoste, posted in 1802, commanded a frigate squadron before the battle of Lissa in 1811.

443 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*. i , 411.

444 Quoted in *Admiral Sir P.B.V. Broke, Bart; A Memoir*, 301.

445 The 18-pounder frigate Medusa.

446 *Admiral Broke: A memoir*, 311.

447 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography* , i , 319; O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, i , 512.

448 In this instance service of more than 2 years has been taken as the minimum guideline.

449 Viscount Lifford, *Memoir of Robert Dudley Oliver*, 37.

450 E.C.W.R. Owen.

451 Arguably, Sir Edward Pellew, Francis Laforey, Thomas Byam martin, Lord Amelius Beauclerk, Charles Cunningham, Thomas Baker and (possibly) David Milne, could be added to the list, as having six years or more frigate service.

452 In order to allow a margin of error in the Admiralty List Book entries.

453 He commanded the frigate Winchelsea from 1786-1789.

454 James, *Naval History*.. i , 106.

455 *Ibid.* i , 114.

456 *Ibid.*, i, 228.

457 *Ibid.*, ii, 128.

458 *Ibid.*, i, 315.

459 *Ibid.*, i, 365.

460 *Ibid.*, ii, 160.

461 *Ibid.*, i, 369.

- 462 Ibid., i, 398.
- 463 Ibid., i, 402.
- 464 Bowen was killed whilst serving as Captain of the Terpsichore at the attack on Santa Cruz, in 1797.
- 465 James, *Naval History*, ii, 247.
- 466 Ibid. ii,p23.
- 467 Ibid. ii, 357
- 468 Ibid. ii, 365
- 469 Cooke was killed in action whilst Captain of the Sibylle frigate. He died as a result of wounds in May, 1799, although news of this did not appear to have reached the Admiralty clerks until February, 1800.
- 470 James, *Naval History*, ii, 384
- 471 Ibid., iv, 65.
- 472 Ibid. iv, 160.
- 473 Ibid., iv, 179.
- 474 This is uncertain as there is confusion as to his official date of Posting. Both Syrett & DiNardo, *Commissioned Sea Officers* and John Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography* record the date as January, 1806; but Rainier's own papers record that he was originally posted into the frigate Dedaigneuse in February, 1805, albeit temporarily. See NMM RAI/201/1-11. (Manuscript marked 53/049 11).
- 475 James, *Naval History*, iv, 376.
- 476 Ibid. v, 13.
- 477 Ibid. vi, 128.
- 478 *Selections from the Correspondence of Admiral John Markham*. 3.
- 479 David J. Hepper, *Warship Losses in the age of sail: 1650-1859*. 118. - It is remarkable how similar this incident is to that experienced by Cochrane in the Imperieuse in November, 1806. See D. Thomas, *Cochrane: Britannia's Last Sea-King*. pp104-5.
- 480 According to Sir John Ross, Saumarez had only just time to fit out the frigate before she was paid off again. *Memoirs and Correspondence of Admiral Lord de Saumarez*. I, 88.
- 481 Saumarez's repeated presence near Guernsey is hardly surprising given that he was a native of St. Peter Port and that his crew were (supposedly) eager volunteers from the island. Ibid. p90.
- 482 Ibid. 148.
- 483 James, *Naval History*. i, 229. See also . *Pages and Portraits from the Past*. i, 148.
- 484 *Royal Naval Biography*. i, 513.
- 485 M. Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*. pp33 sqq.
- 486 Martin's name had actually been entered on the books of various ships from 1780, when his father became Resident Commissioner.
- 487 *Journals and Letters of Thomas Byam Martin*. i, 153
- 488 Ibid. 247.
- 489 Ibid. i, 262. Also See James, *Naval History* , i, 366.
- 490 In this instance from the Committee of Shipping.
- 491 *Journals and Letters of Thomas Byam Martin*. i, 270.
- 492 See *The Heavy Frigate*. 86.
- 493 See letter from Robert Stopford to Byam Martin in *Journals and Letters of T. Byam Martin*. i, 318.
- 494 *Memoir of Admiral Carden*. 102.
- 495 Ibid., 102.
- 496 Though one cannot help wondering whether Martin thought that he really deserved it. Carden had served on the Fisgard for but a few weeks, and following his promotion was kept on half-pay for some time and was not posted until over seven years later. In his gazette letter Martin had commented: "...I should wish to recommend the steady good conduct of Mr. Carden, ..on this occasion, but not to the prejudice of any other person....."
- 497 *Journals and Letters of T. Byam Martin*. I, 277.
- See for example, James, *Naval History*. iii, 15.

- 498 Ibid., iii, pp16-17.
- 499 Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, i, 484.
- 500 See James, W. *Naval History*, i, 304.
- 501 See James, W. *Naval History*, i, 369.
- 502 Marshall. *Naval Biography*, i, 722.
- 503 These being La Vautour in October, 1796; L'Eclair in August, 1797; and the Mars in February, 1798. Dryad also sank the Cornelly privateer in September, 1797.
- 504 See entry in *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 505 *Naval History*, i, 308.
- 506 *The Times*. July 16th, 1798.
- 507 *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 508 *The Times*. July 16th, 1798.
- 509 Milne Papers. NMM. (MLN/35/4).
- 510 Though it should be noted that there was some confusion at the time about the comparative size of the combatants. Vengeance was larger and had a heavier broadside weight, but she was not as large as the public were led to believe. See James. *Naval History*, iii, 26.
- 511 Ibid., iii, 25.
- 512 D. Hepper, *British Warship Losses in the Age of Sail*,. 102. The two pilots were sentenced to two years in the Marshalsea Prison.
- 513 James, *Naval History*, ii, pp357-358.
- 514 The Cunningham papers at the National Maritime Museum indicate that he first went to sea at the age of 15. NMM CUN/4.
- 515 See entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 516 Indeed the obituaries contained in the Cunningham papers at the NMM repeatedly emphasize that Cunningham had no influential friends or patronage of any sort.
- 517 NMM (CUN/1/61)
- 518 These dates coincide with Pitcairn-Jones' lists.
- 519 Cunningham papers. NMM CUN/6/7. It is not clear whose Log this is. It is not kept with the collection of Lieutenant's Logs.
- 520 However, the Midshipmen were sent on shore to keep them from harm. Ibid.
- 521 Cunningham Papers NMM. CUN/1/53.
- 522 James. *Naval History*, ii, 385.
- 523 These were the Clyde; Loire, Captain James Newman; Jason, Capt. The Hon. John Murray; Maidstone, Capt. Ross Donnelly; Trent, Capt. Sir Edward Hamilton; Lapwing, Capt. Edward Rotheram; Hydra, Capt. The Hon. Sir Charles Paget; and Tartar, Capt. John Walker. (NMM CUN/1/55a)
- 524 O'Byrne, *Naval Biography*, 1, 40; Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, II, 829.
- 525 James, W. *Naval History*, III, 41.
- 526 PRO. Captains Letters. B. 1803. ADM1/1528.
- 527 *The Times*. 29th August, 1805.
- 528 Ibid. 7th September.
- 529 But see J. Ralfe. *The Naval Biography of Great Britain*. IV, 239. for a possible explanation.
- 530 James, W. *Naval History*, IV, pp72-74.
- 531 PRO Captains Letters B. 1805. ADM1/1534. 27th December, 1805.
- 532 See Rainier Papers, National Maritime Museum. RAI/201/1-11.
- 533 R. Gardiner, *The Heavy Frigate*. 86.
- 534 James. *Naval History*, iv, 179.
- 535 *The Madras Courier - Extraordinary*. Dec 20th, 1806. See The Rainier Papers. NMM RAI/201/10.
- 536 The cargo included 500,000 dollars in specie and 1,700 quintals of copper.
- 537 Not to be confused with the crack 12-pounder frigate of the same name built in 1759.
- 538 Amongst the names of Captains who were given new 18-pounder heavy frigates during the second war were William Hoste, Peter Parker, Charles Adam, Philip Broke, Jahleel Brenton, Thomas Cochrane, Matthew Henry Scott and Thomas Malling.

- 539 James, . *Naval History* vi, 131.
- 540 Rainier Papers. National Maritime Museum. RAI/201/1-11 (Manuscript 53/049 11)
- 541 In 1830 he became Naval Aide-de-camp to William IV. See Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography* . ii, 977.
- 542 B. Lavery. *Nelson's Navy*, pp89-90; M. Lewis. *A Social History of the Navy*, pp143-149.
- 543 *Shipboard Life and Organisation, 1731-1815*. ed. B. Lavery. pp 9 -51.
- 544 Ibid. p16. Regulation V.
- 545 *Selections from the Correspondence of Admiral John Markham*. 117.. Interestingly, Mitford was never a frigate Captain and in December 1803, he was presumed drowned when the York 64, which he was commanding disappeared in the North Sea.
- 546 Extracts of this have now been published in B. Lavery, *Shipboard Life and Organisation*, pp263- 275.
- 547 My emphasis.
- 548 Ibid , 263.
- 549 Ibid., pp263-264.
- 550 Ibid., 267.
- 551 Ibid., 265.
- 552 See the comments in Robert Wilson's Journal , in *Five Naval Journals*, 243. Wilson served as a seaman on board the frigate Unite, commanded by Patrick Campbell, an officer with a fine reputation. See also W.Robinson, *Jack Nastyface, Memoirs of an English Seaman*, pp149-150.
- 553 J. Byrn. *Crime and Punishment in the Royal navy*. 94.
- 554 James, *Naval History*, ii , pp273-280.
- 555 Lavery, *Shipboard Life and Organisation*, pp119-182.
- 556 *Captain's Standing Orders. December 1802. HMS Amazon, Captain William Parker. (John Skynner's copy)*. JOD/45.
- 557 NMM *Additional Rules and Orders for the Better Government of HMS London*. OBK/10. Order 34.
- 558 *General Orders and Regulations for the Government and Interior Discipline of HMS Princess Royal. Capt. J.C. Purvis. April, 1793*. NMM. PRV/20.
- 559 PRO. ADM/1/815. Sir Thomas Pasley's Despatches as CinC. Plymouth. March, 1800.
- 560 F. Hoffman. *A sailor of King George*". 239.
- 561 Lavery, *Shipboard Life and Organisation*, 127.
- 562 F. Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George*, pp227-228.
- 563 Elphinstone passed for Lieutenant in 1780 and was posted in the aftermath of the mutinies of 1797. His length of frigate service was fairly average at 4.5 years.
- 564 *Captain's Standing Orders. December, 1802. HMS Amazon, Captain William Parker. (John Skynner's copy)* NMM. JOD/45.
- 565 Ibid.
- 566 See in particular, Warren's letter to St. Vincent (Parker's Uncle) in A. Phillimore, *The Last of Nelson's Captains*, 154.
- 567 In May, 1795, Niger was sent out on a cruize. Parker wrote home to his Mother: "*The 'Niger' is a very nice little frigate of 32 guns, and Captain Foote is one of the best men that ever was.....Captain Foote has a vast number of books, so I had a fine choice. In general I read Shakespeare's plays. Captain Foote desired me to read those which were taken from the History of England, and I compared them to the History, which was very amusing.....*" Phillimore, *Last of Nelson's Captains*. pp40-41.
- 568 *Five Naval Journals*. 145.
- 569 Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy*. 31
- 570 Hotham,. *Pages and Portraits from the Past*. i. 42..
- 571 L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*. pp164 sqq.
- 572 For an example of this see the incident in board HMS Genereux; *Autobiography of a Seaman*. 36. Though one must always treat Cochrane's accounts with a certain degree of circumspection.
- 573 Marryatt. *Frank Mildmay*. 118.
- 574 Hall, Capt. Basil *Fragments of Voyages and Travels*. ii, 106.

- 575 Smyth, Capt. W. *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*. 171.  
 576 Griffiths, , *Observations on some points of seamanship with practical hints on  
 Naval Economy*. 114.
- 577 Hall, B. *Fragments* ii. 151.
- 578 It must be acknowledged that some officers were highly critical of young aristocrats being  
 promoted prematurely because of their 'interest' - and these were often condemned for being too  
 harsh. Such views were expressed by the likes of Nelson, St. Vincent and Collingwood.
- 579 Ibid. 164. This also throws interesting light onto John Wetherall's comments about Captain  
 Philip Wilkinson (see above).
- 580 Cunningham Papers. NMM CUN/3. "*A narrative of occurrences that took place during the  
 mutiny at the Nore in the months of may and June, 1797; with a few observations upon the  
 Impressment of seamen and the advantages of those who are employed in his majesty's navy;  
 also on the necessity and useful operations of the articles of war*". 120
- 581 Griffiths, A. Op cit. p115
- 582 Apart perhaps from Court Martial records.
- 583 See Byrn, *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leeward Islands  
 Station. 1784-1812*. 19. Also Lavery, B. (Ed). *Shipboard Life and Organisation. 1731-1815.*  
 15-16.
- 584 For example, take Captain Henry Blackwood's log entry on board the frigate Penelope for the  
 16th may, 1800 (PRO Captains Logs. HMS Penelope ADM/51/1377). This records that one  
 George Towzey received 36 lashes for contempt, drunkenness and neglect of duty; and that a  
 Charles Tapper received a similar punishment for disobedience of orders. On consulting the  
 Lieutenant's log ( NMM Lieutenants Logs. HMS Penelope. ADM/L/85). for the same day, the  
 following punishments are recorded: Patrick Bagley, 48 lashes, George Towzey, 36 lashes,  
 Samuel Tupper[sic], 36 lashes, Samuel Patterson, 18 lashes, all for drunkenness. It is, of  
 course, possible that the Captain's log was being falsified to hide an unacceptable level of  
 severity, but it is more likely that the logs were not always written up on the day in question and  
 that simple error crept in. It is consequently usually necessary to collate the information from all  
 available logs for the same period to obtain anything like a reliable degree of data.
- 585 Byrn, *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy* pp176-177.
- 586 See Hill, Adm. R. *The Prizes of War: The Naval Prize System in the Napoleonic Wars*. 76.
- 587 On 23rd March, 1806, the seaman William Morris was given three lashes for neglect of duty but  
 then "*he being sick gave him no more*". Captain's Logs. PRO. HMS Topaze. ADM/51/1673.
- 588 Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*. These figures are drawn from an interpretation of the figures  
 given on page 123.
- 589 According to Mrs. Dorothy Jordan, the mistress of the Duke of Clarence, Blackwood was "*a  
 great tyrant...he flogs his midshipmen [and] is by all accounts the most severe not to say  
 tyrannical officer in the Service*". But this may have been a worried mother's exaggeration.  
 Cited in Hugh Owen, "I shall make five sons of mine fight for their king...". *Mariners Mirror*,  
 83, No.1. 44. 1997.
- 590 See for example the action with the French 80-gun Guillaume Tell. James, *Naval History*.  
 ii, 440.
- 591 PRO. Hyde Parker's Dispatches. ADM1/248.. Robert Waller Otway to Hyde Parker. 30 May,  
 1797.
- 592 See Captain's Log. HMS Ceres. 2nd - 8th November, 1796. PRO. ADM51/1256.
- 593 PRO Captain's Logs. HMS Mermaid. ADM51/1257.
- 594 PRO Captains Letters. N. 1797-98 ADM1/2226.
- 595 See for example *The Naval Chronicle*. iii. Plymouth Reports. 7th January, 1800. page 78.
- 596 James, *Naval History*. ii, pp406-412.
- 597 For an analysis of discipline under Hamilton, see N. Slope's unpublished M.A. Thesis for  
 Thames Valley University "*HMS Trent, A social Survey: 5th April, 1796 - 25th July, 1797*.  
 38. Slope's conclusion is that Hamilton was as severe as Pigot of the Hermione.
- 598 Biographical studies of Michael Seymour can be found as follows:-  
*Dictionary of National Biography*; *Naval Chronicle*, xxi, 1809, pp89 sqq.;

O'Byrne, *Naval Biography*. (Footnote under his son's (Admiral Michael Seymour) entry only; Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*. ii, Part 1, 294. ; Ralfe, J. *Naval Biography of Great Britain*. iv, 307.

There is also the *Memoir of Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Bart, KCB*. by Richard Seymour. Printed privately for the family in 1878.

599 Son of another Irish family; De Courcy's father was Lord Kingsale..

600 See Colledge J.J. *Ships of the Royal Navy*. Vol. 1. London. 1987.

601 Berkeley was distantly connected to the William Wyndham Grenville at this time Paymaster of the Forces and, from 1790, Baron Grenville. He had previously been Secretary for Ireland, became Home Secretary in 1791 and Prime Minister in 1806-1807

602 Syrett & DiNardo state 28th October 1790; *The Naval Chronicle* ,xxi, 89, states that this was November, 1790.

603 James, *Naval History*. i, pp174-175.

604 See Seymour, R. *Memoir of Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, Bart, KCB*. 19.

605 Ibid. 19.

606 PRO. Admiral's Despatches. CinC Plymouth. 1799. ADM/1/814.

607 *Naval Chronicle*, i, 1799, 441.

608 PRO. ADM/1/815. June 20th, 1800. Pasley to Admiralty.

609 Seymour was based at Plymouth during this period and had become closely acquainted with the Hawkers, a prosperous local family. The fact that Edward Hawker was Lieutenant of the Spitfire may account for this acquaintance, or alternatively, it is possible that Seymour requested Edward as his Lieutenant after their meeting. Edward Hawker became Lieutenant of the Spitfire in July, 1799, and Seymour married Edward's sister at about this time. See O'Byrne. *Naval Biography*. i, 478. It is also worth noting that John Hawker became Seymour's Prize Agent at Plymouth for several years, if not longer. Edward Hawker and Michael Seymour became close friends.

610 *Memoir of Rear Admiral Sir Michael Seymour*. 25.

611 See letter from Seymour amongst Pasley's Despatches (ADM/1/815) dated 20th April, 1800, describing the chase and capture of the French privateer L'Hereuse Societe.

612 Ibid.

613 *Memoir*. 33.

614 Greenwich Hospital Treasurer's Accounts. PRO. ADM68/314 - 316.

615 See Hill, Admiral Sir Richard. *The Prizes of War*. 194.

616 Ralfe, J. *Naval Biography of Great Britain*. iv, 307.

617 Berkeley reached Flag rank in 1799.

618 *The Naval Chronicle* for Jan-July 1801, ( Vol. v, 268) carried the following comment:

*"The Earl of St. Vincent has refused every application that has been made to him for promotion by young Captains, or others newly appointed; having declared his intention of giving the preference to all those persons of whom he has an opinion, who having been the longest on the Half-pay list. The system is undoubtedly just, and highly honourable to him; but if the noble Lord can pursue such a vigorous and impartial line of conduct for a long continuance, it will be more than any of his predecessors have been able to accomplish."*

619 James. *Naval History*. iv, pp129-131.

620 See Chapter 1, Appendix 1.

621 Substantiation of this comes from the fact that in 1811 she was run aground in Bovesand Bay, Plymouth Sound, and in spite of being on the rocks for 21 days was eventually floated off and towed into Plymouth Dock with relatively little damage. Gardiner, R. *The Heavy Frigate*. 58.

622 Ibid. 58.

623 Ibid. 60.

624 Amethyst's previous stations were as follows:

1799 - May, 1802.

Channel Fleet.

Capt. John Cooke (4)

August, 1802 - May, 1803.

Cruising/Convoy duty.

Capt. Henry Glynn

- May, 1803 - February, 1804. " " " . Capt. Alexander Campbell.  
 March, 1804 - July, 1804. Keith's Squadron. " " "  
 August, 1804 - October, 1805. North Sea. Capt. John Spranger.  
 November, 1805 - April, 1806. Cork. " " "
- 625 PRO. Admiralty Digests. ADM12/M367. 1806.  
 626 PRO. Admiralty Digests. ADM12/M470.35. 1806.  
 627 Crowhurst, P. *The French War on Trade: Privateering 1793-1815*. 2.  
 628 PRO Captains' Logs. Amethyst. April 14th 1808 - 30th June, 1808. ADM51/1807.  
 " " " " July 1st 1808, - June, 1809. ADM51/1859.
- 629 See for example A report by Seymour to Gambier on activities in Rochefort. PRO Letters  
 CinC Channel Fleet. ADM1/137 Letter I 360.  
 630 Captain's Log. HMS Amethyst. April-1808 - June, 1808. PRO. ADM51/1807.  
 631 Ibid.  
 632 PRO Letters CinC Channel Fleet. ADM1/138. Letter I 410. Seymour to Gambier. 14th  
 May, 1808.  
 633 Ibid. Letter I 513. Seymour to Gambier. July 9th, 1808.  
 634 Beauclerk had been a considerably successful frigate Captain - with an aggregate command  
 period of over six years. See Chapter 7 above.  
 635 Memoir. p73.  
 636 (ADM51/1859) From 8th March, 1809, until 5th April, the night of the action with the  
Niemen, the Amethyst's log records the presence of the Emerald on almost every single day,  
 and boats were frequently sent between the two.
- 637 Memoir p40.  
 638 For a detailed account of this action see James, *Naval History*, iv, pp376-380.  
 639 Which suggests that Amethyst's damage was primarily to her hull and running rigging, rather  
 than her standing rigging.  
 640 See "The arrival of the Chesapeake in Halifax in 1813, as described by Thomas Haliburton". in  
*American Neptune*. 1998. Vol. 57. No. 2 pp161-165.
- 641 PRO ADM1/2520 Captains' Letters - S. 1809. Letter S40.  
 642 Pertuis Breton, between the Ile de Re and the French mainland.  
 643 Pointe de Chasseron.  
 644 Memoir p61.  
 645 Captain's Log for 14th February, 1809.  
 646 James, *Naval History*. iv, pp391-397.  
 647 Memoir, 62.  
 648 PRO. Letters of Commander-in-Chief Channel Fleet. ADM1/139. Letter J812.  
 649 The Acting Captain was George Cocks. He passed for Lieutenant in 1793, and became a  
 Commander in 1802. He commanded the Thunderer Bomb at Copenhagen in 1807, and was  
 then posted two months later in October, 1807. He spent approximately six months as acting  
 commander of the Naiad, and appears to have had no other command. This is fairly  
 conclusive evidence that he had no interest.
- 650 Memoir, p73.  
 651 Culme-Seymour Papers, Rockingham Castle. WR(S)8. Mends to Adams. 6th April, 1809.  
 652 The Captain's log records that the land was visible by dawn.  
 653 The final accounts for the sale of the Niemen were not settled until July, 1811. Mends and  
 the Arethusa appear to have shared, but Emerald was cut out of the reward. Interestingly, a  
 note in the High Court of Admiralty Papers (PRO HCA/2/366) John Hawker's Account for  
 'the sale states that no deduction was made for the cost of resisting the claim of the Emerald.  
 654 Fair was promoted to Lieutenant as a result of this action on July, 1809.  
 655 Memoir, 72.  
 656 At the start of the action the Niemen had a complement of 339 men and boys. 47 were killed  
 and 73 wounded in the action. James, *Naval History*. v, 16.  
 657 Subsequent correspondence reveals that Ruler became too ill to return at the allotted time and  
 was marked down in the Muster books as having "Run". Seymour later received a letter



- 658 from a Doctor reporting on Ruler's condition and Seymour petitioned the Admiralty for  
 permission to discharge him as unfit. ADM1/2520 Captains Letters S. 1809. Letter S47.  
 659 *Memoir*, 74.
- 660 In fact the Niemen arrived in Plymouth on 26th April.  
 661 He was also promoted to the rank of Captain in 1837.  
 662 Excluding the activity involved in chasing and capturing both the Thetis and the Niemen,  
 which were extraordinary activities.
- 663 PRO Captains' Logs. Amethyst. April 14th 1808 - 30th June, 1808. ADM51/1807.  
 " " " " July 1st 1808, - June, 1809. ADM51/1859.
- 664 See PRO. Muster Book, HMS Niemen, October, 1809. ADM/37/2615. Also Muster Book  
 665 HMS Amethyst. April, 1808, - February, 1809. ADM/37/709.  
 666 Lewis, *The Social History of the Navy: 1793-1815*. 76.  
 667 This figure would appear to be unusually high - though for obvious reasons. As a  
 comparison, the Aurora spent 86 days out of 365 moored or in port (i.e. 23%) between  
 January, 1797, and January, 1798, mainly off the Tagus (Logs at PRO. ADM51/1231; NMM  
 ADM/L/T/240) the Penelope in the Mediterranean spent 83 days out of 457 ( 18%) in port or  
 at moorings between March, 1801, and May, 1802. (logs at PRO ADM51/1377; NMM  
 ADM/L/P/85).
- 668 James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*. vi, 68.  
 669 Log of HMS Shannon. PRO. ADM51/2861.  
 670 That this was not new routine for the Shannon is proven by checking earlier log entries. For  
 example, for the period 1st September, - 30th November, 1809, ( a period of 91 days) it is  
 found that the great guns were exercised on eleven occasions and the small arms on eight;  
 Half of these involving firing at a target. Ibid.
- 671 James. *Naval History*. vi. pp141-142. There is something strange about this particular case  
 and it is possible that James was completely unjust to Phillimore and his crew. Either way,  
 Phillimore was so enraged by James' comments that he thrashed him soundly with a cane!  
 672 My emphasis.
- 673 *Memoir*, 52.  
 674 *Memoir*, 52.  
 675 *Memoir* p53.
- 676 See Syrett & DiNardo. Commissioned Sea Officers. Blennerhasset became a Retired  
 Commander in 1844.  
 677 *Memoir* 57.
- 678 Subsequent correspondence reveals that Ruler became too ill to return at the allotted time and  
 was marked down in the Muster books as having "Run". Seymour later received a letter  
 from a Doctor reporting on Ruler's condition and Seymour petitioned the Admiralty for  
 permission to discharge him as unfit. ADM1/2520 Captains Letters S. 1809. Letter S47.  
 679 This suggests Seymour wanted Fair as his own 2nd Lieutenant.
- 680 *Memoir* 74.  
 681 Ibid. 76.  
 682 Ibid. 79.
- 683 In particular work being undertaken by Nick Slope. See *HMS Trent, A Social Survey*. M.A.  
 Thesis. Thames Valley University.  
 684 Hall, Basil. *Fragments and Voyages*. Vol. III, third series. 83.  
 685 Godwick Hall, Norfolk.  
 686 Hoste, W. Quoted in *Memoirs and Letters of Capt. Sir William Hoste*. II, 84.  
 687 Possibly given command of Sea Fencibles.  
 688 Possible post for Levy of Seaman in 1803.
- 689 Seymour Papers: ("Watson of Rockingham (Culme-Seymour)"). Rockingham Castle Archives.  
 Copy letter from Mends to Seymour, from Arethusa, April 7th, 1809. Ref. WR(S)9.  
 690 Hill, of course, being the First Lieutenant of the Amethyst.. It is not impossible that Seymour  
 was anticipating Hill's promotion as a result of the action and wanted him to have good charts  
 for his first command.

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<sup>689</sup> Seymour Papers, Rockingham Castle. Mends to Seymour, Arethusa. 7th April, 1809. Ref. WRS(S)9.

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