

ENTRY, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION OF THE
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH NAVAL
OFFICER: A SYNTHESIS

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Walter E. Schwing
August 1975

PREFACE

In dealing with eighteenth century British naval history it is imperative to be cognizant of the myriad of components that make up its story. I have focused on a few factors which played an integral role in the development of the British naval officer. There are other equally important ingredients which contributed to Britain's naval successes.

Her seamen represented the human resources so necessary in conducting her naval warfare. They were rough, loyal, and aggressive; quicker on the yardarm and on the gun deck than their opponents. Their numbers and experience were a great store of strength throughout the century.

On a broader plane, the emphasis of the kingdom on maritime objectives, and the huge resources, financial and material that the government was able to put at the Navy's disposal enabled Britain to keep more ships at sea for longer periods, and made possible that strength in reserve which encouraged boldness at sea. In the final analysis, the weight of Britain's naval resources contributed to the quality of her naval leadership. The intention of this study is to focus on the pre-commissioning process which is but only a part of the whole.

During the writing of this thesis several people played an important role. I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Norman Higson, Archivist at the Brynmore Jones Library, University of Hull, England for his assistance in securing a microfilm copy of the interesting and impressive Henry Hotham Workbook from the Hotham Family Collection. My thanks also to Lt. Cdr. W. E. Pearce of the Mariner's Mirror, the journal of the Society for Nautical Research, for locating valuable out of print back issues. I wish to acknowledge the members of my thesis committee, Professor Amos Miller, Professor Clifford Egan, and Professor Joshua Weinstein for their diligence and close scrutiny in correcting errors great and small. I owe a special note of appreciation to my thesis director, Professor Robert Robinson, for his trenchant comments concerning the scope of this work and his incaluable help in all matters of research and writing. To my wife, Carolyn, without whose assistance in the preparation of the original manuscript and without whose patience and understanding this thesis would never have reached fruition, I owe my deepest gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

The eighteenth century can be viewed as the pivotal point in the development of the British Empire. Between the years 1701 and 1783, Britain witnessed a series of climacteric developments: the French bid to establish hegemony in Europe was effectively halted; 1739 saw a series of wars begin which would reach world-wide proportions during the next forty years; the basis of the First British Empire would be lost and the foundation of the Second Empire established. During these events the British Navy played a crucial role, one in which her officers were of decisive importance. The way in which these men entered the service, the training and education they received, helped in part to develop in them a professional competence that was unsurpassed during the century.

The argute policies instituted by Samuel Pepys, Secretary of the Admiralty during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, had a lasting impact on entry, training, and education in the century following his death. His innovations were directly responsible for the continued refining of the pre-commissioning process and for this reason his programs and philosophies are examined in depth.

The entry process affords a unique view into the social and political diversities of the period. Young men

chose the Navy as their profession for a variety of reasons, some of which can be traced to political influence and position within the social strata. The three avenues of entry: volunteer per order, captains servants, and from the lower deck traded positions of importance throughout the century with captains servants finally establishing itself as the predominant mode of entry.

The role education played in the early career of the naval officer was a polemical one between naval administrators and officers. The value of education was not yet realized by most members of the officer corps, yet Admiralty officials continued to press forward for some kind of formal educational program. Individuals outside the service realized the importance of education but came into conflict with parents who preferred the more positive results gained for their sons by the use of patronage and influence.

There was universal agreement as to the benefits accrued from thorough training. Each captain had his own method of imparting knowledge and strove to develop competent seamen whose experience would stand them in good stead throughout their careers. The training a midshipman received was perhaps the single most important ingredient in his development and the Admiralty established examination procedures to insure that his knowledge would be broad

enough to make him an effective leader.

Thus, entry, training, and education were vital to the development of the British naval officer in the eighteenth century. These three factors were in part responsible for the success of the British Navy during these critical years of imperial conquests.

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A Midshipman is the first Rate
Line in a Ship towards the Top-mast-
head of Preferment; for all Admirals,
as well as Captains, are oblig'd to
begin their Rise here.

--Edward Ward, 1706

INTRODUCTION

The wars which lasted from 1701 to 1783 marked a definite phase in English naval history. The seventeenth century had been a period in which the sea played a supremely important role. It had been a century in which colonial expansion held the foremost place in the external policy of England. As the sixteenth century witnessed the discoveries of the Portuguese and Spaniards and the acquisition by these powers of vast dominions and trading interest overseas, so the following hundred years saw Holland, England, and France extending their territories in the East and in the West. England became a vigorous and expanding maritime power. She took her place as a significant factor in the Mediterranean, as a colonial power in the West Indies and America, and as a trading power in the Far East, where the first year of the century was marked by the establishment of the East India Company. In the eighteenth century these developments contributed to a series of wars between France and Great Britain which would decide mastery in the colonial world.

England engaged in these conflicts mainly to establish her supremacy in the oceans, which would enable her to protect her seaborne commerce and her overseas possessions. In these struggles with France, naval power

and the quality of Britain's officers were of decisive importance. The British Navy owed its brilliant triumphs chiefly to the superiority of its officer corps.

British pre-eminence in seamanship revealed itself over and over again in the long struggle with France: the passage of the Traverse by Saunders' fleet and the landing of Wolfe's troops under the Heights of Abraham; the Royal George and the Magnanime sweeping into Quiberon Bay in a rising gale under topgallant sails, in headlong pursuit of Conflans; the outmaneuvering of a superior French squadron by Howe in the summer of 1778 off the North American coast; Hood steering under the enemy's guns into the anchorage off St. Kitts vacated by de Grasse; the rounding of Ushant by the Formidable and eleven more of Rodney's squadron in a January gale in 1782; St. Vincent's infinite capacity for improvisation while on the Mediterranean station, and the matchless sail-drill of the squadron under his command are all examples of superb seamanship which so often had a decisive influence on the course of operations.¹

¹Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History (Boston, 1890), 294, 302, 360, 471-476; Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence (New York, 1913), 70-72, 200-201; William Laird Clowes, The Royal Navy - A History (London, 1899), IV, 283-285.

Because officers are the principal strength of the fleet, this study attempts to deal with the change and continuity present in the entry, training, and education in the Royal Navy of the British Naval officer. These three factors provided the foundation for naval officers' professional proficiency. The eighteenth century marked a critical time in England's naval development. Many old and outmoded customs were supplanted with new and progressive techniques, largely to the credit of Samuel Pepys whose seminal policies were the precursor of the modern Navy. With the adoption of his sagacious policies, the Admiralty modified and improved them throughout the course of the century. Pepys' innovations had a substantial impact upon the development of the early career of Britain's naval officers.

Entry provided unique problems for the Admiralty whose constant attempts to establish pre-eminence over selection of potential officers went against the centuries-old tradition of captain's servants. Naval officers held steadfast to their ancient custom of selection, forcing the Admiralty to exert its authority over the commissioning process. The century saw a constant battle between these groups to establish hegemony over their respective areas of control.

Education was also subject to a state of flux and

malleability. The fundamental question of its worth in the development of a competent naval officer was constantly subject to debate. As a result, the process of education underwent a period of experimentation with the Admiralty stressing theoretical education as important in the maturation of naval officers.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a young man's early career was the practical training he received on board ship. There was, however, no structured format for substantive naval training during the eighteenth century. Captains exercised total control over training, and the Admiralty exercised total control over qualifications necessary for commission. In both instances the processes were in a constant state of change. The effects of these changes were felt not so much in a young man's training, but in his quest for promotion to lieutenant.

Because England relied so strongly on her Navy for defense and the extension of imperial conquest, the development of her officer corps is of utmost importance. How these men entered the service, their subsequent training and education were factors which provided the foundation of her naval superiority. Modern innovations instituted with the purpose of improving the efficiency and strength of her fleet were phenomenon not of sweeping alterations but of evolution.

CHAPTER I

THE REFORMS OF THE RESTORATION NAVY:

THE GENESIS OF PROFESSIONALISM

The advances made in the administration of the Royal Navy during the reigns of Charles II and James II had far-reaching ramifications. The Navy was in a state of disarray, suffering from inadequate financing, inept administrators, and lacked set procedures for admission, education, and training of prospective naval officers. The service was a combination of part-time officers and unruly seamen with no common set of rules and policies to mold them into an effective military force. Charles II and his brother saw the need to improve and update their most important line of defense and this task fell to Samuel Pepys, Secretary of the Admiralty from 1673 to 1688. The era of Pepys initiated the beginning of a service tradition and esprit de corps. It was the formative period in the history of the British Navy, for his reforms and innovations formed the foundation of the modern Navy, and in the eighteenth century his theories and practices were used to produce a highly efficient seaborne fighting arm.

Pepys began his tenure as Secretary by reorganizing

the administration of the Navy at points where it was weakest and applied effective methods to correct deficiencies.¹ An elaborate but practical plan was worked out by the Secretary to ensure the efficiency of the Navy Board and, in turn, to raise the quality of the Navy. Some twenty-three separate instructions were given to the Commissioners of the Board to enable them to deal more effectively with the problems of a growing service.² These moves are examples of Pepys' drive to improve organization so his reforms would have their desired effect.

Pepys worked diligently to effect some relief from poor fiscal policy. The Dutch Wars were very costly to the Navy, and because of wastefulness in administration, an enormous deficit had accrued. By 1673 this deficit amounted to £2,312,876. Because of inadequate funding the

¹J. R. Tanner (ed.) Pepys' Memoires of the Royal Navy (Oxford, 1906), 1-82 passim. Other than his diary, this work, first published in 1690, was the only book to which Pepys claimed authorship. For a detailed history on Pepys' life and career, see Leslie Stephen, "Samuel Pepys," Sidney Lee (ed.), Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1895), XLIV, 361-364. Hereafter cited as D.N.B.

²J. R. Tanner (ed.), Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval Manuscripts in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge (Navy Records Society, 1903-1909), I, 81-83. Hereafter cited as Pepysian MSS.

efficiency of the Navy was dangerously low.³ It was not until 1684 when a Special Commission was proposed by Pepys and appointed by the King, that a workable solution was reached. The Secretary felt that by operating with a net annual budget, wasteful expenditures could be cut and efficiency improved. An annual sum of £400,000 was allotted to the service, and by prudent and careful management, the greater part of the Navy's debts were paid.⁴

In addition to the problem of finance, Pepys attacked with great vigor the abuses so prevalent throughout the service, such as naval commanders carrying private money, jewels, passengers, and merchant goods for their own profit, and commanders being absent from their post without proper leave. Pepys learned of captains neglecting their duty in order to enhance their incomes by shipping bullion. These captains were so rapacious and unreliable that many merchants preferred to send their valuables in unprotected trading ships.⁵ Pepys felt that something had to be done before the situation deteriorated further. In 1686 the

³Tanner, Pepysian MSS, I, 101-106. Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers - Domestic Series, Charles II, 1672-1673, XIV, 5, 18, 23, 102, 369, 375.

⁴Tanner, Memoires, 33.

⁵E. Chappell (ed.), Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys (Navy Records Society, 1935), 172-173, 176-184, 196.

Secretary issued two prohibitions. No captain would henceforth be able to ". . . receive, direct, or permit to be received on board any of our said ships, any money, plate, bullion, jewels, or other merchandise or goods (fine or gross) whatsoever. . . ." He also stated that no captain ". . . shall presume to carry or direct the carrying of any passenger or passenger of what degree or quality soever, from one place to another, in any of our ships of war under their command. . . ."6

Pepys also occupied himself with the ever-present problem of officers being absent without leave. Officers generally did not comply with orders that did not suit their convenience. When a naval officer wanted to go ashore on private business, he simply left his ship and could not be found when needed. Pepys and James II had frequent discussions on the matter, and both agreed that this deplorable behavior was detrimental to the maintenance of discipline in the Navy. Pepys resolved that no officer could take leave of his post unless he had the express written consent of the King or the Admiralty.⁷

Not only was Pepys concerned with the abuses in the Navy, he was also aware that existing institutions were in

⁶Tanner, Memoires, 56-59.

⁷Tanner, Pepysian MSS, III, 55, 178; IV, 664.

need of reorganization and rebuilding. The question of pay, or rather the lack of it, was a situation which the Secretary proposed to solve to the betterment of the service. The inability of the Navy to pay its officers and men created chaos, particularly during wartime. It was difficult enough to attract good officers into the service without the added disability of irregular remuneration. Pepys claimed credit for more expeditious payments, making a point never to let anyone connected with the service be in such an unhappy circumstance.⁸ Conditions of the sick and wounded were also helped by increasing their disability pay.⁹ Furthermore, Pepys improved the system of victualling by adopting a more efficient method of checking victualling books and allowances. To make certain this plan functioned properly, Pepys became Surveyor-General of Victualling.¹⁰

Pepys took great interest in shipbuilding, which was not neglected during his tenure in office. In 1660, when he first joined the Navy Board, the Navy possessed only thirty ships of the first three rates.¹¹ In 1688 at the

⁸Tanner, Memoires, 80.

⁹Tanner, Pepysian MSS, I, 141-144.

¹⁰Great Britain, Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers - Domestic Series, Charles II, 1665-1666, V, 7, 11.

¹¹Ships of the Royal Navy were rated according to the

end of his career, the number had risen to fifty-nine. Ship tonnage increased from 62,594 in 1660 to 101,032 in 1688. The number of men at sea in 1669 numbered 19,551 and in 1688 there were 41,940. The number of guns borne increased from 4,642 to 6,954 during the same period.¹²

Another important achievement during this interval was the systematizing of arrangements for determining the number and type of guns for each rate and the number of men required to work them. In 1677, Pepys drew up a document entitled, "A General Establishment of Men and Guns," and it was officially adopted as universal throughout the fleet.¹³ The "Establishment" outlined a highly complex and very detailed system for determining how many guns and men were needed on specific ships. The ratio of men to guns was ascertained by computing the number and size of guns carried on board with the required number of men

number of guns carried. A first-rate carried at least one hundred guns; a second-rate, ninety guns; a third-rate, seventy to eighty guns; a fourth-rate, fifty to sixty guns; a fifth-rate, forty guns; and sixth-rates, at least twenty guns. Rating indicates size and importance of the ship. Ships of the first three rates were considered to be ships-of-the-line, large enough in armament to form a line of battle. William Laird Clowes, The Royal Navy - a History (London, 1898-1906), III, 6, 10.

¹²Tanner, Pepysian MSS, I, 306.

¹³J. R. Tanner (ed.), Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes (Navy Records Society, 1925), 57. Tanner, Pepysian MSS, IV, 518.

needed to perform specified duties during action at sea.¹⁴

These reforms were but a fraction of Pepys' contributions to the Royal Navy, and his ideas and practices carry over into the areas that concern us in this study. Perhaps Pepys concentrated hardest on entry, training, and education, for he knew that without capable and qualified naval officers England could never achieve superiority at sea. In order to accomplish this goal, men with experience to preserve continuity and pass on acquired experience were essential. The Restoration's main contribution was the development of a professional officer corps. The man primarily responsible was Samuel Pepys, who started the process along lines as to make its achievement inevitable.

The Secretary disliked wealthy youths with court connections who had no intention of making the service their career. Pepys felt this hurt the chances of men with sea experience but no connections.¹⁵ Lord Macaulay, with perhaps some overstatement, summed up the conditions with which Pepys was confronted:

¹⁴Tanner, Pepysian MSS, I, 233-244.

¹⁵G. J. Marcus, A Naval History of England: The Formative Centuries (Boston, 1961), 152.

It does not appear that there was in the service . . . a single naval officer . . . versed in the theory and practice of his calling and steeled against all the dangers of battle and tempest, yet of cultivated mind and polished manners. There were gentlemen and there were seamen in the navy of Charles II. But the seamen were not gentlemen; and the gentlemen were not seamen.¹⁶

To a large extent the creation of a professional officer corps was the Admiralty's own idea. This development had its beginnings in measures aimed at making seamen out of gentlemen. The minds of the seventeenth-century English governing class were not receptive to this approach. Because they commanded favor at court, the well-born were bound to attain high rank in the Navy. Pepys, by 1676, hoped the Navy would be made an honorable profession, attractive to the younger sons of the peerage and gentry.¹⁷ Pepys had deep respect for birth and breeding and wished to see those who possessed them in the Navy. But first they must submit themselves to the stern training that alone could turn them into seamen. It was difficult to expect a nobleman or courtier to make the sea his trade and share the conversation and company, diet and clothes of the

¹⁶Thomas Macaulay, The History of England (London, 1902), I, 283.

¹⁷Tanner, Naval Minutes, 405-406.

common sailor. However, it had to be done, and Pepys felt there should be only one distinction, that of rank. As a result of his urgings, reforms were designed to make naval service attractive to gentlemen and at the same time force them to develop a measure of professional competence.¹⁸

Both Pepys and the Duke of York were determined to train and raise the quality of young gentlemen officers. Because of this determination, the genesis of the modern naval officer came into being.¹⁹ Youths with aspirations to become naval officers were taken to sea by officers already there, on a quasi-apprenticeship basis, without reference to the Admiralty. Pepys did not seriously attack this ancient vested interest of the captains, but merely added a few young men of the Admiralty's own selection. These were known as volunteers per order or king's letter boys.

This move was instituted in 1676 for the express purpose of regulating and improving the quality of officers and to encourage young men to make the Navy their career. Under the rules of 1676 a volunteer per order was required to serve two years as a volunteer and one as midshipman

¹⁸Chappell, Tangier Papers, 148, 207-208, 214, 240.

¹⁹A. W. Tedder, The Navy of the Restoration (London, 1916), 60.

before being examined for lieutenant.²⁰

The rule of 1676 had slowly evolved over many years. Individuals called midshipmen had been on board Royal Navy ships since the days of Elizabeth. They had not been appointed by commission or warrant and were not officers.²¹ During the period of the Commonwealth this practice began to change and young men were given midshipmen's posts who showed promise for officer status. The practice continued, and early in the reign of Charles II a Mr. Thomas Darcy entered the Navy as midshipman under royal patronage.²² Pepys continued this practice by making the post a regular stepping stone to a commission. As a result of Pepys' efforts, a midshipman's pool came into being through which

²⁰R. P. Merriman (ed.), Queen Anne's Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714 (Navy Records Society, 1961), 313.

²¹Michael Lewis, England's Sea Officers (London, 1948), 215.

²²This is one of the earliest known cases of a young man being sent aboard a British man-of-war under royal order for the express purpose of training him to become a naval officer. The letter that follows is addressed to Sir Richard Stayner, a British admiral.

Sir Richard Stayner - His Royal Highness being desirous to give encouragement to such young gentlemen as are willing to apply themselves to the learning of navigation, and fitting themselves to the service of the sea, hath determined, that one volunteer shall be entered on every ship now going forth; and for his encouragement, that he shall have the pay of a midshipman, . . . In prosecuting

those seeking a commission must pass. Thus, midshipman ultimately became a rank, though never a commissioned one.

By 1686, Pepys' regulations of 1676, because of neglect, needed reenforcement.²³ Part of the problem lay in the fact that reforms instituted by Pepys were ill-received by most naval officials, leaving the Secretary to force these reforms almost single-handedly. In April of 1686, a confirmation of the earlier establishment further strengthened the Admiralty's control over prospective officers. Copies of these instructions were sent to each commander, requiring them to post them in a public place aboard ship to prevent ignorance on the part of the crew. It is evident from the Establishment of 1686 that Pepys exercised total control over volunteers and midshipmen.²⁴

this resolution, I am to recommend to you the bearer Mr. Tho. Darcy; and to desire that you would receive him according to the intentions of His Royal Highness, . . . and that you would show him such kindness as you shall judge fit for a gentleman, both in the accommodating him in your ship, and in the fathering his improvement. Signed by William Coventry, Secretary to James, Duke of York, Lord High Admiral and dated May 7, 1661. H. W. Hodges and E. H. Hughes (eds.), Select Naval Documents (Cambridge, 1922), 71-72.

²³There was a brief period from 1679-1683 when Pepys was forced to resign his post because of accusations made against him that he conspired to extirpate the protestant religion. He was sent to the Tower for two months, but released when the charges proved to be false. Because of party politics, he was not re-employed until the summer of 1683. Tanner, "Pepys," D.N.B., XLIV, 363-364.

²⁴Arthur Bryant, Samuel Pepys: The Saviour of the

One factor in the success of Pepys' reforms was his firm belief that no one should break Admiralty regulations. He went to great lengths to see that his decrees were enforced. In a letter dated May 20, 1676, a Captain Russel applied to the Admiralty for permission to carry more captains' servants than his rank allowed. Pepys wrote to Russel that this would be impossible because it was against the establishments, and no exception could be made.²⁵ Several years later a sharp exchange occurred between Pepys and Admiral Lord Dartmouth over the number of servants aboard the Admiral's flagship. Pepys explained that fifty was the number allowed to the Lord High Admiral and thirty to admirals. Dartmouth replied with a broadside of historical arguments, and Pepys returned fire with extracts from his own regulations.²⁶

With the growth in the size and complexity of ships of war, Pepys recognized that education of naval officers was a national necessity. He felt that no degree of land

Navy (Cambridge, 1939), 181. Tanner, Pepysian MSS, I, 213-215. See also Appendix A.

²⁵Tanner, Pepysian MSS, III, 202.

²⁶Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth (London, 1887), I, 149, 155-157.

education qualified a man for a career at sea, particularly since the nomenclature would be incomprehensible to landsmen. Pepys was of the opinion that a captain must know his profession and never give an order which he himself is incapable of carrying out. In addition to the practical aspects of education, Pepys proposed to build a school for prospective naval officers that would stress more formalized education. Unfortunately, he was the only one interested in such an institution, for most upper class families felt their sons could rise in the service without such formal education. The idea was eventually abandoned for lack of support.²⁷

During Pepys' administration the question of incompetent lieutenants was ever-present. In 1677, Sir John Narbrough, commanding in the Mediterranean, complained of the ineptitude of his lieutenants. In the same year, Pepys refers to the gross ignorance of many of the lieutenants in the fleet.²⁸ The crux of the problem was a lack of established qualifications for judging persons fit to hold a commission. Most of these men received their lieutenantcies because of family connections. Pepys laid down certain

²⁷Chappell, Tangier Papers, 217. Tanner, Naval Minutes, 126, 260.

²⁸Tanner, Samuel Pepys, 70.

qualifications without which an applicant would not be accepted. These qualifications were essential inasmuch as the command of the ship might, through some emergency, devolve upon the junior officer. Thus, a recruit was required to serve three years at sea before receiving his commission, of which one year, at least, was to be spent as midshipman. Furthermore, the candidate had to be twenty years of age and present good certificates from commanders under whom he served. The establishment specifically stated that these qualifications for commission were ". . . for ascertaining the duty of a sea lieutenant, and for examining persons pretending to that office." These reforms were put into effect December 18, 1677, and duly passed by the King and the Lords of the Admiralty.²⁹

Pepys formulated the examination process with his usual thoroughness. The candidate was required to present fitness certificates from three persons: a member of the Navy Board who had previously held command; an active flag officer; and a commander of a first- or second-rate man of war. The young men were to be subjected to an examination that would determine their ability to execute the duties of an able seaman, and test their knowledge of navigation. Pepys was thankful that the examining officers took their

²⁹Tanner, Pepysian MSS, I, 203-204.

task seriously, for many candidates were not approved. He wrote of the success of his Establishment saying, ". . . I thank God we have not half the throng of those of the bastard breed . . . which we heretofore used to be troubled with."³⁰

Realizing the importance of qualified men, Pepys did not waver in his allegiance to these precepts. In 1688, with the fear of invasion from Holland and the unsettled domestic situation at home, every man was needed to staff the fleet. There were posts available to every qualified individual, yet Pepys' rules were still adhered to for all who aspired to a commission. In a letter from the Earl of Bath to Lord Dartmouth in 1688, the former recommended his second son to Dartmouth for a place on board his flagship. Bath stated that the young man, ". . . has been bred at sea and to the study of navigation. He was duly examined before receiving his commission having gone regularly through the method prescribed by His Majesty's rules, as Mr. Pepys states."³¹ During this same year the Secretary severely reprimanded two of his most trusted friends, Sir John Berry and Sir John Narbrough, for approving a

³⁰Ibid., IV, 535.

³¹Dartmouth Manuscripts, I, 139.

commission for an old friend without following the proper procedures.³²

Pepys was a pioneer in bringing a business head and business methods to a department of state at a critical time when the approach to modern systems of organization were just being introduced. By 1688, the Royal Navy had a better Navy Board than ever before to look after its personnel; a corps of officers which was beginning to grow into a modern professional full time corps with established ranks and traditions. Thus, Pepys witnessed the genesis of the professional sea officer. The new breed had to work through to the top, but by the beginning of the eighteenth century it was doing so.

³²Bryant, Pepys, 213-214.

CHAPTER II

ENTRY

One of Samuel Pepys' primary concerns during his tenure in office was to encourage young men to make the Navy their profession. He accomplished this feat by striving for professionalism in the service and making the Navy a desirable career. His success was based upon the regulation of entry into the service through the establishment of the volunteer per order program.

However, young men were also attracted to the Navy for reasons beyond Admiralty control. A social change was in progress during the eighteenth century and one of its products was an insatiable hunger for suitable places for gentlemen of good families. With the rapid growth of British ducal families, available sinecures did not increase rapidly enough and the professions, especially the Navy, became attractive.¹

The prospect of wealth, honorably acquired in the

¹Edward Hughes, "The Professions in the Eighteenth Century," Durham University Journal (January, 1952), XLIV, 46-55; T. H. Hollingsworth, "A Demographic Study of the British Ducal Families," Population Studies (1957-1958), XI, 4-26.

service of one's country, also made a naval career more attractive. The Wars of the League of Augsburg and Spanish Succession produced some fortunes in prize money for naval officers fortunate enough to capture a French merchantman or Spanish galleon. Commodore George Anson in his voyage around the world became quite wealthy because he managed to seize a rich Spanish treasure ship in the Pacific.²

Once a young man decided upon a naval career, he had three avenues of entry open to him as a candidate for a commission in the Royal Navy. The first was a servant to a captain or admiral, commonly referred to as a captain's servant. The second means was as a volunteer per order, derisively known as king's letter boy. The third route was either from the lower deck or through the merchant service. Each mode of entry had its own distinct characteristic and different methods of training and education. Within the eighteenth century, the importance of each avenue of entry varied, but together they provided the Navy with its leaders.

As a captain's servant, a boy would be taken to sea by an officer with the understanding that the latter had a duty to educate him and aid him in his desire to seek a

²J. S. Bromley, "Navies," J. S. Bromley (ed.), The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, 1970), VI, 828.

commission. This system approximates that of apprenticeship, the standard form of vocational training in the early modern period. In the personal relationship between the servant and the master, the latter was paid for his knowledge and time. There were also economic similarities. Just as the master in commerce took an apprentice in order to initiate him into his business, so did the captain. As in the case of master and apprentice, lodging and food came out of the captain's pocket, who then received a payment from the boys' wages.

However, there were obvious differences between the two systems. A captain's servant, unlike a true apprentice, did not have proper legal articles. There was no contract of indenture, and captains did not think in terms of seven years, the normal period of apprenticeship, because the captain's own command rarely lasted that long. Another important difference lay in the fact that the state played a part in the maintenance of the servant with funds coming directly from the Treasury.³

³Margaret Davies, The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship: A Study in Applied Mercantilism, 1563-1642 (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1956), 1-3; J. O. Dunlop and Richard D. Denman, English Apprenticeship and Child Labor: A History (London, 1912), 29; Section 31, of the Statute of Artificers, states that the normal term of indenture was seven years nor after the apprentice reached the age of twenty-four. This Statute also stipulated that the wages of the apprentice were to be paid directly to the employer and a fee paid to

Entry into the service as captain's servant has been called the "pitchfork" system. Many have felt entry in this manner followed no logical order.⁴ This was not the case, for the captain held the ultimate power of selection, and he took with him whomever he wished. The only power the Admiralty exercised was over the maximum number allowed for each rate. In 1694, by Admiralty Order, the number of servants was to be no more than as follows: Admiral of the Fleet, ten; all flag-officers, eight; captains of first- and second-rate ships, six; captains of third- and fourth-rates, five; and, commanders of fifth- and sixth-rates were restricted to a maximum number of four servants.⁵

A change in these regulations was made in 1700 when the number of servants was allotted strictly according to rank. The allotment increased substantially so that

him by the parents for his services. The Statute of Artificers, instituted by Elizabeth I in 1563, was the first codification of apprenticeship laws in England. It was still in effect during the eighteenth century. Grace Abbott (ed.), The Child and the State (Chicago, 1947), I, 91-97.

⁴E. P. Statham, The Story of Britannia (London, 1904), 6.

⁵Commander R. D. Merriam (ed.), The Sergison Papers (Navy Records Society, 1950), 269.

commanders-in-chief were allowed fifty servants; admirals, thirty; five admirals, twenty; rear admirals, fifteen; and captains four per one hundred ships' company. The number varied throughout the century, but the allowances remained generous.⁶

The system, however, had many drawbacks. One concerned pay earned by the servant. The wages were not payable to him, but to the captain and were regarded as a premium for teaching his apprentice and also providing him with clothes and other desiderata. This explains the numerous allegations made by the Navy Board concerning fictitious names of non-existent servants. Every servant was supposed to be rated on the ships' books in some specific capacity, and it was tempting to rate a man higher than he should be because able seamen were paid more than ordinary seamen. This larceny was accomplished by discharging the captain's servant and reentering the same man as part of the lower deck company. There was generally a tacit understanding between the officer and the servant that the pay would be split between them. In addition, many captains entered fictitious names, made out pay tickets, and presented them to the Navy Office

⁶Merriman, Queen Anne's Navy, 313.

for payment.⁷

Another drawback to the system concerned the use of political patronage. In the eighteenth century proper connections were of the utmost importance, and nearly everyone in the Navy took care to establish these connections. This interest can be divided into two general categories: service interest, where the power comes from a naval man or body such as captains, admirals, or the Admiralty; and, non-service interest, where the power originates from outside the Navy such as important personages and members of Parliament. The Admiralty was constantly besieged by both service and non-service interest, particularly by politicians trying to secure the government's hold in Parliamentary constituencies. George Anson, when serving as First Lord of the Admiralty, endeavored to restrict political interference in the service. He battled with the Duke of Newcastle and his own commanders in the matter of election interest. In a letter from Newcastle to Anson in 1759, the Duke asked the First Lord to promote a lieutenant, because if Anson refused, Newcastle faced the loss of support from the borough which was bringing pressure for the promotion. Anson replied that if he were to comply with all the

⁷ Merriman, Sergison Papers, 325-326.

borough recommendations Newcastle submitted, the condition of the fleet would most certainly suffer. Anson then gave his criteria for promotion:

My constant method since I have had the honour of serving the King. . .has been to promote lieutenants to command, whose ships have been successfully engaged upon equal terms with the enemy, without having friend or recommendation, and to the preference of all others; and this I would recommend to my successors. . . .⁸

Men like Anson continued to fight outright political intervention in service matters. However, it was well understood that a highly placed naval officer as a member of Parliament could help his constituents find suitable places in the Navy. When Augustus Keppel was sponsored by the Duke of Richmond to fill a vacancy in Parliament at Chichester in 1755, one of his campaign promises was to insure good places under his auspices for some of those of the borough who wished to join the Navy.⁹

This affinity for political patronage filtered down through the ranks and became firmly implanted among the captains who exercised selection of officers' servants. Because captains often used this power of selection to further

⁸ Sir Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (London, 1957), 33-34.

⁹ Ibid., 127.

their own ends, they frequently favored boys of influential descent and their own sons and nephews. Thus, by the time an officer had reached senior rank, he had his own circle of professional friends who were tied to him, and dependent on him for promotion and favors. All naval officers were potentially often very powerful patrons.¹⁰

The Navy resolved itself into exclusive coteries, some small, but others large and decentralized, a near perfect reflection of the political structure of the country. However, the Admiralty still controlled appointments, and they guarded that power carefully. The officers turned their energies to the area in which they exercised total control, that of captain's servants. Thus, political interest was most important at the start of a prospective officer's career. Without it he could not even get on board ship as a prospective officer. Thereafter it continued to be a young man's mainstay until he received his first commission. It was the captain alone who arranged for his entry as a young gentleman.¹¹

¹⁰John Masefield, Sea Life in Nelson's Time (London, 1920), 69-70; Daniel A. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole (Princeton, 1965), 502;

¹¹Namier, Structure of Politics, 33; W. N. Glascock, Naval Sketch Book (London, 1826), II, 134.

Despite the problems inherent in the system, most of the distinguished admirals of the eighteenth century began their careers at sea by volunteering themselves as captain's servants. Anson, Nelson, Hawke, and Boscawen entered in this manner at the age of fifteen. Some were placed on the ships' books at an even earlier age. James Anthony Gardner was entered on the ships' books of the Boreas in 1775 at the age of five. He could have counted these years as sea time even though he did not actually enter the service until 1782.¹² There was, in effect, no qualifying examination nor age requirement, though George III felt that because the Navy was a rugged profession, fourteen was a good age for entry.¹³ Promotion to the rank of midshipman depended entirely upon the will of the captain. He could not actually give commissions, for that was a royal prerogative, but he could select, appoint, and present to the Admiralty for commissions practically all available candidates.¹⁴

¹²Sir Richard Vesey Hamilton and John Knox Laughton (eds.), Recollections of James Anthony Gardner (Navy Records Society, 1906), 6-12.

¹³Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, "The Navy," A. S. Turberville (ed.), Johnson's England (Oxford, 1933), I, 56.

¹⁴Hodges and Hughes, Select Naval Documents, 131.

The system, to be judged by its products, produced men of deep professional knowledge and experience. Two examples which best illustrate the system are to be found in the early careers of George Anson and Horatio Nelson.

Anson, born in 1697, was from a fairly influential family. His aunt was the wife of Thomas Parker, who became Lord Chancellor in 1718. In February 1711, at the age of fourteen, Anson, as a captain's servant, entered on board the Ruby, commanded by Captain Peter Chamberlen. He worked himself to midshipman, and in 1716 served in the fleet bound for the Baltic under Sir John Norris. That same year Sir John wrote that he intended ". . .to commission Mr. George Anson who is cousin to my lord Parker."¹⁵ Anson's family ties and the independent power of commanders to select and present midshipmen as prospective officers worked to Anson's great advantage.

Conversely, Horatio Nelson, the son of a country parson, was from a poor but old Norfolk family. Even though his mother was grandniece of Sir Robert Walpole, Nelson lacked strong political ties.¹⁶ Nelson's uncle

¹⁵Sir John Knox Laughton, "George Anson," D.N.B., II, 31.

¹⁶Laughton, "Horatio Nelson," D.N.B., XL, 189-190.

Captain Maurice Suckling, offered to take his nephew on board his ship the Raisonnable as a captain's servant. Young Nelson thereupon entered the Navy in 1770 at the age of twelve. Because he was without political or social influence, it was beneficial to be attached to a commanding officer capable of advancing his career. His uncle made certain that Nelson stayed on active post and obtained for him service which seemed most desirable.¹⁷

Since youths aspiring to naval careers were chosen by established officers who did not have to consult the Admiralty, Samuel Pepys wanted to add young men of the Admiralty's selection. Thus, the second means of entry into the service, as volunteer per order, was created in 1676. Since the "order" technically represented the royal will, the captains were obliged to take the nominees on board.¹⁸ The boys held Admiralty nominations and were in fact, though not in name, the first naval cadets. These young men were none too popular with the captains and were more commonly referred to as king's letter boys.

¹⁷ Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Life of Nelson: The Embodiment of the Sea Power of Great Britain (New York, 1897), I, 9.

¹⁸ The King in connection with the volunteer per order program is a euphemism for the Admiralty Board. The Board appointed young men in the King's name.

This new type of entry was intended to regulate and improve the quality of officers and encourage young men to make the Navy their profession.¹⁹ It also served to discourage the dilettante from encumbering the quarterdeck. While the volunteer per order program was successful in these respects, it also had an underlying purpose. During the eighteenth century the Admiralty used this method of entry as a competing system to that of captains' servants. The Admiralty was sanguine that officers who had entered under its auspices would remain loyal to the Admiralty rather than the small cliques of naval officers who were often hostile to Admiralty policies. This alternative program was an attempt to destroy the influence exercised by the captains over selection of officer candidates. But the program was limited at the beginning because of expense, for it obviously cost more for the Admiralty to bear the cost of training these young boys from the very start than it did to let these expenses come entirely out of the captain's pocket. During the latter part of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth, the

¹⁹ In an effort to further regulate the entry of volunteers per order, a modification of the rules of 1676 was made. In 1703, the age limit for entry was fixed at thirteen and the qualifying sea time before taking the examination for lieutenant was raised to four years. Merriman, Queen Anne's Navy, 319-320.

volunteer per order program reached its peak, supplying forty-eight percent of those qualifying for lieutenant.²⁰ Thus, those privileged to possess interest in high quarters could procure these special nominations from the Admiralty.

One such volunteer per order was George Byng. His early career is unusual and shows the power and influence that these volunteers per order exercised. Byng entered the Navy in 1678, through the interest of Lord Peterborough and the Duke of York. His ship, H.M.S. Swallow, was sent to Tangier, where Byng's maternal uncle, Colonel Johnstone, was in garrison and on friendly terms with General Kirk. On hearing that Byng was dissatisfied with his truculent captain, Kirk offered him a cadetship in the grenadiers, an army appointment, which Byng gladly accepted.²¹ In six months' time he was appointed lieutenant of a galley attached to the garrison. At the end of 1683 General Kirk persuaded Lord Dartmouth to give Byng a commission, and by that order, he was made lieutenant in the Navy and appointed to the H.M.S. Oxford.²² One can see why officers disliked

²⁰Baugh, British Naval Administration, 97.

²¹It was not uncommon for a naval officer to hold a commission in the Army. There are cases of generals commanding naval fleets during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon History (Boston, 1918), 127-128.

²²Laughton, "George Byng," D.N.B., VIII, 115-116.

the king's letter boys. As Byng's example shows, they had a distinct advantage in the kind of treatment they received. Fortunately for Byng, this experience did not hamper his career, for he became a highly respected admiral.

One of the last of the distinguished admirals to enter the service as a volunteer per order was George Rodney, who went to sea in 1732 aboard the Sunderland at the age of thirteen. Rodney was a descendant of landed gentry and had relatives among the aristocracy. George I was his godfather.²³ The social position and surroundings resulting from such connections probably contributed greatly to his entry in the Navy as a king's letter boy. These connections were perhaps also valuable in securing a place in the Channel Fleet which would be propinquant to those interests.

In the 1730's the volunteer per order system was abandoned. Although the Navy needed officers, the procedure was expensive, and the Admiralty was reluctant to be bound by this single source of supply. Also, the apprentice type entry, which was firmly rooted as social convention, began to dominate the officer training program. The scheme had outlived its usefulness for the Navy could get good candidates

²³Laughton, "George Rodney," D.N.B., XLIX, 81-82.

without it.²⁴

Additional candidates could also enter through the third form of entry, the lower deck, or, as it was more often referred to, "by the hawsehole." This produced only a small number of officers and most of these remained middle-aged junior officers who commanded fire ships, transports, and other lesser craft.²⁵ These men lacked political influence and inter-service connections. But there are examples of pressed men who went on to become flag-officers. One such case involved John Campbell, who first went to sea in the coasting trade. While serving his apprenticeship, his coaster was overtaken by the press-gang, and the entire crew, with the exception of the master and Campbell, who was exempt by his indentures, was pressed into the Navy. The mate became overwrought at the prospect of being torn from his family, and young Campbell asked if he might take his place. The leader of the press-gang replied that he would rather have a "lad of spirit"

²⁴During the second quarter of the eighteenth century the number of volunteers per order began to fall. Michael Lewis estimates the number was probably less than five percent and certainly not higher than ten percent. Michael Lewis, Social History of the Navy (London, 1960), 143.

²⁵Eric Robson, "The Armed Forces and the Art of War," J. O. Lindsay (ed.), The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, 1970), VII, 187.

than a "blubbering man."²⁶ Campbell rose through the ranks and later became Admiral Hawke's flag-captain before the battle of Quiberon Bay.²⁷

Men were also drawn from the merchant service. Hampered by lack of social standing, they were usually promoted too late to rise very high. As late as 1703-1712, the Navy Board certified 303 former members of the merchant service as competent for a lieutenant's post. This was only thirty less than the volunteers per order during the same period. However, the percentage began to fall throughout the eighteenth century because candidates from the other forms of entry stood a much better chance of becoming captains.²⁸

Perhaps the most outstanding example of a man who rose from the lower deck is that of Captain James Cook. Cook was the son of an agricultural laborer, and at the age of twelve was bound as an apprentice to a shopkeeper in a small fishing village. After some disagreement with his

²⁶Marcus, A Naval History, 369-370.

²⁷Ruddock F. Mackay, Admiral Hawke (Oxford, 1965), 237-238.

²⁸Bromley, "Navies," 829; Baugh, British Naval Administration, 98.

master, his indentures were cancelled and he was bound over to Mr. John Walker, a prominent shipowner, whom Cook served for nine years in the Norway and Baltic trade. In 1755 at the beginning of the war with France, he was mate of a vessel lying in the Thames and resolved to forestall the active press by volunteering as an able seaman on board the Eagle under the command of Captain Hugh Palliser. Palliser, like Cook, was from Yorkshire and took notice of the young man. Four years later he obtained for him a warrant as master. Cook applied himself to the study of mathematics and acquired a sound practical knowledge of astronomical navigation. Cook spent most of his time working on navigation, charting, and sailing directions, and as a result was recommended by Palliser to Admiral Hawke to undertake his famous expedition to the Pacific. Cook received his commission as lieutenant in 1768 at the age of forty.²⁹

Another naval officer who rose from the lower deck was John Benbow. An articulate and outspoken man, Benbow achieved the rank of admiral. He was in the merchant service, as Cook was, but due to his activities against pirates, received the attention of James II who appointed

²⁹J. C. Beaglehole, The Life of Captain James Cook (Stanford, 1974), 4-16, 25-27, 134.

him to the command of a man-of-war with the rank of captain.³⁰ Benbow's career is not only noteworthy for his rise in rank from an obscure background, but also for his observations on the naval service in the early eighteenth century. He believed a seaman should never lose preferment for "want of recommendation," or a gentleman obtain preferment strictly because he was a gentleman. Benbow wrote, "a man's merit ought to be judged from his actions at sea, rather than from the company he kept on shore."³¹

The analysis and discussion of entry is not complete without a thorough examination into the social backgrounds of the young men who made the Navy their career in the eighteenth century. Historians have, in the past, stated that the majority of British naval officers belonged to the governing aristocracy or gentry.³² However, studies by Michael Lewis show that naval officers between 1793 and 1815 had a social background quite the opposite. Lewis'

³⁰Edward Hawke Locker, "John Benbow Esq.," Memoires of Celebrated Naval Commanders (London, 1832), 2-5.

³¹John Campbell, Lives of the British Admirals (Dublin, 1748), IV, 179; G. A. R. Callender, Sea Kings of Britain (London, 1909), 118.

³²Walter L. Dorn, Competition for Empire (New York, 1963), 108; L. W. Cowie, Hanoverian England (London, 1969), 192; David Howarth, Sovereign of the Seas (New York, 1974), 207.

investigation indicates the professional classes were more represented than both the aristocracy and the gentry.

The Lewis study has a total sample of 1,800 officers which represent only one-sixth to one-eighth the total of the 1793-1815 period. Lewis admits that his sample is not a cross section of all social groups because it contains too large a number of peers, baronets, and gentry, while omitting a proportionate share of the lower classes. However, his sample is large enough for comparison of the middle and upper classes and can be used as an effective indicator for the entire eighteenth century.³³

An analysis of each of these categories will give some indication of the background of the entrants to the Navy in the eighteenth century. Though neither birth nor wealth was essential for a successful career, the social origins of these officers will enable us to better ascertain the types of young men who were attracted to the service. Table I provides a breakdown of the various social categories included in the Lewis study.

³³Lewis, Social History, 35.

TABLE I - Social Background 1793-1815³⁴

	Social Group	Number of Group	Percentage of 1800
A.	Titled People		
	1. Peers	131	7.3
	2. Baronets	85	4.7
B.	Landed Gentry	494	27.4
C.	Professional Men	899	50.0
D.	Business and Commercial Men	71	3.9
E.	Working Class	120	6.7
	Total	1800	100.0

Groups "A" and "B" which were thought to furnish the majority of officers, did provide the substantial amount of 39.4 percent. Sons of peers did indeed rise high in the service, but not as high as one might expect. They could not exert their influence to such a degree as to bypass the strict seniority rule imposed by the Navy. Regardless of their status, they had to wait their turn for promotion. It was for this reason that more sons of peers did not enter the Navy because they could employ their prestige with greater effect elsewhere.

³⁴ Ibid., 31.

The Baronetage category consisted, for the most part, of sons of first generation creations and were not so indicative of the true aristocracy as were the peers. By the same token, the gentry includes not only those rich and powerful, men with high court connections and political power, but also landowners with little or no social position. It is significant that the gentry did furnish the second largest total, slightly more than half that of the professional classes.³⁵

TABLE II - Details of the Professions³⁶

	Professional Men	Number	Percentage of all Professions	Percentage of 1800
1. Navy		434	48.2	24.1
2. Church		156	17.4	8.7
3. Army		132	14.6	7.3
4. Law		51	5.7	2.8
5. Civil Service		51	5.7	2.8
6. Medicine		50	5.6	2.8
7. Ministers, Governors, Diplomats		18	2.0	1.0
8. The Arts		7	.8	.4
	Total	899	100.0	50.0

³⁵Ibid., 32-34.

³⁶Ibid., 36.

The professions, as indicated by Table I, is the largest group. Because it is such a large and diverse category, a breakdown is provided in Table II to emphasize the different numerical characteristics of each professional sub-group. The magnitude of the Navy profession is hardly surprising, for it was perhaps natural that a father would take his son to sea. There he could look after him and help him in his career by obtaining the best assignments for him. Lewis stipulates that had he included all relations the number would have been substantially higher. As to the validity of the percentage of naval parentage, Lewis feels that the forty-eight percent is a solid indicator of sailors' sons throughout this period.

The second largest sub-group offers an interesting view in contrast. Included in this group is the small "Don" class from the Universities. But more importantly, the group as a whole ranges from those who are high in the Church organization, such as Canons, Deans, Bishops, and Archbishops, down to the lowly country parsons. Lewis estimates that more than half were high Church officials. Many had aristocratic and high political connections which enabled them to place their sons with the most promising commanders.

The third sub-group, the Army, occupies roughly the same social strata as the Navy. These young men could be

favorably placed in the service, for their parents knew well the manipulations necessary to accomplish this goal. Unlike the Army, commissions could not be purchased in the Navy, but good connections would go a long way in securing the right appointments.

The fourth sub-group is represented by the legal profession. This group is similar in the wide range of social status to that of the Church. Law-parentage ranged from the Lord Chancellor down to the county solicitor. Here again, more than half the group came from the higher echelons of the legal profession. Due to the expenses involved in sending a young man to sea the poorer lawyers simply could not afford it.

The fifth sub-group applies to anyone holding an office for profit. Some held sinecures through the basis of political patronage and others were hard-working government officials. This group of civil servants was fortunate in knowing the proper channels to follow, the right people to contact, and the best way of cutting the masses of bureaucratic officialism. But despite these advantages, this group contributed few of their sons to the Navy.

The next sub-group is interesting because its members did not generally occupy high social positions, nor did they have access to vast amounts of patronage. These medical men had the wealth most of the other sub-groups lacked. They

were more able to afford sending their sons into the Navy than either the Army or naval professions.

The last two sub-groups, because of their small numbers, are of little significance in the total sample. Obviously, parents who occupied important government posts had the power to secure good places for their sons in the service, but they were few in number. The arts are represented by authors, musicians, playwrights, and artists. Their sons did well in the service. Perhaps the best example is Sir William Dillon who rose to the rank of admiral, and whose father was Sir John Dillon, critic and historical writer.³⁷

The business and commercial classes were not well represented because their parents had little social position. Again, there is a wide range of status and wealth within the group. There were heads of large commercial banks and international cartels and others who were small merchants. Those possessing wealth could place their sons in the Navy and maintain them as gentlemen.

The working class represents the last group in Table I. While it is not a representative sample, Table I does

³⁷ Ibid., 37-40; John Ormsby, "Sir John Dillon," D.N.B., XV, 84-85; G. C. Boase, "Sir William Dillon," D.N.B., XV, 90-91.

give some information on family background. The majority of these officers came up through the lower deck and many of their parents were merchant seamen or had some type of seafaring background. Lewis estimates that fifteen percent of these men were originally pressed into the service.³⁸

For a young man who aspired to a career in the service, regardless of social background, the system of captain's servants was the most promising. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, this mode of entry had become firmly established. All attempts to influence the selection of prospective sea-officers by the Admiralty had failed, and it was not until the end of the century that the method of selecting captain's servants was even slightly altered. By an Order in Council dated April 16, 1794, all officers' servants were abolished. The order stated ". . .no boys should be allowed to be borne on the books of His Majesty's Ships in the future under the denomination of Servants to the Captain. . .but instead. . .to consist of young gentlemen intended for the sea service. . .to be styled Volunteers. . . ." ³⁹ These young men were now referred to as first class volunteers. But the facts remained the same only

³⁸Lewis, Social History, 40, 44.

³⁹Ibid., 153.

the names were changed. It was not until 1815 that the custom of captain's servants was totally abolished and the Admiralty began to exercise total and complete control over all forms of entry.⁴⁰

Thus, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, things were beginning to change. Pepys' king's letter boys and midshipmen were growing up. The professional corps of naval officers had arrived. In the War of the League of Augsburg the highest commands were still being held by men of prominent families who were appointed to flag-rank. But those in the younger generation, by the War of Spanish Succession, had come through the ranks. A few of them, like Benbow, were of humble origin, but many were now second generation naval officers or sons of gentry or professional men. These furnished the bulk of the officers. But the highest class was never absent, the scions of noble or governing families who had influence to rise fast and far. For interest, the inestimable advantage of knowing the right people was a mighty and sometimes scandalous factor throughout the century.

Much then had been done towards creating a viable profession. The parents of the new entrants had concluded

⁴⁰ Christopher C. Lloyd, The Nation and the Navy (London, 1954), 144.

that it was a respectable calling. It was not yet a very safe profession. The way in was still quite haphazard, depending upon the willingness of a captain to take one's boy to sea. Advancement was a distinct gamble depending far too much upon one's interest. Enough, however, had been accomplished by the eighteenth century, to establish the Royal Navy as a full fledged profession, taking its place alongside the Army, the Church, and the Law.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

If the various modes of entry were in a constant state of flux throughout the eighteenth century, education was also subject to alteration and diversities of opinion. The worth of education in the eighteenth century British Navy was a point often bitterly debated among sea officers. Many felt their rough and ready profession was no place for the pursuit of higher learning. A youth should enter the service at an early age to attain the special qualifications necessary to unite the skillful seaman with an accomplished officer. Young men spending too much time ashore on private education injured their professional careers.¹

Nevertheless, the importance of education was realized by some naval authorities. Not only should an officer be concerned with the mastery of seamanship, but also the science and art of command. Sir Hebert Richmond, a twentieth century naval historian, agreed with eighteenth century figures that sound education coupled with moderate reading would enable officers to perform

¹Locker, "Collingwood," 1; A Naval Officer, "A Plan of Education for Officers," Three Dialogues on the Navy (London, 1754), 13.

their task with a sense of honor and a thorough knowledge of their profession. These educational considerations elevated the officer above the common seaman, giving him a better perspective of his responsibilities at sea.²

If mathematics and navigation were the tools of a proficient seaman, then young men entering the Navy needed a solid foundation in writing and arithmetic. Pre-entry education was important because of the early age of entry. Lord Collingwood aptly diagnosed this situation by stating that young men will progress very slowly in the service if they are without the proper educational requisites. He suggested that young men be sent to mathematical school before entering the service.³

The eighteenth century marked an increasing awareness in the value of education throughout England. Literacy rates improved in the course of the century among the middle and upper classes. The tendency to diversify education from the old public system, which emphasized classics, to the more modern private system, which favored

²Admiral Sir Hebert Richmond, The Navy in the War of 1739-1748 (London, 1920), I, xii.

³"Preliminary Naval Education," United Service Journal (1830, vol. I), 61.

a broad variegated approach, is an example of this perception.⁴

There were several educational avenues open to young boys depending upon the social and economic status of their parents. The young son of a nobleman or gentry would most likely have a private tutor.⁵ The professional families who could not afford such an expense would educate their own sons. Formal institutional instruction was available in grammar schools or private academies. The grammar school continued to represent the conservative classical tradition of education with emphasis on the study of Latin and Greek with some writing and arithmetic. Admiral Edward Vernon attended such an institution at Westminster, where in the course of nine years he acquired such a classical education.⁶ The private academies, which were growing in number during the century, de-emphasized the classics and stressed a more diversified

⁴John Lawson, Social History of Education in England (London, 1973), 190-192.

⁵It has been estimated that sons of peerage would have a private tutor in one family in four. In the gentry the ratio was higher with one in three having access to a tutor. N. Hans, New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1951), 26-27.

⁶Laughton, "Edward Vernon," D.N.B., LVIII, 267.

program including English grammar, arithmetic, geography, history, science, and French in their curriculum. Despite the educational facilities available, informal education by parents and relatives, or even unaided self-help was as important as systematic instruction in schools.⁷ Thus, young entrants had acquired some basic skills in writing and mathematics before entering the service. It is not surprising that Bartholomew James went to sea at the age of eleven with the Epitome of Navigation, an English dictionary, and the Family Bible.⁸

The Navy offered these young gentlemen a shipboard education to further their skills, particularly in mathematics. In an order dated April 28, 1702, from the Lord High Admiral to the Navy Board, reference is made to the absence of a proper method of training young men due to a "want of a fit encouragement of ingenious persons. . .to instruct the youth in the art [of math]. . . ." ⁹ The

⁷Lawson, Social History of Education, 174, 193-195, 198-199, 202-204, 206; Edward Kimber, The Life and Adventures of Joe Thompson (London, 1763), 10-12.

⁸J. K. Laughton (ed.), Journal of Rear-Admiral Bartholomew James (Navy Records Society, 1896), 6.

⁹Merriman, Queen Anne's Navy, 322-323.

schoolmaster was therefore initiated into the Navy. He was paid only twenty pounds per year and rated midshipman. These schoolmasters had to pass an examination at Trinity House to determine their skill in the theory and practice of navigation. In addition, they were required to produce a certificate from reliable persons as to their character. Their main duties were to instruct in navigation, but later they taught mathematics and writing as well. They were assigned to ships of third- to fifth-rate, but later in the century they served on first- and second-rate ships as well.¹⁰

The concept did not work well simply because not many men were appointed to the post. The pay was inadequate and the chance of promotion nil. Midway in the century a few naval officers felt schoolmasters should be paid a decent wage and have some prospects for promotion based on the length and merit of their service. They also proposed that young men of promise at universities should be sought for the post and receive their training at sea.¹¹ This, in effect, would make a seaman out of a scholar instead of

¹⁰ Great Britain, Privy Council, Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea (1790), 136-137, 145; William Mountaine, The Seaman's Vade-Mecum (London, 1756), 26, 67-68. Mountaine's work contains a copy of the Admiralty Regulations for the year 1756.

¹¹ A Naval Officer, "A Plan of Education," 17, 48.

trying to make a scholar out of a seaman. These efforts at reform proved futile, but regardless of the lack of initial success, the schoolmaster was the genesis of what later became the Instructor Branch of the Royal Navy.¹²

The schoolmasters of the eighteenth century were generally of two types. The first were men who had some very modest education but lacked any knowledge of pedagogics and had no university degrees. In most cases they had served on the lower deck and considered schoolmaster a step up, bringing with them an uncultivated mind and a crude outlook on life.

One such schoolmaster is pictured by a midshipman in the 1790's as a man, "about thirty-five years of age, ruddy countenance, of middle size, and rude in his manners. He always wore a cocked hat, but had no pretensions to the denomination of a gentleman. He provided himself with a light yellow cane intended to chastise any delinquent." The majority of midshipmen disliked their schoolmaster not only for his imperiousness, but also because he was responsible for teaching seamanship and navigation though he knew little practical seamanship himself.¹³

¹²Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 273-275.

¹³Michael A. Lewis (ed.), Sir William Dillion's Narrative of Professional Adventures (Navy Records Society, 1953), I, 14, 25; Captain Matthew Conolly, Recollections of the Early Life of a Sailor (London, 1832), 8.

The second type of schoolmaster was the broken-down scholar, all too often a drunkard, a man whose natural talents had failed somewhere along the way. They were a quaint and pedantic minority. Such an individual was described by a midshipman as ". . .one of the finest mathematicians in Europe; an excellent writer in prose and verse, an able disputant, and possessed a mind remarkable for the strictest integrity."¹⁴ Obviously this particular schoolmaster was well-liked by his students, but for reasons known only to himself was content to spend the rest of his life in limiting circumstances.

It must be pointed out that a good ship's education was not common. Captains who took careful interest in the education of their boys were the exceptions, while a competent schoolmaster was a greater rarity still. A typical example of lack of education can be found in a letter addressed to the Earl of Sandwich, then Secretary of the Admiralty, from Admiral Thomas Pye in May of 1773. In the conclusion of his letter Pye states,

Give me leave my Lord to make one
observation more and I have don -
and that is when you peruse Admiral
Pye's letters you will please not
to scrutinize too close either to
the speling or to the grammatical

¹⁴Hamilton and Laughton, Gardner Papers, 79.

part as I allow my self to be no
[sic] proficient in either, I had
the mortification to be neglected
in my education, went to sea at
14 without any, and a man-of-war
was my university.¹⁵

Even if the schoolmaster was hard to find, the education of young men might have been carried out by other members of the ships' company, such as the chaplain or purser. Chaplains were frequently pressed into service in this capacity because before the formal adoption of the post of schoolmaster they assumed this duty in addition to their spiritual functions. As early as the reign of James I, naval chaplains taught captains' servants to read a compass and other basic fundamentals of seamanship.¹⁶ When there was no schoolmaster or chaplain on board ship, the elder midshipmen would frequently instruct the younger ones in navigation and mathematics.¹⁷

These various attempts at shipboard education were too haphazard and casual to do much good. The most potent

¹⁵G. J. Barnes and J. H. Owen (eds.), Private Papers of John, Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty (Navy Records Society, 1932), I, 36.

¹⁶Isabel G. Powell, "Naval Chaplains in the Early Stuart Period," Mariner's Mirror, VIII (April, 1922), 290-296.

¹⁷Captain A. Crawford, Reminiscences of a Naval Officer (London, 1851), I, 35.

reason why young men went untaught at sea was the obstructive attitude of the officers to what they regarded as over-theoretical instruction. Many of them felt, "there was no place superior to the quarterdeck of a British Man of War for the education of a gentleman."¹⁸

A few young men of wealthy families and highly placed connections attempted to combine the benefits of sea experience with formal education on land. During the 1750's such a plan for combining sea duty and land education was suggested to the Admiralty.¹⁹ Though never formally adopted, the scheme was recognized as having some merit. William Hotham, while serving as midshipman in the late eighteenth century, returned home after a term at sea to study under Mr. Bagley, a former Master at the Royal Academy at Portsmouth. Bagley taught young Hotham the basic principles of navigation so he might depend on his own figures rather than those of the master's mate. Hotham felt this brief land education valuable to him and believed it should become more common throughout the service.²⁰ Jeffery Raigersfeld had a similar experience.

¹⁸"Preliminary Naval Education," United Service Journal, 59.

¹⁹A Naval Officer, "A Plan of Education," 44.

²⁰A. M. W. Stirling, Pages and Portraits from the Past (London, 1919), I, 24-25.

Under recommendation from Admiral Samuel Hood, Raigersfeld, after his first voyage, spent a year in England taking a comprehensive course of study in mathematics and navigation. The young midshipman spent four months in a mathematical school and the remainder of the year under an expert in navigation and astronomy, where he specialized in spherical trigonometry. During the course of his studies, he saw many naval officers undergoing the same type of instruction. Apparently the Navy's shipboard educational programs were not an effective deterrent to ignorance.²¹

However, some prospective naval officers had the opportunity for more formalized vocational education. The idea to establish a school for young men seeking a career in the Navy had surfaced during Pepys' tenure as Secretary of the Admiralty. Though it failed for lack of support, the notion never completely died. It came to light again during the early eighteenth century with Lewis Maidwell, a wealthy gentleman, who in 1704 felt that it would be worthwhile to train and educate future naval officers before they went to sea. He offered to endow a naval school for young men to the extent of five hundred pounds per

²¹Jeffery Baron de Raigersfeld, The Life of a Sea Officer, ed. by L. G. Carr Laughton (London, 1929), 37-38.

year. Maidwell believed that to make England secure, sons of gentlemen should be trained to command at sea. While the Admiralty considered the plan to have merit, nothing further was done--the prime reason being the broad and ambitious curriculum. The young men were expected to master geometry, arithmetic, mechanics, geography, trigonometry, chronology, astronomy, fortifications, and study navigation in six languages. The Lord High Admiral felt too much may be attempted by young boys at school as well as too little, and Maidwell's expectations were beyond the limits of most men.²²

Finally in 1729, partly because of the past efforts of Samuel Pepys and Lewis Maidwell, an Order in Council stated "that it [the school] shall be established under the name of the Naval Academy, for the education of forty young gentlemen who are volunteers for his Majesty's fleet."²³ The Academy at Portsmouth was not actually opened until 1733, and then only to volunteers per order.

²² Jonas Hanway, Proposal for the County Naval Free Schools (Marine Society, 1783), 108-110; Captain H. T. A. Bosanquet, "The Maritime School at Chelsea," Mariner's Mirror, VII (November, 1921), 323; Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 87-88.

²³ The name was later changed to the Royal Naval Academy in October, 1773 and in 1806 to the Royal Naval College. "The Royal Naval College at Portsmouth," United Service Journal (1829, vol. 2), 463.

Since that means of entry was soon abolished, young men of high birth now entered the Navy through the Academy. The Admiralty hoped to provide a mode of entry into the Navy for its own nominees which would be an alternative to the usual method favored by naval officers.²⁴

The regulations of the Academy indicate the type of training young men received.²⁵ Only sons of noblemen or gentlemen at least twelve years of age and no more than fifteen could be admitted. An informal entrance examination was even conducted.²⁶ The tuition was twenty-five pounds per annum, but sons of commissioned naval officers were educated at state expense. The first year of instruction was broad and general in content with

²⁴The warrant to the Academy was similar to the warrant issued to volunteers per order going directly to sea. The Entry Warrant to the Academy reads as follows: "You are hereby required and directed to cause the bearer, Mr. _____, to be entered and received as a scholar in H. M. Royal Academy in Portsmouth Yard for education of young gentlemen for sea service, and to be instructed and provided for there according to the Rules and Constitutions thereof. For which this shall be your warrant." The warrant was addressed to the Commissioners of the Navy and the Governor of the Royal Academy. Christopher Lloyd (ed.), A Memoir of James Trevenen (Navy Records Society, 1958), 5.

²⁵For a specific listing of the Regulations, see Appendix B.

²⁶Under the first regulations for the Academy a Certificate of proficiency in Latin was the only qualification required for admission. C. F. Walker, Young Gentlemen (London, 1938), 25.

writing, arithmetic, drawing, and French part of the curriculum. Navigation, gunnery, fortification, and fencing were also taught. After a year of classroom study, students were taken to the rigging-house and shown how to prepare and fit rigging on ships. Their knowledge was further enhanced by short training voyages which emphasized the practical aspects of what they had learned in the classroom. The course of study was to be completed in not more than three years and not less than two.²⁷

A young man had completed his studies when he had inscribed all of his labor and knowledge in his notebook, entitled, "A Plan of Mathematical Learning." One such young man who completed his workbook was Henry Hotham, who attended the Royal Academy from 1789 to 1791 and went on to become a Vice-Admiral.²⁸ We are fortunate in having his workbook still extant. This book is filled with over five hundred pages of problems in various subjects, beautifully written and worked out and illustrated by neatly executed sketches and diagrams. The subjects comprise arithmetic,

²⁷ Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 91. Hodges and Hughes, Select Naval Documents, 131-135; Christopher Lloyd, "The Royal Naval Colleges of Portsmouth and Greenwich," Mariner's Mirror, LII (May, 1966), 145.

²⁸ Laughton, "Henry Hotham," D.N.B., XXVII, 406.

geometry, plain trigonometry, the use of terrestrial globes, geography, chronology, spherics, astronomy, latitude, longitude, dead reckoning, marine surveying, fortification, gunnery, and mechanics.²⁹ It is obvious that a great deal of time and effort was required to carry this project to fruition. Keeping in mind that Hotham was only thirteen years of age, this undertaking becomes a truly remarkable achievement.

Once this "Plan of Learning" was completed, a young man "Passed Out" from the Academy and was given a certificate qualifying him to serve in the Navy. In a letter from the Commissioners of the Admiralty to Admiral Samuel Barrington in October, 1751, a graduate of the Naval Academy was directed to "apply himself to the duty of a seaman and to have the privilege of walking the quarterdeck. He is to keep a journal and to draw the appearance of head lands, coasts, bays, sands, and rocks." In addition to these chores,

He is to be instructed by the Master, Boatswain, and the schoolmaster in all parts of learning that may qualify him to do the duty of able seaman and midshipman. At the end of his service in the ship he is to be given a certificate

²⁹ Henry Hotham, "A Plan of Mathematical Learning Taught in the Royal Academy, Portsmouth, 1790" (manuscript, Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull, Hull, England), passim. See Appendix C.

as to his sobriety, diligence, and skill in the profession of a seaman if he deserves it and also the length of time he has served.³⁰

The young seaman was also to take his journal to the mathematics master and have it examined and his progress checked whenever his ship was at Spithead or Portsmouth. The Naval Academy graduates underwent these shipboard duties for two years rated as able seamen. If qualified they were then rated as midshipmen.³¹

In spite of all the elaborate planning, the Academy never amounted to much. The curriculum was not at fault. But the Academy failed because potential candidates did not consider it to be a very promising way of attaining success in the service. It also had a bad reputation, the principal charge being that the young gentlemen did no work at all and that no one tried to make them.³²

For a first-hand account of the Academy, the critical comments of Thomas Martin are of interest. Martin entered the Academy in 1785 at the age of twelve, which he felt was

³⁰D. Bonner-Smith (ed.), The Barrington Papers (Navy Records Society, 1937), I, 72-73.

³¹Hodges and Hughes, Select Naval Documents, 135.

³²Lewis, Social History, 145.

too young to obtain much of an education. He praises the individual masters saying that, "there was an excellent second math master and a first rate French master," but despite this ". . . a want of method tended much to waste their labors." Generally, Martin felt the Academy was not well conducted and "there was a screw loose somewhere." He concluded that, "a well regulated man of war and a good schoolmaster, and where the captain takes an interest in the boys is a preferable course of education."³³

When James Trevenen attended the Royal Academy between 1772 and 1776 he was regarded as the best scholar the school had produced.³⁴ While his letters home were childish and immature, they reveal bullying, idleness, and debauchery on the part of the students. He complained that some of his classmates stayed out to all hours drinking at bawdy houses and accomplished little in the way of academic achievement.³⁵

James Gardner also spent a brief time at the Academy in 1790. He was fond of the math master, Mr. Orchard, but was shocked at the inadequacy of his knowledge

³³Hamilton, Martin Papers, 23.

³⁴Lloyd, "Royal Naval Colleges," 146.

³⁵Lloyd, Trevenen Memoir, 8-13.

of navigation. Apparently, Mr. Orchard excelled in the art of discipline, for Gardner remembers vividly the horse-whip used to keep order.³⁶

By 1773 only fifteen students were attending the Academy. The Admiralty had failed to attract the nobility and gentry because this group relied on patronage to further their careers and considered school a waste of time. Admiral Rodney's eldest son, John, was admitted to Portsmouth in 1778 only to be discharged a year later at his father's request to serve aboard the flagship as a midshipman.³⁷ This type of action depressed the reputation of the Academy even further.

Not only did the Admiralty have to contend with the failure to attract students, but also with the attitudes of the captains who did not look favorably upon the institution. These officers felt the Admiralty was undermining their privilege of patronage. Also the graduates had inherited the king's letter boys unpopularity, for the captains were forced to accept them when their school days were over, just as they had to accept the volunteers per order. There was also the latent scorn for book-learning

³⁶Hamilton and Laughton, Gardner Papers, 16.

³⁷Laughton, "Rodney," D.N.B., XLIX, 86-87.

in Captains who had been brought up without it. Many officers believed that a lad sent straight to sea was likely to become more proficient than one who had been presumably trained in theory at the Academy.³⁸

Because of these various problems, the Admiralty in 1773 attempted to make additional places available in the Academy to sons of commissioned officers. The age limit was lowered to eleven, and time spent at the Academy could now be counted as sea time when qualifying for a commission. The quality of the faculty was also upgraded with the addition of Mr. Baily, the astronomer on Cook's first voyage, as math master. Despite these attempts to promote the school, the fact remained that the students themselves disliked it. It was a school, and the life there was not nearly so free as that on board ship.³⁹ Perhaps Lord St. Vincent best summarized the general attitude among naval officers concerning the Academy when he wrote in 1801, "The Royal Academy at Portsmouth, which is a sink of vice and abomination, should be abolished."⁴⁰

³⁸Statham, Britannia, 5. Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 90.

³⁹Lloyd, "Royal Naval Colleges," 145-146.

⁴⁰"Letters of Lord St. Vincent," Christopher Lloyd (ed.), Naval Miscellany (Navy Records Society, 1952), IV, 472.

As a result of these problems and attitudes, the number of graduates was always very limited. Only two and one-half percent of the total officer corps in the eighteenth century had attended the Naval Academy.⁴¹ Until the end of the century the best way to enter the Navy was not by going to the Academy, but by becoming a servant to an admiral or captain.

Throughout the century the Naval Academy came under repeated attack for incompetence and faulty educational procedure. Many naval officers believed there was a more efficient way to educate young boys for a career at sea. One such group of officers in 1750 put forth a unique proposal which would solve the basic problems inherent in naval education. These naval officers felt that persons with high connections and noble birth were frequently without merit, and the plan would give them the opportunity to be exposed to a beneficial education. Conversely, persons of lower birth would be exposed to a liberal education and be in a position to rise through merit. The originators of this plan stressed the importance of reading as the background for further assiduous study. The best way to accomplish this was through the study of Latin grammar, which provides the basis of all knowledge

⁴¹Lewis, Social History, 144.

and is fundamental to all forms of education. Besides reading and Latin, more importance was placed on the study of navigation. Not enough stress was placed on math to produce men expert in the calculations necessary to navigate a warship. This was a fairly common complaint among naval officers, for many of them relied on the Masters mate for proper sailing directions.

History was also considered an important subject, with emphasis on maritime affairs and the naval history of Britain. Geography was another neglected field in a young man's education because teachers were not acquainted with the subject, nor were they aware of its importance. The plan also called for the study of literature and the arts, a knowledge of Greek, French, and drawing. These subjects were to be stressed to develop good taste and eloquence. Writing and the art of conversation, logic, dancing, fencing, and riding were also considered indispensable tools for a young prospective officer.⁴²

The obvious goal of this plan was the establishment of a liberal education for young boys wishing to go to sea. The education received at the Naval Academy was

⁴²A Naval Officer, "A Plan of Learning," 19, 24-26, 30-33, 40-41, 48, 51.

viewed as too narrow, turning out young men educated in the ways of the sea but not learned in the ways of mankind. The naval officers proposing this plan were more interested in a broad curriculum that would enable young officers to become gentlemen and scholars. Failing to attract service-wide support the plan was never put into operation. Admittedly, this approach was but one alternative to what some felt was the very limiting and wasteful efforts of the Academy at Portsmouth.

Later in the century an attempt was made to establish a public school for prospective young naval officers. This was undertaken in 1777 by Jonas Hanway, philanthropist and founder of the Marine Society.⁴³ He developed the concept of a public school for navigation under the name, "The Maritime School on the Bank of the Thames, near London." The school was sponsored under the

⁴³Jonas Hanway and the Marine Society were responsible for keeping the supply of seamen in the Royal Navy at a high level. The Society was a highly successful organization especially during the Seven Years War when forty thousand seamen were fitted out by the organization. England remembers Hanway more for his efforts to popularize the umbrella than his philanthropic pursuits. His primary interest centered in helping poor boys find employment in the Navy, but he had other wide ranging social interest. Hanway was a loquacious speaker and voluminous writer, completing over one hundred pamphlets dealing with various social problems. G. F. Russell Baker, "Jonas Hanway," D.N.B., XXIV, 312-314.

auspices not only of the Marine Society, but also such influential men as Admiral Sir George Pocock, the Duke of Bolton, and Admiral Lord Hawke. The impetus behind the founding of the school was to make available to the public an institution open to sons or orphans of impeccable naval officers. Hanway felt a need existed for such a school that would take these sons at a reduced cost and at the same time provide them with a sound naval education.

The school was not actually opened until 1779 under the name, "Maritime School at Chelsea," when ten boys were admitted. Admission rose to twenty-seven in a short time because of the generous financial support for the institution from all over England. The minimum age of admission was eleven years, and each candidate was required to demonstrate enough prior education to write legibly. The students were divided into three categories of admission. Thirteen were to be sons of sea officers who paid no tuition. Six young men would be orphans of naval officers or sons of officers with large families who would pay a total of six guineas for the two year course of study. The final group consisted of seven sons of noblemen, gentlemen, or officers who would contribute fifty pounds per year.

These students were required to complete their studies before they reached the age of fourteen. They were

governed by a superintendent, a math and navigation master, a French and writing master, a sergeant of small arms instruction and a veteran seaman. The curriculum was similar to that of the Royal Naval Academy, in addition to instructions in the use of firearms and artillery. Instead of taking short training cruises, practical seamanship was learned in a vessel of appropriate size built on the school grounds and mounted on swivels by which she could simulate tacking and other appropriate maneuvers.

All seemed to be going well until the school closed suddenly in 1787, most probably due to a difference of opinion between Mr. Hanway and the trustees over operational policies.⁴⁴ But in the same year and at the same location, another school took its place run by the former mathematics master, Mr. Bettesworth. He took six scholars teaching primarily math, navigation and geography, but also history, politics, languages, dancing and drawing. The hours required of the students were long and hard, with twelve hours devoted to study, four hours for meals and eight hours of rest. This institution continued the same objectives as the Maritime School until

⁴⁴Bosanquet, "Maritime School," 322-329.

1830, apparently with some moderate success.⁴⁵

About the same time the Maritime School was established, Hanway embarked upon an even more ambitious scheme to establish private schools in each county to maintain and train young boys as seamen. Since the establishment of these schools was primarily to produce skilled able seamen, the proposal does not fall directly under the topic of consideration. But in each of these schools, in addition to one hundred free scholars, six "artists" would also be enrolled. These young men would act as Cadet Captains receiving more elaborate training to qualify them as future officers. They would be sons of gentlemen paying thirty pounds a year for their education.⁴⁶

The Marine Society considered the plan in 1783 but decided the project was too ambitious for a charitable organization to undertake. Modifications of Hanway's idea was not considered until 1786, but his death halted any future action. The efforts of the Marine Society and its founder, Jonas Hanway, contributed ultimately to the growth and development of a modern system of officer

⁴⁵Hans, New Trends in Education, 89-91.

⁴⁶Hanway, Naval Free Schools, 89-91.

training and did much to promote national interest in the manning problems of the Royal Navy.⁴⁷

The attempts to establish formal procedures in education for prospective naval officers had for all intents and purposes failed. The need for education was recognized among the top echelons of the Admiralty and in private circles, but the difficulty lay with the captains and the parents of the young men. The captains on one hand did not feel that formalized education would benefit a naval officer in carrying out his required duties at sea. The parents, on the other hand, felt that judicious use of patronage would benefit their sons in climbing the ladder of promotion more quickly and surely than time wasted in acquiring formal education. Thus, lack of support among naval officers and parents precluded any chance of success for any of the various forms of educational institutions, either initiated or proposed during the eighteenth century.

⁴⁷Captain H. T. A. Bosanquet, "County Naval Free Schools on Waste Lands," Mariner's Mirror, VIII (April, 1922), 101-108; Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 94-95.

CHAPTER IV

TRAINING

Seamanship played a crucial role in naval strategy and tactics, and provided the foundation for success of future naval officers. Because of the masterful handling of British ships and squadrons, the Navy was able to maintain decisive blockades and take the upper hand in close actions at sea. From the work of David Steel it is possible to gain some insight into the elaborate minutiae of rigging and seamanship, the different evolutions under sail, and other old lore: of catting and fishing the anchors; of setting and taking in sails; of staying and wearing; of box-hauling and club-hauling; of lying-to under different sails; of anchoring in a crowded roadstead in blowing weather, and many other aspects.¹

As a midshipman, a boy was trained in these exercises necessary to attain a sufficient knowledge of the machinery, movements, and operations of a ship to qualify as a sea-officer. The midshipman was obliged to mix with the seamen, particularly in the operations of extending or

¹David Steel, The Elements and Practice of Rigging and Seamanship (London, 1794), I and II, passim.

reducing the sails in the tops. He had to avail himself of their knowledge and acquire expertise in managing and setting the sails and rigging.² Once he fulfilled the qualifications and mastered the techniques of handling a man-of-war, he was eligible to take the qualifying examination for his lieutenant's commission. The process of training and qualifying for commission underwent numerous changes and refinements throughout the eighteenth century. The results of this training enabled Britain to maintain her naval superiority.

At the beginning of the century, the midshipman was a petty officer associated with coxswains, quartermasters, and master's mates in the business of conning, steering, and handling the ship. His was, in fact, the rating from which master's mates were selected, and he might aspire to warrant rank as master. Before 1677 he was not regarded as material for commissioned rank. Gentlemen regarded it as beneath their dignity to perform the duties of an ordinary midshipman. But the practical experience in seamanship and navigation associated with this rating was rightly considered fundamental to the training of a naval

²John Mascfield, Sea Life in Nelson's Time (London, 1920), 71.

officer. The emergence of the midshipman as an officer of quarterdeck standing was not complete until the middle of the eighteenth century.³

A discussion of the classification of midshipman is necessary in order to understand the various stages through which a young man passed before receiving his commission. The term ordinary midshipman was the invention of Samuel Pepys in 1676. None could be rated but those who served as volunteers per order for at least two years.⁴ In 1723, the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty modified the original order by stating no volunteer per order could serve more than four years as a volunteer if at the time of his appointment he was between the ages of thirteen and fourteen, or no more than three years if he was between fifteen and sixteen. At the end of that time he was rated midshipman ordinary at the first vacancy, provided he was qualified.⁵ If by this time he was not qualified, then he

³Charles N. Robinson, The British Tar in Fact and Fiction (London, 1911), 409.

⁴Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 218.

⁵The Order of 1723 is confusing in one respect. The Order states clearly that a young man, after serving the necessary sea time, is to be rated midshipman ordinary at the first vacancy. By a previous Admiralty Order issued in 1701 a delay occurred in fulfilling the requirement to serve at least one year as midshipman in order to qualify for a commission. Owing to the restriction of carrying a limited number of midshipmen in each ship, the Order of 1701 enabled

was to be discharged from the service. The commissioners also stated that if qualified, a volunteer must be at least seventeen years of age to be rated midshipman.⁶

As a group, midshipmen were divided into two categories. The first group consisted of young gentlemen who had entered as officers servants and served two years as ordinary or able seamen. Later the rule was modified to require young men to serve four years as officers servants before being rated midshipman. The second group consisted of lower deck petty officers who might become warrant or commissioned officers, but could also remain indefinitely as non-commissioned without rising higher.⁷ These midshipmen either lacked interest or the opportunity to display their talents, and many became elderly midshipmen. Billy Culmer, a familiar character in naval memoirs, was supposed to be the oldest midshipman in the service at sixty-eight

a volunteer, after serving two years, to be made midshipman whether a vacancy existed or not. No record of revision of this order is extant, which leads to the conclusion that in 1723 a volunteer per order could still be appointed midshipman regardless of the availability of vacancies. Merriman, Sergison Papers, 282-283.

⁶Historical Manuscripts Commission, Manuscripts of Lady DuCane: The Medley Papers (London, 1905), 21.

⁷Merriman, Queen Anne's Navy, 310-314; Lewis, England's Sea Officers, 219.

years of age.⁸

Midshipmen extraordinary were neither young gentlemen looking towards a commission nor regular petty officers on the lower deck. They were commissioned officers, generally lieutenants, but occasionally officers who had held command for whom there were no vacant appointments. Though drawing only a midshipman's pay, they lived aft and were treated like officers. They were available to fill vacancies for commissioned offices in the ship or squadron in which they served. Originally called by Pepys "Reformadoes," or officers reformed from a previous cadre, the institution of this rank was intended to provide employment when no higher appointments were available. The last known use of this rate was in 1737.⁹

Regardless of entry, the young man stayed on the lower deck. Only after he passed for midshipman did he transfer to the after-deck to join his fellow midshipmen.

⁸Flexible Grummet, "Leaves from My Log Book," United Service Journal (1839, vol. 1), 338; Marcus, Naval History, 371; Hamilton and Laughton, Gardner Papers, 37.

⁹Recent study has shown that midshipman extraordinary was not the creation of Pepys, as many naval historians once believed, but was in existence as early as 1667. For a detailed account of the evolution of the rate, see W. E. May, "Midshipman Ordinary and Extraordinary," Mariner's Mirror, LIX (May, 1973), 187-192.

He was on board to learn as much as he could about seamanship, but how much he learned depended on the interest the captain and first lieutenant took in him. During the eighteenth century, naval regulations and instructions did not specify the duties of midshipmen, nor did they direct the captain to follow any prescribed course of training. The regulations left these functions entirely to the discretion of the captain.¹⁰

Much has been written about the trials and tribulations of life on board His Majesty's ships. One has only to read Frederik Marryat's Peter Simple, Tobias Smollett's Roderick Random, and Edward Ward's Wooden World Dissected to glimpse the gloomy existence of midshipmen and the hardships they endured. Bartholomew James commented on the life of a midshipman during the later eighteenth century, when in response to a fellow midshipman's mother's joy on learning of her son's promotion to that position stated, "Alas! little, my good lady, didst thou know what a sea of trouble thy son had to go through; little didst thou conjecture what innumerable difficulties he was about to

¹⁰ Admiralty regulations issued in 1734, 1756, and 1790 make no mention of the duties of midshipmen. It was not until 1813 in the Additional Regulations that a brief outline appeared. Great Britain, Privy Council, Regulations and Instructions (1734 and 1790), passim; Mountaine, Vade-Mecum, 44-68; Great Britain, Privy Council, Additional Regulations and Instructions (1813), 57-58.

encounter, and the snubs that patient mids from their superiors take. . . ."¹¹

It was a difficult life. Sir Thomas Byam Martin, writing on his experiences as a midshipman, felt a young man should go to sea before he was fourteen to give him a better chance of becoming a thorough, practical seaman. Martin believed early age necessary in order to insure the young seaman of becoming accustomed to the "roughness of a sea life before he has tasted too freely and too long of the softer charms of domestic life."¹²

The sea was the midshipman's training ground, and if he applied himself he could gain wide practical experience. A veteran seaman, usually a petty-officer, spent several hours each day teaching the young gentlemen every necessary part of a seaman's duty. They learned each knot and splice known, and when they were ready, rigged a small ship's model kept in the captain's cabin. They rigged and unrigged the model until they became proficient.¹³ A good captain, one well thought of by the midshipmen, would go to great lengths to instruct them and allow them to take the helm,

¹¹Laughton, Journal of Admiral James, 7.

¹²Hamilton, Martin Papers, I, 25-26.

¹³Crawford, Reminiscences, I, 35, Captain W. N. Glascock, The Naval Officers Manual (London, 1848), 4-11.

handle the lead used in depth soundings, and reef the maintopmasts. He might also let them handle the ships boats to gain more practical experience.¹⁴

Because midshipmen's duties were not set down in regulations, the training he received was adopted more as custom than law. Midshipmen frequently supervised the hoisting in of stores, commanded watering parties, mustered the men at night, watched the stowing and cleaning of hammocks, and fetched and carried for the captain and first lieutenant. Midshipmen also stood watch under one of the lieutenants who would frequently leave his post during the watch. At this time the midshipman on duty would assume responsibility, which was thought a good way of developing habits of command. In harbor the midshipman assisted in the smooth working of the ship's routine and kept an eye on all boats approaching and leaving the ship. At sea one of his primary duties was taking charge of having the log in order to determine the speed of the ship.¹⁵

Another important phase of training was the exercise of the great guns, or naval cannons. Midshipmen were often

¹⁴Hamilton and Laughton, Gardner Papers, 60.

¹⁵Masefield, Sea Life, 72; C. F. Walker, Young Gentlemen (London, 1938), 106; "Advice to Sea Lieutenants," W. H. Lord (ed.), Naval Yarns (London, 1899), 108.

required to oversee this important function. They were placed in command of a number of guns and saw to it that all stations had the necessary equipage. The midshipmen then proceeded through fourteen intricate steps, including loading, firing, and securing of guns. The exercise was designed to increase speed, accuracy, and efficiency among gun crews and keep them alert for action. In addition, in time of battle midshipmen were in charge of groups of guns under lieutenants of different batteries. Should the officer in charge be killed or wounded, a midshipman would then command a whole tier of guns, and his knowledge and confidence would be necessary to keep the guns in action.¹⁶

Some captains made midshipmen responsible for the working of the mizzenmast, and sent them aloft to furl the mizzenroyal and the mizzen topgallant whenever sail was shortened. They were expected to go aloft with the men to learn how to furl and reef a sail and how to set up rigging. They were expected to keep order in the tops and see that the evolutions were properly executed. In addition to these supervisory functions, the prospective officers were placed aloft to perform these duties themselves under the critical eye of the first lieutenant. On

¹⁶Walker, Young Gentlemen, 103; New-York Historical Society, Letter-books and Order-Books of George, Lord Rodney (New York, 1932), II, 549; Steel, Elements of Rigging and Seamanship, II, 391-394.

these occasions midshipmen spent hours at a time loosing and furling the sails.¹⁷ James Gardner remarked on this experience that with constant exercise his ship, the Barfleur, "could have beaten with ease any two ships of a foreign power of our rate. . . ."18

Great pride was taken by the midshipmen in their expertise while aloft. It was usually considered a point of honor to be the first in the tops after the order, "Way aloft!" One such example of the courage and daring of midshipmen and their captain aloft is that of Captain Edward Pellew. During the period 1790 to 1793 Pellew commanded frigates on the Newfoundland station. A midshipman serving under him recorded the bravery of his comrades and the mastery of their captain. Once during a gale, Pellew gave the order to reef the main topsail and sent the midshipmen aloft. Upon reaching the topsail yard, the sail was flapping violently in the wind, making it not only difficult but dangerous to secure. The young gentlemen heard a voice from the other end of the yardarm telling them to secure the sail quickly so it would not rip itself

¹⁷Masefield, Sea Life, 71; Glascock, Naval Officers Manual, 323.

¹⁸Hamilton and Laughton, Gardner Papers, 100.

to pieces. One of the young men recognized the voice as that of the captain, who had followed them up the main mast to the topmast and then descended--a feat few landsmen will appreciate, but one which required great skill and strength. Because of Pellew's knowledge and experience, his impact on midshipmen was influential in their training.¹⁹

Frequently captains devoted much of their time to training their prospective officers. Lord Collingwood was one of these who would call his midshipmen together on a Sunday and question them on the knowledge they had gained the previous week. Often Collingwood would ask the young men which lines led to the masthead and which sheets were used for different purposes. His midshipmen remembered him as a man who went to great pains to make a good seaman. Collingwood made it a practice to keep them out of mischief and to make them more proficient at their profession. He personally supervised the customary shooting of the sun at noon by midshipmen on the quarterdeck. On one occasion, when out of twelve men who took their sightings only three or four accomplished the task correctly, Collingwood took out his pin knife and cut their pigtails off telling them they were to keep it in their pockets until they could do

¹⁹Mahan, Types of Naval Officers, 445.

the work properly.²⁰

Other captains used different methods of training. The ship's model was often the focal point, and in one case a captain commented to his young men "that every officer ought to be a perfect master of seamanship in all its branches, as he would cut a ridiculous figure if a man he gave an order to proved unable to execute it, and the officer was unable to show him." It was often the practice of this captain during the midshipmen's absence at dinner to displace parts of the rigging or put something out of order on the model. Upon the midshipmen's return the captain would call to them, "The wind is a point before the beam, trim yards, there is something amiss, things are not in order." The first who discovered the defect went to the captain and without speaking wrote down what he thought the problem was. If any one of the midshipmen were slow in finding it out, a box on the ear followed, and there was no wine after dinner.²¹

Commanders such as Collingwood, who built character

²⁰ During the eighteenth century it was fashionable for young gentlemen to wear their hair tied in a pigtail close behind their neck. It was a sign of maturity in the Navy to wear such a pigtail and all midshipmen thought of themselves as mature old sea-salts. Raigersfeld, Life of a Sea Officer, 14, 33-35.

²¹ "Manuscripts found among the Papers of a Deceased Naval Officer," United Service Journal (1830, vol. 2), 272-273.

in his midshipmen; Admiral Lord Howe, whose squadrons were considered the school of tactics and the nursery of good officers and seamen; and Anson, an able officer of energy and indomitable resolution, enabled midshipmen under their command to reap the greatest benefits of their experience.²² Anson's voyage around the world gave him a profound knowledge of men and the necessities for a successful naval career. His squadron was a school of sea experience and training. Many of those who survived the hazardous voyage went on to become excellent seamen and naval leaders: Piercy Brett, Admiral of the Blue and Commissioner of the Admiralty; John Campbell, Vice Admiral and Governor of Newfoundland; Peter Denis, Admiral; Augustus Keppel, Admiral and First Lord of the Admiralty; Hyde Parker, Vice Admiral; and Charles Saunders, Admiral and First Lord of the Admiralty.²³ This is a remarkable group of men, one that attests to the importance of training and the quality of the man in command.

The early career of Admiral Cornwallis is an excellent example of how an active training period can pave

²² Oliver Warner, The Life and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Collingwood (London, 1968), 24-25; Robinson, British Tar, 53; Geoffrey A. R. Callender, Sea Kings of Britain (London, 1909), 175.

²³ Captain S. W. C. Pack, Admiral Lord Anson (London, 1960), 18-19.

the way for future success. Cornwallis was first appointed to the Newark in a fleet under Boscawen bound for North America, convoying 14,000 troops under General Amherst. He then transferred to the Kingston and was present at the victory at Louisborg in 1758. In 1759 he went to the Dunkirk under Admiral Hawke and took part in the battle of Quiberon Bay. Cornwallis then served under Admiral Saunders in the Mediterranean in 1760 blockading French shipping at Crete. His was a very active and unusual career for one so young, but was of great future benefit.²⁴

It was not uncommon in the eighteenth century to find young prospective naval officers serving a term in merchant ships. Peacetime afforded few occasions for active naval service, and such voyages offered excellent opportunities for expanding knowledge of seamanship. On voyages such as these, young men frequently took their navigation books in order to sharpen their skills.²⁵ Nelson's uncle, Captain Suckling, sent him to a merchant ship where he learned the rough lessons of practical seamanship. The conditions of merchant service tended to develop Nelson's

²⁴G. Cornwallis West, Life and Letters of Admiral Cornwallis (London, 1927), 19-20.

²⁵G. E. Manwaring, My Friend the Admiral: The Life, Letters, and Journals of Rear Admiral James Burney (London, 1931), 9.

skills more rapidly than his comparative inactivity on board a peacetime naval vessel. Of this experience Nelson wrote, "If it did not improve my education, I returned a practical seaman."²⁶ Nelson spent a little more than a year on the merchantman, and when he returned under his Uncle's command he continued his active semi-detached duty in the boats of the Triumph, a job very different from and more responsible than the one he had recently vacated. This condition of detached service begun so early in his career developed in Nelson the ability to think for himself and exercise responsibility in naval matters.²⁷

Naval officers viewed service at sea for prospective officers as the only effective system which provided thorough training. A skilled naval officer learned his profession through practical experience rather than theory. Admiral Rodney's attitude toward a midshipman's training was held service-wide. Rodney ordered his son discharged from the Naval Academy and placed him aboard his flag ship. His son was kept constantly at sea in order to master his trade. The Admiral felt the lad must learn seamanship, and until he did, he would not be fit to hold a commission.²⁸

²⁶Roy Hattisley, Nelson (New York, 1974), 19.

²⁷Laughton, "Nelson," D.N.B., XL, 190; Mahan, Nelson, I, 10-12.

²⁸Major General Mundy, The Life and Correspondence of

Qualifying for lieutenant was the final step in the development of the naval officer. The reforms instituted by Pepys established examinations and set required sea time. His objectives were aimed at producing skilled naval officers and men capable of responsibility and leadership. While Pepys created a system by which midshipmen could be judged fit to hold a commission, the eighteenth century was a time of change and innovation of those original statutes.

In 1702 the first amendment to Pepys's original proposals was introduced. Candidates who had served as mates and midshipmen but who had not entered as volunteers per order or captain's servants, were allowed to sit for the examination and if successful be employed as lieutenants. This change allowed men from the lower deck to become eligible for a commission.²⁹ Another change was instituted in 1728 when the qualifying time was raised to six years, two as midshipman or midshipman ordinary.³⁰ At various times throughout the century required sea time was reduced because the system of entry could not supply full wartime needs.

Admiral Lord Rodney (London, 1830), I, 295, 357.

²⁹Merriman, Sergison Papers, 235.

³⁰Merriman, Queen Anne's Navy, 310.

Faced with shortages, the Admiralty reluctantly elected to ease the restrictions and reduced the requirement to two years, which opened the door for those transferring from the merchant service. In 1745 the Commissioners stated ". . . In our opinion . . . [this new rule] is one means of introducing persons who may be unfit for officers, although good seamen, for we are firmly persuaded that a young gentleman will learn more of the officer in one year in the Navy, than in three in a Merchant ship."³¹ But the general rule of six years sea duty remained as the necessary time required to qualify for a commission. The service was fairly strict on this time requirement, and in one case, Isaac Coffin, one of Admiral Rodney's Captains, refused to receive three newly created lieutenants on board his ship because they had not served their required time.³²

In 1733 the examination for the rank of lieutenant was transferred from the individual captains to the Navy Board. Prospective lieutenants were now required to pass the exams at the Navy Office, but if on foreign station, the Commander-in-Chief could appoint three of his captains to examine them.³⁵ In December, 1739, at Porto Bello, Admiral

³¹Baugh, British Naval Administration, 102.

³²New-York Historical Society, Rodney Letters, II, 845-846.

³³Great Britain, Privy Council, Regulations and Instructions (1734), 14 (1790), 14.

Vernon instructed three of his captains to examine a Mr. Best Mihell to find if he was qualified to act as lieutenant. They were to report their findings to Vernon. Their report is interesting because it provides us with an idea of how qualifying exams evolved from Pepys's time:

. . . Mr. Mihell had gone to sea for six years and two weeks and one day from the journals produced by the midshipmen and signed by the various captains under which he served. His former commanding officers reported that he was diligent, sober, and obeyed orders. He can also splice, knot, reef a sail, keep a reckoning and mercator, observe by sea or star, find the variation of the compass, shift his tides and is qualified to do the duty of an able seaman and midshipman.³⁴

This was how the regulations were to be carried out, but in practice it often failed. The most abused section of the qualifications was the age limit of twenty. Samuel Barrington passed his examination on September 25, 1745, at the age of sixteen, having served at sea for five years and three months. His passing certificate stated, "It appears to us [the Navy Board] he is upwards of twenty years of age." Barrington's recommendation, however, had come from the Duke of Bedford, First Lord of the Admiralty.³⁵

³⁴B. McL. Ranft (ed.), Vernon Papers (Navy Records Society, 1958), 405.

³⁵Laughton, "Barrington," D.N.B., III, 291-292; Bonner-Smith, Barrington Papers, I, 5.

George Saunders passed his lieutenants' examination in 1734 at the age of seventeen.³⁶ Horatio Nelson, with the help of his uncle, Maurice Suckling, Comptroller of the Navy, passed his examination at the age of eighteen.³⁷ Generally, if a young man had powerful or influential family, age was no barrier to early qualification.

It was the captain alone who rated him midshipman, and the captain could, if he wished, appoint him, in the ship, an acting lieutenant. If he wanted the young man to succeed, a recommendation for commission was also within his power. A purpose existed behind this tradition because commanders could trust men they knew and had trained. During the early nineteenth century when this power had been revoked and placed under Parliamentary control, the effect was a lack of trust among captains for men they had not trained and of whose capabilities they were uncertain.³⁸ Captain Lord Cochrane and perhaps most of his fellow officers, felt the old system was never abused.³⁹

³⁶Laughton, "Saunders," D.N.B., L, 324.

³⁷Mahan, Nelson, I, 15.

³⁸Christopher Lloyd, The Nation and the Navy (London, 1954), 143.

³⁹Thomas Cochrane Dundonald, The Autobiography of a Seaman (London, 1861), 67-68.

Yet there were defects in the system. When James Gardner sat for his exam he was nervous about the ordeal, but he need not have worried. Of the three men on the committee, one of them was an intimate friend of his father's, and another, Sir Samuel Marshall, the Deputy Comptroller of the Navy, was a particular friend of Admiral Parry, Gardner's mother's uncle. He passed with flying colors even though he gave the wrong answer to the only serious question asked.⁴⁰ In a similar case, William Dillon had assurance that he would have no difficulty in receiving his commission. Dillon's father, while not a personage himself, mixed socially with many of great influence. One of these, Lord Hawke, son of Admiral Hawke, was not in the Navy but had many service connections. In 1794 when Dillon visited Lord Hawke he was taken aside and told, "When there is a general naval promotion, I am always allowed to provide for one friend. . . . Therefore, when your time is up, let me know, and you shall be my lieutenant. In short, you are as sure of the commission as if you had it in your pocket."⁴¹

⁴⁰Hamilton and Laughton, Gardner Papers, 174.

⁴¹Lewis, Dillon's Narrative, I, 157.

Interest and powerful recommendations, as well as necessary qualifications, were essential. Lord Collingwood echoed the sentiments of many naval officers when he wrote in 1793 that "young men are made officers who have neither skill nor attention, and there is scarce a ship in the Navy that has not an instance that political interest is a better argument for promotion than any skill."⁴² In spite of the deficiencies inherent in the process, the Navy attempted to provide strict examination procedures and base promotion on merit rather than influence.

Near the end of the century, qualifications for lieutenant evolved even further. Instead of a committee assembled by the Navy Board, a captain was appointed to examine prospective applicants on board their ships while docked at Spithead or Portsmouth. The usual exam covered many subjects and was conducted orally and by example. The candidates were expected to be well-acquainted with every aspect of navigation and seamanship. They were strictly examined in the different sailing methods, working tides, days work, and methods of finding the longitude by time and lunar observation. In practical seamanship they were expected to be able to conduct a ship from one place to another under every disadvantage and also demonstrate what

⁴²Warner, Letters of Lord Collingwood, 36.

procedures to follow in case of danger or distress from the loss of masts or rigging.⁴³

In the case of William Dillon, examined for lieutenant in 1797, the examining captain asked him only two questions and promptly passed him. It appeared that Lord Hawke had fulfilled his promise, yet conditions made it not as superficial as it appeared. Dillon was engaged in important ships' work when the examining officer came aboard. It was evident Dillon's captain had every confidence in his ability as well he should, for Dillon had been at sea almost continuously for seven years.⁴⁴ Experience was still the most important element in a young man's training for commissioned officer.

Britain maintained her superiority at sea partly because of her officer corps. These men were extremely competent

⁴³Lewis, Dillon's Narrative, I, 220, 223. One such question in practical seamanship that could have been asked would be how to cast a ship on the larboard tack, in a tideway, with the wind two points on the starboard bow. Based on the midshipman's practical experience, an acceptable answer would be as follows: with the ship so near the shore on the larboard side she must cast upon the larboard tack to clear the shore. The three top-sails must be hoisted and the yards braced up with the larboard braces forward and the starboard braces aft. The starboard fore-top bowline must be well hauled and the helm put hard to port at the anchors weighing. The tide acting upon the rudder and the wind upon the sails braced in that direction would bring the ship about. Steel, Elements of Rigging and Seamanship, II, 318-319.

⁴⁴Lewis, Dillon's Narrative, I, 290.

because they were highly experienced. The training they received as midshipmen formed the basis of that experience. They spent time at sea sharpening their skills and improving their techniques so that in the day of battle their knowledge would prove the decisive factor in the outcome. For all its faults, the system of training and screening candidates for commission provided Britain with officers superior in the knowledge of seamanship and well-versed in the responsibilities of command.

CONCLUSION

The complexion of the early career of the British naval officer is indeed intricate, and in the eighteenth century ever-changing. Pepys's achievements in regulating entry, in establishing standard classifications for midshipmen, and in setting stringent qualifications for commissions, went far in determining the course of the Navy during the century following his death. Pepys wanted to attract the attributes of the best seamen and those of the best families into the service. The continuation and refining of the precepts he spent his life in framing were for the most part upheld by those who controlled England's destiny at sea.

But regardless of the high ideals instituted by Pepys, the ubiquitous use of patronage and influence loomed large upon the Navy's horizon. Entry was hardest hit by this affliction because established policies and procedures were circumvented in the rush to secure the best places for the sons of the powerful and wealthy. However, the exploitation of interest was the manifestation of something far greater than the exercise of power. The Navy was attracting men from good families and acquiring recognition as a respectable profession.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the entry

process had stabilized. The Admiralty failed in its attempt to establish the volunteer per order program as an alternative means of entry. Throughout the remainder of the century nine out of ten candidates entered as officers' servants. The power to appoint recruits as midshipmen and recommend them for commissions was a significant step in organizing the officer corps as a powerful independent body capable of instituting a system of checks and balances that insured high quality in prospective officers.

The Admiralty failed also to establish predominance in the field of naval education. Despite the creation of the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth, lack of support from within the service kept attendance low throughout the century. Naval officers felt that leadership and management of men, the making of decisions, the exercise of judgment, came not from formal training and education, but from experience. Several attempts to formulate private naval institutions fell short due to lack of support from parents who favored the more direct method of influence in securing advancement for their sons. The advocacy of the advantages of naval education did not entirely fall on deaf ears. The Admiralty, a handful of naval officers, and a few citizens realized the value of adequate education not only to insure competency, but also to promote a broader appreciation of gentlemanly values. However, the pressures brought to bear by the majority of naval officers and parents

doomed naval education to play a minor role in the eighteenth century.

In only one area did the use of patronage and influence remain innocuous. Captains, free of Admiralty control and dependent upon training men skilled in the arts of war, provided comprehensive exercises to insure that future officers be, at the very least, competent seamen. Early inured to the hardships of their career, many of these young men attained a high level of professional skill and capability. Progressing for the most part by practical experience rather than by study, they acquired a thorough knowledge of the science of seamanship, rose promptly to an emergency, and learned to pit their strength and skill against every capriciousness of weather, wind, and sea. Even though political influence was applied in securing commissions for men of dubious qualifications, the examination process instituted by Pepys and perfected by the Admiralty achieved its goal of producing competent naval officers.

Thus, entry, training, and education were designed with a single purpose in mind, to produce a better naval officer. It was these ingredients that made up the formula which, while sometimes failing to function properly, enabled Britain more often than not to produce naval officers who performed brilliantly in her quest for imperial domination.

A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX A

ESTABLISHMENT OF APRIL 13, 1686

- I. That his Majesty's Ships shall not hereafter be charged in any one voyage with Volunteers or Midshipmen Extra above the number following for each of the 4 inferior Rates, viz:

Rate	Volunteers	Midshipmen.
5	Four	Three
4	Three	Two
5	Two	One
6	One	One

- II. That no person above the age of sixteen years shall be hereafter entertained as a Volunteer unless the said person shall have formerly served as such on board some of his Majesty's Ships.
- III. That upon any vacancy in the number of Volunteers hereby established upon his Majesty's Ships, such persons as have formerly served at sea in the quality of Volunteers shall upon timely application to that purpose made, and producing the certificate hereafter required, be preferred before any others who have not formerly served Us in that capacity.
- IV. That to such persons as shall by His Majesty's Order be entertained as Volunteers there shall, besides his Majesty's ordinary allowance of victuals as

one of the ship's company, be granted for their better support the further allowance which for some time past hath been given by his Majesty in the like case, vizt., so much in money payable by the Treasurer of the Navy as will make up the value of the said ordinary allowance of victuals twenty-four pounds a year.

- V. That it shall be left to the choice of the Commanders of his Majesty's Ships on board of which any Volunteers shall be ordered, either to victual the said Volunteers at their own tables, and [in] that case have the benefit as well of the ordinary allowance of victuals made them by Us as the extra allowance of money aforesaid, or else leave the said Volunteers to diet themselves as they shall think fitting and take to themselves the benefit of the aforesaid allowances of victuals and money.
- VI. That no Volunteer shall be allowed a servant at his Majesty's charge either for victuals or wages.
- VII. That every person who, having formerly served as Commander or Lieutenant in any of his Majesty's Ships, stands not charged with any misdemeanor or failure of duty in his said employment, and no others, shall be held qualified for the being entertained on board any of his Majesty's Ships in quality of Midshipman Extra,

as far as the number of such midshipmen hereby assigned to each Rate shall admit of the same, and shall accordingly so be entertained with the allowance of a servant to be paid according to his quality.

VIII. That no cabins shall be built in any of his Majesty's Ships for the accommodation of any Volunteers or Midshipmen Extra beyond the number of cabins already established for each of his Majesty's Ships by our orders of the 16th October, 1673, as also that neither the warrant officers nor any of the inferior officers of his Majesty's Ships to which Volunteers or Midshipmen Extra shall be ordered shall be dispossessed of their cabins for the accommodation of any Volunteers or Midshipmen Extra, but shall enjoy the benefit of the cabins provided for and belonging to them respectively, in the same manner as they ought to have done in case no such Volunteers or Midshipmen Extra had been sent on board; and that the said Volunteers and Midshipmen Extra shall be contented with what accommodation can be afforded them out of the number of cabins already established as aforesaid, after the said Officers shall be provided for, in case any cabins shall then remain undisposed of.

- IX. That every person who, having been entertained by his Majesty in the quality of a Volunteer or Midshipman Extra in a former voyage, shall at any time after pretend to the like entertainment, should for his Majesty's fuller satisfaction in the merits of the said person, deliver to the Secretary of the Admiralty for his Majesty's view a certificate under the hands of the Captain, Lieutenants or Master of the ship wherein he last served, signifying his civil and sober behaviour and obedience to command in the case of Midshipman Extra; and the same in the case of a Volunteer, with the addition of his having diligently applied himself to the study and practice of the art and duty of a seaman, before he be held capable of being readmitted to any such employment.
- X. That no person who shall be entertained as Midshipmen Extra as aforesaid, shall be held capable of receiving the wages due to him as Midshipman until he shall deliver to the Secretary of the Admiralty for his Majesty's satisfaction, a perfect Journal fairly written, kept and signed by himself, expressing in distinct columns the place where the said ship shall have been each day at noon, the daily change of the wind, and all extra accidents happening in the voyage, from the time of his entering on board to the day of

his discharge, and shall have produced a certificate to the Comptroller of his Majesty's Majesty's Navy from the Secretary of the Admiralty importing his having received a Journal from the said Midshipman accordingly.

- XI. That all such Volunteers, Midshipmen Extra, and Servants of the Midshipmen as shall be sent on board his Majesty's Ships, by his particular orders as aforesaid, are to be reputed as supernumeraries to the complements of the ships on (sic) which they serve, and borne on the ship's books for wages and victuals accordingly.

APPENDIX B

RULES AND ORDERS FOR THE NAVAL ACADEMY

(issued from the Admiralty, November 1st, 1773)

Article I.

Sons of noblemen and gentlemen only are eligible for admission, not under twelve or over fifteen; except fifteen sons of commissioned officers of H.M. Fleet, who are to be educated at the public expense, and (by Order in Council of October 8th, 1773) may be admitted from eleven to fourteen years of age.

Article II.

Every scholar is to pass a preliminary examination, to show that he is qualified to enter upon the plan of education adopted at the Academy.

Article III.

The master, ushers, and scholars are to be appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, who may dismiss them at any time.

Article IV.

The Commissioner of the Dockyard for the time being is to be governor of the Academy.

Article V.

The master is to reside in quarters provided in the building.

Article VI.

Teachers are also to reside in the building, provided there is room, and are to furnish their quarters at their own expense.

Article VII.

The scholars are to have separate chambers, and to board with the master, who is to receive 25 per head per annum, and no more; to keep a decent table, find washing, fire, candles, towels, table and bed linen, and necessary utensils.

Article VIII.

The master is to keep a register of the scholars, showing the day of their first appearance, times absent, and day of discharge.

Article IX.

The master is to treat all scholars alike, and to see that the teachers do likewise, except in the matter of such encouragement as may be due to those who distinguish themselves by diligence.

Article X.

No scholar is to keep a servant, but is to content himself with the attendance provided.

Article XI.

Every scholar is to be provided yearly, at his own expense, with a new suit of blue clothes against his Majesty's birthday, conformable to a pattern lodged with the master, except sons of sea officers, who are to be allowed 5 to provide the said suit.

Article XII.

The master is to see that the scholars are neat and decent in dress, and that they pay due respect to the officers of the yard when they meet.

Article XIII.

The scholars are to be instructed in writing, arithmetic, drawing, navigation, gunnery, fortification, and other useful parts of mathematics; also in French, dancing, fencing, and the exercise of the firelock. The master is to settle a plan for a regular course of studies, subject to the approval of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Article XIV.

The hours are to be the same as those of the shipwrights, except half an hour for breakfast and one and a half hour for dinner; no intermission or holiday being allowed except such as are observed in the Dockyard, and Saturday afternoon.

Article XV.

The scholars are constantly to go to church on Sundays and other days of public worship.

Article XVI.

A complete set of arms and accoutrements is to be provided for each scholar at his Majesty's expense, to be kept by the fencing master until issued.

Article XVII.

After one year scholars are to be taught fencing and the use of the firelock.

Article XVIII.

The fencing master is to see that the arms, etc., are kept in good order.

Article XIX.

If any of the scholars shall lose or spoil their arms or accoutrements, the master is to provide others for them at their parents' expense, and to give them due correction.

Article XX.

Scholars when at drill are to wear their blue clothes, unless dispensed by the Governor.

Article XXI.

The Commissioner is to visit and inspect the studies and behaviour of the scholars and methods of instruction, and report to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Article XXII.

No scholar is to be allowed out of the Dockyard without the Commissioner's leave, after obtaining written permission from the master to apply for it. A second offence against this rule is to be reported to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Article XXIII.

During the first year punishments shall consist of the rod, task, or confinement, at the discretion of the master. More serious faults to be punished by expulsion by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Article XXIV.

After one year punishments shall consist of task or confinement by the master, confinement under sentry's charge by the governor, loss of time for passing, or expulsion.

Article XXV.

A scholar who has been expelled shall never be admitted into the Royal Navy.

Article XXVI.

The Commissioner, upon application of parents or guardians, may give leave either at Christmas or Whitsuntide for three weeks. Any scholar who absents himself at other times, even by leave, or breaks his leave, shall lose the time. Absence without leave shall be punished by expulsion or otherwise by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Article XXVII.

After one year scholars shall be excused from school two afternoons in each week, and the Commissioner shall direct one of the masters attendant to carry them one afternoon into the rigging house, storehouses, and sail lofts, and to take them afloat, etc.

Article XXVIII.

On another afternoon the master shipwright is to instruct them in ship construction, etc.

Article XXIX.

The Commissioner may order a vessel of small size to be placed near, and make the scholars rig and unrig her; and two guns are to be placed on board, with powder

and shot and all accessories, with an experienced gunner from a ship-in-ordinary to instruct them.

Article XXX.

No scholar is to remain less than two, or more than three, years, except the sons of sea officers, who must remain three, and may remain five, years, unless they have finished their plan sooner and their parents desire them to go to sea. But they are not in any case to remain beyond the age of seventeen. In the first week of March each year an account of the qualification of each scholar is to be sent in, with a view to sending him to sea if qualified.

Article XXXI.

On a scholar being discharged to sea the master is to give a certificate of the time spent in the Academy, deducting times of absence (except three weeks each year), and time forfeited as punishment.

Article XXXII.

A scholar on leaving is to leave his arms with the fencing master.

Article XXXIII.

On scholars leaving, vacancies are to be filled and numbers kept up in each class.

Article XXXIV.

Scholars on joining his Majesty's ships shall be kept to the duties of seamen, but with the privilege of walking the quarter-deck, and shall be allotted a proper place to lie in, but no cabins; and shall be rated on the ship's books as "Volunteers by Order," and receive able seaman's pay.

Article XXXV.

The captain shall make Volunteers keep journals, and draw the appearance of headlands, coasts, bays, and such like; and the master, boatswain, and schoolmaster shall instruct them.

Article XXXVI.

After two years at sea the captain shall rate them midshipman ordinary--or midshipman, if qualified.

Article XXXVII.

Scholars shall have liberty while at Portsmouth to visit the Academy and be instructed there, and in the yard, gratis.

Article XXXVIII.

On returning from a foreign voyage they shall bring their journals to the master of the Academy for his inspection, and he will also examine them and represent to the Secretary to the Admiralty how he finds they have improved.

Article XXXIX.

The captain shall give a certificate on their leaving the ship as to sobriety, obedience, diligence, and skill; and also of the time they have served as Volunteer or midshipman.

Article XL.

When a Volunteer by Order is paid off, upon bringing his certificate of good behaviour to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty they may, if he desires it, give orders for him to have free use of the Academy.

Article XLI.

Volunteers educated in the Academy, and sent from thence by order of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to serve in his Majesty's ships, shall be qualified, in point of time, for lieutenants after so many years' service at sea as, together with the time specified in the certificate given them upon leaving the Academy (not exceeding three years for the sons of sea officers before mentioned) shall complete the term of six years, provided they have served two years thereof as mates, midshipmen, or midshipmen ordinary in his Majesty's ships, and are not under twenty years of age, but shall pass the usual examination of their abilities before they can be preferred.

APPENDIX C

EXCERPTS FROM WILLIAM HOTHAM'S
"PLAN OF LEARNING"

A PLAN OF

Mathematical Learning

Taught in the

ROYAL ACADEMY

Portsmouth

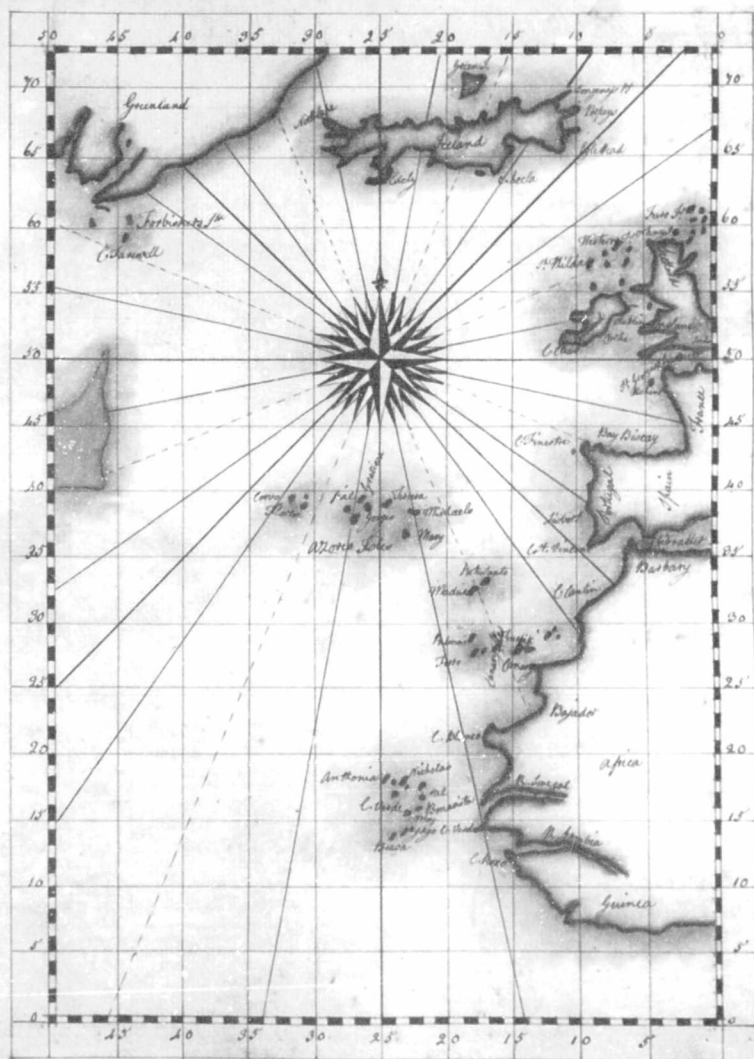
PERFORMED by

Henry Holham

Student there

1771

The Construction of the Plane Chart.

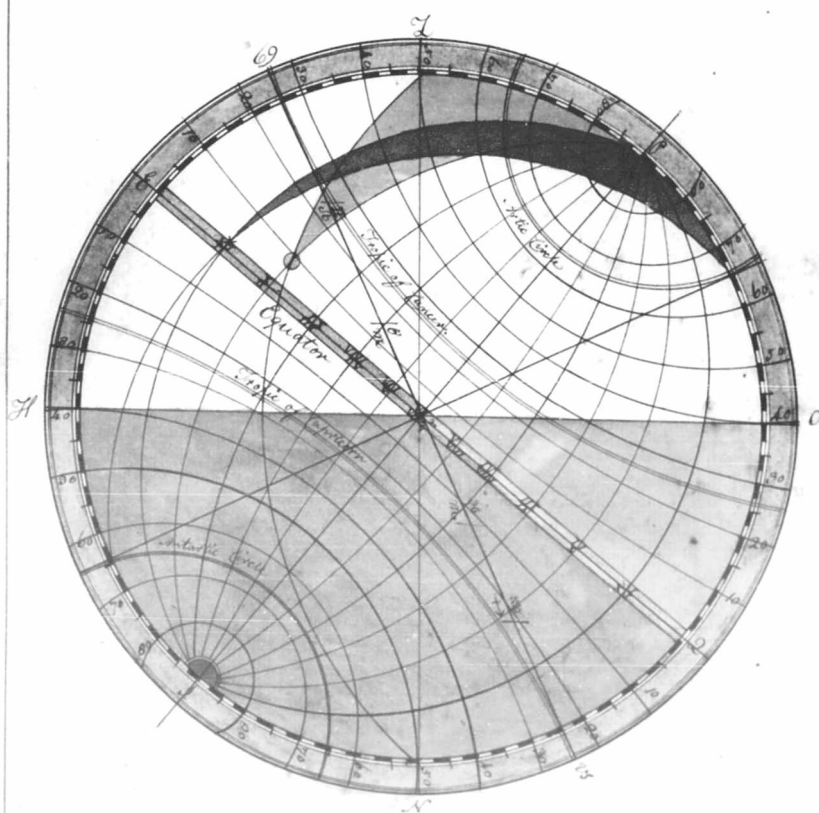


278

Astronomy.

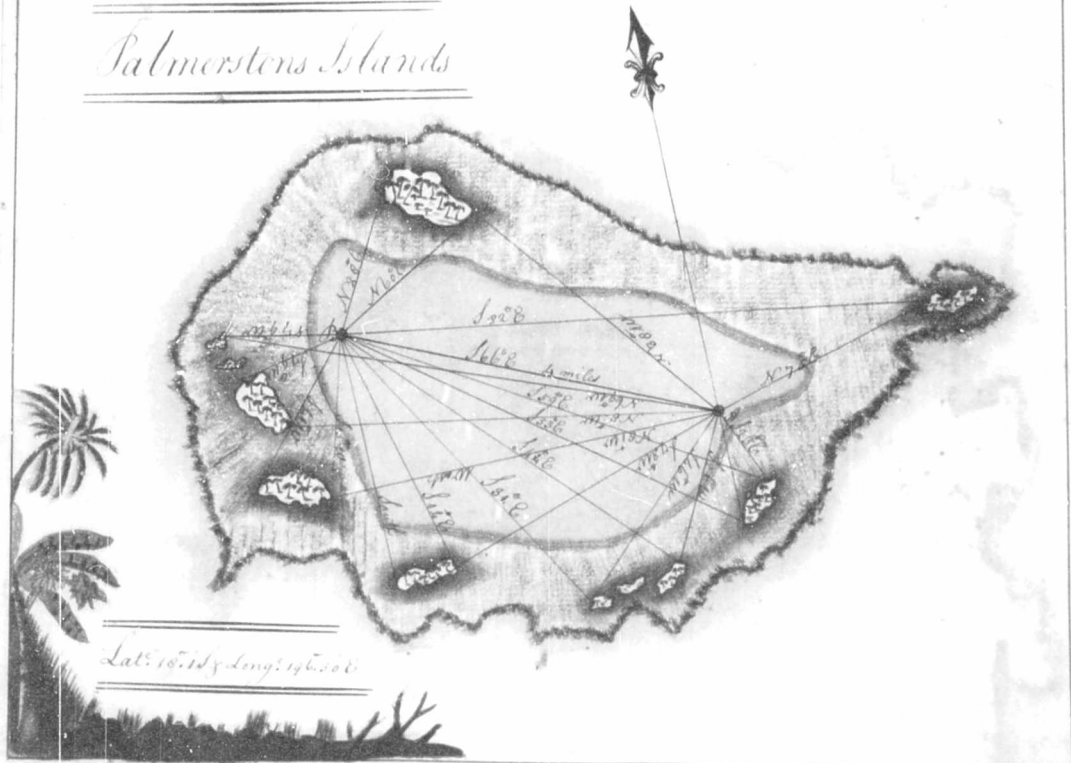
7

Projection of the Sphere,
On the plane of the Meridian.



Marine Surveying.

Palmerstons Islands



Navigation

Traverse Sailing.

Question 6th. A ship from Lat^d 6.3.5 having run the following Courses & Distances viz. N 67. W 4. N 42. E 6. S 67. E 13. W 4. W 6. N 67. E 6. S 44. N 11. W 12. N 66. S 7. Required the present Latitude with the Direct Course & Distance.



To find the Course.

Course	Dist ^s	N	S	E	W	As AB	0.2	9.00619
N 67	4.1	4.6	—	3.6	—	As B	3.4	0.62328
N 42	6	—	0.0	—	3.9	∴ Radius	9.000	10.00000
S 67	6	3.3	—	2.3	—	∴ S. A	28.13	9.72963
S 67 E	13	—	11.3	6.1	—	To find the Distance		
S 44	8	—	4.4	—	6.7	As S. A	28.13	9.32832
N 67 E	6	5.7	—	1.7	—	As B	2.2	0.62328
S 44	11	—	7.0	—	7.0	∴ R	9.000	10.00000
N 66	12	11.1	—	2.6	—	As B	9.306	9.96077
N 66	7	3.0	—	3.9	—	Ans ^r Course <u>N 28.13° W</u>		
—	—	32.7	74.3	10.6	28.0	Distance <u>9.0 Miles</u>		
—	—	0.2	—	—	2.4	Present Latitude <u>6.3° N</u>		

Latitude from 6.3.5
 S of Lat^d 0.2 N
 Latitude in 6.3. N

Distance 9.0 Miles
 Present Latitude 6.3° N

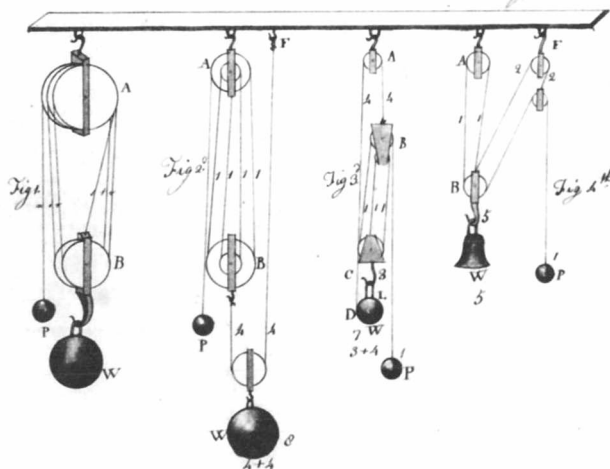
Mechanics.

Problem: Of the Pulley.

A pulley is a small wheel of wood or metal turning round upon an axis fixed in a block on the edge of the pulley is a groove for the rope to go over.

A fixed pulley is a kind of the first kind, but the distance from the fulcrum being the same on each side it tends only to change the direction of the rope, without giving any additional power, but on the contrary it diminishes the power on account of friction.

In a combination of Pulleys, all down become rope proceeding from the moveable



block & pulley, then the power & weight will be in equilibrium.

Let the rope go from the power about the pulley in the order, $n, 1, 2, 3, 4$ where the last part 4 is fixed to the lower block B . Now all parts of the rope being equally stretched they bear an equal weight. But the part 1 bears the power P ; all the other parts sustain the weight of moveable block B each with a force equal to P ; therefore P is to all the forces sustained by $(n + 1)$ as W as 1 is to the number of these ropes immutably communicating with the moveable block B .

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