

Instructions for Training
a Ship's Crew
to the use of Arms
in Attack and Defence



by Lieut. William Pringle Green, 1812.

Presented by the Academy of Historical Fencing
Transcribed by Nick Thomas, Alex Timmerman & Esther Gibson

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Transcription Notes

This treatise is a handwritten journal from 1812. Every effort has been made to accurately transcribe this work. However, the archaic form, corrections and notes in the original work present a challenging task to interpret. This document will be updated as and when mistakes are identified, and corrections made. Please visit the AHF website to ensure you have the latest version. Please note the page numbers (in page headers) are also matched to the original work.

Introduction

Pringle Green's work provides insight into naval boarding actions during an iconic period of British military history. His work paints a picture of how inexperienced and unsuitable many crews were when it came to combat, but also of the changing face of the armed forces of the period. This work highlights the discipline and organisation that was shaping the British forces of the period.

For modern practitioners of martial arts (Historical European Martial Arts, or HEMA), this work provides an invaluable insight into the training and practices of naval close combat. This work is almost entirely orientated around group melee tactics and training. It does not include much information in the individual use of swords and methods of swordsmanship. However, for those wanting to practice these, there are a number of contemporary works that are well suited to this pursuit. These include Charles Roworth's 'Art of Defence on Foot' first published in 1798, Angelo's 'Guards of Highland Broadsword' & 'Manual & the Ten Divisions of Highland Broad Sword', both published in 1799, as well as Angelo's 'Naval Cutlass Exercise', published in 1813. All these works are applicable to the cutlass and all military swords used on foot in that period. These are all freely available at swordfight.uk

About the author of 'Instructions for Training a Ships Crew'

William Pringle Green was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the third son of Benjamin Green, treasurer of that Canadian province. He entered the Navy in 1797 and served as a midshipman and later master's mate during the battle of Trafalgar in 1805, where he served aboard HMS Conqueror and played a part in capturing the French 'Bucentaure', flagship of the combined Franco-Spanish fleet. Promoted lieutenant in January 1806 he was later first lieutenant of the 'Eurydice' on the American station where, under

William Pringle Green,
1806-1812

Sir John Borlase Warren, he proposed methods to bring British firepower up to that of the American frigates that were to prove a bane in the War of 1812. His improvements in training were satisfactorily tested in his command of the brig 'Resolute' in 1811-15. Green thereafter went ashore and devoted time to his inventions until appointed to



a Falmouth packet, 1829-32, and later reappointed a lieutenant in 'Victory' at Portsmouth in 1842. Green had great mechanical ingenuity, he devoted his life to improvements in training ships crews, rigging, steering, gunnery and mechanical handling of heavy objects - many adopted by the Navy. He was twice awarded a Silver Medal by the Society of Arts, took out two patents and in 1833 began publishing (in parts) a book of 'Fragments on electricity, magnetism' and other phenomena. Only the first part, comprising 24 pages and two plates (of a proposed ten listed in the full intended contents) seems to have appeared. It however included a lithograph frontispiece of Green at about that time (right), seated writing at a desk with models of some of his inventions.

William Pringle Green,
circa 1833



Weapons relevant to this work

Cutlass



Is any short cut and thrust sword used at sea, or by seamen. The lands men term for this is hanger. The Royal Navy cutlass for this period was the 1804 pattern. Though it was of a type in use since the mid 18th century or before. A straight sword with a 27-29" blade with what is sometimes called a figure of eight hilt, due

to the shape of it's protective guard. The grip was of cast iron and ergonomically shaped, though earlier types had a symmetrical wood grip wrapped with a thin metal sheet. They are a heavy sword for their size, averaging about 2.2lb (1kg), and yet they are not a slow or clumsy weapon. These were mass produced weapons for any crewmember to use.



Officers carried a range of smallswords, spadroons and sabres. They may also at times have drawn a ship's cutlass or had a private purchase cutlass of their own.



Pistol

The standard Royal Navy Pistol of the day was the Sea Service pistol. A robust 12-inch barrelled (later 9") muzzle loading flintlock smoothbore pistol of .54 calibre. It was reliable and had a long service life and would be more than robust enough to parry a cut from a cutlass as shown in this treatise.



Musket

The Sea Service musket was one of the derivatives of the family of muzzle loading flintlock smoothbores affectionately known as the 'Brown Bess'. The Sea Service model only differed from those used in the army by having a shorter barrel, and used the same socket bayonet.

Pike

'Boarding pikes' were a common feature for naval warfare. Despite their name they were usually 7-8' in length and are therefore a form of spear. Such pole weapons had long been abandoned in the army (besides militia), except for the Sergeant's Spontoon. These weapons were ideal for naval combat, both in attempting to board, and to repel boarders. Shorter 3' versions were also used for close in fighting, as described in this treatise.



Boarding Axe

At no time does Pringle Green refer to the boarding axe in his treatise. This is hardly surprising as it was considered a tool rather than a weapon. Intended to help sailors to cut ropes and rigging, to breach doors and similar. They were sometimes used as weapons out of necessity or convenience.

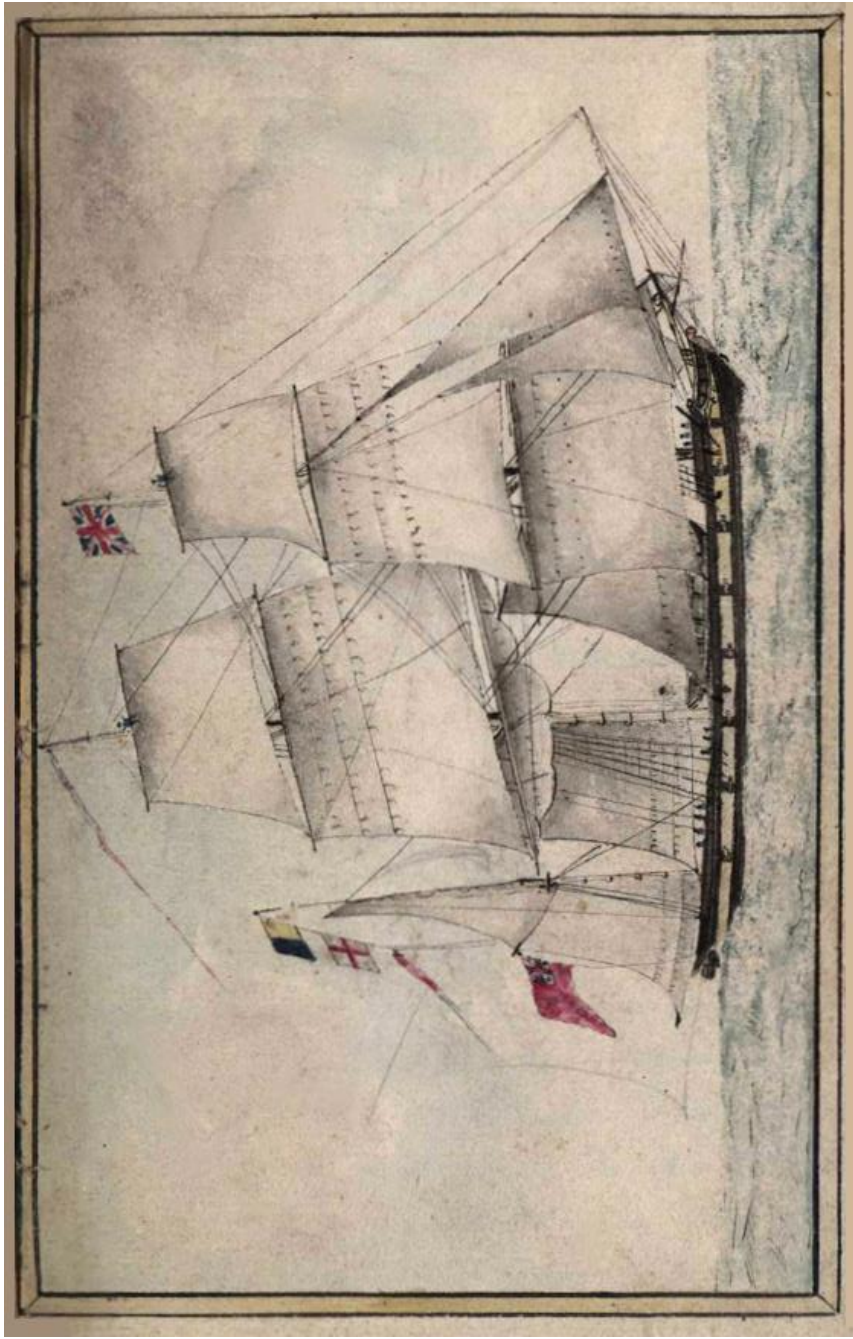
These were typically 23-26" long and around 2.2lbs (1kg).



Instructions
For
Training a ships crew
to the use of
Arms
In
Attack and Defence

by
Lieut. William Pringle Green Royal Navy
Commander of his Majestys Brig Resolute.

1812



1812

H.M. Brig Resolute, converted into a Bork, as proposed by Lieut. Green, with her improvements, as set forth in the list of improvements.

Instructions

The design of this little treatise is to recommend to the British Navy, the practice of a mode of training men to the use of Arms in attack and defence, and to form and move in bodies with some regard to regularity when engaged with the enemy, after the mode represented in the following Plates.

The plans proposed owe their chief recommendation to simplicity and facility, objects of the first importance in all matters connected with naval warfare, and it will appear, that a few days only are necessary to train lands men to the use of the cutlass, pistol, and pike, to move in bodies in such a manner as to prevent the confusion, disorder, or panic that

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any casualty might produce, and to enable a small number of such men, who by the present mode are considered of little or no service in boarding of or repelling boarders, together with marines, aided by a few able petty officers, to repulse a very superior force; or even board the enemy if required.

A crew train'd after this plan may act with troops on shore or in attacking ports, with more hope of success, than if unaccustomed to such discipline, that this system may be permanent.

Particular attention should be paid to training the marines, particularly while in barracks, that they may after the plan proposed, on the commencement of a war, or manning a ship, speedily train the crew: I presume it is profitable that the whole of that useful class of men, might not only be masters of the plans proposed, but may also be good artillery men, and by substituting the rifle with a short bayonet, for the long musket now in use, would make them of the most essential importance. They would by their scientific knowledge save considerable expense in the powder, as it would require less to be fired in exercising the great guns when thus conducted by men of science.

To teach seamen to protect the head, to guard the body, to cut and thrust with full effect,

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with a perfect knowledge of the use of the cannon is all that is necessary; the time thrown away in putting them thro' the positions proposed to the Navy would be advantageously employed in thus exercising them.

It is a singular fact, and of the utmost importance to show, which experiment will prove, that one man, (not excepting those train'd after the present mode adopted in the fleet), will not be found in one hundred men serving in the navy, who can cut with effect at the right side of his opponent or even make the attempt should an opening offer itself, such a man or men is no great use when opposed to those train'd after the proposed plan, and it will also be found that few men, though long accustomed to the cutlass make a cut at any part but the head and this with such awkwardness as to be of no utility when opposed to one so train'd. Therefore to instruct our crews in a more ready effectual use of the cutlass and pistol is the first object to be explained.

According to the custom prevailing from the earliest period of our naval history to the present day, in boarding or opposing boarders, the pistol is held in the right hand, and in the attempt to board is fired and thrown away to enable the boarder to draw his cutlass, which yet remains in the scabbard, or left hand.

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The disadvantages of this mode of attack and defence are many, in the first place, the pistols being fired and lost the boarders are then to attack their opponents (with cutlass alone) who if trained according to this plan, easily dispatch them with the pike, rifle bayonet or cut them down if not shot by the pistol from the left hand; in the next place when the pistol is thrown away, if the cutlass be yet in the scabbard it requires some time in drawing it out thus exposing the men to the assault and fire of those prepared to oppose them.

To obviate these difficulties, it is proposed, that the men should reserve their pistols in their belts when attacking until they gain the gunwale or deck of the enemies ship using the cutlass for their defence; this leaves the left hand disengaged to assist their movements and to secure a footing.

Having gained the deck or a footing, the pistol can be drawn from the belt with the left hand, and being thrown across the arm, as is shown in Plate No.1 letter B. serves as a guard, preserves a formidable weapon in case of any accident depriving a man of his cutlass or right hand, and if attacked by an untrained man it is only for him to receive the blow (aimed at his head) on the pistol, and with the cutlass dispatch his opponent, who has thrown himself quite open to that blow, or thrust.



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Every man that has witnessed an action or naval engagement will admit, that a pistol ball fired with the left hand (even at random) amidst a crowded crew, when a footing is gained, cannot fail of having superior effect, to one fired from the right hand in the bustle of an attempt to board, and thus being placed on a deck makes the men equal to those with pikes, and to oppose them.

It is a matter of notoriety in the Navy that when fire-arms are from necessity put into the hands of untrained men, with inexperienced petty officers, the consequences are as fatal to their friends as their foes, and indeed this must necessarily happen in a confused crowd of men fighting upon the present Naval system.

Section II.

Commanding his Majestys Brig Resolute of 14 guns with a complement of 64 men and being constantly deployed in protecting convoys, conveying supernumeraries to and from Ireland, Scotland, and the several naval ports, enables me to employ the occasional leisure which this service permits, to putting to the test the advantages of the proposed arrangements, to which I had directed my attention for a long period.

It frequently occurred during this service that the compliment has increased to 150 or 180; the greater portion of whom were landsmen, and of course totally unacquainted with all matters relative to ships; with such a body of men in so small

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a compass, totally unacquainted with modes of warfare, naval discipline, or the use of small arms, it might be expected that great confusion would ensue. But repeated trial evidenced, that after a few days exercise, in the manner proposed, it appeared impossible to throw them into disorder, although every possible means were employed to affect that purpose.

In my opinion it is preposterous, and indeed idle to suppose, that it is necessary a man should be led to the sea, to be of service in an engagement on board ships, or to induce him to fight courageously, and that with ordinary seamen and lands men if trained after the plan, use of musket, pike, cutlass and pistol, will use them with due effect, it is a question whether such men properly trained in the use of small arms and in the practice of the manoeuvres here described in defending a ship against the boarders of an enemy and in boarding may not be rendered as useful as the best seamen on board who are (unintelligible) and are not only more usefully employed in serving the great guns, which from the motion of the ships require the most experienced seamen when their moment to board the enemy arrives, for a desperate attempt or assistance be enabled, those previously engaged not following up the advantage they had gained, from being weakened by the assault. Working the ship and performing the requisite duties of able seamen, exercising men in the manner here proposed



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if properly timed, and not continued so long as to become toilsome; may be considered not only a pleasant and amusing scene, but also create a degree of rivalry; will occasion the men to practice the use of the cutlass by way of fortune and they will long to have an opportunity before the enemy, to prove the pre-eminence that each individual may suppose himself to have acquired.

On commencing to train a crew to use of cutlass and pistol, each man should be provided with a stick, in length that of a cutlass, and another to represent, the pistol; to instruct men in the use of these weapons, a few words only are necessary, viz.

- 1st. Guard the Head
- 2nd. . . . the right side
- 3rd. . . . the left side
- 4th. . . . thrust or parry

These words serve as well for attack as defence, substituting the word "strike" for "guard", as it has been already noticed, that the only cut an untrained man can make is a downright blow at the head, the Note No.2 will show the manner in which the sword should be held to guard against it; in this instance the pistol is also used as a guard, and is a sufficient guard against any man of the present mode of using the cutlass.

To protect the right side the sword should be

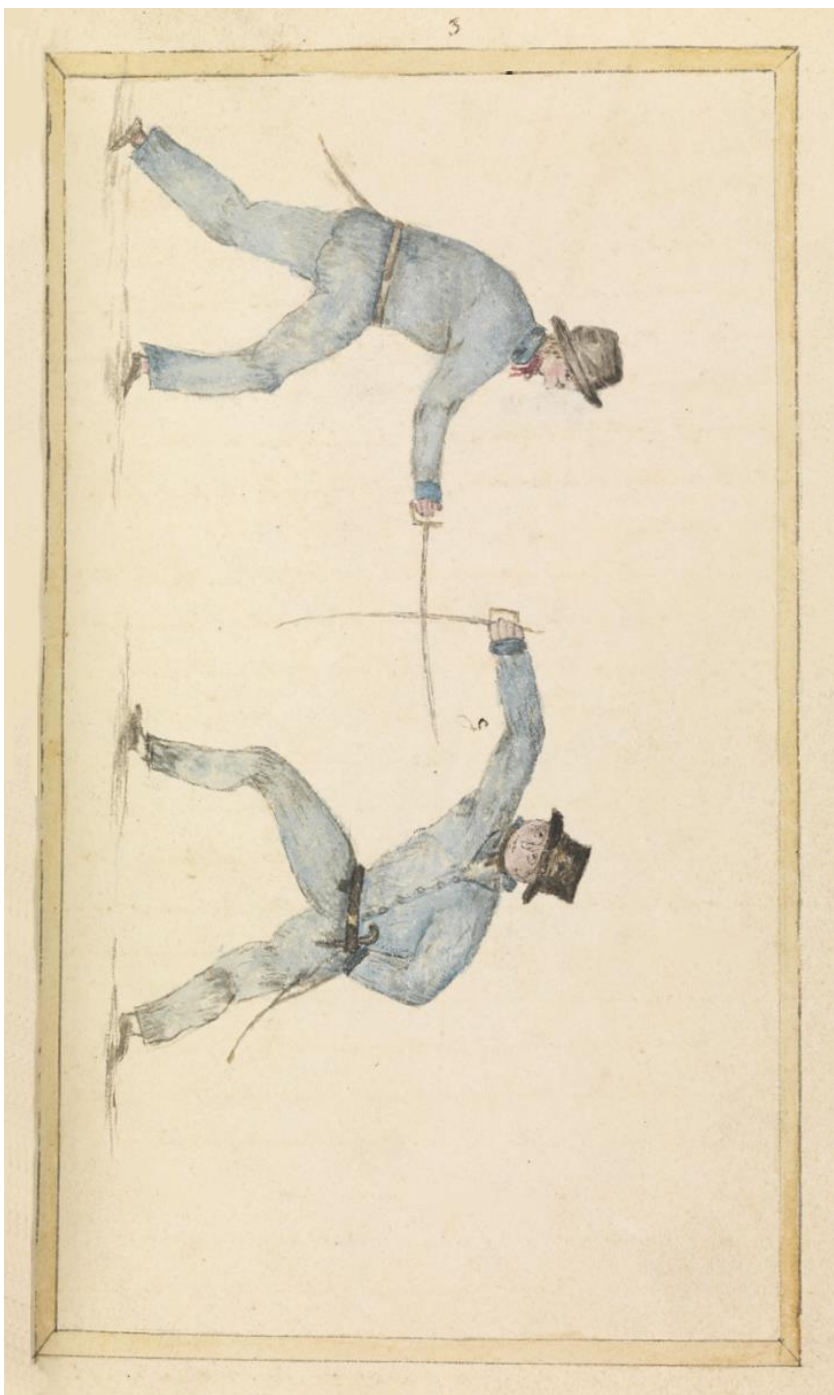
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held as in Plate No.3. letter g. throwing the sword arm across the body to protect the left side,

This Plate also represents two men practicing these motions; which being soon learned single handed, the crew should be formed into squads and trained; with this done, the squads should be formed into divisions of twenty one, thirty, fifty, or in numbers proportioned to the size of the ship.

In forming a division of thirty, the ten front rank men should face the side, leaving a space between each of them of three feet. A man is then to be placed directly in the rear of each of them, and ordered to form the rear rank, which form a division of thirty men three deep, with a front of ten, a few words will now direct all the necessary evolutions, viz, "first, form a line; on receiving this command, the men in the rear step into line, always moving to the right of the men in front, whose distance apart enables the line to form without any confusion or trouble.

Then send command "form three deep", on this being given the two rear rank men step back into their former position, the front remaining stationary. To face the division aft or forward it is only necessary to say "face aft"



* This sort of pouch is certainly much more commodious, & efficient than the cartouche box commonly used

- Adm'l Heathcote

Instructions 27

or forward", or to the right, or left face, but when a division is facing forward, and is instantly required aft, to prevent confusion, the first order should be, "face the side, then face aft", or to the right or left about face" and advance.

For practicing, the stick may be used either as a musket, pike or cutlass. The rear ranks men when ordered to form a line, or to face forward or aft should raise the points of their weapons, to prevent accidents whilst moving. When in line, the whole are to guard the head, present and fire the pistol with the left hand, turning it to receive the cut of the opponent, whilst the right is inflicting a blow of the cutlass as in Plate No.1 letter c.

Some of the guns, aft and forward in any class vessel should be fitted with hooks to the breechings, and boxes of bags, containing musket balls placed near them, so that in an extreme case, they may be fired with effect at the assailing crowd of the enemy as represented in Plates No.6 and 9.

Adapted

* To the sword belt a small leather pouch is attached to contain flints, 16 rounds of musket and pistol ball cartridges; this is much more commodious than the heavy and clumsy cartouche box now in use, which of itself is enough to impede the progress of any man.

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Plate No.4 shows the manner in which the charge of musket or pike, is to be warded off by the cutlass. The great superiority must be evident to every one, in favour of the man who has reserved his fire and pistol over the one who has thrown away both, particularly so, where we reflect upon the custom those to be attacked to discharge their musket or pistol and none to reserve their fire.

I would require a folio to explain the practical importance of this single point and Plate.

The greatest advantage results from dispatch in all evolutions; every movement should be executed with celerity, and particularly so in supplying the place of those who had been disabled in the assault or who were driven back, by superior force will harass them and force their opponents to retreat and in confusion, those who receive a check in repulsing; if compelled to fall back, should do so in good order until aided by a fresh squad of division, which in its turn, is to sustain the shock, or advance and attack the enemy, if he be stationary or advancing.



Section III. 29

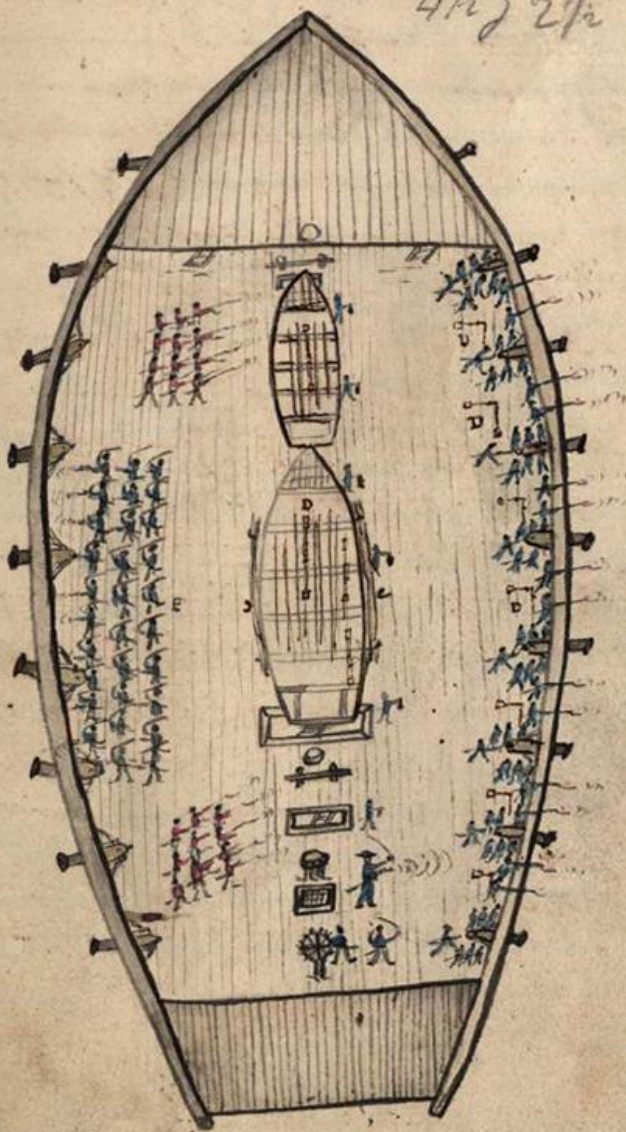
It is customary in many ships in a general exercise to go through the motions without loading or firing once in a year, and in others to exercise a few guns every day, and seldom have a general exercise or to fire the guns, the consequence is, that when men become actually engaged; the sudden effects of numerous explosions, the recovering of the guns, the constant and necessary attention to powder horns, tackles, sponges, ammunition et al, create a degree of confusion and causes many accidents in some instances, a to be dreaded dissidence; which in the commencement of an action must be attended with the worst of consequences. And it is a fact that show only the breechings in many ships are spliced in and kept so long to the guns as to become quite rotten and not so built to resist broadsides of the guns shotted. To remedy those evils, exercising cartridges, containing sufficient powder to recoil the guns should be used until the crew are perfect, no breechings should be suffered to be spliced in to the rings in the tube box, which should have a hook affixed to it, that it may be easily disengaged from the belt.

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a quantity of priming cartridges should be placed with the tube box, and a priming wire attached to the box; these enable a man to prime much sooner than with a horn, save a very considerable quantity of powder, prevent the blowing up of the horn which occurs in the act of priming guns that may hang fire, which I myself have witnessed.

Another circumstance leading to results more peculiarly disastrous, which has been often shown in small vessels is the death or disabling of the Captain or officers, who command in different parts of a ship, in this case if it be the Captain. confusion and often dismay ensue, and often afford the enemy an immediate and great advantage because skilful officers on observing confusion or the slightest deficiency in serving the guns or in manoeuvring should instantly embrace the opportunity of changing his position if by doing so might insure an advantage or victory, to obviate any disorder and to completely defend a ship after the proposed plan.

4 1/2 2 1/2



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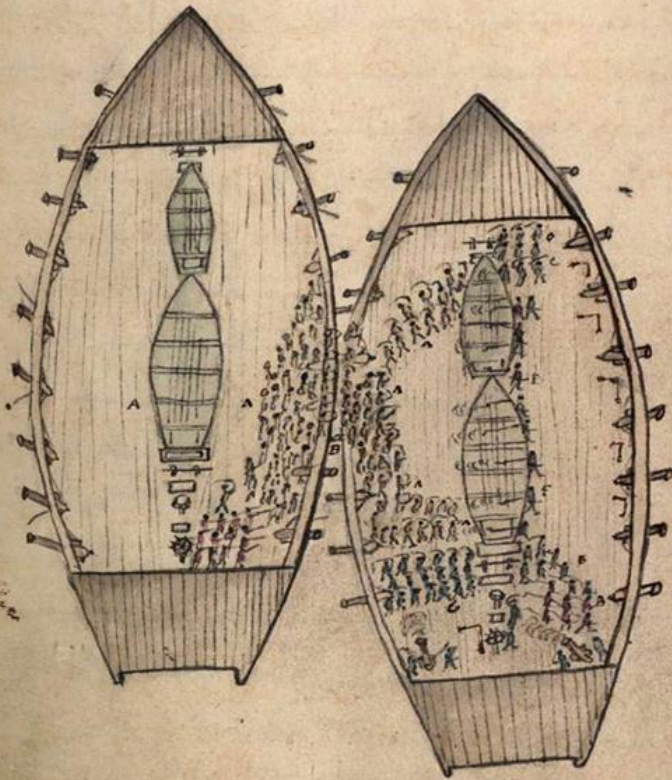
To manage an English defended ship should be a certain number of petty officers and able seamen should be selected, and marked according to ability as the ships company would act with confidence under men they had been thus accustomed to obey; in exercise as their officer. These men should be called occasionally to the quarter deck, there to put the ships company in squads and divisions as well as the ship, through all the necessary evolutions; so that no difficulty could occur should the command devolve on them, and it would be a singular advantage to them should they be promoted in the service. Indeed there should be no difficulty ensued for every man should know his time to command should the ship fight until only one officer & one squad remain'd.

Every general operation in agitation, by this mode is thereby made clear to every man and they are in consequence as much interested in their success as if the command had wholly devolved on them and the plan had been their own.

Plate no 5 shows the deck of an 18 gun Brig at exercise, Letter .C. the pikes in the goosenecks under the boat for the men a midships, some of which are the usual length others only three feet long that they may

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be used at close quarters, D the improved staffs. Plate no. 6 Letter B serves to show the deck of an 18 gun brig having on board only 65 men; in this case the crew being compelled to retreat from the guns, and resisting double their numbers, the enemy having by a stratagem of their opponents been admitted to board. Letter A represents the enemy; part of them in possession of the boarded ships waste, o v c represents a squad of the opponents forward .G. a division of them formed on the quarter deck F a squad defending the centre of the ship, all firing into the body of the enemy, who are thus kept at bay, without the hope of success, confounded, and confused, knowing not how to commence a retreat. In this instance, there is no officer on board but the captain, those men appointed to command in the absence of the officers supplying their places; should the squad forward be compelled to retreat, they fall back in good order disputing every inch of ground; those amidships facing forward and assisting them thus the whole possessing the after part of the ship, and by their superior discipline



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and determined resolution defeat their opponents and not only destroy many but by a close pursuit in their confusion succeed in capturing a vessel of superior force .+.

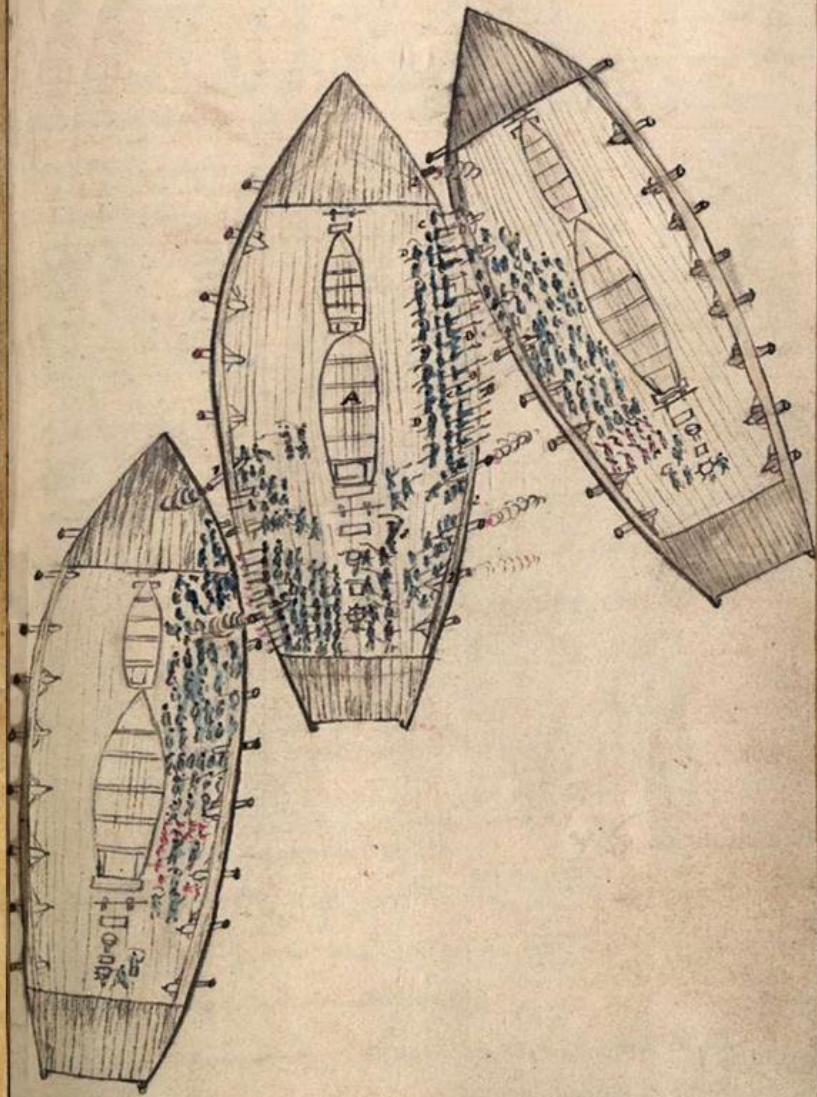
The larboard gun in this case has been several times fired, by a stratagem of the division G. who fall back a midships, their opponents thereby receive the full contents of the guns on the discharge of which the party .B. advance and charge the enemy. Division .G. forming in the rear of Marines who in addition to their rifle are armed with cutlass and pistol, according to the proposed plan which enables them when intermixed and unable to charge to repel their opponents with sword and pistol and to board them in return.

Plate No. 7 letter A represents a ship boarded by two of equal force, in this instance it will be obvious that if the enemy fire their great guns they will do as much injury to each other as to the ship assailed whilst the single ship has the advantage of using some of her guns &

.+. proving that valour can supply in the face of numbers

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with great effect. B represents the front rank with pikes or muskets, C the centre, with pikes, D. the rear with cutlass and pistol, the whole crew being armed with cutlass and pistol; if the men forward on the starboard side letters B.C.D from overpowering numbers of the enemy, are compelled to give way, they are to dispute every inch of ground falling back in order, on the squad or division whose place it is to receive them, while a division or all the marines are to advance forward on larboard side, and either charge the enemy or attack them with sword in hand. No. 1 & 2. show the guns continuing to fire. Figure 8 the captain is on the quarter deck, a station he should never quit but in emergency, to rally, or lead a party much pressed, or where the fate of the battle depends upon such a measure as affording him an opportunity of saving every occurrence and sending seamen to the weakened points. Volumes might be written on the impropriety of the captain or commanding officers leading boarders, and those leaving the ship to chance. Little care should he about the loss of individuals in desperate



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cases, provided there be a hope of success in the end. In this and almost every instance it would be advisable to grapple the opponent so that if his boarders are repulsed he not be able to disentangle his ship and prevent the party which defeated him becoming assailants in their turn. If the two ships be armed according to our present mode they must certainly ensure the single ship victory, and this from his superior armaments and discipline.

The boarders of the enemy have lost their pistols and many their cutlasses, very many men are slain, and the remaining part of the crew, unarmed, can make little or no resistance.

Plate no.8 will serve to show two ships in contact, Letter A, exhibits the whole crew of the enemy attempting to board, who are opposed by the men stationed at the front of attack only.

The two divisions of marines, a dispersible force formed into squads there with the men at the point of attack being the 2nd and 3rd divisions forming as great

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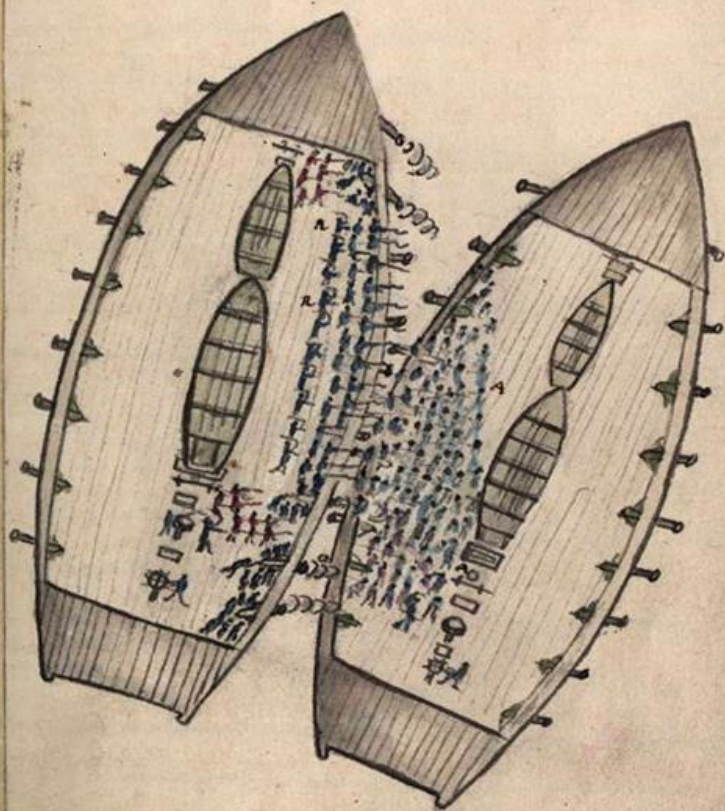
a body as can possibly act in one point, whilst the portion of the crew stationed at the foremost guns the 1st division, and three after guns in 4th division are firing; at the same time they bring a strong reserve.

Should the enemy gain a footing the 2nd division letter .a. step back, the 5th division the same, placing the enemy between both, the marines pass over to larboard side and continue a destructive fire into the body of the enemy, thus placed between three divisions; division letter R and 3rd division are not to fire their pistol but diagonally, and that with care and certainty.

The men at the foremost guns, provided they do no executions, and division R be weakened, are to form with them.

The men at the after guns the 4th Division affording another reinforcement who might board on the quarter, whilst those in the centre follow up the advantage they have gained, by boarding in their turn.

As it is well known that the carrying a ship by boarding or opposing boarders depends on previous arrangement, it is therefore of consequence to point out the means most likely to insure



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success, or in the event of defeat in the attempt to board to secure a retreat. In no pretence whatsoever, are the party whose lot it is to defend their part of the ship to quit their post, they are to be supportive but never to retreat.

Plate No.9, represents two ships on board of each other; letters A. that of the enemy, B the opponent who is this instance having the weathergage has men on board the enemy; in doing this the and bowsprit is carried away and foremast No.1 and 2. by the concussion also fall on the deck and so covered as rendering it impossible to fire the guns, or there to run under the lee of the enemy, necessarily compelling the crew taught after the present plan to quit their guns, and to be exposed to repeated broadsides of the enemy, the crew considering all hope of success to be over, and unaccustomed to strategems and modes here proposed. surrender from necessity with eighty, or one hundred effective men. If however, the crew of the disabled ship had grappled, and as soon as the accident occurred had retired under the boats, with the appearance of flight, and form in the manner so presented in Note. 2.3.4:5, load all their pistols and muskets and be in every way prepared to oppose, and follow their enemy who no doubt would immediately board in great numbers; with the certainty of having

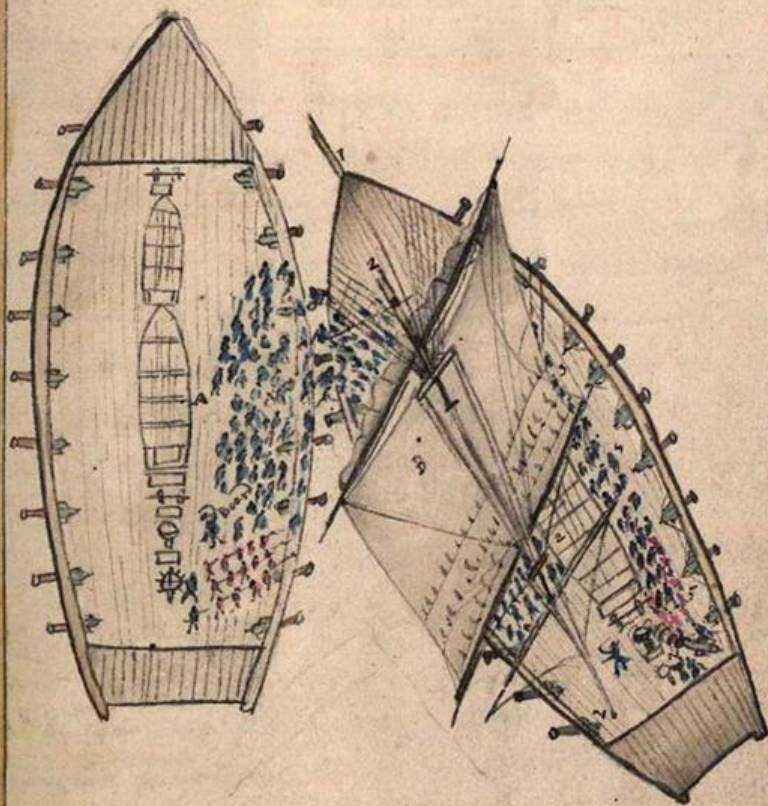
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an easy capture; the great guns .2. charged with bags of musket balls, at this moment being fired [by a few men stationed for that purpose] a determined attack made at the same time on all sides of the tumultuous and confused crowd of assailants, many of whom probably not prepared to meet such a reception would give way, and by a desperate attack, the scale may take a turn and give the opponents the advantage,

Inducing the enemy to board, or to board them is in this instance the only hope, and their boarding places them on an equality with the disabled ship, if the enemy continued to fire the guns until quarter be called for would have insured their victory.

Plate no. 10 exhibits two ships commencing an engagement, the guns loaded and run out at this time few men only are required to work them, because the guns will recoil, and seven men will be sufficient to each for the two first broadsides whilst the super-

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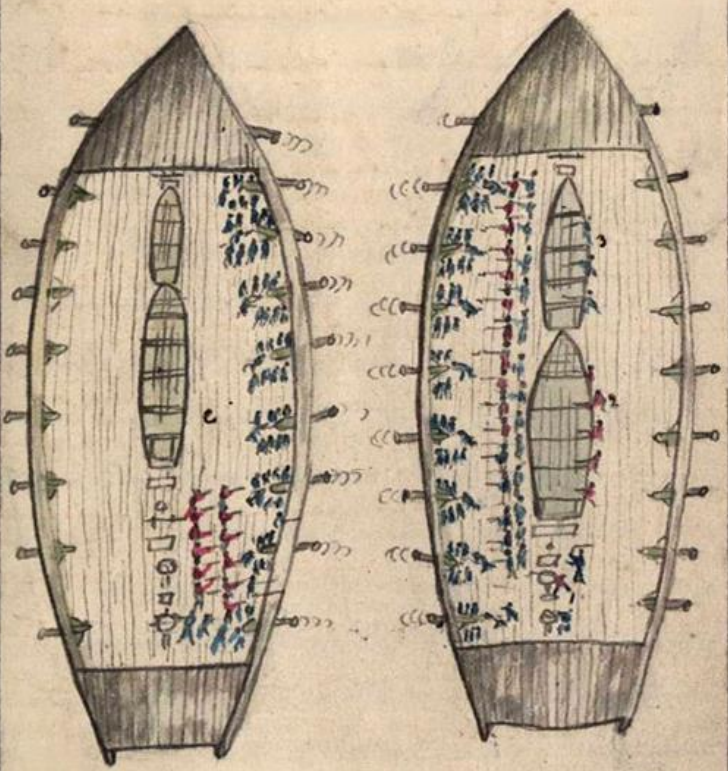
numeraries are drawn up on deck with small arms, as at Letter .B. until required at the guns No 1,2,3, show the station of those men whose duty it is to attend the enemy's tops, or any marksmen aiming at the officers or crew. The advantage to be derived from such arrangement cannot fail to strike any persons notice, when compared with the state observable in the opposite ship C; and everyone who has been in an engagement will admit the great advantage of many muskets and a well directed fire and continued fire on commencing an action. The men with small arms may be placed on the opposite side to the one engaged and under shelter of the boats, masts etc.

It is necessary to remind officers, that on all occasions of boarding; the leader of the party, is the most likely person to fall; and in this event, which often happens, should there not be a second officer immediately at hand, to take the command, the party being without a leader are at a loss to know whether to advance or retreat, and are left entirely to chance and should the captain be the leader, so,

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slain, or rendered unable to do it, confusion must everywhere ensue. To preclude against this misfortune, it should be previously arranged, and the crew made to understand, that should the officer fall, the men appointed by the captain to command squad, are in this case to be obeyed; And in order to encourage enterprise, emulation, and intrepidity, any commander of a squad who may gain the adversary's deck and from the pre-eminence of his prowess in being most forward (no officer at hand or they being slain) gives the word of command, he should be obeyed. Should he fall the next captain of a squad is to take the command and so on in succession as if onboard their own ship, and as they had been accustomed to do in exercise.

As more than 5 or 6 men cannot go abreast in a small vessel the petty officers being right hand men [This is the case in every division] they can with ease replace from the rear those men that have fallen in the front ranks.



Section IV.

It is surprising how that such establishments of arming could have been determined upon, and I cannot help reprobating such science! By the present regulation, an 18 gun sloop of war, with a complement of 120 men (which I consider at least thirty less than should be, as represented in Plate no. 5) is only allowed seventy cutlass's and thirty five pairs of pistols [I cannot help believing; with very much deference to the higher authorities upon this subject, that there is a deficiency, and error in considering this allowance sufficient, If the giving one pair to each boarder, as is the general custom, serves to arm but thirty five men, or if one be given to each of those with cutlass's, there then upon the deck remains then fifty unarmed men; should those who are so armed be killed in attempting to board, or their cutlass's and pistols lost, broken, or disabled consequently

Instructions 42

if an opening offers to board the enemy, it cannot be embraced, from a deficiency of cutlass and pistols, and there exists little or no means of resistance, if boarded by the enemy, as pikes and muskets become useless when the crews become interrupted, and those who have not cutlasses to defend themselves must necessarily seek refuge in flight.

These unfortunate circumstances will be prevented by the modes of attack and defence proposed; in which it is recommended, that every seaman and marine on board be arm'd with cutlass and pistol independent of their musket and pikes, this will enable men stationed in any part of the ship not only to resist boarders, but to take advantage of a favourable opportunity to board the enemy rendering it unnecessary to call men from their guns, or weaken any important point, which must be the case by the present mode when the boarders are called, two or more men are denominated boarders from each gun. to which I must strenuously recommend after the plan I have adopted.

Instructions 43

The proposed arrangement, not confined to flush deck vessels but is of the greatest importance in every class ship, if on board a frigate men be required to repel the boarders, if boarded on the quarter the men from the forecastle and there together with those other 20 at the fore most guns upon main deck, will be as many as can possibly act; while the after guns on the main deck, keep up a constant fire. If boarded on the bow the men on the quarter deck, and after main deck guns, are to assist, in like manner as before.

The advantage of the weather gage though generally sought, is not always desirable because if engaged in a low, or single decked vessel, and it is blowing a fresh breeze the lee guns can not be fired with effect and whenever the ship sails to leeward all her crew are exposed to the small arms and grape shot of her opponent; and if a mast is shot away, this pulling to leeward, disables all the guns; At the same time it will not be possible to put before the wind, and if this could be accomplished the ship would be exposed to the raking broadside of the enemy who may take a position that may insure him victory, but if engaged to leeward and a mast should go, it pass's clear of the side engaged

Instruction 44

and it may be possible to get the mast cut away & the ship free, prevent her being raked, and afford an opportunity of boarding, should the enemy endeavour to close or veer to leeward. The wreck being cut away the ship going free, will be enabled to fight as good a battle as if the mast was standing; and board also if a mast be disabled.

Altho' I am so strenuous an advocate to lay the enemy on board and grapple him, yet I do not mean to advise the immediate boarding, but to wait perfect opportunity, according with occurrences and to the system performed. It would be ill advised to board when the great guns are doing great execution and if possessing an advantage situation, considered it better to suffer the opponents to become assailants, which according to my ideas, is to be almost always desirable.

A ship constructed after the plan I proposed is/as being built without channels will have very many advantages over her opponent, and the present construction.

M.

Lieut. Green on Naval Warfare
Admiralty letter No.1 & 2
Ordnance Board's letter.