

Strategy and the Sea

Essays in Honour of John B. Hattendorf

Edited by

N.A.M. Rodger, J. Ross Dancy,
Benjamin Darnell and Evan Wilson

THE BOYDELL PRESS

© Contributors 2016

All Rights Reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owner

First published 2016
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978 1 78327 098 9

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620–2731, USA
website: www.boydellandbrewer.com

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

The publisher has no responsibility for the continued existence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate

This publication is printed on acid-free paper

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	viii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	ix
John B. Hattendorf – A Transatlantic Tribute <i>N.A.M. Rodger</i>	1
Introduction <i>Evan Wilson, Benjamin Darnell and J. Ross Dancy</i>	5
1. Spanish Noblemen as Galley Captains: A Problematical Social History <i>Carla Rahn Phillips</i>	9
2. Strategy Seen from the Quarterdeck in the Eighteenth-Century French Navy <i>Olivier Chaline</i>	19
3. Danish and Swedish Flag Disputes with the British in the Channel <i>Jakob Seerup</i>	28
4. Reconsidering the <i>Guerre de Course</i> under Louis XIV: Naval Policy and Strategic Downsizing in an Era of Fiscal Overextension <i>Benjamin Darnell</i>	37
5. British Naval Administration and the Lower Deck Manpower Problem in the Eighteenth Century <i>J. Ross Dancy</i>	49
6. British Naval Administration and the Quarterdeck Manpower Problem in the Eighteenth Century <i>Evan Wilson</i>	64
7. The Raison d'Être and the Actual Employment of the Dutch Navy in Early Modern Times <i>Jaap R. Bruijn</i>	76
8. British Defensive Strategy at Sea in the War against Napoleon <i>Roger Knight</i>	88
9. The Offensive Strategy of the Spanish Navy, 1763–1808 <i>Agustín Guimerá</i>	98

10. The Influence of Sea Power upon Three Great Global Wars, 1793–1815, 1914–1918, 1939–1945: A Comparative Analysis <i>Paul Kennedy</i>	109
11. The Evolution of a Warship Type: The Role and Function of the Battlecruiser in Admiralty Plans on the Eve of the First World War <i>Matthew S. Seligmann</i>	138
12. The Royal Navy and Grand Strategy, 1937–1941 <i>George C. Peden</i>	148
13. The Atlantic in the Strategic Perspective of Hitler and his Admirals, 1939–1944 <i>Werner Rahn</i>	159
14. The Capital Ship, the Royal Navy and British Strategy from the Second World War to the 1950s <i>Tim Benbow</i>	169
15. ‘No Scope for Arms Control’: Strategy, Geography and Naval Limitations in the Indian Ocean in the 1970s <i>Peter John Brobst</i>	179
16. Sir Julian Corbett, Naval History and the Development of Sea Power Theory <i>Andrew D. Lambert</i>	190
17. The Influence of Identity on Sea Power <i>Duncan Redford</i>	201
18. Professor Spenser Wilkinson, Admiral William Sims and the Teaching of Strategy and Sea Power at the University of Oxford and the United States Naval War College, 1909–1927 <i>Paul M. Ramsey</i>	213
19. Naval Intellectualism and the Imperial Japanese Navy <i>Keizo Kitagawa</i>	226
20. History and Navies: Defining a Dialogue <i>James Goldrick</i>	236
21. Teaching Navies Their History <i>Geoffrey Till</i>	242
Afterword <i>N.A.M. Rodger</i>	252
A Bibliography of Books, Articles and Reviews Authored, Co-authored, Edited or Co-edited by John B. Hattendorf, 1960–2015	255
Index	285
Tabula Gratulatoria	305

Contributors

Tim Benbow is Senior Lecturer in Defence Studies at King's College London. His work focuses on the development of naval aviation, and he has published a number of articles and chapters on that theme. He is in the process of completing a book for the US Naval Institute Press entitled *The Royal Navy, the Carrier Question and British Defence Policy 1945–1963*.

Peter John Brobst is Associate Professor of History at Ohio University. He has published a number of works on the Great Game and strategy in the context of the Indian Ocean. He is in the process of completing a book entitled *Indian Ocean Strategy, 1957–1977: Sea Power and Globalism in the Era of Decolonization*.

Jaap R. Bruijn is Professor Emeritus of Maritime History at Leiden University and one of the world's leading experts on Dutch maritime history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His most recent book is *Zeegang: Zeevarend Nederland in de achttiende* (Zutphen, 2016).

Olivier Chaline is Professeur d'histoire moderne at Université de Paris IV – Sorbonne. He is the head of the Laboratoire d'histoire et d'archéologie maritimes and co-director of the *Revue d'histoire maritime* and the collection *Histoire maritime* at the Presses universitaires de Paris Sorbonne.

J. Ross Dancy is Assistant Professor of Military History at Sam Houston State University in Texas. He received his DPhil from the University of Oxford, where his research examined British naval manning at the end of the eighteenth century. His book, *The Myth of the Press Gang*, was published by Boydell in 2015. He holds a BA in history from Appalachian State University, and an MA in Naval History from the University of Exeter. He served as a US Marine for four years, and was deployed throughout the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Benjamin Darnell is a DPhil Candidate at New College, Oxford under the direction of Dr David Parrott. His research investigates the administration of the French Navy under Louis XIV during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14). He is interested in naval finance and the role of private enterprise in resource mobilisation.

Rear Admiral **James Goldrick** recently retired from the Royal Australian Navy. He has held multiple seaborne commands. From 2003 to 2012, he commanded the Australian Defence Force Academy, Australia's Border Protection Command and the Australian Defence College. He was made Officer of the Order of Australia for his leadership in defence education and training.

Agustín Guimerá-Ravina is a Research Fellow of the CSIC (Spanish Council of Scientific Research), Madrid. He has published extensively on the maritime and naval history of the eighteenth century Atlantic world, and he has edited several international books in naval history.

Paul Kennedy is J. Richardson Dilworth Professor of History and the Director of International Security Studies at Yale. He is the author or editor of nineteen books, including *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism* and, most famously, the bestselling *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. His most recent book, *Engineers of Victory*, was published in 2013.

Captain **Keizo Kitagawa** is the Defence Attaché at the Japanese Embassy in London. He was commissioned in 1994 and has spent the last two decades in a variety of command and staff positions in the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force.

Roger Knight spent the majority of his career at the National Maritime Museum, which he left in 2000 as Deputy Director. In 2005, he published a critically acclaimed biography of Nelson and was appointed Professor of Naval History at the University of Greenwich. His most recent book is *Britain Against Napoleon: The Organization of Victory, 1793–1815*, published in 2013.

Andrew D. Lambert is Laughton Professor of Naval History in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and Director of the Laughton Naval History Unit. His most recent book, *The Challenge: America, Britain and the War of 1812*, was published in 2012.

George C. Peden is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Stirling. He has published extensively on British public finance, mainly in the twentieth century, and the economic aspects of defence and foreign policy. His most recent book, entitled *Arms, Economics and British Strategy: From Dreadnoughts to Hydrogen Bombs*, was published in 2007 in the Cambridge Military History series.

Carla Rahn Phillips, Emerita Professor of History at the University of Minnesota, has published extensively in the economic, social and maritime history of Spain. Her most recent book, *The Treasure of the San José: Death at Sea in the War of the Spanish Succession*, appeared in 2007.

Werner Rahn spent his career in the German Navy, reaching the rank of Captain and serving as director of the German Armed Forces Military History Research Office from 1995 to 1997. He has published a number of important works on German naval history, with a particular focus on the Second World War.

Paul M. Ramsey is completing his doctorate at the University of Calgary. He recently held the Edward S. Miller Research Fellowship in Naval History at the US Naval War College.

Duncan Redford was Senior Research Fellow in Modern Naval History at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth. He served as a submarine officer in the Royal Navy for a decade before completing his doctorate. He is editing a multi-volume history of the Royal Navy.

Nicholas Rodger is a Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford and the leading historian of the British Navy. He is in the process of completing the third volume of his critically acclaimed *Naval History of Britain*.

Jakob Seerup is a curator at the Royal Danish Naval Museum in Copenhagen, and he also teaches naval history at the Royal Danish Naval Academy. Most of his work has been published in Danish and explores the history of the Danish Navy in the eighteenth century, but he has also published an article about the Danish Naval Academy in the *Mariner's Mirror* and an article about officers' early careers in the *Journal for Maritime Research*.

Matthew S. Seligmann is Professor of Naval History at Brunel University. His work focuses mostly on Anglo-German relations and the causes of wars and he has authored or co-authored nine books and numerous articles on these topics.

Geoffrey Till is Emeritus Professor of Maritime Studies and Chairman of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies at King's College London. Since 2009 he has been a Visiting Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore. His *Understanding Victory: Naval Operations from Trafalgar to the Falklands* was published by ABC-Clio in 2014 and he is currently working on a fourth edition of his *Seapower: A guide for the 21st Century*.

Evan Wilson is the Caird Senior Research Fellow at the National Maritime Museum. He completed his doctorate at the University of Oxford in 2015. He has published a number of articles on naval officers' careers and social backgrounds in the late eighteenth century. His first book, *A Social History of British Naval Officers, 1775–1815*, will be published by Boydell & Brewer later this year.

Danish and Swedish Flag Disputes with the British in the Channel

JAKOB SEERUP

On 11 August 1694 an incident took place which strained Anglo-Danish relations seriously. The Danish ship of the line *Gyldenløve* of fifty guns under the command of Captain Niels Lavritzen Barfoed, peacefully anchored at the Downs, was attacked by the seventy-gun HMS *Stirling Castle* from Sir Cloudesley Shovell's Squadron.¹ The *Gyldenløve* suffered three men dead and eighteen wounded, including Captain Barfoed himself. On the *Stirling Castle*, Captain Deane reported that he had eight men dead and about twenty wounded. The Danish ship was seriously damaged and had to undergo significant repairs. Barfoed and his officers were subsequently arrested, and they were only released after prolonged negotiations between Denmark and England.

Denmark remained neutral during the ongoing Nine Years' War of 1688–97. However, the Danish king did provide auxiliary troops for the English war in Ireland from 1689 to 1691. Politically it would seem very unwise to compromise the good relations between the two countries by attacking a Danish warship, unless there was a very good reason. So what serious offence had the *Gyldenløve* committed to provoke such an attack? Or was it perhaps all a mistake? Surprisingly, the underlying cause was what we today might regard as a trifling matter of courtesy. The battle was the result of a dispute over the right of English warships to demand that foreign warships strike their pennants in the Channel. It was not the only incident of its kind, and in the period around the year 1700 such 'courtesy battles' involving both Danish and Swedish warships strained England's relations with the Scandinavian kingdoms. These conflicts have been noted by researchers before, but the fact that the English insistence on striking of pennants had long term strategic implications for the sailing patterns of the Danish and Swedish navies has not previously been described.² This chapter seeks to present the flag disputes in their context as seen from a Danish and Swedish perspective.

¹ See R.C. Anderson, 'An Anglo-Danish Incident in 1694', *The Mariner's Mirror*, xiv, no. 2 (1928), pp. 175ff.

² See for instance Anderson, 'Anglo-Danish Incident', *passim*, and F.E. Dyer, 'An Anglo-Danish Incident in 1694', *The Mariner's Mirror* xiv, no. 3 (1928), pp. 278ff. In Danish the incidents are described thoroughly in C. Bastrup, 'Konvojrejser I Slutningen af det 17. Aarhundrede', *Tidsskrift for Søvesen* (1900), pp. 241ff.

Before we look at the wider perspective of the flag disputes, let us return to the situation in the Downs in August 1694. The wider context of that and other battles needs to be included in order to understand the incident. In 1691 Denmark and Sweden had signed a treaty to bilaterally protect their merchant ships sailing through the Channel from being ransacked by the warring navies.³ If Danish and Swedish merchant ships were sailing in convoy with warships from either country, the two kings were guarantors that ships under their protection did not sail with contraband goods. The treaty was supplemented by separate treaties between Denmark and Sweden and England, Holland and France outlining the conditions of the neutral trade and specifying which goods were to be considered contraband. The ships had copies of these treaties on board so that they could give proof of their right to trade if approached by ships from the warring states. However, both France and England and their allies were suspicious of this neutral trade. So, disregarding the treaties, convoys were regularly harassed by both British and French warships. This was why the *Gyldenløve* was anchored at the Downs in the first place. The *Gyldenløve*, along with a Swedish warship, the *Wachtmeister*, had been escorting a convoy of some sixty merchantmen going from Norway to France through the Channel. First the convoy was stopped and searched by eight Dutch warships, in contradiction with the treaty. Three ships were confiscated as prizes by the Dutch but saved by the arrival of a French squadron under command of Jean Bart, who fought the Dutch while the confiscated ships were spirited away by the *Wachtmeister*. Then the convoy was stopped by a superior force of twelve English ships that, without any formalities, sent boarding parties on board every ship, arrested the captains and confiscated their papers. At the same time the weather worsened, and the entire convoy chose to follow the English ships to the Downs where they dropped anchor on 30 June. The entire convoy was inspected by the English authorities.⁴ The English prize court representative took some time investigating the papers and ladings of the convoy, so Captain Barfoed of the *Gyldenløve* had enough time to go to London to report the incident to the Danish envoy there. It was only after his return to the Downs in August that Barfoed's ship was attacked.

On 10 August, Sir Cloudesley Shovell's squadron had arrived at the Downs. When the admiral observed that the *Gyldenløve* did not strike its colours, he sent the *Stirling Castle* to demand this the next morning. When two officers from the *Stirling Castle* came on board the Danish ship and informed him that he was obliged to strike his colours, Barfoed replied that he would not strike for any man in the world.⁵ Shovell noted that the Swedish warship also present at the Downs

³ The full text of the treaty is printed in Bastrup, 'Konvojrejser', pp. 243ff.

⁴ Anderson, 'Anglo-Danish Incident', pp. 175ff. He says that the convoy had been obliged to anchor at the Downs because of head winds, but in Barfoed's own report it is stated that he was indeed forced to the Downs by the English.

⁵ Dyer, 'Anglo-Danish Incident', p. 279.

did not fly its pennant.⁶ The English officers returned to the *Stirling Castle*, which then fired two shots aimed at the *Gyldenløve's* pennant and one shot at her stern.⁷ An English officer, sword in hand, asked again if the Danes would strike, and upon receiving a negative answer the English commenced firing. The Danish ship fired its broadside at the English. A short battle ensued, as summarised by Captain Deane:

I weighed and ran up under his quartr & fired 2 Gunns over him and he took no notice of itt, then I fired one into him & by that time I was got up along his side, then began ye dispute, we firing our broadside into him and he into us, then struck.⁸

Barfoed decided to strike his pennant when one more English warship with seventy guns approached, and fighting no longer seemed prudent. After the battle, Barfoed and his officers were arrested and escorted to Sheerness. The ship was only released on 18 November. Because of winter storms the *Gyldenløve* only made it back to Norway by March the following year. The Swedish *Wachtmeister* was able to carry on her convoy duties and also made it back to Norway in March – after one more skirmish with a British warship.

The Danish resident in London, Pauly, was outraged over the incident and wrote a note of protest. One of the points he made is especially poignant:

This outrage is not only a violation of the laws of hospitality, but is the more flagrant because my master [i.e. the Danish king] always allows English men-of-war to carry their pendants in the ports under his jurisdiction, and under the very guns of his castles.

In his report to the Admiralty, Shovell defended his actions. He argued that he was merely enforcing the legitimate claim of His Majesty's ships in the Channel to force foreign warships to strike their pennants. Furthermore, he noted 'that the States Generall's Ships did it notwithstanding our Present Union ... and the better to induce him to a compliance added that if he Strooke he should have liberty to hoyst his Pendant againe'. These two quotes sum up the difference of opinion between the Scandinavians and the English.⁹

The following year, 1695, much the same situation arose.¹⁰ Captain Just Juel on the fifty-gun ship *Lindormen* sailed with a convoy from France to Denmark and encountered the English frigate *Jersey* on 30 May. The *Jersey* fired at the *Lindormen* to force her to stop and strike pennant, but the *Lindormen* escaped. The next day, the *Lindormen* met the *Charles Galley* of thirty-two guns. A pitched battle ensued, and five hours and twenty-two dead sailors later, the *Lindormen*

⁶ It has not been possible to ascertain the reason for this, but it seems to be confirmed by the Danish sources.

⁷ The description of the incident builds on a combined reading of Dyer, 'Anglo-Danish Incident', p. 279 and Bastrup, 'Konvojrejser', p. 241.

⁸ Quoted from Dyer, 'Anglo-Danish Incident', p. 279.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 279–80.

¹⁰ Bastrup, 'Konvojrejser', pp. 257ff.

was able to escape the scene of the battle. The *Charles Galley* was said to have suffered twenty-nine dead and wounded in the action.

A Dramatic Battle at Orford Ness

The dramatic outcome of Barfoed's and Juel's battles in 1694 and 1695 also had implications for Sweden. A Swedish ship had been present in 1694, and the dispute was intimately connected to the 1691 treaty between Sweden and Denmark. In 1695, the Swedish king Charles XI decreed that foreign warships were to be met 'with friendship' and that violence was to be avoided when Swedish men-of-war sailed in the Channel. If foreign ships demanded to board and inspect the ships, the Swedish were to defend themselves – but only if they determined that they were likely to have success. Otherwise they were to tolerate boarding under protest. And most importantly, the Swedish 1695 regulations required the Swedish men-of-war to sail without their pennants after they had passed the Scaw.

But the warlike young king Charles XII who ascended the Swedish throne in 1697 was not happy with this situation. So even though he kept the pragmatic regulation in place that instructed Swedish ships not to fly the pennant in the Channel, he gave very firm orders to Captain Gustaf Psilander of the forty-eight-gun ship *Öland* in 1703 not to strike his flag or topsails for anyone. If he failed to comply with this he was to suffer the death penalty, and one in every ten of his crew was to be hanged. Charles XII was not very keen on the concept of honourable surrender.

But this meant that Psilander had been dealt a very difficult hand when he eventually did encounter English warships in the Channel on 28 July 1704. The scene was set for a memorable event in Swedish naval history.¹¹ Psilander was escorting a convoy of ten Swedish merchant vessels when he encountered eight English ships of the line and one frigate off Orford Ness. When the English ships caught up with Psilander's convoy they greeted him with two sharp gunshots from the HMS *Worcester*. An envoy from the *Öland*, Lieutenant Schmidt, was sent on board the English ship to demand an explanation. The captain of the *Worcester*, Thomas Butler, and Schmidt engaged in a heated discussion:¹²

Butler: Do you not see the flag of the Queen of England?

Schmidt: Yes, we do, but do you not see the King of Sweden's flag?

Butler: Yes, but why do you not pay your respect to the Queen of England?

Schmidt: What respect must the King of Sweden pay the Queen of England?

Butler: You must strike your topsail.

¹¹ The affair in 1704 is well described in literature. See A. Munthe, *Svenska Sjöhjärtar* (Stockholm, 1898), vol. i, s.v. 'Gustaf von Psilander' and Lybeck et al., *Svenska Flottans Historia* (Malmö, 1941), vol. ii, pp. 94f. I owe a great deal of thanks to Bengt Nilsson's website about Psilander, http://members.tripod.com/Bengt_Nilsson/ where much of the source material has been made public and the details of the battle thoroughly analysed.

¹² Here translated from Munthe, *Svenska Sjöhjärtar*, p. 16.

Schmidt: My Captain is under orders not to strike.

Butler: Well, I'll teach you to strike!

And that was the beginning of the battle. Even as Lieutenant Schmidt and his men were rowing back to their ship, the guns on both sides commenced firing. The Swedes tried to escape, but they had to stop briefly to wait for Schmidt's return, costing them their chance. The battle was joined on very unequal terms. Even though Psilander was vastly outnumbered and outgunned, the battle lasted four and a half hours. In the end, the *Öland* was entirely ruined: of a complement of two hundred, sixteen men died and thirty-seven were wounded in the battle. On the English side, three ships were so damaged that they later had to be docked and repaired. Some seventy fatalities and a large number of wounded were reported. However, Psilander did not capitulate. He cunningly found a way around his strict orders not to strike. He hoisted his flag with a knot in it (known as a 'wheft' or 'whaft'), thus turning it into a signal of distress (flying the Scandinavian flags upside down for obvious reasons would not work as a signal of distress). This was seen as the signal to stop the fire, and Psilander went to pay his respects to the English commander Whetstone. The *Öland* was captured and escorted to the Nore, and the Swedish merchant vessels were taken as prizes. Psilander and his men were arrested and were only released in the middle of August after Queen Anne had protested to King Charles XII and instructed him to punish Psilander. Charles did no such thing and instead replied in support of Psilander, asking Queen Anne to punish her captains for their unjust actions in the Channel.

The whole affair almost brought the two countries to war. But in the end both countries were too concerned with their other ongoing wars in respectively Spain and Poland, so they let it be. However, the Swedish convoy seemed to be jinxed. When the *Öland* at long last had been repaired, and the convoy released, the passage back home to Sweden went horribly wrong. Off the Scaw, she ran aground and was wrecked. Psilander managed to get his men ashore, and somehow they got back to Sweden. Psilander went on to have a very fine career, and he was ennobled in 1712 as 'von Psilander'. In 1734 he was president of the Admiralty, the highest position in the Swedish Navy. The battle at Orford Ness acquired an air of mythology in Sweden, and Psilander obviously held the memory of the battle high, as was reflected in his coat of arms featuring a lone Swedish flag surrounded by eight English naval ensigns.

How to Avoid Saluting Battles

The dramatic incidents in the Channel in the years around 1700 were to have far-reaching implications for both the Danish and the Swedish navies. Even though all the captains involved were commended by their sovereigns for honourably having defended their flags, both the Danish and Swedish kings had reasons to modify their policies. The tactical situation in the Channel called for prudence rather than heroics. Upholding the right to fly the Danish and Swedish naval

pennants in the Channel simply was not possible given the circumstances. And even if the men-of-war were not flying pennants they would still be forced to strike their flag or their topsails. Charles XI's regulation about not flying the naval pennant in the Channel was kept in place even after Charles XII's ascension to the throne in 1697, and was in effect during the Psilander affair in 1704 – but that obviously did not prevent the conflict.

The simple solution for both the Danish and the Swedish navies was to avoid entering the Channel with warships. A route west of Ireland was preferred for most of the rest of the eighteenth century. Exceptions were made if there was an urgent need to get to the Mediterranean quickly. In such cases the orders were given not to fly the pennant. The Danes and Swedes never accepted or understood the British demand for foreign warships to strike the pennant or flag – and never made the same demand in their territorial waters.

With all probability neither the English nor the Swedish and Danish officers were aware of the exact background for the English claim for sovereignty in the Channel. And it did indeed go a long way back. It began in 1293 when the English King Edward I had his diplomats fabricate a legal justification for the right of his Gascon ships to attack a Norman fleet in the Channel at the Trade in May that year. Edward, as Duke of Aquitaine, was a vassal of the French king and worried he would be summoned to court in Paris for this incident. To avoid this, he claimed that the kings of England 'time out of mind had been in peaceable possession of the sovereign lordship of the English sea and the islands therein'.¹³ This provided a legal loophole for Edward to avoid an embarrassing day in a Parisian court of law. But it also provided justification for English naval captains to demand the striking of pennants and other demonstrations of submission from foreign warships in the Channel for the following five hundred years. Time and again the navy's insistence on enforcing this sovereignty of the sea on behalf of the king would undermine the foreign policy of Parliament in Westminster – as exemplified in the 1694–95 and 1704 incidents.

And the problem just would not go away. In 1755 Swedish Captain Rajaliñ was instructed that he should fly the Swedish naval ensign when passing the Sound.¹⁴ But during his passage from the Scaw to Cape Finisterre he was to fly the commercial flag; if he came across British men-of-war he was to first salute them, but not to strike sail for them. The order was repeated in 1758 when a new squadron was sent to the Mediterranean. That same decade, the two Danish ships *Slesvig* and *Christiansborg* had similar instructions for their voyages to North Africa. The *Slesvig* was instructed not to go through the Channel, but still abstain from flying the pennant from the North of Jutland to Cape Finisterre in order to avoid trouble with the British. The *Christiansborg* went through the Channel. Captain Johan Christopher Holst was taken ill and died from diarrhoea off the

¹³ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, 660–1649* (London, 1999), p. 78.

¹⁴ C.A. Gyllenranath, *Sveriges Sjökrigs historia* (1840), p. 85.

Isle of Wight on 11 July 1752, and his body was taken ashore to be buried.¹⁵ This was an embarrassing moment for the Danish ship's officers who now had to identify themselves. But apparently the British authorities did not protest and we have no reports of differences about striking the flag or pennant. Again, in 1761, Danish naval officer Samuel Akeleye reported to the Admiralty that he had ordered his men to battle stations in the Channel when a British frigate had demanded that he strike his pennant and salute. He refused to strike the pennant but offered to give the salute if the Englishman would reply the salute with the equal number of shots. The British captain was satisfied with this arrangement.¹⁶ In 1779 we have reports of an incident between Danish frigate *Møen*, under Captain Ole Budde, and 'British warships' in the Channel.¹⁷

One must wonder whether the captains of Danish and Swedish warships really thought they could pass for civilian ships if they refrained from flying their pennants. Even though large merchant ships regularly carried guns, warships would have been easily recognisable. The rigging and conspicuous stern ornaments and general shape of the ships would probably indicate that they were indeed warships. Also, different navies and nations had specific traits characteristic to them, and a trained naval officer would be able to tell the difference between, for example, a Danish and a French ship even without visible flags or pennants.¹⁸ The decision not to fly pennants seems to have been motivated purely by legal concerns.

We now know the English position on the matter of demanding salutes in the Channel. We have also seen how this was considered an affront by the Swedes and the Danes. In order to better understand the strong Scandinavian reaction, we need to examine the Scandinavian view on saluting traditions and customs. In our own time navies and civilian sailors still retain the tradition of 'dipping the flag' in certain situations as a sign of reverence. So what was the big problem? First of all, we need to acknowledge that it was not a matter of simply 'dipping the flag', that is, lowering and hoisting the flag again as a polite gesture to the English warship. No, what the English ships tried to do in the above-mentioned cases in 1694 and 1695 was to make the foreign ships strike the pennant. The pennant is the very symbol of a warship being under command. Only when the captain is on board does the pennant fly. So the pennant is the very symbol that his sovereign has commissioned the officer with his ship. Given the significance of this symbolism, the strong reactions make more sense.

But as we have seen, the English went further than just making the foreign ships strike their pennants. They also wanted them to fire the salute while the

¹⁵ H.G. Garde, *Efterretninger om den danske og norske Søemagt* (Copenhagen, 1833), vol. iii, p. 377. See also J. Seerup, 'The Royal Danish Naval Academy in the Age of Enlightenment', *The Mariner's Mirror*, xciii, no. 3 (2007), p. 327.

¹⁶ Topsøe-Jensen and Marquard, *Officerer i Den Dansk-Norske Søetat* (1935), vol. i, p. 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁸ S. Willis, *Fighting at Sea in the Eighteenth Century: The Art of Sailing Warfare* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 7ff.

pennant was struck. The significance of this will elude most modern readers. To fully comprehend the symbolism of this gesture we need to consult a Danish manuscript from the middle of the eighteenth century. The Danish naval officer Peter Schiønning wrote an unpublished manual in practical seamanship in the 1760s. In the more than three thousand manuscript pages we find a large number of interesting details that reflect not just what regulations said but also what the practice of the day was. He describes the practice of striking the pennant while giving a gun salute.¹⁹ A man would go aloft and with his hands pull in the pennant. When the pennant was folded in his arms, the ship would fire the grand salute of twenty-seven guns, and when the last shot had rung out, he would release the pennant. This was a salute reserved for one specific situation only: when a Danish warship saluted another Danish warship on which the sovereign was embarked. This explains why the British demand was considered such an affront to the Danish officers. Striking the pennant to a British warship simply was not an option.

But the English expected foreign ships to salute in this way, and they were partially successful in enforcing this claim. Indeed, it seems that the Dutch Navy had completely accepted and adopted this way of saluting. At least, Admiral Shovell in his report about the 1694 incident cited that ‘the General States’ struck their pennants and saluted. We do not have much in terms of documentation of the practice, but in an older book on Swedish naval history there is an interesting reference to this custom. It mentions how in the summer of 1742 a Swedish squadron met a combined British and Dutch squadron in the North Sea. Much to the surprise of the Swedish officers, the Dutch ships not only fired a salute but also struck their pennants. The exact wording in Swedish is ‘*palmade in vimplarne*’ – literally handed the pennant as described by Schiønning above.²⁰ The reason why the Swedes would have made a note of this was that it was considered so perfectly strange!

The British insistence on forcing foreign warships to salute and strike their pennants in the Channel was never completely abandoned in the eighteenth century. However, both the immediate tactical situation and general political situation dictated how seriously the Royal Navy insisted. In the 1790s, neutral Danish ships were regularly stopped and searched by the Royal Navy in the Channel as a result of the ongoing war with France. This resulted in the deployment of warships to escort the Danish vessels, and subsequently very similar confrontations as the ones that had happened a hundred years before. The most dramatic of these incidents happened at the Downs on 25 July 1800 when the Danish forty-gun frigate *Freya*, under the command of Captain Peter Greis Krabbe, was forced to stop by four British frigates and a lugger and allow her convoy to be searched by British officers after a half-hour battle with dead and

¹⁹ Royal Library, Copenhagen, Manuscript Collection, Schiøn. 44, 4to, Haandbog i Practisk Søe-Mandskab, pp. 2290ff. See also J. Seerup, ‘Søetatens Flagføring i 1700-tallet’, *Marinehistorisk Tidsskrift*, no. 4 (2009).

²⁰ Gyllengranath, *Sveriges Sjökrigshistoria*, vol. ii, p. 64.

wounded on both sides.²¹ As we have seen, the renewed confrontations between Danish and British warships in the Channel during the 1790s did not represent a new practice. They were a continuation of the practice that had been going on since at least the seventeenth century, if not all the way back to 1293.

Following the end of the Ancien Régime and the Great Wars of 1789 to 1815, a number of old traditions, from fashion to culture to politics, finally disappeared. The centuries-old royal prerogative of demanding salutes from foreign warships was not officially abandoned. But the *Regulations and Instructions* for the Royal Navy in 1806 did not include a reference to the practice. It was not officially abolished, but just simply omitted from the text; nor was it mentioned in the 1816 peace treaty.²² The tradition disappeared almost unnoticed. Both the Danish and Swedish navies encountered much more demanding challenges in those same years, though, so even if this British change of policy might have been seen as a small victory for Denmark and Sweden, it was certainly overshadowed by the British capture of the Danish Navy in 1807. Today the battles and the captains are still to some extent remembered, but the context is all but forgotten. Hopefully this chapter has changed that a little.

²¹ See O. Feldbæk, *Dansk Søfartshistorie*, vol. iii, p. 126.

²² W.G. Perrin, 'The Salute in the Narrow Seas and the Vienna Conference of 1815', in W.G. Perrin (ed.), *Naval Miscellany III* (Navy Records Society, 1927), pp. 287–329; N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (London, 2004), p. 583.