

Tyranny of the Lash? Punishment in the Royal Navy during the American War, 1776-1783

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The idea that the British sailing navy was "a floating hell," with brutal officers ruling their men with the lash, was popularised by John Masfield in the early years of this century.¹ His view was followed to varying degrees by most later writers dealing with the social history of the Royal Navy. Only in 1986 did Nicholas Rodger reject this view in *The Wooden World*, a detailed study of the RN at the time of the Seven Years War (1756-1763).² Rodger stressed community and cooperation rather than incipient conflict that demanded a liberal application of the lash.

Nevertheless, most historians of the RN have been aware that during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1793-1815) punishment seems to have grown more severe in a greatly-expanded British fleet. Rodger has also recognised this development, and in a 1992 paper outlined his view of a "decline of the old order," with the naval community of the mid-eighteenth century giving way to a more stratified and strictly disciplined fleet in which internal conflicts led to the naval mutinies of 1797.³

The most detailed study of British naval discipline in the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars is John D. Byrn, Jr.'s 1989 book on crime and punishment in an overseas British squadron from 1784 to 1812.⁴ While agreeing with Rodger that naval discipline did not consist solely of rampant brutality, Byrn saw the British naval community at the end of the eighteenth century as being more formalized and stratified than its mid-century predecessor, with a resultant greater emphasis on discipline.

This essay aims to examine some aspects of British naval punishment in the American War of Independence, a conflict which occupies a mid-way point between the different naval communities described by Rodger and Byrn. Was the American war a time of increasingly strict discipline, or did some of the cooperative spirit of the mid-century navy still survive? To examine this question a detailed study of three contrasting naval vessels has been made. The vessels are the ship-of-the-line *Queen*, active in the Channel fleet; the frigate *Daphne*, which spent much of the war on the North American station; and the sloop *Wolf* employed in home waters on mundane duties such as collecting recruits for the navy and escorting coastal convoys. This varieties of ship type and war service might show up significant differences in punishment inflicted on the crews.

The principal sources listing punishments have been the vessels' captains', masters', and lieutenants' logs, with additional information coming from captains' letters and courts martial records.' It should be noted that minor corporal punishments, such as "starting" (striking) with a rope's end to encourage seamen to work harder, were not recorded in the logs. Moreover, there are often significant gaps in the punishments recorded in certain logs – that is, some punishments may be noted in the master's log, but not in the captain's log, and *vice versa*. For this reason it is necessary to look at all available logs for a ship to be sure of getting a reasonably complete list of punishments. Information from a computer analysis of the muster books of these three vessels for the period 1776-1780 has also been useful.'

Under naval regulations, the captain of a British warship up to 1806 could order a seaman, manne, or petty officer guilty of misconduct to be punished summarily with up to twelve lashes from a cat of nine tails, administered at the gangway in the presence of the assembled crew. More serious punishment could only be inflicted by order of a court martial. All commissioned and warrant officers could only be punished by a court martial and not summarily by the captain. Courts martial could order a wide variety of punishments, ranging from a fine to death by hanging. Commissioned and warrant officers could not be sentenced to corporal punishment; instead, dismissal from the service was the most common punishment if an individual was found guilty of an offence.

Those sentenced to a flogging by a court martial received different treatment than those flogged at the captain's order. Courts martial ordered the guilty to be "flogged around the fleet," that is, to be taken by boat around all the warships then in harbour, receiving a portion of their lashes at each. One unusual punishment imposed summarily by the captain was "running the gauntlet," a punishment inflicted by the entire crew on a seaman who had stolen from his comrades. The men formed two lines and the miscreant had to run between them while he was beaten with whatever implements his comrades had to hand. This was banned in |

In the following sections the war service of each vessel is noted, followed by details of corporal punishment noted in the logs and the offences for which it was inflicted. Next, details are given of any particular features of the ship's punishment record during the war, particularly of relevant courts martial and punishments other than flogging. Finally, some general conclusions will be derived from the evidence.

HMS Wolf

The sloop *Wolf* (ten guns; seventy-two men) had been built at Chatham Dockyard in 1754. At the beginning of 1776 the vessel was commanded by Captain Arthur Kempe. Based at Plymouth, *Wolf* spent most of its service during the war off the coast of southwestern England, in the English Channel, and in the Irish Sea. The sloop was often employed collecting marine and seamen recruits, both volunteers and pressed men. Many of the recruits came from Ireland, and *Wolf* made regular visits to Cork, Dublin, and Carrickfergus. Other recruits came from southwestern England. For example, on 5 December 1776 the sloop was in Fowey harbour, Cornwall, with its "boats employed in search of men." The recruits were taken to Plymouth, Spithead, or direct to the fleet. For example, on 11 August

1779 *Wolf* brought men direct to the fleet cruising in the Channel. The sloop was also active in stopping and inspecting ships, and escorting convoys, such as the linen ships from Belfast. Noted at various times as "leaky," *Wolf* was paid off in April 1781 and sold later that year.'

Wolf did not have a major corporal punishment record (see table 1a). There were only eighteen floggings in five and one-third years, giving a total of 276 lashes and an average of fifteen lashes per flogging. Thirteen of the floggings were of twelve lashes and five of twenty-four lashes each. Only fifteen individuals were subject to flogging. The fourteen men flogged in the period 1776-1780 (see table 4) amounted to 4.9% of all the seamen and marines who served with the ship in that period.' This percentage may be compared with Byrn's finding that on average nine percent of the men in his sample suffered corporal punishment in the Leeward Islands squadron, 1784-1812.¹⁰

There were only two repeat offenders in *Wolf* – William Nugent, a seaman, and John Hancock, a marine. Nugent was flogged once in 1778 (for quarrelling, mutiny, and insolence to a superior officer) and once in 1779 (for drunkenness, quarrelling, and neglect of duty), receiving twenty-four lashes each time. Hancock was flogged three times in 1776 for disobedience to command and neglect of duty, receiving twelve lashes each time. (Hancock had already been flogged twice in 1775.) Of the fifteen individuals punished, no fewer than four were marines, nearly one-third of the total (see table 6)."

Captain Kempe had been concerned about the marines from early in his command. In December 1775 he wrote to the Admiralty that "I find the sloop exceeding badly manned, owing in part to there being twelve marines included in her complement who are of little or no service in so small a vessel." He asked to have the marines replaced by seamen, but this does not seem to have been done.¹²

A breakdown of the offences leading to corporal punishment shows that, unlike the other two vessels, drunkenness and drink-related offences did not constitute a major category (see table 1b). The biggest groups were neglect of duty (eight), followed by mutiny/mutinous behaviour (four) and quarrelling (four).

HMS *Daphne*"

The 6th-rate frigate *Daphne* (twenty guns; 160 men) was built at Woolwich Dockyard in 1776. The commander was Captain St. John Chinnery, and the frigate's first commission was for the North American station. In the autumn of 1776 *Daphne* escorted a convoy to New York. For the next three years the frigate served on the eastern coast of North America, based principally at New York. *Daphne* took more than forty prizes during the period, including two American privateers. Operations also took the vessel to St. Augustine and Pensacola, Florida; Port Royal, Jamaica; Tybee, Georgia; and the Delaware River. *Daphne* returned to England in the autumn of 1779. After a refit at Sheerness, it spent most of 1780 cruising and escorting convoys in the North Sea. In 1781 the frigate escorted ships to and from the Channel Islands, took a convoy out to Lisbon and another home. In 1782 *Daphne* returned to patrol and convoy escort duty in the North Sea, including visits to the Orkneys escorting Hudson's Bay Company ships. The frigate was paid off at Sheerness in April 1783.

Table 1a
Floggings on *Wolf*, 1776-1781

Year	Number of Floggings	Total Number of Lashes	Average Number of Lashes
1776	5	60	12
1777	1	12	12
1778	6	108	18
1779	3	60	20
1780	2	24	12
1781	1	12	12
Totals	18	276	15

Table 1b
Reasons for Floggings on *Wolf*, 1776-1781

	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781
Drunk/drunken related	1	1		1		
Mutiny/mutinous behaviour	1	1	1	-	1	
Neglect of duty	3		2	1	1	1
Assault						
Desertion			1			
Awol	1	-				
Disobedience	2	-				
Insolence			2			
Theft			1			
Quarreling			2	2		
Fighting			1		-	

Note: Offences have been disaggregated, e.g., one flogging for quarrelling, disobedience, and neglect of duty will yield three offences.

Sources: See text.

Daphne had a more substantial corporal punishment list than *Wolf* (see table 2a). There were ninety-nine floggings in seven and one-third years, giving a total of 1464 lashes and an average of 14.8 lashes per flogging. Most of the floggings were of twelve lashes, but nineteen were of twenty-four; one of thirty-six; and one of forty-eight. A total of ninety-two individuals were flogged. The fifty-seven men flogged in the period 1776-1780 comprised 11.2% of all seamen and marines who passed through the ship in that period (see table 4). This percentage is slightly above Byrn's average of nine percent for his sample.¹⁴

There were eleven repeat offenders in *Daphne*: six men received two floggings each; four had three floggings each; and one, John Mahoney, was flogged four times over two years, receiving a total of seventy-two lashes. On each occasion Mahoney's offences were drunkenness and neglect of duty. That he was considered a troublemaker is shown by

the fact that as soon as the frigate reached Sheerness in March 1780, he was discharged "for his misbehaviour" and sent on board another warship»

The rate of flogging on *Daphne* can be compared with those of some frigates in the French Revolutionary War. Nick Slope has looked at the frigate *Trent*, which had twenty-nine floggings between 1 June 1796 and 25 July 1797 (421 days); the average number of lashes inflicted was 1.35 per day. There were twenty-six floggings on *Daphne* between 10 June 1776 and 17 July 1777 (402 days); the average number of lashes inflicted was 0.8 per day. Slope also gives an average for a notoriously brutal frigate captain (Hugh Pigot of *Success*, 1794-1795) of four lashes per day over a similar period. It would seem that corporal punishment on *Daphne* was lighter than on comparable vessels in the French Revolutionary War.¹⁶

The breakdown of actions leading to corporal punishment on *Daphne* gives neglect of duty (fifty-eight incidents) as the principal offence. Unfortunately, the nature of this crime is rarely defined. One exception was when Richard Tokley received twelve lashes on 19 February 1777 for "losing a Dutch flag overboard." The next main category was related to alcoholic drink (forty-four), often when the ship was in port. For example, most of the drink-related offences in 1778 took place while *Daphne* was at New York. The next main offence was insolence (fourteen), followed by quarrelling (eight) (see table 2b).

Attempts might be made to link corporal punishment to later deaths or desertion. For example, John Redshaw, who received twelve lashes on 3 September 1776 for drunkenness and neglect of duty, was buried at New York on 15 October 1776.¹⁸ It cannot be established, however, whether flogging in any way contributed to his demise. A more obvious link can be found between punishment and the desertion of William Carrol. On 15 January 1778, when the frigate was at Pensacola, West Florida, John Mahoney and William Carrol received twenty-four lashes each for drunkenness and neglect of duty. Shortly after this event, Carrol deserted from the watering party. He was later recaptured by soldiers on Rose Island and returned to the ship on 30 January.¹⁹

While seamen and marines suffered corporal punishment, *Daphne's* officers seem to have escaped lightly for their offences. When *Daphne* was in New York harbour on 24 July 1779, a midshipman named McKinley was sent with the cutter to the King's yard for the boats and carpenters and their stores. When he returned he complained that the boatswain and carpenter had behaved in a very disorderly and quarrelsome manner and had struck him. Captain Chinnery ordered the two men to be confined in their cabins pending a court martial. After a postponement, the court martial was finally held on the frigate *Blonde* on 28 July. Chinnery spoke up for his boatswain and carpenter and stressed their good behaviour. The court merely ordered the two men to be severely reprimanded and returned to duty.²⁰

On 9 July 1780, while *Daphne* was cruising in the North Sea, the master-at-arms was "suspended from duty, he being incapable of doing his duty through drunkenness," but no trace of any punishment has been found.²¹ On 20 June 1782, when the frigate was at the Orkneys, the surgeon, Michael Cobby, was suspended from duty for "drunkenness, disturbance, and insolence to his superior officer."²² The Admiralty was slow to convene a court martial, and in March 1783 Captain Fortescue had to remind them that the surgeon "has been in confinement several months." Cobby's court martial finally took place on

Hermione at Sheerness on 24 April 1783. Charged with "behaving with insolence and disrespect" to Lt. William James Stephens, he was found guilty and dismissed from the

Table 2a
Floggings on *Daphne*, 1776-1783

Year	Number of Floggings	Total Number of Lashes	Average Number of Lashes
1776	16	216	13.5
1777	16	204	12.7
1778	19	252	13.2
1779	10	120	12
1780	11	180	16.4
1781	19	336	17.7
1782	5	84	16.8
1783	3	72	24
Totals	99	1,464	14.8

Table 2b
Reasons for Floggings on *Daphne*, 1776-1783

	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781	1782	1783
Drunk/drunken related	6	2	13	5	3	11	4	
Mutiny/mutinous behav.								
Neglect of duty	6	13	15	9	8	6	1	
Assault								
Desertion						6		
Awol					3	2		
Disobedience	2	1		3				-
Insolence	1	-	3	1		3	5	1
Theft	2	2		-		1		
Quarreling	2		3				-	3
Fighting	2			-			-	2
Riotous Behavior			2				-	
Embezzlement					3		-	

Notes: See table 1.

Sources: See text.

HMS *Queen*²⁴

The 2nd-rate ship-of-the-line (2nd rate, three decks) *Queen* (ninety-eight guns; 750 men) was built at the Woolwich Dockyard in 1769. Laid up in ordinary at Plymouth, the vessel was not brought into service until the end of 1776 and the process of fitting out continued slowly during 1777. Only the prospect of war with France expedited matters. After France joined the war, *Queen* moved to Spithead to join Admiral Keppel's fleet. Vice Admiral Sir Robert Harland hoisted his flag in *Queen*. The ship took part in the battle of Ushant in July 1778, and in the summer of 1779 was part of the fleet which faced the Franco-Spanish invasion force in the Channel. *Queen* was with the fleet in the Channel in the summer of 1780, and in March/April 1781 was part of Admiral Darby's fleet escorting supplies to besieged Gibraltar. The ship took part in Admiral Lord Howe's final relief of Gibraltar in October 1782, including the action off Cape Spartel. In March 1783 the crew took part in the demobilisation mutiny at Spithead. The ship was paid off at Portsmouth in April 1783.

Given the size of *Queen's* crew, the corporal punishment list does not seem excessive (see table 3a). Moreover, of those crew members who gave details of their origins, twenty-eight percent were Irish, a traditionally turbulent group, yet *Queen* does not seem to have been especially undisciplined. In comparison, *Daphne* and *Wolf* each had only about thirteen percent Irish among their crews (see table 5).²⁵ The Irish seamen of the American war were not radicalised like those in the French Revolutionary war, when the United Irishmen infiltrated their ranks. The volunteer movement which disturbed Ireland during the American war largely²⁶ concerned with the Protestant ascendancy and had little impact on Irishmen in the navy.

In *Queen* there were 201 floggings in six and one-third years, giving a total of 3355 lashes and an average of 16.7 lashes per flogging (see table 3a). Most of the floggings were of twelve lashes, but twenty-three were of twenty-four lashes, several of thirty-six, two of 200, and one of 300 lashes. Seven men ran the gauntlet. Including those who ran the gauntlet, a total of 190 individuals received corporal punishment. The 109 individuals punished in the period 1776-1780 comprised 4.3% of the seamen and marines passing through the ship, a lower percentage than in the other two ships and almost half Byrn's average of nine percent (see table 4).²⁷

In *Queen* there were fourteen repeat offenders: eleven received two floggings each, two had three floggings each, and one, Patrick Duff, received four floggings, totalling sixty lashes, within the space of three months in 1779. Duff, a marine, was punished for a variety of offences, including "cutting the sergeant's hammock and striking the corporal," for which he received twenty-four lashes. It may be noted that nearly one-third of the repeat offenders (four of fourteen) were marines.

The breakdown of offences leading to corporal punishment in *Queen* shows that behaviours related to alcoholic drink (seventy) were by far the main category (see table 3b). Next was absence without leave (thirty-one), which is distinguished from desertion (ten). Deserters did not intend to come back, but other men went absent when on shore (usually to get alcohol), only to return to the ship later. Neglect of duty (twenty-eight) and insolence (twenty-seven) were also major categories. Then came theft (twenty-two), which seems to have been divided into two types. The seven men forced to run the gauntlet for theft were

almost certainly guilty of stealing from their comrades, hence a punishment involving the whole crew. Those guilty of theft from ship's stores were simply flogged.²⁸

During 1777, when *Queen* was slowly being fitted out, there were a number of punishments (all of twelve lashes) of men for going absent without leave or for desertion. Then at the beginning of 1778 there was the severe punishment of Thomas Young with 300 lashes for desertion. Young had deserted on 18 June 1777 while ashore at Torpoint and was not captured until the following December. Unlike the other captured deserters, who were punished with twelve lashes on the captain's order, Young went before a court martial aboard *Blenheim* on 28 January 1778. Found guilty of desertion, he was sentenced to 300 lashes, to be administered by flogging around the ships of the fleet then in Plymouth harbour. The punishment took place on 31 January.²⁹ There were no aggravating features in Young's desertion (e.g., violence), so his savage punishment may have been to make him an example at a time when war with France seemed likely and the navy needed especially to discourage desertion.

At the end of 1778 Captain Alexander Innes, who seems to have been a man of strong religious convictions, took over command of *Queen*. Unable to obtain a new chaplain until the summer of 1779, Innes carried out such religious duties himself. In relation to the crew he claimed to stand "in the character of King, Priest, and Prophet, and read to them some of the famous Blair's sermons, which already begins to touch their deprived hearts, and produces a beginning towards a reformation in their morals."³⁰ There does seem to have been some reduction in the number of offences and punishments during the period Innes was in command in 1779 and 1780, but whether this was due to his religious fervour is unclear. A particularly severe punishment at the start of 1780 may have had a greater impact on his crew's behaviour.

Late on the night of 30 October 1779 there was a disturbance aboard *Queen*, which was then at Torbay. In the course of this seamen William Brady and John Leary were said to have assaulted Lt. Walter Holland of the marines. For this mutinous act they went before a court martial on *Dunkirk* at Plymouth on 24 January 1780. Found guilty of the assault, the two were sentenced to 400 lashes each. The first 200 lashes each were administered to the men as they were taken around the ships at Plymouth on 5 February. No trace has been found of a second punishment of 200 lashes each being given, so it may have been remitted.³¹

There were instances of more large-scale unrest among the crews of the Channel fleet at various times during the American war. For example, in April 1780 *Queen* (along with other ships) sent armed parties to suppress a mutiny aboard *Invincible* at Spithead. Fortunately, the mutineers gave in without the need to use force.³² There seems to have been an outbreak of disorder among the crew of *Queen* in February 1782 when the ship went into dock at Portsmouth. Nearly sixty crew members were sent to *Union*, anchored at Spithead, "for security," while fifteen received more than 250 lashes for being absent without leave, theft, or insolence to their officers. The men sent to *Union* were not returned to *Queen* until it had left Portsmouth Dockyard and rejoined the fleet at Spithead.³³

The end of the American war was announced to the crews of the ships of the Channel fleet at Spithead in February 1783; they also received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for the relief of Gibraltar in the autumn of 1782. But the government was not

yet ready to pay off the fleet and by mid-March some of the crews were becoming restless. Disorder broke out in a number of ships and Admiral Lord Howe came down from the Admiralty to try to pacify the sailors.³⁴ *Queen*, flagship of Real Admiral Alexander Hood (later Lord Bridport), was still untouched by the discontent when Howe came aboard on 15 March. He asked the ship's company if they had any complaints, but received no reply – "answering not any," as the master noted.³⁵

Table 3a
Floggings on *Queen*, 1777-1783

Year	Number of Floggings	Total Number of Lashes	Average Number of Lashes
1777	13	180	13.8
1778	57	981	17.2
1779	33	414	12.5
1780	1	508	46.2
1781	25	336	13.4
1782	51	756	14.8
1783	11	180	16.3
Totals	201	3,355	16.7

Table 3b
Reasons for Floggings on *Queen*, 1777-1783

	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781	1782	1783
Drunk/drunken related		21	6	2	13	22	6
Mutiny/mutinous behaviour		5	2	2	1		
Neglect of duty	2	4	12	-	5	4	1
Assault	-		3	1	1		
Desertion	3	3		-	1	3	
Awol	3	5	1		-	14	8
Disobedience	2	5	6		5		
Insolence	4	9	6		2	6	
Theft	1	5	3	1	6	6	
Quarreling	1	1	0	2			
Fighting		2	0	5	3		
Riotous Behavior		9	2				
Forgery						1	

Notes: See table I.

Sources: See text.

Table 4
Comparative Incidence of Corporal Punishment (CP) in the Three Ships, 1776-1780

Ship (Complement)	Total No. of men on musters	No. who suffered CP	As % of total
<i>Queen</i> (750)	2547	109	4.3
<i>Daphne</i> (160)	508	57	11.2
<i>Wolf</i> (72)	285	14	4.9
Totals	3340	180	5.4

Note: Total number of men on musters excludes supernumeraries.

Sources: See text.

Table 5
Comparison of Ethnic Groups in the Three Ships, 1776-1780

	<i>Queen</i>	<i>Daphne</i>	<i>Wolf</i>
English	50%	64%	72%
Irish	25%	13.5%	13%
Scots	11%	11.8%	8%
Welsh	4%	4%	6.5%
Others	7%	6.7%	0.5%

Note: The usefulness of the above figures is limited by the fact that ethnic origins are given for only half the personnel of *Queen*, just over half the personnel of *Daphne*, and only a quarter of the personnel of *Wolf*.

Sources: See text.

Yet on 22 March *Queen's* crew mutinied, becoming "very disorderly, taking the arms from the gunroom, and would not pay any attention to what Admiral Hood said to them." The crew made preparations to take the ship into harbour, which the officers sought to prevent. Next day the crew continued to be disorderly, "still under no command of the officers," and began to disarm the ship, getting out cannon, powder and shot. Hood ordered small craft to take the guns ashore, hoping this might pacify the men. On the following day he "called the people aft" and made a long speech, promising the crew that they would be among the first discharged, but the men "paid no attention." A short time later, when Hood was about to go ashore, the crew wanted to man ship in his honour. But Hood "sent an officer to acquaint the ship's company that he would receive no such compliment from them until they had returned to their duty." After some hesitation, the men returned to duty and then "gave the admiral three cheers upon his going out of the ship." There were no punishments following the mutiny and *Queen* was paid off in Portsmouth harbour on 8 April 1783.³⁶

Table 6
Incidence of Corporal Punishment (CP) of Marines in the Three Ships, 1776-1780

a) *Queen*

Seamen: 2,192
Marines: 355
Total: 2,547

Marines as % of total: 13.9%

Received CP in period: 91 seamen
18 marines
109 total

Marines as % of total: 16.5%

b) *Daphne*

Seamen: 463
Marines: 45*
Total: 508

Marines as % of total: 7.7%

Received CP in period: 47 seamen
10 marines
57 total

Marines as % of total: 17.5%

c) *Wolf*

Seamen: 235
Marines: 50+
Total: 285

Marines as % of total: 17.5%

Received CP in period: 10 seamen
4 marines
14 total

Marines as % of total: 28.5%

Conclusions

One of the most obvious points revealed by this study is that the supposed maximum of twelve lashes a captain could order as a summary punishment was in fact treated as a minimum. On all three ships significant numbers of men received summary floggings in excess of the supposed limit. Some punishments may have been built up by finding a seaman guilty of several crimes and ordering him to receive twelve lashes for each, resulting in total lashes which were multiples of twelve. It is clear that some men received

punishments of twenty-four lashes or more for single offences. Floggings involving hundreds of lashes could, however, only be ordered by courts martial. That the supposed maximum of twelve lashes was regularly exceeded on three such different ships over the whole period of the war would seem to indicate that exceeding the limit was an accepted practice, as long as it did not become "too excessive" (most of the summary floggings in excess of twelve lashes were of twenty-four lashes).

It is interesting that marines offended more often than their percentage of the crew should have warranted. This is ironic, since one of their functions was to maintain order aboard ship and, if necessary, to assist the naval officers in suppressing indiscipline. Far from being pillars of order, marines featured as regular offenders. One possible explanation is that since they were intended to support authority aboard ship, they were held to stricter rules and were more likely to be punished than seamen.

Yet no matter who was punished, it is clear that the majority did not relish a second dose of the lash. Repeat offenders were a definite minority (only two on *Wolf*, eleven on *Daphne*, and fourteen on *Queen*), and only two men received four floggings each – John Mahoney, seaman of *Daphne*, and Patrick Duff, marine of *Queen*. (John Hancock, a marine on *Wolf* would exceed them with five floggings, if we add the two floggings he received in 1775). Once again, marines featured prominently. But the main point is that of those who had been flogged, the vast majority were careful not to repeat the experience.

Relating the level of punishment to ship types, one would have expected a progression upward as crew sizes increased, with the least punishment in the sloop *Wolf* more punishment in the frigate *Daphne*, and the most punishment on the crowded decks of the ship-of-the-line *Queen*. In fact, the progression was *Wolf*, *Queen*, and *Daphne*, with *Wolf* and *Queen* having similar incidences of corporal punishment while *Daphne's* was more than twice their levels. How can this be explained? The most obvious difference between the ships is that both *Wolf* and *Queen* spent their war service in waters around or near the British Isles, with regular periods in port. *Daphne*, on the other hand, spent half its war service in North American waters, where sixty-two percent of the floggings occurred. Perhaps the strain of prolonged overseas service, and the proximity of an enemy with whom crew members would find much in common if they deserted, necessitated a stricter disciplinary regime.

To return to the question of whether naval punishment during the American war matched the less harsh regime of mid-century, or the more severe regime of the 1790s, the conclusion would seem to be that it was still more akin to the mid-century experience. The overall incidence of corporal punishment among the crews of the three ships was 5.4%, well below Byrn's average of nine percent for the later wars. The incidence in both *Wolf* and *Queen* was in fact below five percent and only *Daphne's* high figure of 11.2% inflated the average. This is of course only a micro-study and any conclusions can only be tentative, awaiting a wider sample. Nevertheless, it seems likely that during the American war the RN, despite facing ever-increasing difficulties from 1778, did not yet exhibit the stricter discipline that began to be manifested during the war years of the 1790s.

When mutiny broke out in the Channel Fleet at Spithead in 1797, two participants in the 1783 demobilisation mutiny were involved. Admiral Alexander Hood was now Lord Bridport and commander of the Channel fleet, while the aged Admiral Lord Howe once

again had to come down to Portsmouth to try to pacify the sailors. But the mutineers of 1797 were more radicalised than those of 1783, with a clear programme of demands – including restrictions on flogging (though not its abolition) – which would have to be met if their co-operation was to be ensured to continue to prosecute the war.

NOTES

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1. John Masefield, *Sea Life in Nelson's Time* (London, 1905).
 2. N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London, 1986).
 3. N.A.M. Rodger, "Shipboard Life in the Georgian Navy, 1750-1800: The Decline of the Old Order," in L.R. Fischer, *et al. (eds.), The North Sea: Twelve Essays in the Social History of Maritime Labour* (Stavanger, 1992).
 4. John D. Byrn, Jr., *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leeward Islands Station, 1784-1812* (London, 1989).
 5. Most of these records are in Great Britain, Public Record Office (PRO), Admiralty (ADM) 51 (captains' logs); ADM 52 (masters' logs); and ADM 1 (captains' letters and records of naval courts). The lieutenant's logs are in National Maritime Museum (NMM), ADM L.
 6. The computer analysis was carried out by Chris Millard in a project funded by the British Academy and the University of Exeter.
 7. For naval punishments, see Byrn, *Crime*, 64-88.
 8. For *Wolf's* career in the American war, see PRO, ADM 51/1080, captain's log, 1776-1781; and ADM 1/1612, 1838, 2013-2014, captain's letters, 1776-1781.
 9. PRO, ADM 51/1080, captain's log; and ADM 52/2098-2100, master's log.
 10. Byrn, *Crime*, 108.
 11. See note 9.
 12. PRO, ADM 1/2013, A. Kempe to Admiralty, 13 December 1775.
 13. For *Daphne's* career, see PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log, 1776-1783; and ADM 1/1611, 1613, 1614, 1791 and 1906, captain's letters (St.J. Chinnery, Lord Hervey, W. Carlyon and M. Fortescue), 1776-1783.
 14. PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log; ADM 52/1689, 2247 and 2248, master's log; and NMM, ADM L/D 6 and 7a, log of Lt. Christmas Paul, 1776-1780.
 15. PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log, 5 March 1780.
 16. See Nick Slope, "HMS *Trent*, A Social Survey, 1796-7" (Unpublished MA thesis, Thames Valley University, 1996), 33-42.
 17. PRO, ADM 52/1689, master's log, 19 February 1777.
 18. PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log, 3 September and 15 October 1776.
 19. No record has been found of any punishment or court martial relating to Carrol's desertion. PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log, 15 and 30 January 1778; and NMM, ADM L/D 7a, log of Lt. C. Paul, 15 and 30 January 1778.
 20. No minutes of this court martial have been found PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log, 24, 26 and 28 July 1779; ADM 52/1689, master's log, 28 July 1779; and NMM, ADM L/D 6, log of Lt. C. Paul, 24, 26 and 28 July 1779.
 21. PRO, ADM 52/2248, master's log, 9 July 1780.

22. PRO, ADM 51/227, captain's log, 20 June 1782; ADM 52/2247, master's log, 20 June 1782; NMM, ADM L/D 6, log of Lt. William James Stephens, 20 June 1782; PRO, ADM 1/1791, M. Fortescue to Admiralty, 26 September 1782.
23. PRO, ADM 1/1791, M. Fortescue to Admiralty, 7 March 1783; and ADM 1/5322, papers of court martial, 24 April 1783.
24. For *Queen's* career in the American war, see ADM 51/752, captain's log, 1776-1783; and ADM 1/1710, 1987, 2123 and 2390-2391, captain's letters (J. Robinson, A. Innes, F. Maitland, W. Domett), 1776-1783.
25. Information from C. Millard, computer analysis.
26. For the Volunteer movement in Ireland during the American war, see T. Bartlett and K. Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), 327-332; for the 1797 naval mutinies see G.E. Manwaring and B. Dobree, *The Floating Republic* (London, 1935).
27. PRO, ADM 51/752, captain's logs; ADM 52/1933-1934 and 2480, master's logs; and NMM, ADM L/Q 7-11, lieutenant's logs.
28. *Ibid.*
29. PRO, ADM 1/5309, court martial papers, 28 January 1778; and ADM 52/1933, master's log, 31 January 1778.
30. PRO, ADM 1/1987, A. Innes to Admiralty, 16 June 1779.
31. PRO, ADM 1/5314, court martial papers, 24 January 1780; ADM 51/752, captain's log, 5 February 1780; and NMM, ADM L/Q 8, lieutenant's logs, 24 January and 5 February 1780.
32. PRO, ADM 52/1934, master's log, 11 April 1780; and NMM, ADM L/Q 8, lieutenant's logs, 11 April 1780.
33. PRO, ADM 51/752, captain's log, 14 February 1782; and ADM 52/2480, master's log, 14 February 1782.
34. PRO, ADM 1/1982, Admiral Sir Thomas Pye, Commander in Chief, Portsmouth, to Admiralty, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 30 March 1783; and ADM, CB 3027, 1933, Commander J.H. Owen, "Mutiny in the Royal Navy," I (1691-1919) (C.B. 3027, Admiralty, 1933), 36-40.
35. PRO, ADM 52/2480, master's log, 15 March 1783.
36. NMM, ADM L/Q 10, log of Lt. Thomas Ireland, 22, 23 and 24 March 1783; PRO, ADM 52/2480, master's log, 22, 23 and 24 March 1783; and ADM 1/1982, Admiral Pye to Admiralty, 24 March 1783.