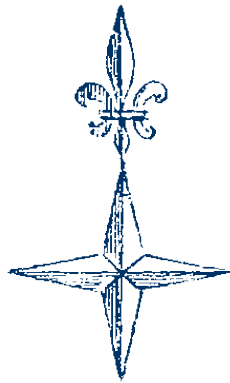


Discipline



'Discipline, Marine, (discipline navale, Fr.) signifies training up soldiers for the sea-service, in such exercises and manoeuvres as can be formed on board ships of war at sea.'

From Falconer's New Universal Dictionary of the Marine 1815 Edition

Long periods at sea often resulted in sailors deserting. 'R' for run was recorded in the ship's muster book. Return or capture meant 12-24 lashes but the seriousness of the crime increased if he had stolen a boat or ship's property in the attempt..

During Cook's time, discipline in the Royal Navy was considered to be a matter of training and obedience. Co-operation and competence were required to ensure the ship was in working order for long periods of time and all sailors recognised that disobedience was dangerous. From Commander to cabin boy, each man was expected to carry out his role for the good of all. The Admiralty provided 36 Articles of War which detailed crimes and punishments recognized by the Navy – mostly for offences by officers. There was also a large manual, the *'King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions'*, which outlined rules for every conceivable event from the time a man entered the Navy, to his retirement or death. All of these were written with regard to a man's 'station': that is, his position on board as sailor, officer or gentleman. The Commander ensured discipline, and therefore efficiency, was immediate and unquestioned on his ship. Punishment was expected by the ordinary seamen and had to be seen to be done. It was carried out in full view of the ship's complement, drama adding to the deterrent quality of the event.



Cat o' nine tails. ANMM collection

Flogging

The whip or scourge was known as the cat-o-'nine tails. A thick piece of rope was used as the handle and spliced with nine knotted strands. It was hung in a red baize bag in the mess area as a constant reminder to the sailors. Flogging was the most common type of punishment inflicted at the Captain's discretion. Carried out at the gangway, the crime was read out in front of the ship's company. The officers watched from the quarter deck and the marines stood between the prisoner and the crew. The convicted sailor had his shirt removed and his hands were tied to the rigging or grating. Usually a dozen lashes for any one crime was given by the boatswain or his mate with enough force to break the skin. The blood and flesh were cleaned from the 'cat's tails' by the mate running his fingers through them after each stroke. The surgeon's role was to assess the sailor's condition until the flogging was complete and the man was cut down.

Running the Gauntlet

This was an alternative punishment for thieves until 1806. Stealing from a fellow sailor was stealing from your 'brother-at-arms'. Stealing from the ship's stores threatened the survival of the whole ship. After sentencing, the ship's crew mustered in two rows, facing each other. The sentenced man was stripped to the waist and given 12 lashes – often with a 'thieve's cat' (a thicker version of the cat 'o nine tails with more than one knot per cord). He was placed between an officer- who walked backward with his cutlass at the prisoner's chest- and the ship's corporal, who prodded him from behind to pass through the rows. His shipmates were furnished with small twisted cords, called 'knittles' or 'nettles' and lashed him as he passed. A sharp eye was kept on



18th century mess deck. HMB Endeavour replica

Articles of war

The legal basis for naval discipline was the 36 Articles of War, 1757. These were required to be read out by the Captain to the formally mustered crew at least once a month, as part of the 'sermon' at the Sunday service and before punishments. These were the 'laws' they lived by. They defined the major punishments for crimes at sea – death was mandatory for eight crimes, and optional for eleven more. The Crimes can be summarized as offences against: *religion and God, the King and*

government; the duties which men owe to their fellow subjects and withdrawing or keeping back from fight. The last article gave the Captain of a ship almost unlimited power: *All other crimes not capital committed by any person or persons of the fleet.. shall be punished by the laws and customs in such cases used at sea.* Brutality occurred but most captains realized that hanging and flogging could deprive a ship of much needed labour.

the crew – any man not striking and striking hard, risked the same punishment. Sometimes the punishment ended with another 12 lashes to reinforce the deterrent nature of the spectacle.

Flogging 'round the Fleet'

This was an almost certain death sentence. A man sentenced to between 100 and 1000 lashes (300 lashes was common for desertion) would be rowed around the fleet and given a portion of the sentence on or in sight of each ship. Gagged with an iron bar in his mouth, he was flogged and when he fainted, revived by 'blue paper steeped in vinegar' placed on his back. This continued until the sentence was completed or he died.

Drunkenness and boredom

Were the commonest causes of crime. The *Endeavour's* crew were given 250 ml of rum a day, which they mixed with water to make a litre of 'grog'. Some sailors hoarded their ration and

drunkenness caused trouble – disobedience, talking back to an officer, stealing, insolence and sleeping on duty. Punishment could be 12 lashes – or even worse-stopping his grog ration for several days!

Confinement in irons

One leg or two were locked into manacles or 'iron garters' which slid along iron bolts called 'bilboes'. The man would be restrained below decks and guarded by a marine with bayonet fixed, until the time of his court martial or punishment.

The boatswain

The boatswain carried a stick or cane called a 'rattan' to thrash the sailors as they worked. The boatswain's mate used a rope's end or 'starter' to get the sailors moving quickly.



Rattan cane. ANMM collection

Sample crimes on HMB Endeavour based on information in Captain Cook's Journal

Date	Name	Crime	Punishment
16/9/1768	Henry Stephens, able seaman and Thomas Dunster, marine	'for refusing to take their allowance of fresh beef'	12 lashes each
30/11/1768	Robert Anderson, gunner	'leaving his duty ashore and attempting to desert from the ship'	12 lashes
30/11/1768	William Judge, marine private	'using abusive language to the Officer of the Watch'	12 lashes
30/11/1768	John Readon, boatswain's mate	'not doing his duty in punishing the above two men'	12 lashes
19/11/1768	John Thurman, able seaman	'refusing to assist the sailmaker in repairing the sails'	12 lashes
26/3/1769	William Greenslade, marine	'had taken part of a Seal Skin put under his charge' 'either by accident or design went overboard, was drowned' Suicide over honour	
16/4/1769	Richard Hutchins, boatswain's mate	'for disobeying command'	12 lashes
12/6/1769	John Thurman, able seaman and James Nicholson, able seaman	'had taken by force from them several bows and arrows and plaited hair'	24 lashes each
30/11/1769	Henry Stephens, able seaman and Manoel Pereira, able seaman	'leaving their duty when ashore last night and digging up potatoes'	12 lashes each
30/11/1769	Matthew Cox, able seaman	'leaving their duty when ashore last night and digging up potatoes' and 'he insisted that there was no harm'	12 lashes and confinement
23/5/1770	Richard Orten, captain's clerk	'some malicious person or persons in the ship took advantage of his being drunk and cut off all the clothes from his back...and cut off a part of both his ears. No culprit found. Cook offered a reward of arrack (spirit). He wrote 'the greatest insult...to my authority'	

Mutiny

Was a broad term for single or group disobedience: *traitorous or disrespectful words; mutinous assembly; uttering words of sedition; contempt for a superior officer; concealing traitorous or mutinous design or words; striking or quarrelling with a superior officer.*

Court Martials

These were required before any penalty of death, imprisonment, floggings of more than 3 dozen lashes or reduction in rank of senior officers. Convicted officers suffered death by shooting until the 1790s. For other crew, the death penalty was by hanging, usually from the cathead or yardarm. Executions were not common while at sea.



Leg irons with chains. ANMM collection

The Surgeon's role

Was to assess the physical state of the prisoner. If he considered the man could not take any more punishment, the sailor was treated with smelling salts. Raw welts on his back were rubbed with brine (salt water) or a salve of mercuric oxide (now considered poisonous). If and when the man recovered, the remaining sentence was carried out.



HMB ENDEAVOUR



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM