

## **The Competition for American Seamen during the War of 1739-1748**

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## *12. The Competition for American Seamen during the War of 1739-1748*

In June of 1739 the British Privy Council authorized the issuing of letters of marque and reprisal against the property of the King of Spain and all of his subjects.<sup>1</sup> This action allowed Britons to fit out privateers and legally capture the commerce of the Spanish Empire. Colonial reaction to this aggressive change in policy was exuberant. Newspapers from Boston to the West Indies reported the colonists' "universal Joy" at being able to prey upon Spanish shipping.<sup>2</sup> When the conflict expanded in 1744 to include France, the American response remained enthusiastic. Press reports testified to the strength of the "privateering Spirit" in colonial seaports.<sup>3</sup> To ensure that the colonies fit out privateers, imperial administrators instructed the American governors to encourage such ventures in their colonies "as effectually as possible."<sup>4</sup> Throughout the War of 1739-1748, the colonial chief executives complied with those instructions. They published proclamations to encourage privateers, aided in lowering customs duties on prize goods, and, of course, issued hundreds of letters of marque and reprisal.

As a result of these policies, scores of British colonial privateers plied the Atlantic in quest of Spanish and French merchantmen. These predators succeeded in capturing hundreds of prizes and greatly distressed Spanish and French shipping.<sup>5</sup> In this way private men-of-war augmented Britain's power at sea. At the same time, however, privateering ventures helped to cause serious problems for colonial governors. The lure of rich prizes attracted thousands of seamen to sail on private men-of-war. This drain on colonial mariners coincided with increased manpower requirements of the Royal Navy. Moreover, most of the British colonies in North America and the Caribbean began fitting out vessels to patrol their coasts. To make matters worse, British and American merchantmen began carrying larger crews in an effort to defend themselves against enemy predators. All of these avenues of maritime endeavour created competition for colonial seamen which greatly hindered the governors' abilities to man colonial coast guard vessels and assist Royal Navy commanders in filling their complements for the king's ships stationed in America. Thus, the maritime prize war created serious administrative difficulties for colonial and naval officials.

The imperial hostilities increased the demand for able seamen and created a shortage of mariners in British colonial ports. The ships of force of the navy, coast guard, and private men-of-war all required large crews to capture

enemy merchantmen and escort them to friendly ports. Vessels employed as warships carried many more men than comparable craft engaged in peacetime commerce.<sup>6</sup> The manpower requirements of the navy alone increased by more than 700 percent over the peacetime decade of the 1730s. Only about 7000 or 8000 officers and men comprised the Royal Navy's establishment during the quiet years of the 1730s. By contrast, at the peak of its strength in 1746 and 1747, between 50,000 and 60,000 men sailed on the king's ships.<sup>7</sup> British colonial privateers also attracted large numbers of sailors. During King George's War colonial private men-of-war provided more than 29,000 berths and averaged 4700 berths annually after 1744.<sup>8</sup>

The shortage of seamen affected all areas of maritime enterprise. Numerous letters from a Charles Town rice merchant, Robert Pringle, reveal that the most important port in the southern colonies experienced difficulties manning its merchant vessels.<sup>9</sup> The seaborne commerce of other colonies as well as the mother country also suffered.<sup>10</sup> The sailors' belief that they could earn greater financial rewards on privateers aggravated the shortage of merchant mariners. Advertisements frequently appeared in the colonial press offering rewards for the return of men who had jumped ship to join privateers;<sup>11</sup> other advertisements sought to recruit sailors for private men-of-war.

Contemporaries (and subsequent historians) believed that countless sailors deserted from the merchant marine, Royal Navy, and the coast guard to join privateering cruises, but despite these defections private men-of-war not infrequently experienced problems in manning their vessels. A 1739 press report from Jamaica indicated that island privateers shared this shortage. "There are only two Privateers gone out . . . tho' several others would be fitted out if they could get Hands, who are so extream scarce."<sup>12</sup> In 1741 the Newport privateer *Revenge* left her home port short-handed and spent thirty-six days in New York trying to recruit men. While the *Revenge* was in Manhattan the commander of the New York private man-of-war *Humming Bird* resigned himself to the fact that there was an insufficient number of mariners to fill his requirements at home, and he headed, therefore, to Philadelphia.<sup>13</sup> Other privateers were forced to search for crews beyond their home port. Two London predators, the *Garland* and the *London*, sought hands in Ireland.<sup>14</sup> The owners of the New York privateer *Prince Charles* placed a recruiting advertisement in a Philadelphia newspaper; so did the owners of the Norfolk, Virginia cruiser *Raleigh*. Even with this expanded area from which to enlist mariners, the *Raleigh* had to delay its departure for three months.<sup>15</sup>

Although merchant vessels and privateers often faced a shortage of seamen, the Royal Navy and colonial coast guard vessels suffered more serious manpower problems. The existing evidence clearly reveals that eighteenth-century sailors preferred to serve on merchantmen or privateers rather than in the navy or the coast guard. Throughout the war, naval commanders' advertisements placed in the colonial press to recover deserters often mentioned that the absent mariners had been enticed by the higher wages paid by the merchant marine.<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Governor William Shirley informed his colony's legislature in 1742 of Admiral Vernon's complaint "that

the Masters of Merchant Ships . . . in this Province, make a Practice of enticing away their [ie, the navy's] Seamen."<sup>17</sup> Shirley called upon the legislators to enact a new law to curb merchant vessels and privateers from employing naval deserters, but he was unsuccessful.<sup>18</sup>

Deserters plagued the navy in other colonies as well. Captain Peter Warren informed the Admiralty that the king's ships in New York had great difficulty keeping their men: "It is impossible . . . to keep any of them that have an inclination to leave their ships, to which they are greatly prompted by the success of the privateers."<sup>19</sup> Naval vessels in Philadelphia encountered similar problems. Replying to a request for wharf space from Captain Masterson of HMS *Hector*, Pennsylvania Council President Anthony Palmer expressed his fears that the *Hector's* crew would probably jump ship *en masse*:

The danger mostly apprehended by the Council is, that you will not be able to keep your Sailors; this Port is on this account one of the worst in the World, as there is an abundance of bad People to conceal & assist Runaways. Captn. Ballet [commander of HM Sloop *Otter*] experienc'd this & found it a hard matter to get Men.<sup>20</sup>

Royal Navy commanders stationed in Charles Town were also often forced to place advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette* offering rewards for the return of absent mariners.<sup>21</sup> Naval officers in the West Indies seemed to face a never ending struggle to prevent their men from jumping ship to sign on privateers or merchant vessels.<sup>22</sup>

The operations of the colonies' guard vessels were also hampered by manpower shortages. The Massachusetts House of Representatives anticipated a lack of volunteers to serve on the province's new guard vessel in 1740 and, therefore, authorized the governor and council to press a sufficient number of sailors to man the craft.<sup>23</sup> Expecting an exodus of mariners during the preparations for the expedition against the French fortress at Louisbourg, the Bay Colony's legislature enacted a statute "to prevent seamen removing into distant parts to avoid their being impressed into His Majesty's service."<sup>24</sup> A year later the commander of the *Massachusetts Frigate* petitioned Governor Shirley "setting forth the great Difficulty he meets with in manning the said Ship."<sup>25</sup> Other Massachusetts vessels suffered from the same problem. "The Commander of the *Boston-Packet* is inlisting Seamen . . . but it has been represented to me by the Committee of War, that it is not probable that many Men will inlist upon our Pay, when they can have much greater Wages in the Merchant Service." Governor Shirley did not think the colony would obtain a sufficient number of mariners "without some extraordinary Methods."<sup>26</sup>

The Rhode Island coast guard experienced similar difficulties. In order to obtain full complements for the sloop *Tartar*, the legislature was forced to press sailors.<sup>27</sup> An inquiry into the capture of a French vessel off Point Judith, Rhode Island in 1748 highlighted the problem of the *Tartar*. The sloop's commander had committed a serious breach of discipline by sailing without orders. In the subsequent investigation of Captain James Holmes's conduct, the coast guard's lack of popularity was evident:

It was resolved by the committee [of inquiry], that his [Holmes's] going out without orders . . . from the Governor, or the Deputy Governor, was a great misdemeanor; but it appeared to the committee, that it was without any bad design, and principally to keep his men on board from deserting their service.<sup>28</sup>

It is ironic that the Narragansett Colony had such difficulty attracting and keeping sailors in its employ. Moreover, it is surprising that the Rhode Island government issued press warrants. Throughout King George's War — especially after the French entered the conflict — Rhode Island was attacked as a haven for seamen who wished to avoid impressment into the navy. William Shirley, the chief protagonist in this assault on the Newport government, was particularly strident in criticizing Rhode Island's contribution to the Louisbourg expedition. In June of 1745 he wrote Rhode Island Governor Gideon Wanton and excoriated him for inadequate efforts to supply mariners for the incursion. Shirley went on to describe how Massachusetts's attempts to secure seamen were doomed to failure because of Rhode Island's ineffective recruiting policies:

I find my endeavors will be to little purpose, whilst all mariners subject to be impressed here into His Majesty's Service, fly to Rhode Island to avoid it (as indeed has been long the practice) and are there sheltered and encouraged, where (I am credibly informed) there are at this time many hundreds of foreign Seamen daily walking the streets of Newport, whilst scarce one is to be found in Boston.

After leveling this charge, Shirley stated that the King had authorized him to supply Commodore Warren with men and shipping. The Massachusetts governor then instructed Wanton, in effect, to put his colony in order and provide the necessary sailors:

You will exert yourselves in the most effectual manner, for furnishing Mr. Warren with Seamen, which I am satisfied it is in the power of your Government to do, either by offering the same bounty to voluntiers as this government has done [i.e., £3 (Mass.)], or by impressing; and that you will not permit your Colony to be an Asylum to all mariners coming into New England, for screening themselves from His Majesty's Service.<sup>29</sup>

Shirley continued to level similar criticisms throughout the war. He also cast aspersions on the willingness of New York and Pennsylvania to supply manpower for the navy. In a long letter to the Duke of Newcastle, Shirley revealed that his attempts to secure seamen for the king's service had caused Massachusetts serious economic problems. Forcing men into the navy had driven hundreds of mariners out of the province and into the neighboring colonies. This exodus had caused the Bay Colony's trade to suffer while the commerce of Rhode Island, New York, and Pennsylvania expanded. Moreover, riots had erupted in Boston, murders had been committed during a confrontation between sailors and press gangs, and the colony's council had been intimidated from issuing additional press warrants. Shirley refrained from suggesting a solution to this problem, but he stated emphatically that he

would be unable to raise any more men for the navy “unless some method is at the same time found to oblige the other Colonies, especially the neighbouring ones of Rhode Island, New York and Pennsylvania to furnish their proportion of Mariners for the King’s Ships.”<sup>30</sup>

The attacks on Rhode Island’s willingness to send sailors and troops to Cape Breton and for the subsequent assault on Canada prompted numerous letters from Newport to Richard Partridge, the colony’s London agent. This correspondence urged Partridge to defend the colony’s actions by insisting that Rhode Island was only a small province which had provided all the men it could spare. These letters illustrate clearly how privateering created difficulties: “The Colony was then exhausted of Men to an uncommon degree,” Governor Wanton explained to Partridge, “not twenty had return’d from the West India Expedition [the unsuccessful 1741 attempt on Cartagena], We had lost many more in the Privateers and had then ten or twelve sail on a Cruise so that it was morally impossible to raise such a Number of Volunteers here at that Time as was desired.”<sup>31</sup>

It is difficult to evaluate this dispute between the New England governments. Rhode Island had offered large bounties to attract recruits, and the colony was not adverse to impressment.<sup>32</sup> It is possible, therefore, that much of what the Rhode Islanders said was true — that the Narragansett Colony did, indeed, face a shortage of sailors. It is, of course, naïve to accept all of their claims at face value; after all, Rhode Island’s politicians did not want to incur ill will in England. The colonists had expended monies in the expeditions against the French, and they wanted to be reimbursed. At the same time, however, Shirley’s charges are also not above suspicion. It was to his advantage to blame other colonies — especially Rhode Island — for the impressment riots that had erupted in Boston in 1747. Moreover, the less the Narragansett Colony received from the parliamentary grant to cover the expenses of the Cape Breton campaign, the more there would be for Massachusetts.<sup>33</sup> The major point that emerges from these charges and counter charges is that the naval and the colonial coast guard vessels were undermanned. It also appears that as many seamen as possible attempted to find berths on merchantmen or private men-of-war rather than on vessels in the navy or the coast guard.

When Governor Shirley informed the Massachusetts legislature that it was improbable many sailors would enlist in the coast guard “upon our Pay,” he mentioned one of the main reasons for this: seamen could earn much higher wages in the merchant marine than they could aboard the men-of-war. Moreover, service on a privateer offered even greater potential for financial gain.

One important consequence of the wartime demand for mariners was an increase in the level of seamen’s wages. Throughout most of the peacetime decade of the 1730s wages in the merchant service averaged 23-25 s. (sterling) per month.<sup>34</sup> After the outbreak of hostilities in the fall of 1739, mariners’ wages rose dramatically. The *Boston Evening Post* reported on 5 November that seamen in Jamaica “may have 20 Guineas, besides many other Advantages, for the Run Home [i.e., England].”<sup>35</sup> In Britain, sailors demanded 50 s. (sterling) a month from merchant shippers in 1740 but from

1745 to 1748 wages averaged 55 s. (sterling) per month.<sup>36</sup> Wages in North America also reflected the increased demand for sailors. Writing from Charles Town, Robert Pringle informed his business associates of the high cost of maritime labor, "There being now Fifteen and Twenty Guineas given to Sailors for the Run to Europe."<sup>37</sup> Massachusetts seamen sailing on William Pepperrell's vessel *Charming Molly* received £16 (Mass., about 35 s. sterling) per month in 1747. This was four times higher than wages paid by Pepperrell during the 1730s.<sup>38</sup> The letterbook of Manhattan merchant Gerard Beekman reveals that New York tars also earned war-inflated wages. Two hands on Beekman's sloop *Dolphin* received 75 s. (N.Y., about 41 s. sterling) per month in 1748, while another "Mariner" was paid at the monthly rate of £5.15.0 (N.Y., about 61 s. sterling).<sup>39</sup>

The financial rewards of privateering are harder to determine. Unlike merchant seamen, mariners on private men-of-war earned no fixed wages, receiving instead shares of the prizes they intercepted. Obviously, if a privateer were unlucky in capturing enemy merchantmen, its crew members would receive little more than their provisions. On the other hand, successful privateering cruises offered the prospect of windfall gains. The crews of Captains Hall and Lamprier, two privateers sailing in consort in 1744, shared £200 each after capturing a rich Spanish ship which sold for £10,000.<sup>40</sup> Each tar serving on board a New Providence Island privateer, commanded by John Gardener, shared 1000 pieces of eight (about £163 sterling) from the proceeds of a 1745 cruise.<sup>41</sup> Shares of £70 per man were divided by the crew of the Philadelphia privateer *Cruizer* in 1745.<sup>42</sup> Although these examples are probably exceptional, the hands of a private man-of-war could expect to earn about 137 s. (sterling) per month if their vessel only took one prize of average value on a voyage.<sup>43</sup> This more than doubled the wages paid in the merchant service.

Mariners serving in the Royal Navy and on the colonial coast guard vessels earned much lower wages than their merchant marine counterparts. The rate of pay for seamen in the navy had not changed since the Interregnum. In 1653 Parliament set the wages for able seamen at 24 s. per month; this rate did not change until after the great mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797.<sup>44</sup> Out of his monthly wages the British tar paid deductions to the sailors' hospital at Greenwich, to his ship's chaplain and surgeon, and, because the navy provided no uniforms, to his vessel's purser.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the lower deck sailor on a king's ship earned about 23 s. each month if he were lucky. Because pay in the Royal Navy was so low and the service so onerous, the navy was plagued by deserters. In an effort to curb desertion, the service continually withheld wages to deter their men from deserting. As a result, numerous tars in the Royal Navy were not paid for years.<sup>46</sup>

Wages in the colonial coast guard also held little attraction for provincial sailors. Table 1 presents the available data on wages in the Massachusetts and Rhode Island coast guard as well as the proposed wages for a Pennsylvania guard vessel. Only the Pennsylvania rate equaled the prevailing wages in the merchant service. The remuneration offered by the Bay Colony never approached these wages. The low pay, coupled with the inflation that afflicted New England currencies, combined to drive Massachusetts wages

**TABLE I**  
**Monthly Wage Rates for Seamen in the Colonial Coast Guard**  
**During King George's War**

| Year | Massachusetts               | Rhode Island                | Pennsylvania  |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1740 | £6 (22s. 10d.) <sup>a</sup> |                             |               |
| 1741 | £8 <sup>b</sup> (22s. 2d.)  |                             |               |
| 1742 | £8 (29s. 1d.)               |                             |               |
| 1743 | £8 (29s.)                   |                             |               |
| 1744 | £8 (27s. 1d.)               | £8 (27s. 1d.)               |               |
| 1745 | £8 (24s. 9d.)               | £8 (24s. 9d.)               |               |
| 1746 | £8 (24s. 10d.)              | £8 <sup>c</sup> (24s. 10d.) |               |
| 1747 | £8 (17s. 3d.)               | £14 (30s. 3d.)              |               |
| 1748 | £12.10 (27s. 4d.)           | £14 (30s. 8d.)              | £5 (57s. 5d.) |

Source: *Mass. House Journal*, XIX, 122-23; *Mass. House Journal* XX, 202; *Mass. House Journal*, XXI, 208-09; *Mass. House Journal*, XXII, 155-56, 216; *Mass. House Journal*, XXIII, 393-94; *Mass. House Journal*, XXIV, 12, 68, 96, 349; *Mass. Acts and Resolves*, XIII, 94, 106, 225, 367, 535; *Col. Rec. R.I.*, IV, 568, 575; *Col. Rec. R.I.*, V, 16, 90-92, 101, 167-68, 216, 246; *Pa. Arch.*, II, 67-68.

<sup>a</sup>The figures in parentheses are the sterling values of the colonial currencies. They are based on the exchange rates found in Table 5.2, "Colonial Exchange Rates: English Continental Colonies, 1649-1775" in John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978), p. 316.

<sup>b</sup>The Massachusetts legislature enacted these wages as £2 new tenor. Table 1 expresses all Massachusetts wage rates in old tenor. £1 new tenor was approximately equal to £4 old tenor. See McCusker, *Money and Exchange*, p. 133.

<sup>c</sup>The Rhode Island legislature also paid a bounty of 40s. (R.I.) to each volunteer. In his discussion of New England exchange prior to 1750 when Massachusetts adopted the silver standard, Professor McCusker states "that with minor exceptions we are able to treat them [i.e., the currencies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire] as a unit." As a result, the Massachusetts rates of exchange were used to compute the sterling equivalents of Rhode Island paper money. See McCusker, *Money and Exchange*, pp. 131, 136.

down below even those of the Royal Navy in 1747! Rhode Island tars fared better than their northern neighbors, but they still lagged far behind the merchant service and the privateers.<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly, the colonies often experienced difficulty in raising (and keeping) volunteers to serve on the patrol vessels. In January 1746 Captain Thomas Sanders, commander of the provincial sloop *Massachusetts*, petitioned the Bay Colony's government for



higher wages for himself and his crew. Governor Shirley supported Sanders's request, and told the House that Sanders "was not able to support himself and Family nor to get able-bodied Seamen to navigate the Province Sloop, under the scanty Allowance you have made for them."<sup>48</sup> Sanders's plea was successful, and the House agreed to raise their wages.<sup>49</sup>

Prompted, perhaps, by the success of the colony's sloop crew, Captain Edward Tyng, commander of the province's ship *Massachusetts Frigate*, requested more money for himself and his crew. Tyng's application emphasized "the great Difficulty he meets with in manning the said Ship by Reason of the lowness of the Wages allowed by the Government." Shirley again strongly urged the representatives to increase the wages paid to the colony's tars "for it seems impracticable for Capt. Tyng to make up his Complement without it." After initially defeating two proposals to raise the mariners' wages, the legislators granted an increase to 40 s.<sup>50</sup>

The Bay Colony's legislators were not as sympathetic to the sailors in its employ the following spring. The lower House flatly refused another petition for higher wages presented by Captain Tyng, stipulating that wages for 1747 be continued at the level of the previous year. In case there should be a shortfall of recruits, the representatives decided to rely on coercion to fill the colony's manpower needs: "if a sufficient Number of Seamen do not appear to inlist, the Captain-General [Governor Shirley] be desired to cause an Impress for that Service."<sup>51</sup>

Throughout King George's War the low wages paid by the colonial governments and the Royal Navy were major obstacles hindering recruiting. The severity of naval discipline with its heavy reliance on corporal punishment was undoubtedly another.<sup>52</sup> To solve its manpower shortages the navy relied on impressment. Not surprisingly, the colonists were strongly opposed to this form of "recruiting," and press gangs were greeted with violence. In Boston and Charles Town lives were lost in confrontations between merchant seamen and the naval press gangs.<sup>53</sup> Despite this, it is interesting to note that many of the New Englanders who protested loudly against the Royal Navy's press gangs enacted legislation that set in motion press gangs of their own to recruit the colonial coast guard.

Since merchant shippers could not resort to impressment to obtain sailors, they too tried to attract men by offering high wages. Indeed ship owners were forced to offer wages that were sufficiently high to induce mariners to risk the press. In this way the mere presence of naval warships helped to push up the cost of merchant seamen's wages. The manpower requirements of the navy helped to create a vicious circle of an inadequate supply of seamen, higher wages, press gangs, and an exodus of merchant sailors to safer ports. The demand of privateers for seamen exacerbated the pressure on the number of men available for merchant vessels.

Even more than the merchant marine, privateers were seen as a drain on seamen from the navy and the coast guard vessels. But even the private men-of-war often faced shortages of men. They too were forced to advertise for crews in the newspapers or sail from port to port in quest of able-bodied seamen. It is incorrect to view the privateers as great magnets easily attracting a bountiful supply of mariners.

The shortage of seamen was one of the most serious problems affecting British naval administration in the eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup> There were not enough mariners in Britain to meet the needs of both the navy and the merchant fleet. This same problem clearly affected administrators in the colonies. American mariners avoided service in the navy and the coast guard as much as possible. The merchant vessels and privateers held forth more attractive possibilities. Yet, even these employers frequently suffered from a lack of sailors. In the colonies, as well as in the mother country, there was simply a shortage of seamen available for duty during wartime.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> W.L. Grant and J. Munro, eds., *Acts of the Privy Council of England: Colonial Series, 1613-1783* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1966), III, 636.
- <sup>2</sup> *Boston Gazette*, 20 Aug. 1739; *New York Weekly Journal*, 27 Aug. 1739; *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 23 Aug. 1739; *South Carolina Gazette* (Charles Town), 8 and 15 Sept. 1739.
- <sup>3</sup> *Pa. Gaz.*, 30 Aug. 1744; *New York Post-Boy*, 17 Sept. 1744, quoted in Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (New York, 1971), p. 61.
- <sup>4</sup> Duke of Newcastle to the Governor and Company of Rhode Island, 18 Apr. 1740, Gertrude S. Kimball, ed., *The Correspondence of the Colonial Governors of Rhode Island, 1723-1775* (Freeport, N.Y., 1969), I, 149, hereafter cited as *R. I. Gov. Corr.* Newcastle sent the same letter to the other colonial governors.
- <sup>5</sup> For the disastrous effects of the war on French colonial commerce, see Thomas M. Doerflinger, "The Antilles Trade of the Old Regime: A Statistical Overview," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6 (1976), 397-415; Dale Miquelon, *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729-1770* (Montreal, 1978), chapters 6 and 7. The number of British colonial privateers and the prizes they captured are presented in Carl E. Swanson, "Predators and Prizes: Privateering in the British Colonies during the War of 1739-1748," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1979), chapters 3, 5, and 7.
- <sup>6</sup> The rations of tons, guns, and men for merchantmen increased noticeably during wartime, thus indicating both larger crews and heavier armaments. See Swanson, "Predators and Prizes," 95, and James F. Shepherd and Gary M. Walton, *Shipping, Maritime Trade, and Economic Development of Colonial North America* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 196-97.
- <sup>7</sup> Daniel A. Baugh, *British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole* (Princeton, N.J., 1965), 205, supports the larger figure; Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1962), pp. 320-21, cites a peak strength of 52,000 in 1747.
- <sup>8</sup> Swanson, "Predators and Prizes," p. 175.
- <sup>9</sup> R. Pringle to Andrew Pringle, 31 Dec. 1742; Pringle to Richard Partridge, 5 Feb. 1743; Pringle to Francis Dalby, 23 May 1743; Pringle to Henry and John Brock, 12 Dec. 1744, Walter B. Edgar, ed., *The Letterbook of Robert Pringle* (Columbia, S.C., 1972), pp. 471, 496, 557, 777, hereafter cited as *Pringle Letterbook*.
- <sup>10</sup> Worthington C. Ford, et al., eds., *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1919-1971), XXII, 204-05, hereafter cited as *Mass. House Journal*; H.S. Vaughan, ed., *Voyages and Cruises of Commodore Walker* (London, 1928), pp. 93-94.
- <sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Boston Gaz.*, 24 Nov. 1747, 3 May 1748; *Pa. Gaz.*, 25 Feb. 1746; *S.C. Gaz.*, 14 and 21 May 1744, 17 June 1745, 25 May 1747. Numerous examples from the *Maryland Gazette* are cited in Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York, 1965), p. 247.
- <sup>12</sup> *Boston Eve. Post*, 5 Nov. 1739.
- <sup>13</sup> Journal of the privateer sloop *Revenge*, 5 June-14 May 1741, J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents* (New York, 1970), pp. 382-93.

- <sup>14</sup> *Pa. Gaz.*, 10 Feb. 1747.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 Aug., 6 Sept., 6, 14, 18, 25 Dec. 1744, 1, 8, 15, 29 Jan. 1745.
- <sup>16</sup> See, for example, *Boston Gaz.*, 10 Feb. and 17 Nov. 1747; *Pa. Gaz.*, 4 Nov. 1742; *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), 26 Oct. and 2 Nov. 1739; *S.C. Gaz.*, 4 Apr. 1740.
- <sup>17</sup> *Mass. House Journal*, XX, 84.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-99; Massachusetts Archives, 64, Maritime, 1740-53, 204-05, 209-11, State House, Boston.
- <sup>19</sup> Warren to Thomas Corbett, 8 Sept. 1744, Julian Gwyn, ed., *The Royal Navy and North America: The Warren Papers, 1736-1752* (London, 1973), p. 36.
- <sup>20</sup> Palmer to Masterson, 2 Aug. 1748, George E. Reed, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives, Fourth Series: Papers of the Governors* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1900), II, 80.
- <sup>21</sup> See, for example, *S.C. Gaz.*, 4 Apr. 1740, 1 and 8 Nov. 1742, 3 Jan. 1743.
- <sup>22</sup> Richard Pares, "The Manning of the Navy in the West Indies, 1702-63," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th Series, 20 (1937), 47.
- <sup>23</sup> *Mass. House Journal*, XVIII, 90.
- <sup>24</sup> Ellis Ames, Abner C. Goodell, et al., eds., *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay . . .* (Boston, 1869-1922), XIII, 427, hereafter cited as *Mass. Acts and Resolves*.
- <sup>25</sup> *Mass. House Journal*, XXII, 203.
- <sup>26</sup> *Mass. House Journal*, XXIII, 115, 121.
- <sup>27</sup> See, for example, "An Act for equipping the colony sloop, and sending her out to cruise, &c.," enacted April 1741; "An Act for fitting out the colony Sloop Tartar, in company with the sloop kept by His Majesty's colony of Connecticut, for guarding the coast," enacted June 1744, John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations In New England* (New York, 1968), V, 17, 19, hereafter cited as *Col. Rec. R.I.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 253-54.
- <sup>29</sup> Shirley to Wanton, 6 June 1745, Charles H. Lincoln, ed., *The Correspondence of William Shirley* (New York, 1912), I, 227-28, hereafter cited as *Shirley Correspondence*.
- <sup>30</sup> Shirley to Newcastle, 31 Dec. 1747, *ibid.* 420-23.
- <sup>31</sup> Wanton to Partridge, 26 July 1745, 1 *R.I. Gov. Corr.*, p. 367. This theme was reiterated many times in other letters; see 5 *Col. Rec. R. I.*, pp. 139-40, 148, 154, 183-84.
- <sup>32</sup> Shirley and Warren to Rhode Island Governor William Greene, 4 July 1746, 1 *Shirley Correspondence*, pp. 329-32. Shirley and Warren actually complained that Rhode Island's bounty was too high.
- <sup>33</sup> Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History* (New York, 1975), pp. 274-75.
- <sup>34</sup> Davis, *Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, p. 137.
- <sup>35</sup> *Boston Eve. Post*, 5 Nov. 1739.
- <sup>36</sup> Davis, *Rise of the English Shipping Industry*, p. 137.
- <sup>37</sup> Pringle to Henry and John Brock, 12 Dec. 1744, *Pringle Letterbook*, p. 777.
- <sup>38</sup> Byron Fairchild, *Messrs. William Pepperrell: Merchants at Piscataqua* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1954), p. 152. The exchange rates for sterling conversion employed here and throughout this paper are from John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978), pp. 310, 316.
- <sup>39</sup> Beekman to Captain William Collins, 3 Feb. 1748, Philip L. White, ed., *The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746-1799* (New York, 1956), I, 41. The wage rates cited in this discussion are for men who sailed before the mast. Captains and mates, of course, received much higher remuneration.
- <sup>40</sup> *Pa. Gaz.*, 21 June 1744; *Boston News-Letter*, 16 Aug. 1744; *S.C. Gaz.*, 17 Sept. 1744.
- <sup>41</sup> *Pa. Gaz.*, 23 May 1745.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 June 1745.
- <sup>43</sup> A detailed discussion of the procedures employed in arriving at this figure is presented in Swanson, "Predators and Prizes," pp. 312-20.
- <sup>44</sup> Christopher Lloyd, *The British Seaman, 1200-1860: A Social Survey* (London, 1968), pp. 248-49; Baugh, *British Naval Administration*, p. 229.
- <sup>45</sup> Lloyd, *The British Seaman*, pp. 235-36.
- <sup>46</sup> J.R. Hutchinson, *The Press-Gang Afloat and Ashore* (London, 1913), 44; Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 25 (1968), 382-83; Pares, "Manning the Navy," *Trans. Royal Hist.*

*Soc.*, 20 (1937), 38. In addition to monthly wages, naval personnel also received prize money from the enemy vessels intercepted by their ship. It is difficult to ascertain how much prize money augmented a mariner's income. Three-fourths of all prize money went to the officers. The remaining quarter was shared among all the lower deck sailors and marines. Moreover, the navy withheld prize shares, like wages, in an effort to prevent desertion. However much prize money supplemented the 24 s., it was insufficient to place naval wages on a par with the merchant marine or equal the potential offered by privateering.

<sup>47</sup> Like their naval counterparts, sailors in the coast guard were entitled to prize money. But since provincial guard vessels primarily patrolled their own coasts and rarely cruised in the enemy's shipping lanes, colony vessels made few captures. It is, therefore, doubtful if prize money significantly raised the level of wages in the coast guard.

<sup>48</sup> *Mass. House Journal*, XXII, 155-56.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-71.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-04, 224-25.

<sup>51</sup> *Mass. House Journal*, XXIII, 393-94.

<sup>52</sup> Lloyd, *The British Seaman*, pp. 239-45.

<sup>53</sup> *S. C. Gaz.*, 24 May 1740; *Pa. Gaz.*, 10 Dec. 1745. Impressment of Boston seamen caused a major riot in 1747, but there were no fatalities. See *Boston Gaz.*, 24 Nov. 1747 and Shirley to the Lords of Trade, 1 Dec. 1747, *Shirley Correspondence*, I, 412-19.

<sup>54</sup> Baugh, *British Naval Administration*, p. 147.