



The Sea Rover's Practice: Pirate Tactics and Techniques, 1630-1730

Benerson Little

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To read of sea roving's various incarnations - piracy, privateering, buccaneering, la flibuste, la course - is to bring forth romantic, and often violent, imagery. Indeed, much of this imagery has become a literary and cinematic cliché. And what an image it is!

But its truth is by halves, and paradoxically it is the picaresque imagery of Pyle, Wyeth, Sabatini, and Hollywood that is often closer to the reality, while the historical details of arms, tactics, and language are often inaccurate or entirely anachronistic.

Successful sea rovers were careful practitioners of a complex profession that sought wealth by stratagem and force of arms. Drawn from the European tradition, yet of various races and nationalities, they raided both ship and town throughout much of the world from roughly 1630 until 1730. Using a variety of innovative tactics and often armed with little more than musket and grenade, many of these self-described "soldiers and privateers" successfully assaulted fortifications, attacked shipping from small craft, crossed the mountains and jungles of Panama, and even circumnavigated the globe. Successful sea rovers were often supreme seamen, soldiers, and above all, tacticians. It can be argued that their influence on certain naval tactics is felt even today.

The Sea Rover's Practice is the only book that describes in exceptional detail the tactics of sea rovers of the period - how they actually sought out and attacked vessels and towns. Accessible to both the general and the more scholarly reader, it will appeal not only to those with an interest in piracy and in maritime, naval, and military history, but also to mariners in general, tall-ship and ship-modeling enthusiasts, tacticians and military analysts, readers of historical fiction, writers, and the adventurer in all of us.

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