

An American sailor, named James, who was impressed by the British Navy, rises in ranks during the Napoleonic Wars. Aboard the HMS Flora, he not only fights the French, but also for his life against a treacherous officer and his henchmen.

Dueling Brothers, Dueling Countries, and The Lure of Empire:

The Barbary Pirates - Volume II of the Founding of the U.S. Navy Trilogy
By William D. McEachern

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BARBARY PIRATES



VOLUME II OF THE
FOUNDING OF THE U. S. NAVY
BY THE AWARD WINNING AUTHOR
WILLIAM D. MCEACHERN

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Chapter 1: The Barbary Pirate Crisis Begins-1784



Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.

-Seneca.

What do I propose to do in this second part of my work tracing the history of the United States Navy?

First, I have read enough to know whence comes the word history. In the *Iliad*, Homer used the word *histor*. This word from the ancient Greek means a man of great skill before whom legal disputes were brought for resolution. The *histor* was required to make an inquiry into the matter to find the truth. The truth, for the Greeks, resided in the facts. Thus, the *histor* had to, in essence, decide what the facts were to determine the truth.

I, too, am a *histor* searching for the truth and so I will go into all the facts that might bear upon the issue of the founding of our Navy. History, thus, is the search for a rational explanation and understanding of events that occurred in time. It encompasses

geography, the character of men, the process of making decisions, and the randomness of chance that moves in all human endeavors.

Second, there are times that I shall digress from my theme in order to tell a story, which might not appear to bear upon the matter, yet, in some way I see a thread that ties it to other matters, some of which might be important and others of which might be insignificant, but weave a cloth of the rarest and finest value.

Third, as this is also my memoir, I must relate how the times and events impacted my family, my friends, and, of course, me.

The tale of how we became involved with the Barbary Pirates begins with the capture of our merchant ship, the *Betsy* in 1784, followed by the *Dauphin* off the coast of Portugal in July 1785, and finally by the *Maria* later that year. It would end in the new nineteenth century, in 1816 to be exact. How this all came about is our tale.

When I was 10, I did not understand my mother's fear of my going to the sea. I was unaware that men such as the Barbary Pirates might sail the oceans searching for prey, which were unsuspecting and unarmed merchantmen from the United States. In their corsairs, these Pirates swept the Atlantic Ocean from far off the Gates of Hercules, known to us as the Straits of Gibraltar, and far off the west coast of Portugal and Spain. They did not stop there. They marauded the western Mediterranean along the coast of North Africa as far east as Tunis, then off the west coasts of both Sardinia and Corsica, and, thence, along the southern coast of France and then down the eastern coast of Spain back to the Gates of Hercules.

The men and officers of the *Betsy*, *Dauphin*, and the *Maria* were incarcerated for years. These were my countrymen and fellow sailors who were captured. Actually, incarceration is too weak a word. They were brutally enslaved.

When these Pirates captured a ship, they seized the crew, stripped them naked to search their clothes for gold and silver coins or other valuables, looted the cargo holds, and, finally, sold both the ship and its crew members at the auction block. The enslaved crew worked for the despotic leaders of the Barbary Pirates doing heavy manual labor, such as breaking and carting rocks to build fortress walls and breakwaters in harbors. Often, they were fed nothing but dry, stale bread or given only water to drink. Rarely, they were given a small portion of vinegar to drink, but only from a shared bowl. It was on those rare occasions that they might get some olives to eat. They were whipped, kept in cramped and confined quarters, given tattered rags to wear, and were otherwise mentally and physically abused. They slept on a stone floor, freezing in the desert night with their rags, in which they worked as their only blanket. By day, they labored beyond their endurance. The enslaved crews, such as the *Dauphin* crew, might spend years or even decades in captivity.

The captain of the *Dauphin* was Richard O'Brien. His greatest fear was that his men would starve to death or that they would be worked to death. Knowing not what else to do, he wrote from his prison cell in Algiers to America's minister in France, Thomas Jefferson.

"Our sufferings are beyond our expression or your conception..."

His words would so grievously wound the heart of Thomas Jefferson that Jefferson would not forget these poor souls in captivity when he would become president some 16 years later.

Captain O'Brien kept a diary. One entry, made on February 19, 1790, read as follows: "Picture to your Brother Citizens or Unfortunate Countrymen in the Algerian State Prisons, starved two-thirds and Naked... Once a Citizen of the United States of America, but at present the Most Miserable Slave in Algiers."

For these poor unfortunates, there were only four roads out of their prison. The first road was to convert to Islam by renouncing Christianity. The religion of Islam prohibited one Moslem from enslaving another Moslem. By taking the second road, they could attempt to escape and face the possibility of death in the attempt or death fleeing through the desert, or recapture. Of course, recapture meant a flogging so severe that death ensued. Third, they could await being ransomed either by their nation or by some charitable organization. Few, however, were ever ransomed. By way of the fourth, they could die of diseases, such as yellow fever, or malaria, or malnutrition, overwork, or exposure to the harsh heat during the day and the bone chilling cold of night.

So why did the crew of the *Betsy*, or the *Maria* or of the *Dauphin* sail into harm's way and be captured? Until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, American Merchant ships could ply the waters of the world with relative impunity because they were under the passport of Great Britain. With our independence, and our new nation being internationally recognized, Great Britain withdrew its protective wing and left American commerce naked and unprotected from the depredations of the Pirates who roamed the seas. Great Britain, like France, Spain, and other nations of Europe, paid "gifts" (which were in reality tribute) to the potentates of the four Barbary Coast nations for free passage of their ships. Of course, the tribute was nothing more than a form of extortion, or ransom, that is, bribery paid to these Pirate monarchs such that the European ships bearing goods would not be molested. The trade that America found with Europe after the successful conclusion of the American Revolution was so lucrative that the nascent nation could not afford to not pursue it. Further, the United States had such vast debts to several of the European nations after the war that they needed to pursue commerce to gain specie to repay these debts.

Of course, American ships that plied the waters were piled high with trade goods, crops, timber, and nautical supplies that were irresistible to the Pirates, who had insatiable greed. It would take years, and two wars, before their lust for lucre was overcome by the American Navy.

The issue, the actual issue, is that almost every land in the world borders the ocean. All these oceans flow one into the other, such that it could be said, in reality, that there is only one ocean in our world. America needs a strong Navy to transit this ocean, to protect the goods that make up its commerce with the rest of the world, and to protect itself from invasion, although that is a lesser mission because the United States is so very far from either Europe or Asia. Nonetheless, the British attempted it during the American Revolution and would attempt it again during our Second War for Independence, the so-called War of 1812.

Because we did not have a Navy, we were at the mercy of a vile, barbaric, piratical people, who had but the rump of a navy themselves. Now, we were in good company, because the great nations of the world were paying tribute and gifts to the selfsame peoples, the Barbary Pirates. However, their purses were far deeper than ours, and although the Pirates knew it, they disregarded this fact and demanded sums that were one-quarter to one-third of our national treasury.

Had they asked as much from Great Britain or from France, in percentage terms of one's treasury, as they asked of us, either of the British or the French, or both, would have revolted far before this time and would have wiped these Pirates from the face of the earth. The fact that they had not done so left the task to us. But the lesson to be learned, is not that we were successful in this war, for it took us a long time for us to be successful in this war, but that we must always be prepared for war, because the darkness that lurked in the souls of the

The Barbary Pirates

Barbary Pirates, lies buried deep and black within the souls of all men, waiting merely to be released to ravage the world unfettered. We can never be at the mercy of such forces again. It is shameful that we were at the mercy of them at this time, but we should never bow down before a foreign, petty tyrant ever again.



Chapter 2: How I Got to Where I Am



Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

-Chief Seattle of the Duwamish Tribe.

Before I go much further, I should introduce myself to readers who may not have read the first volume of this trilogy. For those who have read that volume, I apologize. But I provide in this chapter a summary of my family and my life until the start of this work. It may be a help to those who have read my first volume to have this summary to jog one's memory, as well as I am sure, it will be helpful to those just beginning to read my story.

I start with my grandfather, for whom I am named, James McEachern. He fought at the battle of Culloden with the MacDonald clan, of which he was a member. After the battle, he assisted Flora

MacDonald in spiriting Bonnie Prince Charles out of Scotland. For these acts, he was under a Writ of Interdict by which the Duke of Cumberland could kill James McEachern on sight without a trial. Rather than face this bleak future in Scotland, he emigrated to the New World.

He landed at the port of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. From there, he walked the Great Wagon Road West through Pennsylvania and ultimately into Maryland, where, at Frederick, he met a young Daniel Morgan. Morgan, at this time, was a teenager several years younger than my grandfather. Still, they became fast friends and business partners in a freight hauling business. Daniel Morgan was a fist fighter of renown, a hard drinker, and a crack shot who won the turkey shoots each fall. He is the one who taught my grandfather to become a marksman with the legendary Pennsylvania Long Rifle.

After a couple of years, my grandfather continued his journey through the Appalachian Mountains following the Great Wagon Road coming down to Charlotte, North Carolina, and then ultimately thence to the Waxhaws in South Carolina. There, he began to farm, as well as to establish businesses, such as sawmills and flour mills. Thus, my grandfather settled down in South Carolina and got married to Flora McNeil. They had eight children, of which my father, Daniel, was the firstborn.

When I was a young boy, I traveled with my father to Charleston, South Carolina. There, I met men who were the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the warrior heroes of the American Revolution. These men all recognized my father, as well as my grandfather, as being the crack shots who fired what was known as the 'Shot Heard Around South Carolina' at the Battle of Cowpens where Daniel Morgan, my grandfather's friend, commanded the American

forces to a stunning military victory over a part of the Army of General Cornwallis led by that devil, Colonel Tarleton.

It was in Charleston that I became enamored with the sea. My father's friend and owner of an export firm, Mr. Nicholas Cruger, helped to feed my ambition to become a sailor by providing me with numerous books of nautical titles. Mr. Cruger thereby became my first mentor.

Obviously, both my mother and father were distraught at my thoughts of becoming a sailor. My mother was extremely devout and extremely knowledgeable of the Bible. She was the one who nurtured my spiritual side. My father, on the other hand, had been the one to provide me with an education. He felt that education was the only way whereby a man could advance in the New World. In hopes that I would find what I needed in a trade, I was apprenticed to be a barrel maker by the name of Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper was a laconic man who prided himself on his work making barrels. He became my second mentor by requiring me to become precise, almost perfect, in my work making barrels. Any word of praise from him was so rare that I eagerly sought to please this man. I not only learned a great deal about barrel making but also the tools used and involved in barrel making. It was with a heavy heart that I left him, but my love of the sea was overwhelming.

Mr. Cruger, with the blessing of my parents, arranged for me to be an apprentice sailor on one of his merchant ships, the *Isle of Skye*. Aboard the ship, I was schooled by the Sailing Master, Mr. John Fryer, who taught me mathematics and navigation. The Captain, Mr. John McKenzie, took me under his wing and protected me from some of the harsher aspects of being on board a ship. He, too, became a mentor and a friend.

During one of my voyages on the *Isle of Skye*, we encountered a British frigate, the *HMS Flora*. I was impressed into the British Navy by First Lieutenant Campbell and his henchman, Sailing Master Samuelson. I suffered a great deal under these men who punished me in ways that might have led to my death on several occasions. This was, unbeknownst to me, because a distant relative of Lieutenant Campbell had died in the battle of Culloden. So, First Lieutenant Campbell was taking out his anger and grief over that death by torturing me, a member of the MacDonald Clan.

In my wildest dreams, I never envisioned that I would one day mount the deck of a warship, and command men to fire cannon in anger against an enemy. I never had any ambition in that direction. It was not in my nature to fight. As a boy, I did not play the games which most of my peers played. I did not imagine that we were killing Indians or fighting against the British in the Revolution, nor did I engage in fistfights, unless a boy first took a swing at me. My brothers were much more likely to engage in fisticuffs, so I left the fighting to them. I was much more interested in reading, looking at the stars, and dreaming of far-off lands.

During the 10 years that I was impressed, I had numerous adventures. One of which was that I was involved in the great raid upon the St. Malo, and another was the Battle of Aboukir under Lord Nelson, while spending much of my time on blockade duty on the French coast. I also had a two-year foray in Africa, but more of that later.

I should also mention that when I went to sea, I left behind a woman with whom I have been in love since I was a small boy, Miss Penelope Pendleton. Although I wrote to her every chance I could get, I learned, after the *Flora* was nearly destroyed, that First Lieutenant Campbell and his evil twin, Mr. Samuelson, had been intercepting my

letters and withholding her letters. Thus, although I had written to her faithfully, there had been long gaps between my letters, because they were never sent. This was another torture that this evildoer had inflicted upon me, without my knowing that they were the source of this evil. But I have gotten ahead of myself.

So, I believe I have given you an excellent summary of my first volume, *The Founding Fathers at Odds: The Quasi-War*.

As I write this in 1815, I am aged and sick. My wife forbids me from dying, but I hear the call of God and his Angels. I will endeavor to finish my work before I die, but I do not think that I will get it all done. I pray that an all-forgiving God will watch over me and permit me to complete my task.

It is time now to embark upon the story of the Barbary Pirates and how these four petty nations along the coast of Northern Africa helped to forge the nascent American Navy.

I must now beg my reader to indulge me as I go back in time to set the stage for the War with the Barbary Pirates.



Chapter 3: A Meeting of Two Old Friends-1786



"Absolutely suspended between indignation and impotence."

-Thomas Jefferson, on the Barbary Pirate Crisis.

Early 1786, Jefferson traveled to the City of London to meet with John Adams. He had not expected the smoke, the choking fog, nor the density of the population of this city, almost all of whom were poor.

'No port in America has a third of the masts that fill the sky like a forest over the harbor in London.'

Jefferson could not resist raising the issue with Adams of what could be done to assist the good men of the *Dauphin*, who were enslaved by the Barbary Pirates.

'My heart is broken by the thought of the enslavement of these brave crew members. I cannot imagine what they are enduring.'

Although Adams and Jefferson were good friends, the two men were a study in contrasts. John Adams was 50 years old. Adams was a man who was not yet portly, but was well on the way to being there. His face was getting the puffy features and jowls that come with good eating. Jefferson, on the other hand, at 42, was thin and lanky. At over 6 feet, he towered over the much shorter Adams. Adams was born in New England, while Jefferson was a Virginian. Adams was a hard-hitting attorney who had handled many cases. Jefferson, while he had studied law, had never practiced the art. Adams, perhaps because of his litigation background, was forthright in his speech—some called it arrogant frankness. Jefferson was more reticent and was not adept at public speaking. Still, you could not help but notice his quiet elegance, his grace, and his gentlemanly manners.

One thing both men shared in common was the fact that neither was adept at diplomacy. Both were rank amateurs in the art of international affairs. Yet, here they were, America's commissioners in Europe, responsible for foreign affairs.

"The crux of the problem is that with the signing of the Treaty of Paris, our legal status as a nation changed in the eyes of every nation of the world and in the eyes of every little despot along that damned coast of North Africa," stormed Adams. "We lost Britain's protection. Now, even the teeniest of nations views us with contempt. I have written repeatedly to the British Government, but my letters go unanswered!"

"The lack of civility of our British counterparts is appalling. I am not sure I see why they would be willing to allow the 'piratical nations' of North Africa, as you call them, to despoil our trade, capture our sailors, and generally destroy our commerce," Jefferson scoffed.

Jefferson tried to create a little additional breathing room by pushing the index finger of his right hand between his neck sock and his neck. The room was gallingly hot. The Franklin Stove burned bright in the center of the room.

"Tom, I had understood that France was going to take up our case with the Pirates and assist us. But our wartime allies have now deserted us. They will not protect us now that there is peace with Great Britain. I guess once we stopped fighting their enemy, they saw no benefit in continuing the relationship."

Jefferson settled back in his red leather easy chair and swirled his wine glass, helping his Bordeaux to breathe. Not knowing what to say next, he lifted the crystal glass to his nose so that he could inhale the aroma. As he did so, he enjoyed the prismatic effect of the candlelight shining through the glass.

"John, this is a fine Merlot. It is quite elegant and polished." Jefferson stopped his wine lesson there, not sure if he should pursue discussing the soils of the right bank of the Seine, the quality of the French sunlight, or the art of the vintner in creating this velvety liquid.

John Adams, who knew very little about wine and who had relied solely on his wine merchant to bring him the best vintages, smiled to himself that he had pleased his erudite friend.

"I am glad you are enjoying it. I asked my wine merchant, Block, Grey, and Block, to provide me with the finest wines of France to satiate the palate of a friend of mine who is a connoisseur. They are a new merchant, but they are highly spoken of." Adams smiled slightly at Jefferson, hoping that he was paying a compliment to his friend.

He began again, but now mores seriously, "When I left America, the price of insurance was insupportable. The merchants of New

England cannot pay these high rates!" He stamped his hand on the arm of his wooden rocking chair.

Jefferson, picking up where Adams' thought had ended, continued, "I have made some calculations. John, one-quarter of New England's most important export, dried salted cod, goes to southern Europe. We must enter the Mediterranean to reach these markets. Further, at least one-sixth of the nation's grain exports, as well as significant amounts of rice and lumber, are delivered there. Our commerce provides employment for thousands of sailors. You and I both know that trade and employment are essential to the growth of our new nation."

"I think our economy could more than double, if we could find a solution to the Barbary problem. "We need to find a diplomatic solution to solve this problem," Adams emphatically offered his solution.

"But John, the sums of tribute that are demanded of us are impossibly great! They want hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions! When I left, there was barely \$10-\$20,000 in all our treasury. My home in Virginia was assessed at only \$7500! How can we pay hundreds of thousands when we have nothing?"

John Adams got up and walked across the room to his desk. He opened a drawer and pulled out a cigar, which was in a red velvet-lined, carved mahogany box.

"Do you mind if I smoke a cigar? It helps me to think."

Barely waiting for an answer, Adams went over to the fireplace and placed a straw into the flames to light his cigar. Soon, curls of smoke swelled around his head. His eyes seemed to brighten with each and every puff.

"If only the British had signed the Commerce Treaty, as well as the Definitive Treaty, we would not be in this situation," Adams sighed.

"Why do you think the British would not sign a treaty of commerce with us?"

Jefferson knew that he was displaying his naïveté by asking this question, but he did not want his ignorance of the matter to be displayed before anyone else than his close friend.

"I think the matter comes down to two things in particular. First, our pressing for trade with England, as if we still were a colony, rankled British politicians and the merchants alike. The colonial theory of trade is quite simple: the motherland manufactures items out of raw materials provided by the colonies. If you allow an interloper, such as we would be, to trade on the same footing as a colony, the interdependence of the colonial system falls away. Further, the British politicians want to charge us tariffs to keep us out of this trade cycle with the motherland or at least to make a better amount of coin than that which the colonies pay. The second reason is they still hate us, and they want to punish us."

Adams slunk into his rocking chair. More swirls of smoke wafted above him as the rocker swayed back and forth.

With that, both men sunk into deep thought, while watching the flames of the fireplace wax and wane, jump and ebb, as the light of the fire danced, brightened, and darkened. The fate of the three ships' crews weighed deeply on their minds. Further, both knew that the new nation was not in any position to fight a new war. On the other hand, there was no additional source of funds available to the nation. There were no lenders out there willing to extend or increase the debt of the

Dueling Brothers

United States. So, they sat staring into the gathering gloom of evening, suspended between indignation and impotence.



Chapter 4: "Monsieur, Vous Etes un Turk!"-1786



"The halal is that which Allah has made lawful in His Book and the haram that which He has forbidden, and that concerning which He is silent, He Has permitted as a favor to you."

A Saying of the **Prophet Muhammad.**

John Adams was comfortably ensconced in his sitting room, smoking a cigar. As always, he enjoyed the swirls of smoke that floated in the still air.

'The lacy tendrils intertwine and spiral above my head.'

He chastised himself for this moment of fancy and diversion from his deep thought upon the problems that besieged him.

He looked out on the bright March morning. Grosvenor Square spread before the windows of Adams' residence. His home was in one of the most fashionable residential areas of London, situated on the

corner of Brooke and Dukes streets. His building was three stories tall, the first story in white limestone, and the upper stories in Georgian brick. He also had an attic and a basement.

The Square itself was one of the largest garden squares in central London. It was some two and one-half hectares of open garden, which had been originally designed by the master gardener, John Alston, in the 1720s. Alston's vision was to have a wilderness world in the central portion of London.

While the sunlight was playing upon the light green buds on the trees, and the first scents of spring were in the wind, Adams was besieged by dark thoughts. So, while Adam's mood should have been bright and cheery, it was not.

'Nothing that I have thought of seems to resolve this issue of the damned Pirates. We cannot pay them what they want because we do not have it. We cannot make war with them because we do not have a real Navy. Further, our nation is sick of war and wants only peace. The French promised to help us, but their promise is empty. The British spurn us and hold us in complete contempt. I pray to God that deliverance comes to us!'

It had been some nine months since Adams had arrived in Great Britain from Paris. Shortly upon his arrival in London, Adams had had an audience with King George III on June 1, 1785.

He had dressed in his finest clothes, only to find that his finest was met by ridicule and smirks by the nobility of Britain who attend upon the King.

Further, the words of that short audience still rang disparagingly in his mind.

Bowing to the King, Adams had promised to do all that he could to restore friendship and cordiality.

"Between People who, though separated by an Ocean and under different Governments have the Same Language, a Similar Religion, and kindred Blood. We should have only amity and commerce."

Adams smiled to himself, content that he had struck the right diplomatic note.

The King responded in kind when he said that he received "...with Pleasure, the Assurances of the friendly Dispositions of the United States."

But then things went awry.

"Although I had been the last to consent to American independence, I want you to know that I have always done what I thought was right."

After a brief pause, the King caught Adams further unaware as he said, "There is an Opinion, among Some People, that you are not the most detached of all Your Countrymen, to the manners of France."

Again, bowing to the King, Adams responded, "That Opinion, sir, is not mistaken. I must have out to your Majesty, I have attachments but to my own country!"

Not to be outdone, the King replied, "An honest Man will never have any other."

As Adams mulled over these reminiscences, he wondered how the assurances of friendly dispositions towards the United States had dissipated in the wind of royal finery.

His mood was getting darker and darker, especially now that the gathering clouds started to make what had started as a spring day look more like winter.

It was at this moment that his servant brought an invitation on a silver tray. Picking up the envelope, Adams was singularly surprised to see that he had been invited to the home of the Ambassador from Tripoli, Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja.

When the day of the audience arrived, Adams was warmly welcomed by two tall and muscular turbaned servants in red kaftans embroidered with gold geometric designs. They led him into a room and seated him before a roaring fire. Within minutes, Ambassador Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja gracefully entered and bowed to his guest. He snapped his fingers, and the two servants departed and then almost instantaneously returned, each carrying a six-foot long pipe. Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja offered one of the pipes to Adams. Both began smoking a fine Turkish tobacco.

They sat smoking for a long time, not saying anything, but both were seemingly content with their smoking. The room seemed to fill with a fog to rival London's best. After a while, the Ambassador from Tripoli smiled broadly at Adams and praised his technique with a long pipe.

He leaned forward, and he complemented Adams, "Monsieur, vous êtes un Turk!"

Adams was so pleased with his visit to the ambassador from Tripoli that he invited the Ambassador to his home just a few days later. This meeting, like the last, went exceedingly well.

Adams then enlisted Jefferson to meet with Ambassador Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja, whom he described as being "a benevolent and wise man."

Adams, glowing about the Ambassador, gushed, "I truly believe that he is a man who could broker an agreement between the United States and the Barbary nations. I believe that he will end the era of incarceration of American sailors!"

Another meeting was set for the three at the home of the Tripolitan official. Of course, the obligatory smoking of pipes had to be conducted without Thomas Jefferson puffing, while the Ambassador and his new friend, John Adams, smoked with great relish.

"Again, this is an exceedingly fine Turkish Tobacco," Adams compliment the Ambassador.

The conversation was lighthearted. The two men joked and smoked. Jefferson, much a fifth wheel, spent the afternoon looking out the window. The March afternoon was fading into dusk, when, finally, Adams brought up the question of what amount of tribute would be necessary to bring peace between Tripoli and the United States.

"Oh, my friend, we do not need to discuss 'tribute!' The Dey does not want tribute," the Ambassador smirked.

Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja eased back into his embroidered cloth, high-backed chair and smiled benevolently at the two American ambassadors. Adams looked knowingly at Jefferson, as if to say, "See, I told you."

After taking another drag on his pipe, Adams, in his clipped New England accent, verbalized the thoughts in his mind before he had deeply considered the matter.

"Oh, I am so glad that the Dey does not want tribute. We were frightened that you would ask for too much money when our treasury is almost completely empty. I am so glad that we can proceed to have the open trade and treat each other as favored nations..."

In that moment, the face of the Ambassador went through a few contortions, ranging from a grimace to a scowl, a frown to a sneer, and ending in a rictus.

"Oh, mes amis! How naïve you truly are! You are correct that the Dey does not want tribute, but the Dey does expect lavish and expensive gifts. Gifts come from the heart, whereas tribute is compelled..."

The Ambassador's condescending tone was as polished and cutting as that of the finest British gentleman.

It was Adams' turn to gape. "How much in gifts?"

"I think two or three hundred thousand dollars would be appropriate. Don't you? With additional gifts to several of his officials, including his humble Ambassador." He pointed to himself as if he were the acme of humility.

At this Ambassador Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja took a small bow.

"Do you not agree?" The Ambassador condescendingly gushed.

Jefferson had been quiet all along.

"I have researched what the other nations have been paying. The conclusion I have come is that a perpetual peace with Tripoli would cost some 3,000 English guineas or the equivalent of about \$120,000. I had expected a ten percent gratuity to you, sir. Thus, I was prepared for a number such as \$132,000. The cost of peace with Tunis would

be another 3,000 English guineas. Of course, there would be amounts due to Morocco and Algiers, which is the largest and most powerful of the four Barbary states. I can assure you, sir, having recently come from the United States, that our treasury has far less funds than that available. Further, we have been authorized to pay a total of \$30,000 to all four nations! While I recognize that such a sum is well below what you have expected, it is all that we have got."

His right fist struck his left palm as he said the last words.

As Jefferson spoke, Adam's face was contorted with rage. His anger welled up. Although Consul Robert O' Brien had warned him, Adams had not believed what that sailor-turned-consul had expounded, "Money is their God and Mohammed their prophet!"

Adams thundered, "How do you justify making war upon nations who have done you no injury?"

The Ambassador puffed contentedly on his pipe and then bellowed a laugh.

"According to our holy book, the Qur'an, **all nations, which have not acknowledged the Prophet, are sinners**, for whom it is not only right, but the duty of the Faithful to plunder and to enslave!"

Horror and consternation showed in the eyes of both Adams and Jefferson.

Adams then proclaimed, "I thought that you were a benevolent and wise man who would understand that war can be prevented by diplomacy. Yet, it seems that you are as mercenary, as we had been advised. Does your faith really justify killing innocents?"

The ambassador stridently stood up. He smirked wickedly and sneered, "No Christian is innocent! Every Musselman, who is slain in this warfare, is sure to go to Paradise!"

With that, the Ambassador clapped his hands together and his two servants roughly showed the two Americans to the door.

Later, Jefferson wrote to Adams from Paris, France. "I should prefer the obtaining of freedom of the seas by war. We need a Navy to deal with the Barbary Pirates such that we can banish the scourge from the seas forever. I think it is quite likely that the establishment of a Navy would be less expensive than the extortionate tribute, bribery, or gifts, by whatever name you call them, to the freebooters in their devilish corsairs. They pretend that they are privateers carrying letters of marque from their petty tyrants. But this is state sanctioned plunder of innocents."

In reply, Adams wrote, "In my estimation, the price we would have to pay for a Navy is too great. I think, if we fight them, we will be fighting them forever. I do not see how they would ever give in. The system they have created of plundering merchants on the high seas is one that they claim is sanctioned by their God and their Holy Book. It also feeds their economies and, thus, is sanctioned by their leaders. Further, the goods plundered, the ships captured, and the crews enslaved, bring wealth, which is distributed part to the Dey, part to the Sultan in Istanbul, part to the pirate ship's captain and crew, and some even trickles down to the peasants in the streets. They will not listen to reason. This is a dangerous admixture of greed, lust for power, and religious fanaticism."

There, the matter lay for over a decade more. The United States did not have the money to free the enslaved crews, nor the Navy to

The Barbary Pirates

fight and win the War. America was effectively shut out of the Mediterranean Trade.



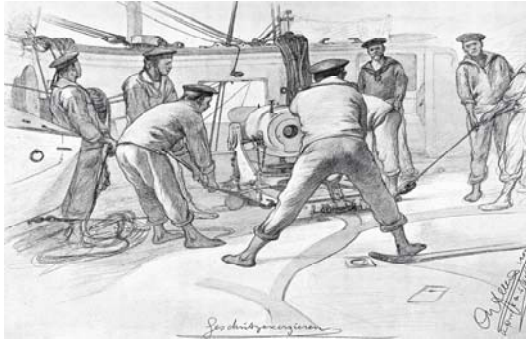
Book II:
Prelude to War

"In war, events of importance are the result of trivial causes."

-Gaius **Julius Caesar**.

Chapter 5:

Newspapers, Magazines, and Letters-1798



"It is by no means enough that an officer of the navy should be a capable mariner. He must be that, of course, but also a great deal more. He should be as well a gentleman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor.... He should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness, and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his attention or be left to pass without its reward, even if the reward is only a word of approval. Conversely, he should not be blind to a single fault in any subordinate, though, at the same time, he should be quick and unfailing to distinguish error from malice, thoughtlessness from incompetency, and well-meant shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder."

-John Paul Jones.

The Gazette, founded in 1665, was the newspaper, which was the official record of His Majesty's Royal Navy. It boasted that it was "Published by Authority." Its lists set forth all the officers of the Navy with their date of commission. Many a fight over seniority was resolved by accessing this list of commission dates.

Beyond the all-important seniority list of officers, there were legal notices of all kinds and articles about the prize ships seized. We all salivated over the prize money awards.

These prize money awards were determined by the Prize Court for the capture of enemy ships or contraband cargoes carried by neutrals or merchant ships of an enemy. It was thrilling to think about the vast amounts of money that could be earned if a one were to seize a prize ship. When an enemy ship was captured, every member of the crew, from the captain down to the lowliest powder money boy, received a share of the prize money. Of course, the higher in rank you were, the greater your share. Thus, again, commission dates mattered.

We all dreamed of prize money. We were obsessed with prize money. We breathed prize money. Because the amounts of prize money awarded exceed several years of wages for each and every member of the crew.

We also craved news of England and the world which was brought to us by the four main daily newspapers of London: *The Morning Post*, *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Morning Herald*, and *The Times*. If we could get it, we also read the evening paper, *The Sun*. Each of these papers had a different view of the world, depending upon their founders and publishers. *The Sun*, for example, was most decidedly a Tory paper, having been founded by members of the Tory Party who supported William Pitt the Younger. Its public mission was to act as a counter to contemporary pro-revolutionary presses.

One learned many a thing in the wardroom. For example, I learned that it was the consensus of the assembled officers that the worst assignment in the British Navy was to patrol the West Indies.

I asked, "How come?"

After the raucous laughs had died down, one lieutenant, Mr. Henry Hill, was kind enough to answer my stupid question.

"It is because one is always subject to the tropical diseases such as The Saffron Scourge, The Bloody Flux, The Break Bone Fever, and The Blue Death."

From then on, I listened more than I spoke, and I never asked another question out loud in the wardroom.

I read the newspapers, and I came to understand that the British Government clearly did not think that the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 truly ended the war. The British Government was determined that it would make the Americans pay for their impudence. So, the Government removed the United States from British naval protection. No longer were the ships of my fledgling nation protected from the depredations of the piratical nations of North Africa.

I learned also that the French, who had been the maritime and wartime allies of my country of the United States against the British, would also no longer protect American trade. American ships were, thus, wholly on their own against the Pirates of Barbary.

In one article, I read that it did not take long for the Pirates of the Maghreb, which is Arabic for 'lands of the setting sun' (which displayed the bias of Egypt towards its neighbors), to begin their depredations on American ships. The Pirates of the Maghreb hailed

from the ports of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. These nations were vassal states of the Ottoman Empire but were just barely vassals. They gave tribute to the Sultan, but other than that, they followed their own designs in the realms of foreign diplomacy.

The ramifications of this were immediately apparent. The premiums for insurance for American ships ascended to the heavens-American ships paid twenty times the rate of European ships. Americans were swimming in debt because the War had been fought mainly with borrowed money. The pressure to repay this vast debt required American merchant ships to venture abroad, irrespective of the costs of insurance. The articles outlined how the members of Lloyd's of London laughed at the incredible rise in the rates for insurance of ships and cargoes in America, which underscored the truth of what the British thought of the United States: we were a laughingstock.

Our American trade had to go to southern Europe, which was accessible only by sailing into the Mediterranean. The northern coast of Africa was the home of the Barbary Pirates, who sallied forth out from their protected ports to raid unprotected merchant ships. American merchantmen were the most susceptible to these attacks because there was no American Navy.

After I got back home, I read one long, 1797 letter from Thomas Jefferson to my brother, John, which recounted Jefferson's days in Paris in 1785.

Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams were the American ambassadors, but were officially titled (confusingly in my opinion) 'commissioners,' and they were saddled with dealing with the problem of dealing with Pirates, as well as being ambassadors to France, and

also had to negotiate the debt of the United States to the Dutch and other foreign nations.

Jefferson wrote:

"My Dear John, It was late fall. The leaves were coming off the trees in torrents and crunched into brown slivers beneath men's feet.

"I have written letter after letter to the British Government, all of which have gone unanswered!" Adams bellowed. "They show me no courtesy and no respect."

I did not understand why they showed such disrespect to my colleague Adams then, but now, some twelve years later (the letter having been written in 1797, but it related to the events of 1785), I understand it thoroughly now.

I remember that I looked up from my work desk and smiled at Adams, who was then becoming my friend.

'Both France and Spain are quite cordial to me,' I replied. 'They show me every courtesy and every politeness. They wine me and dine me,' I added.

Adam's face lost its color. His smile faded, and he sighed. 'Yet another insult to me! Still, neither France nor Britain is willing to do anything to protect us from the Barbary Pirates or to talk to the Pirates on our behalf!'

Jefferson looked down at the sheets of paper upon which he had written line after line of mathematics.

Adams walked over to where a decanter stood next to two crystal wine glasses. He poured himself a glass.

'Would you like some of your claret?'

I nodded a 'no.' Then, I hung my head and commenced speaking.

'By my calculations, at least one-quarter of New England's most important export, our dried salted cod, is carried in hulls to southern Europe. So also, at least one-sixth of our grain exports are destined for ports in Italy, southern France, and the like. All well within the range of the Barbary Pirates.'

I sat at my desk and continued my scribbling of calculations of the American trade.

'It is also our rice and our lumber! Think of the employment of thousands of sailors!' I stabbed my quill pen into the sheet of paper.

Adams held up his hand to interject a word to me, 'I tell you, Tom, our exports could more than double if we could reach some type of diplomatic or other solution with these Pirates.'

John Adams paced the floor of Jefferson's office.

'John, I do not like the idea of paying annuities to these petty depots and piratical tyrants! I would rather wage war and cut them out at the root! Once and for all! Would it not be better to offer them an equal treaty? If they refuse, why not go to war with them?'

John Adams staggered to a seat. He could not believe I could be so bellicose.

That is what I told him then and now, in this year of 1797, I am still of the opinion that we should war upon those fiends and destroy them finally.'

Dueling Brothers

I read this letter, and wondered whether Mr. Jefferson could have been so strident in his thought process then, when all these years he had argued for the dismantling of the very instrument he would need to press that war: the Navy.

I know that I must, dear reader, place you in the time of the first news of the Pirates seizing American ships and American crews. These were shocking times which revealed our weakness, our utter and complete weakness in the international world.

The shortening days of November wended their wintry ways into somber December 1784, when the news came that a small brig, named the *Betsy*, had been captured by the Moroccan Pirates in October 1784. Demands were made for hundreds of thousands of dollars for ship, cargo, and crew.

According to Jefferson, Adams was trying to cool the ardor of his friend, Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson had written to my brother, John, that he had another conversation with Adams.

'There must be a way that we can pay off these Pirates with a sum for the last time. They must see that we are a poor, new country, and cannot pay the annuities that the strong European nations can.'

I (Jefferson) was standing by the window, looking out at the grey December day.

'It looks like it might snow,' I said casually.

Then I turned and stared directly at Adams.

'John, our trade to Portugal, Spain, and the Mediterranean will be annihilated unless we do something decisive!'

The Barbary Pirates

I slammed my fist on a table. The decanter lifted off its base and thudded down again.

'Tribute or war is the usual alternative of these Pirates. If we yield to the former, it will require sums which our people will painfully feel! Further, once paid, the demands will come repeatedly! We will never be free of their blackmail.' I slammed my fist again. The snifter fell over and circled on its belly, spilling the brandy on the cherry wood table.

I yelled, 'Why not build a navy then and decide on war? We cannot begin with a better cause or against a weaker foe. It is the honorable thing to do. We should not pay tribute. We can use the funds we would pay in tribute to fund a navy and beat them finally!'

To Jefferson, that matter was closed.



Chapter 6: The Aftermath of the Battle of the Nile-1799



"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers"

-William Shakespeare,
King Henry V, Act IV, Scene 3.

Nelson had sent a circular throughout the British fleet, praising us for our heroic efforts at Aboukir Bay. We read it and re-read it, and our chests swelled with pride. I, too, was proud that I had served in that grand battle.

"TO THE CAPTAINS OF THE SHIPS OF THE SQUADRON

Vanguard, of the Mouth of the Nile 2nd August, 1798

The Admiral most heartily congratulates the Captains, Officers, Seamen and Marines of the Squadron he has the honour to Command, on the event of the late Action; and he desires they will accept his sincere and cordial Thanks for their gallant behaviour in the glorious Battle...HORATIO NELSON"

What had Nelson wrought? Simply that here was an English admiral who had the same or more drive, determination, courage, and uncanny military ability that marked Napoleon. Nelson proved he would not just defeat the French, but that he and his band of brothers would annihilate them. Our victory was extraordinarily lopsided. We captured or destroyed eleven of the fifteen enemy ships. Our losses were a third of those of the French. In Nelson, here was a man who had the tactical ability to overawe the French navy. Nelson was created Baron Nelson of The Nile. He was a national hero. Lord Nelson and his fleet, every man in it, had made history. We bathed in this glory; we luxuriated in this praise; and we strutted like peacocks spreading our tail feathers.

But to those of us with a shorter sense of vision, we looked at the fact that we had captured nine ships: two frigates and seven ships of the line. The amount of prize money that would be paid out was astounding.

And we all would share in it!

How would this money be distributed? One-quarter of the prize money would go to the Captains, other than Lord Nelson. The next one-eighth of the money would go to Lord Nelson, as commander. One-eighth was divided among all the lieutenants, sailing masters, and captains of the marines. One-eighth was divided among all the wardroom warrant officers, which are the surgeons, the pursers, the chaplains, the standing warrant officers, which are the carpenters, boatswains, and gunner mates, and lieutenants of marines, and the masters' mates. The final one-eighth was divided among the junior warrant and petty officers, their mates, sergeants of marines, captains' clerks, surgeons' mates, and midshipmen. Finally, the remaining one-quarter was to be divided among all the crews, with all the able and specialist seamen receiving larger shares than ordinary seamen,

Dueling Brothers

landsmen, and boys. The pool for the seamen was divided into shares, with each able seaman getting two shares in the pool (referred to as a fifth-class share), an ordinary seaman received a share and a half (referred to as a sixth-class share), landsmen received a share each (a seventh-class share), and boys received a half share each (referred to as an eighth-class share). So, everyone shared in the money. Each of us would receive amounts far in excess of two or three years' pay.

The question was, when would we receive it? We want it now!



Chapter 7: Peace with France, But At Any Cost? -1800



"I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain."

— **John Adams.**

Many things were consuming the time of President John Adams. There was the political infighting by his former best friend and now his Vice President, Thomas Jefferson. At the same time, there was the ongoing crisis with France that seemed to be boiling over. Finally, there was the fact that Britain had not honored its treaty with the United States. They were fomenting rebellion by the Indian Tribes; they were not honoring the borders to which they had agreed; they were poaching fish by entering American fishing grounds; they were

actively aiding the Barbary Pirates and their seizures of America's ships. John Adams thus did not have the time to deal with the enslaved crews of American merchant ships which had been taken by the Barbary Pirates, some almost thirteen years ago.

President John Adams had kept the channels of communication open to France. He had done this, despite intense opposition from within his own political party, the Federalists. In fact, many Federalists wanted to conquer the Louisiana territory. Unwittingly, the British blockade of France, coupled with American victories on the seas in frigate to frigate actions (well, Truxtun's two victories at sea); the capture of over 80 French vessels; Napoleon Bonaparte's disastrous campaign in Egypt; and the French economy being on the verge of collapse, all convinced Talleyrand that France needed to cooperate with the Americans in order to obtain trade goods from the French West Indies. France reached out to make peace with the United States. This time, it was without a request for a bribe.

It was in this atmosphere that President John Adams dispatched a commission to make peace with France. In the time that it took this commission to reach France, France's situation had changed dramatically. Napoleon had seized power as the First Consul. In a brilliant campaign, he had defeated the Austrians at Marengo, which, in essence, was a death blow to the Second Coalition. Nevertheless, the commissioners arrived at a peace treaty, in which Americans got the embarrassing Franco-American treaties of alliance of 1778 revoked, but, in exchange, France demanded and received the cancellation of all claims against France for its depredations against American commerce.

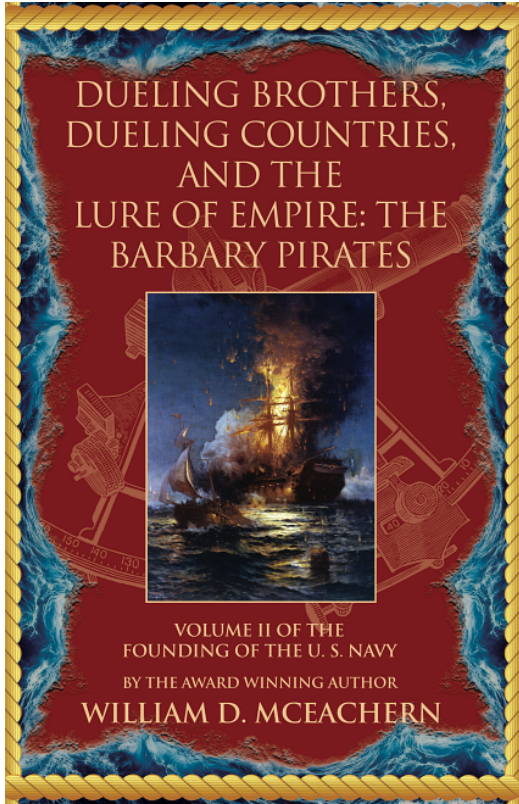
The announcement of these terms in the United States created a firestorm. The timing of this announcement could not have been worse for President John Adams as it was made just before the national

The Barbary Pirates

presidential elections. Thomas Jefferson, long a staunch critic of John Adams and of his administration, decided to seek the Presidency in competition with John Adams.

One thing that was clear in this political chaos, although it may have gone unnoticed, the Navy had won the Quasi-War with France. It might yet settle the Barbary Pirate Crisis.





An American sailor, named James, who was impressed by the British Navy, rises in ranks during the Napoleonic Wars. Aboard the HMS Flora, he not only fights the French, but also for his life against a treacherous officer and his henchmen.

Dueling Brothers, Dueling Countries, and The Lure of Empire:

The Barbary Pirates - Volume II of the Founding of the U.S. Navy Trilogy
By William D. McEachern

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