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John Marshall

Excerpt

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## ROYAL NAVAL BIOGRAPHY.

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### POST-CAPTAINS OF 1812.

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#### GEORGE PRICE, Esq.

ELDEST son of the late Captain Charles Papps Price, R. N. of whom the following mention is made in the Naval Chronicle, vol. 29, p. 88:—

“ This gentleman was a native of Hay, in Breconshire, and at a very early age entered into the service. In May, 1778, he was made lieutenant. He continued actively employed, with honor to himself, and benefit to his country, and was appointed to command the island of Marcou, which was threatened with an attack by the French from La Hogue. On the night of the 6th May, 1798, the enemy attempted to carry the island by storm; but its gallant defender, with a handful of brave men, drove them back with immense loss, and so complete was the defeat, that they did not again repeat the attack. For his brave and skilful conduct in this affair, he was promoted to a commander, and subsequently made a post-captain. The infirmities that too often visit the decline of life passed in the honorable perils and trying vicissitudes of a service, which warfare and the elements equally encircle with danger, obliged Captain Price to relinquish the active duties of his profession, and retire upon half-pay. He has left a widow, two daughters, and three sons—all the latter in the navy; the eldest being a post-captain, and equally distinguished for gallantry and skill in his profession, and estimable qualities in private life.”

Captain Charles Papps Price died at Hereford, about Jan. 1813, aged 62:—his eldest son, whose services we are about to record, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, Sept. 14, 1805; and appointed to the Porcupine of 24 guns, commanded by Captain the Hon. Henry Duncan, in April, 1807:—the following is a copy of one of that excellent

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officer's official letters, to which we alluded in the note at p. 985 of Vol. II. Part II.—

“*H. M. S. Porcupine, off Catero, 23 Nov. 1807.*”

“Sir,—Having, on the evening of the 7th Oct. last, chased a trabacolo into the harbour of Zupaino, I sent Mr. George Price, first lieutenant of this ship, with a cutter and jolly-boat, to endeavour to bring her out. On their rounding a point, which forms the entrance of that port, I observed a gun-boat, under the Italian flag, open a fire of round and grape upon them; I therefore, for the present, recalled the boats; but as soon as it was dark, detached them to attack her: having taken her guard-boat (sent purposely to look out for them) mounting a 4-pounder swivel, and manned with French soldiers, they boarded and carried the vessel, under a heavy fire of grape and musketry: the enemy expected the attack, and had in consequence moored her to the shore, with four cables, and were in every respect quite prepared for it. She proved to be *la Safo*, mounting one long brass 24-pounder and several large swivels, commanded by Antonio Ghega, enseigne de vaisseau, and had on board about 50 men, most of whom jumped overboard. She belonged to a division of Venetian gun-boats, stationed along this coast, and had been sent three days before, from Ragusa, to protect the island of Zupaino. Great credit is due to Lieutenant Price, for his gallant conduct in this affair; also to Lieutenant Francis Smith, the petty-officers, seamen, and marines, who were employed under him. I am happy to say we had only one seaman and one marine wounded.

“His Majesty's ship under my command has also captured, since the 23d Sept. last, about forty vessels belonging to the enemy; their cargoes chiefly consisting of grain and wine, and either bound to, or coming from, the ports of Ragusa and Catero: as this service has been principally performed by Lieutenant Price, with the boats, and almost always under the fire of the enemy's batteries and musketry, I should not be doing justice to that officer, was I to omit mentioning how much I feel satisfied with his gallant and judicious conduct on these occasions. Owing to a series of bad weather, I have been obliged to destroy *la Safo*, and most of the other prizes. I am, &c.

(Signed)

“HENRY DUNCAN.”

“*To Patrick Campbell, Esq., senior officer in the Adriatic.*”

Shortly after the capture of *la Safo*, Lieutenant Price was sent into Ragusa, with a flag of truce, to negotiate an exchange of prisoners; but notwithstanding Captain Duncan had invariably liberated the crews of the merchant vessels taken by the *Porcupine*, the French commander-in-chief persisted in detaining three or four men belonging to that ship, who, while employed in navigating a small prize, were driven thither by stress of weather. Lieutenant Price had scarcely

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returned on board from his unsuccessful mission, and was still in his full uniform, when two large boats, with red awnings spread, and pulling only four oars each, were observed coming out of the harbour: Captain Duncan immediately despatched him, in the jolly-boat, with 6 men, to ascertain what they were, and ordered all the other boats to be got ready for service, in order, as he said, to shew General Lauriston, the commandant at Ragusa, that the absence of a few sailors was not felt by a well-manned British ship: of the real character and object of the strangers he had not the least suspicion.

On the jolly-boat tossing her bow-oar in, to go alongside one of them, the Frenchmen knocked their awning down, and a number of armed soldiers suddenly started up. Every one on board the Porcupine expected to see Lieutenant Price surrender; instead of which he fired his swivel into the enemy's boat, waved his hat, and pulled away, himself standing up, with the tiller between his legs: a heavy fire of musketry ensued; many balls struck the jolly-boat, and her sail, then made up and lying on the thwarts, was cut in several places; but fortunately not a man was hurt.

Previous to their return into port, one of the French boats was nearly cut in two by a shot from the Porcupine; and during their retreat they were harassed by her boats under Lieutenant Price, whose cool bravery on the above occasion elicited general applause. They were both full of soldiers, and each armed with a gun in the bow; but Captain Duncan did not consider their capture of sufficient importance to risk the loss of men in attempting it.

On the 27th of the following month (Nov. 1807), Lieutenant Price, in the Porcupine's cutter, captured two small vessels from Ragusa, under a fire of musketry from the shore, by which he had one man wounded. Two days afterwards, he was sent with the boats to destroy a number of small merchantmen in the harbour of Zuliano, together with the wine that was in the magazines, it being intended for the enemy's troops: this service he performed without any loss, and much to his captain's satisfaction. A trabacolo loaded with wool, the only vessel that was afloat, he brought out.

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While the boats were returning on board, another trabacolo was discovered and chased by Captain Duncan; but Lieutenant Price anticipated his wishes, and, with his usual alacrity, pulled to windward, and captured her. She was from Ragusa, bound to Curzola, having on board stores of every description for mortars and guns; two  $6\frac{1}{2}$ -inch brass mortars, two  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -inch brass howitzers, four new 18-pounder gun-carriages, plank, and every material necessary for constructing a battery on that island, also a great quantity of shot and shells.

On another occasion, Lieutenant Price being in-shore, near Ragusa, in a 12-oared cutter, a gale of wind came on during the night, and just before day-break he fell in with a xebec running before it. The vessel discovered her dangerous situation time enough to clear the cutter, but the British seamen succeeded in getting hold of her boat towing astern, and instantly fired a swivel gun, which killed her master and wounded 3 or 4 men: she then rounded to and surrendered. In this vessel, Lieutenant Price captured two others; but the gale increasing, he was obliged to run with the whole into the port of Ragusa Vecchia, where he lay all night unmolested. Next morning, the wind moderated; and as he did not communicate with the shore, the enemy suspected and sent off to him. It being impossible to remain there any longer with safety, he then cut his cable and escaped with two of his prizes; but the third, with a petty-officer and 2 seamen on board, was unavoidably retaken.

Early in Jan. 1808, the Porcupine captured two large French transports, from Tarento bound to Corfu, with cargoes of grain and gunpowder. The capture of these ships, on their first voyage, was an important service, as they sailed remarkably well, and had been completely fitted for carrying troops and provisions to the Seven Islands.

A few days after their capture, one of the above prizes, la Madona del Carmine, foundered in a heavy gale of wind; but providentially, out of 25 men on board, 2 only were drowned; 15 drifted off the booms in her launch, as she sunk, and were saved by the Porcupine; the remainder were picked up by Lieutenant Price, in the frigate's jolly-boat, at a time when it was thought almost impossible for any boat to live—“his

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intrepid conduct, and that of the brave men who were with him, was viewed with admiration by all.”

On the 23d June following, a vessel under French colours came out of Civita Vecchia, and endeavoured, by crossing the Porcupine, to get to the westward, but failed in the attempt, and was obliged to run ashore, under two towers, mounting two guns each; Captain Duncan instantly sent Lieutenant Price to destroy her, which he did most effectually, and without any loss, though exposed to a very heavy fire. She proved to be from the island of Ischia, loaded with wine. The service for which Lieutenant Price obtained a commander's commission is thus described by Captain Duncan, in a letter to Lord Collingwood, dated July 14, 1808:

“On the morning of the 9th inst. being off Monte Circello, on the coast of Romania, I observed two French gun-boats, with a merchant vessel under convoy, going alongshore to the westward: as the ship was becalmed, I sent Lieutenant Price, with the boats, in pursuit of them; after a row of eight hours, in a hot sun, he drove the latter on shore, and forced the gun-boats to take shelter under the batteries of Port D'Anzo. At this time, seeing three very suspicious vessels coming down, with a fresh breeze from the westward, I was obliged to recal him; but before we could cut them off, they also got into the same harbour. Next morning I observed one of them,\* a large polacre ship, lie further out than the others, and having reconnoitred, thought it possible to take her. \* \* \* \* \* As soon as it was dark, the boats went in, under the command of Lieutenant Price, and from under the heaviest fire I ever saw, brought her out; she carries eight long 6-pound guns, and had on board between 20 and 30 men, from Hieres Bay, bound to Naples, with salt. When I consider that this vessel was moored to a beach lined with French soldiers, within pistol-shot of two batteries, a tower, and three gun-boats, carrying each a 24-pounder, and 30 men; that from the baffling winds, she was an hour and twenty minutes before she got out of range of grape, and that the enemy were at first perfectly prepared for the attack; I cannot find words to express my admiration at the intrepid conduct of all the officers, seamen, and marines employed. I am sure that the services of Lieutenant Price, he having been more than thirty times in action with the boats of this ship since October last, and his sufferings on this occasion, being severely wounded in the head and right leg, will be a sufficient excuse for my requesting, in the strongest terms, that your Lordship will recommend this gallant officer to the consideration of the Lords of the Admiralty.”

On this occasion, the British had not a man killed, and only 8 persons, including Lieutenant Price and Mr. John O'Brien

\* The Nostra Signora del Rosario.

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**Butler, midshipman, wounded.** The following is a copy of Lord Collingwood's official reply to Captain Duncan's communication :

*" H. M. S. Ocean, Dec. 25, 1808.*

" Having transmitted to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty a copy of your letter of the 14th July last, stating the capture of a large polacre ship, by the boats of the *Proserpine*, under the command and direction of Lieutenant Price, I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that their Lordships very highly approve of the zeal and gallantry displayed by Lieutenant Price, the officers, seamen, and marines, employed on that service, and in consideration of Lieutenant Price's meritorious conduct on this and former occasions, they have been pleased to promote him to the rank of commander.\* "

In Oct. following, the Patriotic Society at Lloyd's voted Captain Price the sum of 50*l.* for his gallant conduct at the capture of the *Nostra Signora del Rosario* ; but instead of accepting pecuniary recompense, he requested that a sword, or some other honorary reward, might be substituted for it. We next find him commanding the *Sabine* sloop, on the Cadiz station ; where he was very actively employed during the siege of the Isle of Leon†. His promotion to post rank took place Jan. 7, 1812 ; and he was presented with the freedom of Hereford in 1817.

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### JOSEPH SWABEY TETLEY, Esq.

THIS officer was made a lieutenant in Dec. 1795, and we first find him serving as senior of the *Solebay*, 32, bearing

\* By commission dated back to July 10, 1808.

† See Captains Sir THOMAS FELLOWES, FREDERICK JENNINGS THOMAS, WILLIAM HENRY SMYTH, &c. &c. N. B. On the 26 May, 1811, the boats of the *Sabine*, under the orders of Lieutenant William Usherwood, in a most skilful and gallant manner, cut three small French privateers out from the anchorage of Chipiona, near the mouth of the Guadalquivir. These vessels mounted two 4-pounders, with a complement of 25 men each ; and had long daringly annoyed the commerce on the Spanish coast. On the following morning the *Sabine*, in company with the *Papillon*, captured another privateer, which persisted in her endeavours to escape, although under a heavy fire of grape and musquetry, until she was actually run on board by the latter brig. Among the prisoners taken in these vessels were 12 British deserters.

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the broad pendant of Commodore Edward Henry Columbine, (Governor of Sierra Leone) by whom he was promoted to the command of the *Derwent*, a fine 18-gun brig, during the expedition against Senegal, in July 1809. The capture of that settlement is thus described by Commodore Columbine's military colleague, in a despatch addressed to Viscount Castlereagh, of which the following is a copy :

“ My Lord,—When I last had the honor of writing to your lordship, I communicated such information as I had received concerning the situation of the French colony of Senegal, and my opinion of the practicability of reducing it with a small force; I also mentioned the annoyance we had received at Gorée and in its vicinity, from their privateers, during the absence of ships of war from that station.

“ On the 24th June, Commodore Columbine arrived at Gorée with the *Solebay* frigate, and gun-brig *Tigress*, having the colonial schooner *George*, the *Agincourt* transport, and several merchant vessels under convoy: having communicated to him what intelligence I had lately obtained, we thought the reduction of Senegal practicable with the force we possessed, provided no obstacles should prevent our being able to pass the bar at the mouth of the river. \* \* \* \* \*

“ Having therefore procured some light vessels and boats, the best adapted for passing the bar, a detachment of the garrison of Gorée, consisting of 6 officers, 6 serjeants, 4 drummers, and 150 rank and file, was embarked on board the *Agincourt* on the 4th July, when we sailed, and anchored at the bar on the evening of the 7th. Next morning, Commodore Columbine was of opinion the troops might be passed over the bar, which was accordingly effected, though with much difficulty, by the exertions of the navy. We unfortunately, however, lost a schooner and sloop, containing much of our provisions and ammunition, and the schooner *George* went on shore inside the bar. I landed the detachment, and 60 royal marines from the squadron, on the left bank of the river, where I took up a position, with a view to wait till provisions could be passed from the shipping, and the schooner could be got off. We then learnt that the enemy had made a formidable line of defence at the post of Babagué, 12 miles up the river, where there is a battery, in front of which three brigs and four other vessels were moored, and the whole protected by a strong boom drawn across the river.\* On the 9th we were attacked, but speedily repulsed the enemy, and drove them within their line at Babagué; after which we returned to get off the schooner, which was effected on the following evening †.

\* The enemy's vessels were armed with 1 long twenty-four-pounder, 1 eighteen, 9 twelves, 6 sixes, 2 twelve-pounder carronades, and 16 light guns.

† The *George* was the principal vessel of the flotilla intended for service

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“The 11th was employed in refitting the schooner, and embarking provisions and water. The Solebay and Derwent were ordered to anchor opposite the post of Babagué, and bombard it, which was executed with much effect. During the night, in shifting her berth, the Solebay unfortunately got aground, but in a position which enabled her still to annoy the enemy. On the morning of the 12th the troops were embarked, and the flotilla proceeded up the river, till just without gun-shot of the enemy’s line of defence, and when every thing was in readiness for a night attack, we received information that it was the intention of the French commandant to capitulate\*.

“Willing to spare an unnecessary effusion of human blood, the attack was postponed. On the morning of the 13th we discovered that the boom was broken, that the enemy had abandoned the battery and vessels, leaving their colours flying, and shortly afterwards a letter was received from Messrs. Degrigny and Durecu, in the name of the commandant of Senegal, offering to capitulate. Mr. Heddle, surgeon to the forces, who had acted as my aide-de-camp during the campaign, was sent forward to treat with these gentlemen, and soon returned with the articles of capitulation, which we ratified. I immediately took possession of the battery of Isle aux Anglois, and in the course of the evening, of the battery of Guétendar facing the town. Next morning the garrison laid down their arms and were embarked. We then found that the force which had been employed against us amounted to 160 regular soldiers, and 240 militia and volunteers. \* \* \* \* \*

“In accomplishing this service, the officers and soldiers of the army were anxious to equal their brothers of the navy, who on all occasions distinguished themselves. I feel much satisfaction in having enjoyed the

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in the river: after many attempts to float her had failed, Lieutenant Daniel James Woodriff, then first of the Solebay, obtained permission to try his skill, and he at length succeeded in getting her off amid the loud cheers of soldiers and sailors, who were anxiously awaiting the result of this last effort.

\* It may be here proper to remark, that the Solebay was left in charge of the master, her lieutenants having commands in the flotilla, which consisted of seven vessels, mounting 18 carronades, from 12 to 18-pounders, 3 field-pieces, and 1 howitzer; and nineteen boats of various sizes, with necessary appurtenances for all. This force was conducted in person by Commodore Columbine, who passed the bar in an American-built schooner, commanded by Lieutenant Woodriff. The other commissioned officers employed in this service were Captain Tetley, Lieutenant Robert Bones, of the Tigress, Lieutenant John Filmore, of the Solebay, and Lieutenant Reeves, R. M. The frigate was unfortunately wrecked, but all her men and part of the stores were saved.



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confidence of Commodore Columbine, whose exertions and ability contributed so effectually to our success\*. I beg to bear testimony to the indefatigable and zealous exertions of Captain Tetley, Lieutenant Bones, and the other officers of the royal navy and marines \* \* \* \* \*”

(Signed) “CHAS. W. MAXWELL, *Major, Royal African Corps.*”

The ordnance found *mounted* in the garrison of Senegal consisted of 28 long 24-pounders, 4 brass mortars and howitzers, 2 field-pieces, and 14 guns of small calibre. The only loss sustained by the English on this service, was that of Captain Frederick Parker, of the *Derwent*, Mr. Francis Atterbury Sealy, midshipman of that sloop, and 6 seamen, drowned in attempting to cross the bar; 1 military officer, who died in consequence of the intense heat, when charging the enemy, in the affair of the 11th; and 1 soldier wounded.

We next find Captain Tetley commanding the *Guadaloupe* brig, mounting fourteen 24-pounder carronades, and 2 long sixes, with a complement of 102 officers, men, and boys, on the Mediterranean station.

On the 27th June, 1811, being then off Cape de Creux, Captain Tetley discovered and chased two strange sail to leeward, which afterward proved to be the French national brig *Tactique*, of 16 carronades, the same calibre as her own, and 2 long 8-pounders, with at least 150 men and boys; and the xebec *Guêpe*, of 2 long 18-pounders, 6 light carronades, and about 70 men and boys.

At 40' P. M. the British brig received the *Tactique's* starboard broadside; then passing under the latter's stern, returned it with interest, and immediately afterwards lay her opponent close alongside to leeward. A spirited action now ensued, in which the xebec took a safe, but at the same time very effective part, by raking the *Guadaloupe* astern. At 1-30, the French brig made an attempt to board the British, but was repulsed with considerable slaughter. The *Tactique* then passed the stern of the *Guadaloupe*; on which the latter bore up to close, and renew the action. About this time

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\* Commodore Columbine left Sierra Leone, on his return to England, in a state of great debility, brought on by the deleterious influence of that climate on European constitutions, and died of dysentery, on board the *Crocodile* frigate, to the westward of the Azores, June 18, 1811.

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two land batteries, one of four, the other of nine heavy guns, opened a distant fire upon her. Shortly afterwards the combatants again came to close battle, and continued engaging until 2-15, when the *Tactique*, having had quite enough of fighting, bore up, made sail, and escaped under the batteries, whither the *Guépe* had just before fled for shelter. The *Guadaloupe*, from which vessel the town of Port Vendres at this time was distant not more than two miles, gave the French brig a parting broadside, then hauled to the wind, and stood off shore; her loss consisted of 1 man killed, her first lieutenant (White) and 9 men severely, and 2 or 3 others slightly wounded; the *Tactique* is said to have had 11 slain, and 48 wounded.

Shortly after this gallant action, Captain Tetley was appointed, *pro tempore*, to the *Perlen*, a Danish-built frigate, in which he captured the French schooner privateer *Syrene*, of 6 guns, pierced for 12, with a complement of 61 men, near Majorca, Oct. 24th, 1811. An affair in which he was engaged, off Toulon, on the 22d of the following month, is thus described by Mr. James, in his *Nav. Hist. Vol. V. p. 481, et seq.*

“On the 20th Nov. when the only British force off Toulon were the two 38 gun frigates, *Volontaire*, Captain the Hon. G. G. Waldegrave, and *Perlen*, Captain J. S. Tetley, and these had been blown to some distance from the coast, a French fleet of fourteen ships of the line and several frigates sailed upon a cruise between the capes of Sicie and Sepet; intending to extend it a little beyond them, if wind and weather should permit, and if Sir Edward Pellew should approach no nearer than his present cruising ground, off Cape St. Sebastian. The French admiral remained out all that night, and all the following day and night, without being crossed by a hostile sail.

“At daylight on the 22d, however, as the *Volontaire* and *Perlen* were lying to, at the distance of two or three leagues W. S. W. from Cape Sicie, the French advanced division, consisting of three line-of-battle ships and two frigates, made its appearance in the S. E. Both parties were soon under a crowd of sail. At 9 A. M. Captain Tetley exchanged several shot with a French frigate upon his lee-quarter; and, owing to the *Perlen* being able, from the peculiar construction of her after-body, to bring 6 guns, three on each deck, to bear upon what is usually termed the point of impunity, he so cut up the French frigate forward, that, at 10 A. M. the latter bore away out of gun-shot. The *Trident 74*, and *Amélie* frigate, in the mean time, had exchanged a few distant shot with the *Volontaire*.