

## **ANNEX 24**

**RODNEY CARLISLE, PH. D.**



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From Saturday October 20, to Tuesday October 23, 1804.

Admiralty-Office, October 23, 1804.

Copy of a Letter from the Honorable William Cornwallis, Admiral of the White, &c. &c. to William Marsden, Esq; dated on board the Ville de Paris, in Torbay, the 20th of October 1804.

SIR,

I HAVE the Honor to enclose, for the Information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, Copies of the several Communications transmitted to me from Captain Moore, of the *Indefatigable*, giving an Account of his Proceedings in the Execution of the Service he was sent upon, in which he has, in Company with the *Medusa*, *Lively*, and *Amphion*, succeeded in detaining the Spanish Frigates therein named.

Admiral Montagu communicated to me the Arrival of the *Lively* at Spithead, on the 17th, with the *Fama*.

I have the Honor to be, &c.

W. CORNWALLIS.

SIR, *Indefatigable, at Sea, Oct. 6, 1804.*

I HAVE the Honor to acquaint you, that I have executed the Service you did me the Honor to charge me with.

On the Morning of the 29th of September, the *Indefatigable* got off Cadiz; on the 30th, we fell in with the *Medusa*; Captain Gore having informed me the *Amphion* was in the Strait's Mouth, and that the *Triumph* was off Gibraltar, and that Sir Robert Barlow meant to go into Cadiz for the Trade there, on his Way to England; I thought fit to send the *Medusa* to apprise Sir Robert Barlow of the Nature of my Order, that he might then judge whether or not he should go into Cadiz, and I directed Captain Gore to rejoin me with the *Amphion* as soon as possible off Cape St. Mary. On the 2d Instant, I was joined by the *Lively*, and on the 3d, by the *Medusa* and *Amphion*; the latter having communicated, what I thought necessary, to Sir Robert Barlow.

Yesterday Morning, Cape St. Mary bearing N. E. Nine Leagues, the *Medusa* made the Signal for Four Sail W. by S. I made the Signal for a general Chase; at Eight A. M. discovered them to be Four large Spanish Frigates which formed the Line of Battle a-head on our Approach, and continued to steer in for Cadiz, the Van Ship carrying a Broad Pendant, and the Ship next to her's Rear-

Admiral's Flag; Captain Gore being the headmost Ship, placed the *Medusa* on the Weather Beam of the Commodore; the *Indefatigable* took a similar Position alongside of the Rear-Admiral; the *Amphion* and *Lively* each taking an Opponent in the same Manner, as they came up: After hailing to make them shorten Sail, without Effect, I fired a Shot across the Rear-Admiral's Fore-foot, on which he shortened Sail; and I sent Lieutenant Ascott, of the *Indefatigable*, to inform him, that my Orders were to detain his Squadron; that it was my earnest Wish to execute them without Bloodshed; but that his Determination must be made instantly: After waiting some Time, I made the Signal for the Boat, and fired a Shot a-head of the Admiral. As soon as the Officer returned with an unsatisfactory Answer, I fired another Shot a-head of the Admiral, and bore down close on his Weather-Bow; at this Moment the Admiral's Second a-stern fired into the *Amphion*; the Admiral fired into the *Indefatigable*; and I made the Signal for close Battle, which was instantly commenced with all the Alacrity and Vigour of English Sailors. In less than Ten Minutes *La Merced*, the Admiral's Second a-stern, blew up alongside the *Amphion*, with a tremendous Explosion. Captain Sutton having, with great Judgment, and much to my Satisfaction, placed himself to Leeward of that Ship, the Escape of the Spanish Admiral's Ship was rendered almost impossible; in less than Half-an Hour she struck, as did the Opponent of the *Lively*. Perceiving at this Moment the Spanish Commodore was making off, and seeming to have the Heels of the *Medusa*, I made the Signal for the *Lively* to join in the Chase, having before noticed the superior Sailing of that Ship, Captain Hammond did not lose an Instant; and we had the Satisfaction, long before Sunset, to see from our Mast-Head that the only remaining Ship had surrendered to the *Medusa* and *Lively*.

As soon as our Boats had taken Possession of the Rear-Admiral, we made Sail for the floating Fragments of the unfortunate Spanish Frigate which blew up; but, except Forty taken up by the *Amphion*'s Boats, all on board perished. This Squadron was commanded by Don Joseph Bustamente, Knight of the Order of St. James, and a Rear-Admiral. They are from Monte Video, Rio de la Plata, and, from the Information of the Captain of

**Fernández Duro, Cesáreo.**

*Armada Española.*

R.A.H.A San Fernando. Madrid, 1897

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"(P.264) (...) Four frigates with treasure from Peru set sail for Spain from Río de la Plata. They had left the port of Callao de Lima on April 3 and ran into bad weather rounding the Cape of Good Horn which obliged the fleet to change the route by going into Montevideo. Two of the frigates needed repairs, their cargo was offloaded and they were replaced. The Commander was also substituted because the jefe de escuadra don Tomás de Ugarte, was gravely ill when he arrived (...)

(P.265) D. José Bustamante y Guerra was appointed commander, (...) the squadron was made up of four frigates: Medea, Fama, Mercedes and Clara, the first carried 40 guns: 18 pounders in the battery, 8 and 6 pounders in the quarter decks and forecastles. The other three had 34 guns, the largest cannons being 12 pounders in the gun deck, which is the norm for ships of that size in the Spanish navy. Furthermore, the issue of arms was not of concern as this was a time of peace. The hold was filled with bundles of vicuña wool, medicinal herbs, hides, ingots of copper and silver. The cabins were put in the gun decks. (...)

On August 9, the ships sailed from (...). On October 5, the Clara signalled having sighted four ships at 8 in the morning. They were recognised to be English and large and sailing along the same route (as the Spanish) (...) as a precaution, the Commander ordered the ships to form a battle line: the Fama at the head and followed by the Medea and the Mercedes while the Clara sailed to the rear. At nine, they were within sight of cabo Santa María, with a strong breeze. The English ships were also in battle formation and approached from windward

(P.266) and the largest one let off a cannon shot. She sent a boat with an official on behalf of Sir Graham Moore who communicated with General Bustamante by way of an interpreter: " Under order of His English Majesty he was to intercede this squadron and take it to England, albeit at the cost of a bitter battle (...)"

Rodriguez Gonzalez, A.R. Trafalgar y el conflicto naval anglo español del siglo XVIII, San Sebastián de los Reyes, Madrid, Actas, 2005

El autor, profesor de la Universidad y uno de los más prestigiosos historiadores de la Marina española, con importantes premios y una amplia bibliografía sobre este tema, nos ofrece una visión muy clara de diferentes aspectos que nos interesan en relación con la flota de Bustamante, en primer lugar al hablar del tema titula el capítulo como Agresiones en tiempos de paz y dice que:

*... Estando en plena paz, se abarrotaron las bodegas de los buques con fardos de lana de vicuña, cascarilla, cueros, lingotes de cobre y plata y todas las mercancías habituales que se exportaban desde Montevideo, mientras que se habilitaban camarotes para numerosos pasajeros, entre ellos civiles y, señaladamente, la familia del capitán de navío y mayor de la escuadra Don Diego de Alvear... (pag. 306)*

*... Pero es que además los datos del artillado de las fragatas españolas son teóricos y corresponden a su porte, pues no hemos podido hallar sus estados de Fuerza y Vida de esta travesía. Las cosas fueron, casi con toda seguridad, mucho peores, pues nuestras fragatas, al ir de transporte y en tiempos de paz, solían desembarcar las piezas de su batería principal en todo o en parte para dejar espacio a la carga y pasaje, por lo que sólo iban armadas con las piezas ligeras de cubierta. Esta práctica conocida como "armada como urca", era habitual y la hemos podido comprobar documentalmente con frecuencia en otros casos y en la misma travesía y con análoga carga. Tampoco nos parece posible que llevaran algún obús Rovira emplazado, pues venían de América y allí no se fabricaron dichas piezas. Tomadas por sorpresa, con los movimientos a bordo obstaculizados por las mercancías y el personal civil y siendo tan inferiores en poder artillero, cabe deducir que el famoso combate no tuvo historia. Y nada decimos de la tremenda diferencia entre un buque de guerra preparado, alistado y pertrechado para el combate y otro que sólo lo está para el servicio normal en tiempos de paz, porque tal cosa resulta evidente... (pág. 309)*

*... Las bajas fueron sensibles especialmente en la volada Mercedes, donde perecieron 249 personas... Prueba de la casi absoluta indefensión de las fragatas españolas es que las bajas británicas se redujeron a dos muertos y siete heridos. Justamente el relativo alto número de supervivientes a la voladura de la Mercedes parece indicar que el buque llevaba mucho menos armamento y pólvora de la normal, pues de llevar sus cargos completos, es casi seguro que sólo hubieran sobrevivido un puñado de personas. (pág. 310)*