

as a Number of them jumped overboard, and I fear a great many of them were drowned.

The *St. Joseph* is only Six Years old, is Copper-fastened, well found in every Respect, sails remarkably fast, is pierced for Sixteen Guns, is One Hundred and Forty-five Tons Burthen, and in my Opinion well calculated for His Majesty's Service.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

(Signed) T. SEARLE, Capt.

To Sir Thomas Livingstone, Bart. Captain of His Majesty's Ship *Renommée*, and Senior Officer at Carthageua.

Admiralty-Office, April 26, 1808.

Extrait of a Letter from Rear-Admiral Purvis to Vice-Admiral the Right Honourable Lord Collingwood, dated on board His Majesty's Ship *Atlas*, off Cadix, April 6, 1808.

HAVING directed the Captains of the *Mercury* and *Grasshopper* to put themselves under the Orders of Captain Maxwell of the *Alceste*, off the Light-House, until Sir John Gore in the *Revenge*, with the Excellent, should return to that Station, it appears by Captain Maxwell's Letter to me of the 4th Instant, that a large Convoy of the Enemy was discovered pushing for Cadiz from the Northward, under the Protection of about Twenty Gun-Boats and a numerous Train of Flying Artillery on the Beach. At Three P. M. the Convoy being off Rota, Captain Maxwell with his little Squadron attacked them, and after having destroyed Two of their Gun-Boats, driven the others away, and silenced the Batteries at Rota, they captured Seven of the Convoy, and drove many of them ashore in the Surf. Captain Maxwell gives Captain Searle the Credit of silencing the Batteries at Rota, and speaks of him in Terms of high Praise and Admiration for his gallant Behaviour and skilful Management in the middle of Shoals, driving the Enemy from their Guns with his Grape-Shot, and keeping a Division of the Gun-Boats in check at the same Time, which had come out from Cadiz to assist the others engaged by the *Alceste* and *Mercury*. Captain Maxwell speaks of his Officers and Men, as well as of those belonging to the *Mercury* and *Grasshopper*, in exalted Terms for their Bravery and cool Behaviour, and particularizes the Names of many Officers, which your Lordship will see in the Copy of his Letter which I have the Honour herewith to inclose.

His Majesty's Ship *Alceste*, in Shore, off Cadix, April 4, 1808.

SIR,

I HAVE the Honour to inform you, that when at Anchor To-day with His Majesty's Ship *Mercury*, and *Grasshopper* Brig, Saint Sebastian's Lighthouse S. E. Distance Three Miles, Wind W. S. W. a large Convoy of the Enemy was discovered coming close along Shore from the Northward, under the Protection of about Twenty Gun-Boats and a numerous Train of Flying Artillery on the Beach. At Three P. M. I made the Signal to weigh and attack the Convoy, and stood directly in for the Body of them, then off the Town of Rota; at Four, the Enemy's Shot and Shells from the Gun-Boats and Batteries going far over us, His Majesty's Ships opened their Fire, which was kept up with great Vivacity until half-past Six, when we had taken Seven of the Convoy, and drove a great

many others on Shore on the Surf; compelled the Gun-Boats to retreat, which they did very reluctantly, and not until Two of them were destroyed; and actually silenced the Batteries at Rota, which latter Service was performed by the extraordinary Gallantry and good Conduct of Captain Searle, in the *Grasshopper*, who kept in upon the Shoal to the Southward of the Town so near as to drive the Enemy from the Guns with Grape from his Thirty-two Pound Carronades, and at the same Time kept in Check a Division of Gun-Boats that had come out from Cadiz to assist the others engaged by the *Alceste* and *Mercury*. It was a general Cry in both Ships, "Only look how nobly the Brig behaves!" The Situation of our little Squadron was rather a critical one, tacking every Fifteen Minutes close on the Edge of the Shoal, with the Wind in, and frequently engaged both Sides; in the Heat of the Action, the First Lieutenant, Allen Stewart, volunteered to board the Convoy, if I would give him the Boats. I was so struck with the Gallantry of the Offer, that I could not refrain from granting them, although attended with great Risk. He went, accompanied with Lieutenant Pipon and Lieutenant Hawky of the Royal Marines, who most handsomely volunteered to go, as their Party were chiefly employed working the Ship. Mr. Arcott and Mr. Day, Masters' Mates, Messrs. Parker, Adair, Crocker, McCaul, and M'Lean, Midshipmen; they were soon followed by the *Mercury's* Boats, under the Command of the First Lieutenant W. O. Pell, accompanied by Lieutenant Gordon, and Lieutenant Whylock, Mr. Ducain, and Mr. M. R. Cummings, Masters' Mates. The Boats, led by Lieutenant Stewart, pushed on in the most gallant Manner, boarded and brought out Seven Tartans from under the very Muzzles of the Enemy's Guns, and from under the Protection of the Barges and Pinaces of the Combined Fleet, which had, by that Time, joined the Gun-Boats. I was greatly indebted to Lieutenants Hickman and Jervoise, (who both wished to go in the Boats,) for the spirited and well-directed Fire they kept up from the Main Deck; also to Mr. Welllake, the Master, for his great Attention to the steering and working the Ship; and I have much Pleasure in adding, that the other Officers, Seamen, and Marines, behaved with the utmost Bravery and Coolness. Captains Gordon and Searle (whose Gallantry and excellent Conduct it might be Presumption in an Officer of my standing in the Service to comment upon) also report upon the great Bravery and Coolness of their respective Officers, Seamen, and Marines. It is with much Pleasure I have to add, the Frigates have received no material Damage; the *Mercury*, an Anchor shot away, her Sails and Rigging cut, though not much; our Sails and Rigging in the same Way; but the *Grasshopper*, I am sorry to say, is a great deal damaged in the Hull, the Main Topmast shot through Shrouds, Sails and Running Rigging cut almost to Pieces: she had One Man mortally wounded, the Gunner and Two others wounded, but not severely.

The captured Vessels are all loaded on Government account for the Arsenal at Cadiz; and; I am happy to say, there is a very considerable Quantity of valuable Ship Timber.

The Zeal of this little Service was greatly heightened by being performed in the Mouth of Cadiz