

THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE

Log of HMS ALFRED

Thursday, 29 May 1794

AM—At daylight the enemy in sight to windward. At 7, tacked in succession, when the enemy fired on our van in passing them, and their van wore to support their rear. At $\frac{1}{4}$ before 11, the van of the enemy edged down and opened their fire on our van, but at a considerable distance, which was soon after returned.

PM—Fresh gales and cloudy. The attack on our van continuing. Signal to tack in succession; when the TREMENDOUS missing stays came stern foremost on our starboard bow, and carried away the cathead and several timbers, and knocked in her stern gallery. Tacked and opened our fire on the enemy's rear in passing. Two of their ships disabled. Received a number of shot in our sails and rigging and had 2 men wounded. Signal to tack and for a general chase. Wore, as did all the fleet; but the enemy coming up in order to support their crippled ships, wore again to form and again renewed the action; the enemy carrying off their crippled ships, and soon after the firing ceased. Employed refitting our sails and rigging. Bent another mainsail. Several of our ships much disabled, standing westward all night; the enemy also standing that way. Foggy.

Friday, 30 May 1794

AM—Do. weather. At 9, the fog cleared. Saw the enemy's fleet on the NW. Some of the ships made the signal of inability to recommence the action. Signal for the order of sailing in 2 columns on larboard tack; the fleet of the enemy on same tack about 4 leagues to leeward. Moderate and thick fog.

Saturday, 31 May 1794

PM—Moderate and hazy. At 1, saw the enemy's fleet NW. Bore up towards them. Signal to prepare to engage. Signal to carry lights. Hauled to the wind, the SOUTHAMPTON came along the line and delivered orders from the admiral. At 8, the enemy's fleet NW by N, 6 or 7 miles. In 2nd reefs.

Sunday, 1 June 1794

AM—At 5, saw the enemy in the NW 4 or 5 leagues off. Bore up towards them. At 7, brought to to close and dress the line. At 40 minutes past 8, signal to engage each ship her opponent. Bore up towards them. At 34 minutes past 9, the action commenced and in a few minutes was general from van to rear, and within musket shot. In about an hour forced our opponent to quit the line and she run to leeward. At 34 past 11, stood towards the CHARLOTTE who had lost her topmasts, and wore to form astern of her by order, when we were attacked by a French 3-deck ship which we returned and carried away her main mast. At noon, a number of the enemy's ships entirely dismasted but still keeping up their fire. A great part of our standing and running rigging and sails cut to pieces by shot and many in different parts of our hull. Lost 2 ensigns together with the staff, and had 6 men wounded during the action. Our fore topsail yard was carried away and also the main topgallant do. Our bowsprit shot through and various other injuries.

PM—At 40 minutes past 12, the action ceased, 10 or 11 of the enemy's ships being entirely dismasted, the rest forming to leeward, the MARLBOROUGH and DEFENCE totally dismasted. The ROYAL GEORGE lost her topmasts and fore mast, the QUEEN all her masts but the fore, and several other ships much disabled. Fully employed knotting and splicing our rigging, &c., &c. The RATTLER brought orders for us to take possession of a dismasted French ship ahead. Made sail towards her, sent an officer on board and found her to be the VENGEUR of 74 guns. Hoisted out all our boats to save her people, she being sinking. In about an hour got out 213 men, when she went down with the rest. At 7, the remainder of the enemy's fleet in the ESE making off, several of them dismasted and 6 remaining in our possession as prizes.

Monday, 2 June 1794

AM—Moderate and cloudy. Our signal for a lieutenant. Received orders to take the JUSTE, a French 80, in tow and made sail for that purpose. The fleet employed getting up jury masts and repairing their damages, shifting prisoners from the captured ships, &c.

T. Sturges Jackson, Logs of the Great Sea Fights, 1794–1805. (London:1899), I:103–105.