

OPERATING PROCEDURES, USS CONSTELLATION

Captain Thomas Truxton, USN, to his Sea Lieutenants and Master

27 June 1798

Gentlemen, the watch lists being subdivided in the mode I prescribed, you are to observe that when all hands are employed otherwise than at Quarters, the division of work should be made under the various officers of each watch according to the nature of the work; as for instance, when at the rigging the Master will direct the Boatswain to employ his first mate in performing what is to be done at the foremast, and bowsprit, and his second mate, the main, and mizen mast, and these take in every thing that is wanting to be done or repaired, from the top-gallant mast's heads down, as well as the jib boom, gaff and what relates to the cables, sails, anchors, boats etc., etc., etc.

In cleaning the ships, and performing the various work below, the Boatswain's mates, under direction of the midshipmen, and Master's mates, are to have that business performed; the carpenter, and his crew, is to have everything in order respecting the pumps, and what relates to his duty in stopping leaks, and preserving the hull etc., etc., etc.

The gunner, and his crew are to see the guns kept dry, well puttied, and everything belonging to the cannon, or connected with the cannon, in good order, and in readiness at a moments' warning.

The Purser, Steward, and Cooper's duty has been so clearly defined, as well as the other officers, that it is unnecessary to mention it here.

Whenever a sail is in sight, I must be immediately informed, night or day, a good look-out must always be kept, and in daylight a man at each masthead. The printed, and other instructions, if attended to, must make everything appear plain and clear.

The general superintendence of the duty is by the commissioned officers; the lieutenants are particularly answerable for what relates to the guns in their respective divisions.

The Master and Boatswain the rigging etc.—the people as well as officers must repair to their stations, whenever all hands or the watch is called, and they are not to leave their post under any pretence whatever without leave.

We have an infant navy to foster, and to organize, and it must be done.

Office of Naval Records. *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France. Naval Operations from February 1797 to October 1798.* (Washington, DC: 1935), p. 144.