**Crew of the Queen Anne’s Revenge**

John Gills, Master Gunner

Ahoy matey! Allow me to introduce myself, the name’s John Gills. The bloody ruthless Captain Blackbeard, appointed me Master Gunner of this fine vessel. Ye may ask thyself, “Why would such a revered Dutch Naval Officer like me-self take up a dishonest trade such as piracy?” The answer my handsome lad, is there is no thrill in the grueling work aboard a naval ship, but bucko let me tell you, once ye has experienced the joys of life aboard a pirates ship ye never goes back. Blimey! The rum and spirits are flowing in plenty here on this fine ship, but sink me, I enjoy being loaded to the gun wall from time to time. And the lass’! Enough ‘round here to fill all of ye hearties desires.

After the War of Spanish Succession, a rigorous cost cutting programme was put in place by Dutch Naval Commanders. The country was burdened with large amount of debt and could no longer compete with the great naval powers of the Royal Navy. Rather than replacing broken ship parts, the navy simply destroyed old ships. The reason for this being, the United Provinces Navy believed that they would not engage in a major war soon, and thus would not need a large navy in the short term. They wanted a navy that would enforce free trade of its citizens no matter the current international circumstances were occurring at the time. The smaller navy made all other powers, such as the French and the British, and believed that they could strengthen their own trade by restricting the Dutch. But, after the Despite having to reduce the naval forces, the Dutch restored their commercial and trade domination after the Austro-Dutch Antwerp treaty.[[1]](#footnote-1) Frankly, why would anyone want to go from fighting in a war, to “enforcing free-trade”? Not I, so I packed me bags and began me life as a pirate on Blackbeard’s crew. More importantly with the downsizing of the navy, there was no need for privateers, thus the natural succession was for me to become a pirate. Life as a pirate is much more democratic and equal, following a private order, the only laws we abide by is the code made created by the crew. Navies would operate under a chain of command, following a public order, providing no freedom other than abiding to unilateral decisions. With all the restrains, why would any good lad want to hold a legitimate naval position?

Being Master Gunner on this fine ship, I am responsible for the crew’s naval artillery. In my early years, I was respected Dutch Officer, so I know me way around a ship. More importantly, I have connections with arms dealers across the pirating world whom would provide me plentiful artillery at me fingertips. The primary place ye can go to find pirates in the plenty is “Gallows Point” on Port Royal. There you could find other notable pirates such as Charles Vane, Jack Calico, George Booth, Amaro Pargo, Thomas Antis, and Black Bart. With the aid of these fine men and arms dealers around the world, I have been able to stockpile a large quantity of weapons. Other than on Port Royal, other popular pirate settlements include; Tortuga, Nassau, and Madagascar.[[2]](#footnote-2)

When Captain Harnigold commandeered *La Concorde*, a French slave ship, she was 100 miles from Martinique. The Frenchmen were weak, only carrying 16 cannons on their large ship. Contrary to a typically preferred pirate ship, *La Concorde* was a big, powerful and most importantly fast. Slave ships are often the most effective and powerful pirate ships because they are designed transport a perishable cargo across the Atlantic as fast as possible.[[3]](#footnote-3) After we commandeered her, we refitted her, adding twenty-four guns to her armament.[[4]](#footnote-4) In addition, to the cannons, our ship is equipped with iron round and bar shots, lead aprons or touch-hole covers, bag shot with glass shrapnel and carriage hardware. Small arms on my ship include a brass blunder barrel, chert gunflints and several thousand small caliber lead round shots. As well, we have two powder-filled hand grenades with wooden fuses in our artillery.[[5]](#footnote-5) Physical weaponry was not the only good that was acquired through the plunder. *La Concorde* was carrying precious human cargo. Once the Frenchmen had surrendered, we dropped them off on an island with the majority of their slaves. But, Blackbeard thought acquiring some of the slaves would be a good idea. Thus, our captain kept around 50 of the slaves to keep in our mites and work with us on our crew.

The majority of our loot occurs in the middle passage of the triangle trade. The French would trade textiles, rum and manufactured goods to Africa, where they would purchase slaves to bring to the New World. Once there, they would trade the slaves for sugar, tobacco and cotton back to France. If a ship were to be intercepted in during these travels, then a plethora of loot could be plundered. When we wanted to replenish claps of thunder, we could travel along the coast of Africa to intercept a ship prior to slave trade occurring. But trading goods honestly? Blimey! Where would the fun be in that? Me hearties, a dead man tells no tales and plundering allows me to maintain the ability to be loaded to gun wall whenever I do so please.

*If I don’t kill a man every now and then, they forget who I am.*

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