

Appendix 3

Illness and Injury Aboard Naval Ships Scenarios

Scenario #1

USS *Constitution* has had several good days of sailing, but now is entering a storm. A heavy rain starts to fall and the wind, once steady and firm, grows powerful and violent. As waves crash over the decks, the ship pitches and rolls in the waters of the angry ocean. The ship's captain orders that sails be reefed, or hauled in, immediately in an effort to reduce the amount of sails exposed to the wind and help the ship ride out the storm. This means sailors must climb the masts, maneuver out onto the foot rope that hangs below the yard (the horizontal poles from which sails hang) and reef the sails together. The sails are made of a very heavy canvas. They weigh a lot when dry and are even heavier now that they are wet from the rain.

Think About It! What are some of the dangers the sailors in the situation above faces?

Scenario #2

It is June 1812, and USS *Constitution* sits in the waters of the Potomac River awaiting orders. The summer weather has been unbearably hot and humid, and sailors are complaining about thirst and the swarms of mosquitoes that are everywhere. Officers tell them not to drink the water, but some sailors ignore these statements and drink the river water anyway. The ship receives a new supply of meat from ashore. The ship's cook makes a comment about the shipment not smelling right, but serves it to the crew anyway. Over the next couple of days, some of the sailors begin to complain of stomach pains and cramps. A few can be seen rushing to the head when they start experiencing diarrhea. Others show signs of nausea and vomiting.

Think About It! What medical problems might the sailors in the scenario above be suffering from?

Scenario #3

USS *Constitution* has been at sea for weeks. Sailors wake up in the cramped, crowded berth deck after being off watch for 4 hours. As they stretch and put on their shoes to report to duty, one man's loud, hacking cough fills the air. He grumbles about not feeling well and having a headache. The sailors put away their hammocks on the spar deck and head off to holystone the decks. Kneeling beside the sick sailor as they scrub away at the wooden decks using sand and holystones, the men can see him scratching all over his body. Later that day there is a "sick call" for people to go to the surgeon. The ailing sailor heads off to the sick bay to be treated by the surgeon. Later that night, laying in their hammocks, some of the crew complain about sweating and feeling feverish.

Think About It! What medical problems might the sailors in the scenario above be suffering from?

Scenario #4

It is August 19, 1812. USS *Constitution* encounters the British ship HMS *Guerriere* about 600 miles east of Boston. The ships maneuver into position parallel to each other and engage in battle. Cannonballs shoot forth from their guns, striking the opposing vessels and sending pieces of wood flying. Smoke fills the air and the sounds of battle, including men screaming in pain, are all around. As the battle continues, the ships collide at one point. British soldiers from the *Guerriere*, armed with muskets and swords, seize this opportunity to attempt to board the *Constitution*. The Marines on the *Constitution* fight to repel the invading British before the ships are pulled apart.

Think About It! What are some possible ways that sailors in the scenario above could have been injured during the battle?