

minutes this carried the ships clear of each other; the British frigate now came to a little and got a few of her foremost guns to bear on the starboard side, some of the wads from these set fire to the Constitution's cabin but the flames were soon extinguished. The Guerriere's bowsprit now struck the taffrail of the American frigate by which the forestay was slackened and the fore shrouds on the Port side being nearly all shot away, the mast fell over the Starboard side, crossing the main stay, the sudden jerk on which carried the already damaged mainmast along with it, thus leaving the British frigate a dismasted hulk rolling her main deck guns under water.

At 23 minutes past six the Constitution ranged ahead to repair damages and renew the action at leisure, while the crew of the Guerriere began clearing away the wreck of her masts for a like purpose, but just as she had done so her sprit sail yard upon which a sail had been set to endeavor to get her before the wind was carried away leaving her an unmanageable hulk rolling in the trough of the sea requiring incessant efforts to secure her main deck guns which were breaking loose from the rotten state of the breechings as well as of the timber heads through which the long bolts passed.

At 45 minutes past six the Constitution having rove new braces wore round and took up a position within pistol shot on her starboard quarter; it being impossible to prolong the contest the Guerriere fired a gun to leeward and hauled down the Union Jack from the stump of her mainmast. Her loss was 15 killed, 6 mortally, and 57 severely and slightly wounded, total 79 put hors de combat out of a crew of 244 men and 19 boys. The Constitution had seven killed and seven wounded as reported. Although the British frigate was not handled with the skill and energy displayed in the management of the Belvidera, which may be accounted for by the state of her mainmast and bowsprit, yet the praise of bravery and endurance must be awarded to Capt. Dacres and his gallant crew, they fought an unseaworthy vessel fearfully over matched for two hours and a half and did not surrender till she was sinking.

In addition to the Constitution's other advantages she had one which even in those days of mechanical triumphs must not be despised by any nation that wishes to have effective war vessels—*she carried her main deck guns ten feet above water*—while at almost every roll the Guerriere's main deck was swept by the wash of the sea. The relative forces of the opposing vessels were as follows:—

Guerriere—Broadside guns,	24
Weight of Broadside,	517 lbs.
Crew, men only,	244
Tonnage,	1092
Constitution—Broadside guns,	28
Weight of Broadside,	768 lbs.
Crew, men only,	460
Tonnage,	1533

Captain Dacres and several of his officers being badly wounded were removed on board the American frigate where every attention was shown them. At daylight on the 20th, the American prize master hailed the Constitution to say the Guerriere had four feet water in her hold and was rapidly sinking, the prisoners were quickly removed out of her, and at 3.30 a.m., having been set on fire by Capt. Hull's orders, she blew up. Capt. Dacres, officers and surviving crew were tried by a Court Martial for the loss of their ship and were honorably acquitted with a high compliment for their gallant defence.

There can be but one opinion on this action, and that is nothing but the most consummate seamanship could give the Guerriere a chance of success against so powerful an opponent as the Constitution—it was that quality alone saved the Belvidera from capture—no one could have fought his ship better than Capt. Dacres, nor no crew could have more nobly or with more unflinching heroism have stood by their guns, but they were fearfully over matched and they surrendered when resistance was no longer possible. Thus ended the first of the *Frigate* actions about which so much has been written. The loss of the mizenmast decided the fate of the action and of the Guerriere.

On the 12th of September the British 18 Gun-brig sloop Frolic, Capt. T. Whinyate, sailed from the bay of Honduras with a convoy of 14 sail of merchantmen bound for England. On her arrival off Havana the master of a Guernsey ship informed her commander of the War with the United States and the capture of the Guerriere. Having been five years on the West Indian station and her crew very sickly, the Frolic was by no means in a fit state to encounter an enemy's vessel of a similar force, but having no alternative the brig pursued her voyage along the coast of the United States. During a violent gale on the night of 16th October, in latitude 36° North, long. 64° West, the Frolic carried away, her main yard, sprung the topmast, and tore both topsails to pieces, and separated the brig from her convoy. At dark on the 17th six of the missing ships had joined, and on the 18th at day break while she was repairing damages in a turbulent sea, a sail hove in sight to windward which was at first mistaken for one of the convoy, but the near approach of the stranger and her not answering the signals marked her as an enemy; whereupon removing her main yard from off the casks and lashing it to the deck the Frolic hauled to the wind under her boom mainsail and (her fore topmast being sprung) a close reefed fore topsail in order to let the convoy pass sufficiently ahead to be out of danger. Apprehensive that the stranger might pursue the merchantmen instead of himself, Capt. Whinyate hoisted Spanish colors as a decoy, having two days before passed a Spanish convoy under protection of an armed brig, which convoy it was imagined the strange vessel might also have seen.

The latter proved to be the United States 18 gun ship-sloop Wasp, Capt. Jacob Jones, five days out from the Delaware, immediately hoisted her colors and bore down for the Frolic then awaiting her approach on the port tack. At a few minutes after 11 a.m., being about 60 yards distant the Wasp hailed, upon which the brig quickly hauling down the Spanish and hoisting the British flag opened fire with great guns and musketry; this was returned by the Wasp, and as the vessels dropped nearer to each other the action became close and spirited. In less than five minutes after she commenced firing the Frolic shot away the Wasp's main topmast, and in two minutes more the latter's gaff and mizen topgullant mast also came down. The sea was so rough that the muzzles of the guns were frequently under water as the vessels rolled, still the action was maintained with spirit, the Americans firing as the engaged broadside was going down, the British as it was rising; as a consequence almost every shot fired by the Wasp hulled her opponent while most of the Frolic's shot passed among the rigging or over the masts of the Wasp. Being in a light state from deficiency of stores and unable on account of the state of her topmasts and want of a mainyard to steady herself by carrying sail, the Frolic laboured more than the Wasp and experienced greater difficulty in pointing her guns—in a minute or two after the Wasp's main topmast came down the gaff head braces of the brig were shot away, and having no sail whatever on the mainmast she lost the means of preventing the Wasp from taking a position on her bow, of this the latter took advantage raking the brig's deck with broadside after broadside which the latter could only return with one of her bow guns. Believing that the deck of the British brig was so thinned that no opposition could be offered, Capt. Jones determined to bring the contest to a close by boarding. The Wasp accordingly wore and running down on the Frolic soon brought the latter's jib-boom between her fore and main rigging and two of her own carronades in a line with the bow ports of the defenceless brig. In this position two raking broadsides were poured into her at the last of which the action having continued 43 minutes, during 33 of which the American sloop had all the firing to herself, the officers and men of the Wasp boarded the Frolic, on the deck of which were Capt. Whinyate and his Second Lieutenant T. B. Wintle, both so severely wounded as to be unable to stand without support, the Quarter Master at the wheel; and 17 seamen, the remainder of the crew, were below attending to the wounded and at other duty. The colors being lashed in the main rigging were struck by the First Lieutenant of the Wasp.

The Frolic was much shattered in her hull, the two masts fell over the sides a few minutes after she was taken possession of: out of her compliment of 97 men and 18 boys she had 15 seamen and marines killed.