



# HOIST THE BLACK FLAG



being about Jolly Roger by K evin Dallimore

Well so ye bewantin' a flag for them brave cutthroats to serve under. Here be a number for ye to copy and cut out and raise above your own armies of buccaneers!

## A BIT OF HISTORY

My extensive research (well, other people's research) leads me to believe that the name Jolly Roger might come from the French "Joli Rouge" which we have Anglicised to Jolly Roger. The "Joli Rouge" was a red flag that signalled no quarter would be given in a battle and was in widespread use during the great age of piracy. English pirates may have taken "Joli Rouge" to refer to Pirate flags in general and may then have transferred the anglicised name to the black flag which came into common usage in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Or it might come from the name for the Devil at the time "Old Roger".

Many written descriptions survive:

*"a skeleton with an hour glass in one hand and a dart in the other and three drops of blood proceeding from it in the other... .. which flag they called Old Roger and often used to say that they would live and die under it."*

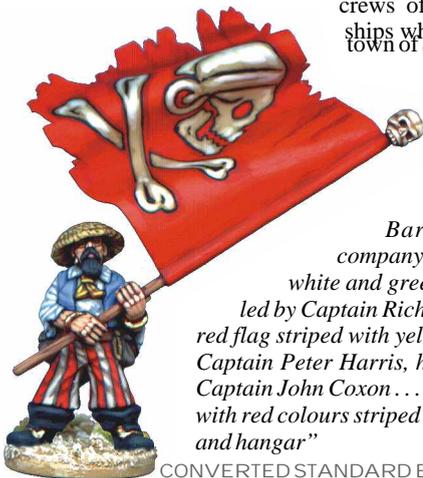
Emmanuel Wynne fought under "a sable ensign with crossbones, a Death's head and an hour glass".

*"They hoisted Jolly Roger...in the middle of which is a large white skeleton with a dart in one hand, striking a bleeding heart, and in the other and hour glass...When they fight under Jolly Roger they give quarter, which they do not when they fight under the red or bloody flag"*

Many symbols seem to have been used on the black field, including bleeding hearts, blazing balls, hourglasses, spears, cutlasses, and whole skeletons as well as the skull and cross bones in various formats. The skull was more often referred to as the death's head and was a common symbol for death. Also red or bloody flags are mentioned as often as black flags until the middle of the eighteenth century. Red flags were often plain or with stripes of white or yellow.

Many buccaneers, in particular, seem not have used black flags. English buccaneers are recorded as sailing under English colours. This includes Sir Henry Morgan who, in spite of his reputation as a pirate, always regarded himself as an English privateer and presumably flew the Cross of St. George. When Blackbeard's squadron attacked the Protestant Caesar in the Bay of Honduras in 1718, two of the pirate ships flew black flags with death's heads and three ships flew red flags.

Basil Ringrose's journal describes the flags used by the crews of the various ships when they marched on the town of Santa Maria in April 1680:

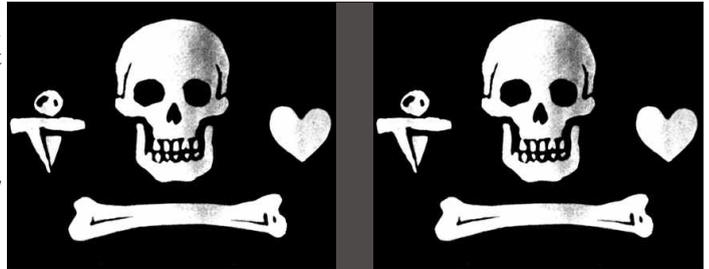


CONVERTED STANDARD BEARER

*"There were some three hundred buccaneers, and they must have made a colourful sight as they headed inland: First, Captain Bartholomew Sharp with his company had a red flag, with a bunch of white and green ribbons. The second division, led by Captain Richard Sawkins with his men, had a red flag striped with yellow. The third and fourth, led by Captain Peter Harris, had two green flags, his company being divided into several divisions. The fifth and sixth, led by Captain John Coxon . . . made two divisions and had each of them a red flag. The seventh was led by Captain Edmund Cook, with red colours striped with yellow, with a hand and sword for his device. All or most of them were armed with fuzee, pistol, and hangar"*



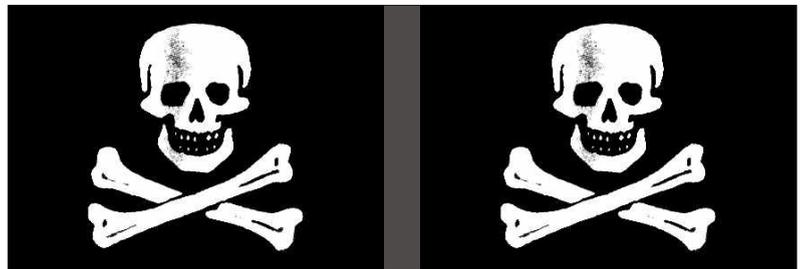
EDWARD LOW



STEDE BONNET



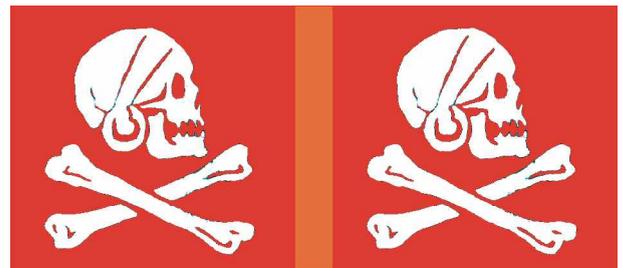
EDWARD TEACH "BLACK BEARD"



EDWARD ENGLAND



CHRISTOPHER CONDENT



HENRY EVERY



## USING THE PRINTED FLAGS

The flags have been drawn in the size I use. I know they are somewhat over-large but I like them like that. It also makes them easier to copy and cut out. If you like smaller flags reduce them in the copying process.

☠ Once you have copied them cut them out slightly oversized, leaving some white surround.

☠ Fix them around a suitable pole with white PVA glue.

☠ Allow this to soak well into the flag then press the two side together around the pole.

☠ Leave to cure for a while; keeping it pressed flat under an old book.

☠ Bend the flag, whilst it's still flexible to make folds as if it's blowing in the wind.

☠ Once the flag is hard trim it with a sharp pair of scissors so that none of the surrounding white paper shows.

☠ You can now varnish it for extra strength or even add some painted on highlights.

For extra strength and bendability you can make a sort of sandwich with a thin bit of aluminium foil in between the two "sides" of the flag before you stick it together. See below for the foil route.

## MAKING FLAGS FROM SCRATCH

I make my flags out of aluminium foil from things like tomato puree tubes. Cut to the size you want and fix to a pole of piano wire or flower arranging wire of the appropriate length, leave enough length in the fly to wrap around the pole.

☠ Once the flag is set spray it with grey car primer. Hold the flag by the pole in a washing peg, this allows you to paint it without touching it.

☠ Trace one of the designs from this article then transfer it to the flag.

☠ Paint the entire flag, except your design, black- your design is left in grey prime.

☠ Paint over your design in very light grey. Leave a thin border of grey primer around the inside edge of the design.

☠ Add a small amount of this grey to your black and paint over most of the black leaving a thin pure black border around the outside edge of the design.

☠ Now bend the flag into some interesting folds.

☠ Paint your design where it touches the top of the folds in white and leave the bits at the bottom of folds as they are.

☠ Add a little bit more of the grey to the black and highlight the rest of the flag where it touches the top of the folds.

You will need a standard bearer to carry your black flag. One or two will soon be available from FOUNDRY. Or for the time being you can convert an existing model by removing a weapon and drilling a hole for the flag pole. Insert the pole and glue it in place after you have painted the flag but before you paint the pole. Then paint the flag pole wood colour.

You can then varnish the man and flag together.

Thanks to Steve Dean, Chris Rule and Will Hannah for help and information.

CONVERTED STANDARD BEARER



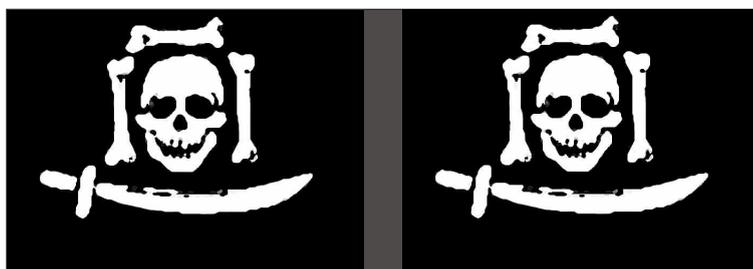
BARTHOLOMEW ROBERTS



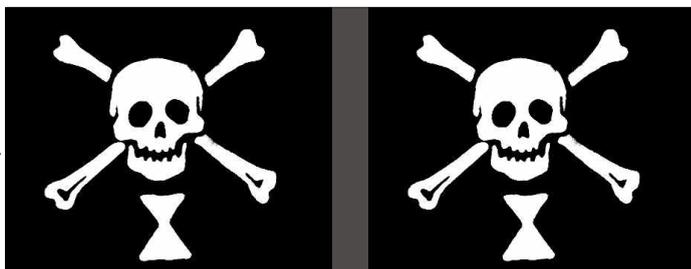
JACK RACKAM



CHRISTOPHER MOODY



CARRIERE



EMANUEL WYNNE



ROBERT CULLIFORD

