



Fire at sea was a terrible danger. Where might the fires start?

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

The topsails were frozen as hard as boards. One of our main topmen was frozen and died soon after. I was speaking to a man at the wheel when a sheet of ice fell out of the mizzen mast and knocked both of us down. I was so numb when I got below that I hardly had any life in me.

Lieutenant James Gardner

The electric fluid split the mizenmast, killing and wounding fourteen men. It descended into the captain's cabin. The electric fluid struck his hand and arm, passing along the bell wire and exploded the gunpowder in some cartridges that he had on his shelf. The explosion knocked out some of his front teeth and slashed open his mouth and jaw. The lightning also melted hooks to which his hammock was slung, and he fell to the ground and knocked unconscious. His cabin was found in flames, himself in a sheet of fire.

Alexander Scott

She having sprung a leak we pushed all the guns overboard to prevent her from sinking. We were continually pumping with all our pumps. Six men died at their pumps with the hard work.

John Howe

Activities

Make a list of the possible natural dangers at sea

Which do you think were the most dangerous and which the least?