

THE SHIPWRECK DECODER—ERRATA / UPDATES

Book: The Shipwreck Decoder by Ashton East

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Status: These corrections are incorporated into the 2026 Revised Reprint.

Page	Original	Change
42	Timeline: "600 BCE Stone stock" "600 BCE Wood and metal" "1540–1819 Admiralty..." "1819 Admiralty..." "1840s Admiralty..."	Replaced with: "700 BCE Hook (one-arm) wood with stone stock (Mediterranean)" "500 BCE Lead-cored wood stock (Mediterranean); "500 BCE Two-arm, wood with stone stock (Mediterranean)" "300 BCE Iron shank (Mediterranean)" "300 BCE Cast lead stock (Mediterranean)" "50 Iron shank (Northern Europe)" "900 Two-arms, wood with stone stock (East Asia)" "1320 Grapnel with iron shank and arms (East Asia)" "1450 Admiralty Longshank, straight arms" "1815 Admiralty Pattern aka Fisherman, curved arms and wood stock" "1815 Admiralty Pattern (fisherman), curved arms and metal stock".
	Heading: "Primitive"	Changed to: "Stone and composite".
	"Primitive anchors are shaped stone with a means to affix a rope, and may have slots or holes cut to fit one or more shanks."	Deleted.
43	Stone and composite anchors	Added bullet: "Hook (one-armed anchor): a wooden arm, as simple as a natural tree branch, digs into the seabed for improved holding. The stone stock mounted on the arm side gives the anchor a better chance of landing hook-down, perpendicular to the arm, keeping it vertical until it digs in, and weighted (stone or lead) to help push the arm into the bottom." Added bullet: "Two-armed anchor (wood and stone or metal): a stock mounted perpendicular to the arms forces the anchor to rotate into a position where one arm digs in, improving holding power and stability on the bottom."
	Illustration: "Simple stone anchor"	Changed: New illustration showing rope attached through hole.

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	N/A	New illustrations: Hook anchor; Two-armed anchor (stone stock); Two-armed anchor (metal stock).
44	Bullet: "Arms"	Added: "Curved arms improve the mechanics of the initial set (tendency to bury under own weight) and break-out (reduced resistance) compared to straight arms."
45	Illustration: "Wood and metal"	Deleted.
	Caption: "Admiralty longshank and round crown (wood stock)"	Changed to: "Admiralty longshank (wood stock)". Illustration updated to show pointed crown.
	Caption: "Admiralty pattern (metal stock)"	Changed to: "Admiralty pattern (metal stock shown, could be wood)".
46–47	Illustration: "Cathead anchor mechanism"	Switched pages with "Modern anchor mechanism" illustration to improve spacing. Label added where hook is attached to stock before the anchor fluke: "Fish tackle".
	Bullet: (Cathead) "When the anchor is pulled back up to the hawse hole, the tackle is attached to the anchor ring and used to hoist the anchor up to the cathead. Separately, one of the flukes is raised to hook over the rail. The anchor is stored in this position between the cathead and rail until needed, then the process is reversed. Catheads were used on ships with stocked anchors."	"The cat tackle is attached to the anchor ring and used to hoist and secure the stock end of the anchor from the hawse hole to the cathead ('catting'). The fish tackle is attached to an arm and used to lift the anchor to its horizontal storage position ('fishing'). When the anchor is needed the process is reversed.
153	General Note	Chapter 13 has been revised to align naval ordnance terminology and dates with standard historical usage.
153, 154, 156, 158, 160, 163, 167, 168	Illustrations: Cannon	Updated to remove erroneous rings/mouldings from the reinforce section of various gun patterns.
154	Bullet: (Identification is based on a combination of diagnostic features)	Added bullet: "Various markings, e.g. founder's marks, serial/survey numbers, disposal marks, pattern marks, nation and unit emblems".
155	Bullet: "Smooth... designed for higher projectile velocities..."	Added: "...or designed for spherical projectiles, short range munitions..."
	Bullet: "Faceted bore..."	Changed to: "Faceted/polygonal bore..."
	Bullet: "Rifled bore..."	Definition updated: Clarified use of soft metal jackets/bands to impart spin.

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	Timeline: "1498 Rifled bore" (the earliest instance of the technology)	Changed to: "1854 Naval cannon with rifled bore" (more likely in naval settings).
156	Bullet: "Gradual → English"	Added: "(caution: highly generalised)".
	Bullet: "Sharp → Swedish"	Added: "(caution: highly generalised)".
	Bullet: "Muzzle swell: the chase is flared"	Changed to: "the chase is thickened".
	Illustration (x4)	Cannon bores changed to be the same diameter (matching the "Tapered muzzle" cannon).
	Illustration: "Cylindrical muzzle swell"	Refined at muzzle end.
	Caption: "Tapered muzzle swell"	Changed to: "Tapered muzzle".
157	"Decoration or embellishments to dolphins:" Bullet: "Fish or dolphin → Netherlands"	Added ", e.g." Changed to: "Fish or dolphin → General form (widely used)"
159	"Cast bronze, elaborate base plate and button → Netherlands"	Deleted.
160	Bullet: "Mix of bronze and iron cannon on same vessel Likely bronze cannon will be closest to the stern to maximise the distance between iron cannon and magnetic compass"	Deleted.
	Bullet: "Cast iron with cylindrical muzzle Likely intended as field artillery"	Replaced with: "Cast iron with short, cylindrical muzzle Likely a naval carronade".
	Bullet: "Cast iron with smooth or sharp thickening... English cannon typically had long muzzle swells..."	Changed to: "English muzzles are typically flared or rounded; Swedish and United States designs are often angular".
161	Timeline: "c.1500–c.1750 Swivel gun"	Date extended: "c.1500–c.1850".
	Timeline: "1750 Solid bore cast bronze (Sweden)"	Changed to: "(France)".
	Timeline: "1846 Breech-loading (Sweden)"	Changed to: "(Sweden/Italy)".
	Description: "Wrought iron..."	Updated: Added reference to "mandrel" construction and "industrial appearance".
162	Breech-loading: "powder cartridge"	Changed to: "powder chamber".
	Description: "Carronade... post mounted."	Added: "... (on a slide carriage). Intended for devastating close-range fire."
163	No caption	Added: "Comparing relative trajectory by category".
164	Timeline: "1864–1880 Armstrong gun, muzzle-loading (England)"	Updated: "1864–1880 Armstrong gun, rifled muzzle-loading (England)".
	Description: "Paixhans gun"	Updated: Added reference to "flat, direct trajectory... to penetrate wooden hulls."

Page	Original	Change
	Timeline: "1858 Rodman gun (United States)"	Deleted.
	Caption: "Colombiad cannon"	Changed to: "Columbiad cannon".
165	Heading, paragraph and illustration: "Rodman gun (United States)"	Deleted.
	Description: "Parrott rifle"	Correction: Clarified manufacturing method (reinforce heated and slipped over cooled barrel).
166	Timeline: "1690–1715 Rose and crown (England)"	Date corrected: "1542–c.1707".
	List: Mouldings	Added: "1725–1787 Armstrong pattern (England)".
	Description: "Blomefield pattern"	Updated: Added description of "Simple, small Royal Cypher... gunfounder's initials".
167	Description: "Naval gun bed"	Correction: "mounted on two wheels" (removed reference to four).
168	Illustration: "Gun carriage block and tackle"	Changed: New illustration showing correct position of ropes.
	Assemblage: "Sponge"	Correction: "wooden cylinder covered in lamb or sheepskin" (replaced "pole topped with a sponge").
169	Bullet: "Linstock"	Correction: Added reference to "portfire".
	Bullet: "Searcher"	Added: "Inspection and maintenance tool that would be less common than the rest of the assemblage."
	Bullet: "Cat"	Added: "Another inspection/maintenance tool."
	Bullet: "Tampion: plug or cover to close muzzle when the gun was stowed."	Changed to: "Tampion: plug to close muzzle when the gun was stowed."
170	Projectile: "Ball shot"	Changed to: "Ball/round shot".
	Projectile: "Bomb/shell shot"	Changed to: "Hollow/shell/bomb".
	Projectile: "Carcass shot"	Renamed: "Carcass".
171	Projectile: "Shoe"	Renamed: "Wooden bottom".
	Projectile: "Sabot"	Correction: "Engaged" the rifling (replaced "joined").
	Heading: "Layout Interpretation"	Changed to: "Wreck site layouts".
	N/A	Added: "Cannon are one of the most durable components of a vessel, and their distribution on a site can give important information about the vessel, the wrecking event, and later salvage operations. Interpreting wreck sites is a long and complex process for professionally trained archaeologists, but we can start paying attention to how cannon are distributed on the site."

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	Bullet: "Cannon located near the stern may be bronze to minimise interference with magnetic compass readings."	Deleted.
	Bullet: "Cannon regularly spaced along the ballast pile in two rows with muzzles facing out suggests the wreck settled intact on an even keel, guns fall to ballast pile as decks degrade"	Changed to: "Cannon regularly spaced along the ballast pile in two rows with muzzles facing out could mean the wreck settled intact on an even keel, and the guns fell down to the ballast pile as the decks degraded."
	Bullet: "Cannon regularly spaced along the ballast pile in a single row with muzzles facing in alternate directions suggests the wreck settled intact but listing to one side."	Changed to: "Cannon regularly spaced along the ballast pile in a single row with muzzles facing in alternate directions could mean the wreck settled intact but listing to one side. High side guns slide across decks as restraining ropes degrade, guns fall to ballast pile as decks degrade."
	Layout: "suggests" (multiple instances)	Changed to: "could mean" (to reflect uncertainty in wreck interpretation).
	N/A	Added: "These are just some of many ways of interpreting cannon layout from seabed finds. Specific circumstances, the influence of human activity since sinking (including salvage operations) and other explanations need to be considered by experts before drawing conclusions."
178	Caption: "50 calibre"	Updated: ".50 calibre".
189	"Early submarines were powered manually or by steam. The modern configuration emerged from 1900 with the introduction of electric engines. From there, submarines rapidly increased in size and operating range."	Moved to top of page.
INDEX	"Anchor > primitive"	Changed to: "Anchor > stone/composite".