

# WAR IN DENMARK

## Vice-Admiral William Goodson

to General George Monck (1608–1670), Governor of Scotland (1653–1659)

*King Charles X of Sweden declared war on Denmark in 1657, seeking territorial expansion. After initial Swedish successes, by late 1658 the war had ground to a stalemate. Concerned with the importance of the Baltic trade, the Dutch Republic intervened on behalf of Denmark. As a result, Parliament in December 1658 dispatched Vice-Admiral Goodson to the Baltic to mediate the conflict.*

SWIFTSURE, in the Sound near Scarlett Island, 31 July 1659

The change of government in England has put a long stop to affairs here, the Dutch not well knowing how to deal with their old antagonist, our present Parliament. Their fleet and we have been long facing one another on this and the Belt. They consist of about 85 men-of-war; ours seldom above 38. I have, I must confess, admired that they have not taken advantages on us, our fleet though little, yet smart, but theirs most of all the best ships of Holland, and have had with them soldiers to put on board as many as they thought good; but when I look back to see the wheel within the wheels, the finger of Heaven that steers the affairs of all, I am silent.

We have had men sick, and it may be worse represented than it is; therefore [this is] to let Your Honour know we have at present sick about 400, few more or less, and have had not more at any time.

Our plenipotentiaries arrived the 20<sup>th</sup> instant, ever since when they have waited for the King of Sweden,<sup>1</sup> who has been at Nakskov in Lolland, which he has lately taken in, but is now come over and gives them audience this day at Frederiksborg, formerly the King of Denmark's great palace. I wish they may cut their work short, for our victuals and the summer grows short. I am fearful the ministers of the King of Sweden could represent the state of their fleet to be very considerable and ready to join with ours, as was presented before we came out of England, when ever since our coming into these parts they have had their ships scattered in squadrillers, not doing any service worth the naming.

Only Vice-Admiral Cox with a squadron of ships the other day upon the coast of Utland surprised five sail of Danish men-of-war and burned twenty or thirty yawls, being in an harbour without fortification and not capable of making any resistance, being not half-manned. But this will hardly balance their loss sustained in the former part of the year; they have only this squadron that did this service, which consists of 7 sail that are able to perform present service, the rest of his ships being 15 in Landskrona not half-manned and 13 more chased up into the Baltic Sea by the Dutch, whence they will hardly return this summer.

C.H. Firth, ed. *The Clarke Papers* (Longmans, Green, and Company: London, 1901), IV:29–30. [modernized]

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<sup>1</sup> Charles X (1622–1660), King of Sweden (1654–1660)