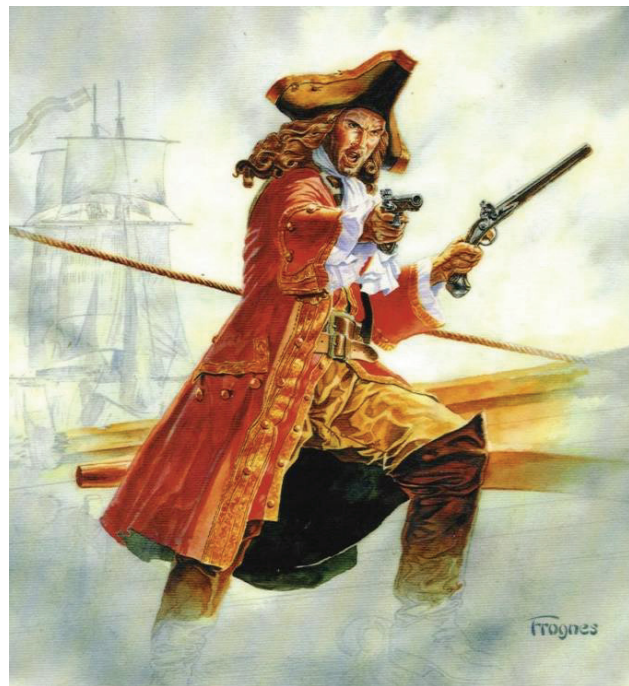


Tordenskiold

Few, if any, Norwegians have shaped history such as Peter Wessel. During The Great Northern War in 1710-20 he hindered Sweden and Karl XII from invading Norway. With great skill and courage, he won the war almost single-handed and became a hero of the people and one of Europe's most renowned men under his ennobled name Tordenskiold (Thundershield). But he only lived to be 30 years old. Still, he himself became a symbol of the Norwegian dream.

With his distinguished talent and own conviction, he rose from the ranks of a trader's son to the highest orders of power. He was a man ahead of his time who faced and confronted age-old attitudes and beliefs. His points of view and qualities are reflected in many of our later heroes such as Amundsen, Nansen, Heyerdahl and more. Peter Wessel was proud to be Norwegian and during the last 300 years has been an important part of our national self-image but a documentary film about him doesn't exist (excluding the old, silent film)! Former Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland has said, "It is typical Norwegian to be one's best" and we would like to believe it – and see people in our history who personify this phrase. Peter Wessel Tordenskiold is among the greatest of these.



Peter's unusually close contact with the autocratic King Fredrik IV drew to him strong rivals and enemies which only his cunning talent and skills protected him from. But one among them was also one who could destroy him – the same King Fredrik IV. What did it cost Peter to attain his achievements? He sacrificed much along his rise in the ranks, not unlike some in today's top positions, but in the end he sat all alone again. His death was but a tragic contrast to his otherwise life of greatness.

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