UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

Media Change and Recruitment Images: The Royal Navy since World War II

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"You're born, you cry, you grow," a narrator intones as microsecond-long scenes of a young man's life flash across the television screen.[1] The unnamed youth is shown successively in an ultrasound picture, as a toddler, a boy, and a teen. The next shots place our 'every boy' in a flurry of disagreeable jobs, each picture accompanied by a two-word narration, "you pull, you push." Finally, "you stop, you think." In a paused moment, this young man's environment changes to the flight deck of a Royal Navy aircraft carrier. The next series of flashes shows him saluting in uniform, boarding a helicopter, visiting foreign cities, firing a machine gun, and carrying an African child to safety from an unknown threat. The thirty-second promo ends with the tagline, "You live, a life without limits." This 2010 Royal Navy recruiting advertisement provides a brief but immediately gripping glimpse of a life filled with adventure and purpose. More than a job option, these advertisements offer up the navy's idealized image of itself. With a proud heritage spanning several centuries, the Royal Navy, Britain's "Senior Service," enjoys a special place in British national culture. A 2005 survey conducted by YouGov for *The Daily Telegraph* showed that 42% of British people felt the Royal Navy was "very important" in defining Britishness. [2] These results place the Royal Navy ahead

[1] Royal Navy Recruitment, "A Life Without Limits," http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/life-without-limits/index.htm. (Accessed 5 Dec 2010).

[2] Survey information included in article by Peter Kellner, "What Britishness Means to the British," in *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question,* ed. Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell in association The Political Quarterly, 2009), 63-65. The poll asked British citizens to judge how important a list of thirty-five words or phrases were in defining Britishness, with "very important" being the highest level of significance awarded. The list comprised terms commonly associated with Britain, including British Common Law, Shakespeare, and The BBC. The Royal Navy placed ahead of all of these; it had the 9th highest percentage. The issue that received the highest percentage of "very important" responses was "the British people's right to say what they think" (61%). The survey's review sheet can be found at http://www.yougov.co.uk/extranets/ygarchives/content/pdf/TEL050101032_1.pdf (last accessed 12 Dec 2010).

of Shakespeare (24%), the House of Commons (37%), and the Monarchy (38%) in characterizing which elements of British culture are most important to its people.

The pivotal role played by the Royal Navy in the creation and expansion of Britain's 19th century empire is a well-established historical fact.[3] According to one historian, the navy had become "a virtually sacred institution"[4] to the British state and its people by the beginning of the 20th century. How this relationship between the navy and society came into being has been the topic of increasing scholarship. Several historians have documented how "popular imperialism" entered mainstream British culture during its imperial apogee; perhaps most eminent is John MacKenzie's work in detailing the level to which domestic Britain was exposed to images, songs, and stories extolling its military, particularly the Royal Army.[5] Mary Conley carries this study into the naval realm in tracing how perceptions of navy sailors transformed from the vile "jack tar" of Nelson's navy to the embodiment of manliness in British society by the reign of Edward VII.[6] In *From Jack Tar to Union Jack*, Conley documents how the fascination with all things navy took hold of Edwardian Britain, from commercial advertising to fleet reviews to mothers dressing their toddler sons in white sailor's uniforms.

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[3]For example, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1983), 149. Here, Kennedy quotes Christopher Lloyd's *Nation and the Navy* in establishing a maritime empire with a navy "so unchallenged, so immense….that people spoke then and later of a 'Pax Britannica.'"

[4] Willaim D. Rubinstein, "The World Hegemon: The Long Nineteenth Century, 1832-1914," in *A World by Itself: A History of the British Isles,* ed. by Jonathan Clark (London: William Heinemann, 2010), 553.

[5] John MacKenzie, *Popular Imperialism and the Military: 1850-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992). This collection of essays from British cultural historians approaches the issue of military representation in popular culture in a number of ways. Among the studies are that of popular music, youth literature, even air shows are detailed. This study is itself a development of MacKenzie's earlier works, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), and *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

[6] Mary Conley, *From Jack Tar to Union Jack: Representing Naval Manhood in the British Empire, 1870-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 145.

Several scholars have extended the study of the navy's interaction with society up to the end of World War II. Especially germane is a 2003 article by Ralph Harrington, which shows how the loss of the HMS *Hood* early in the war sparked an outpouring of national sentiment for the Royal Navy that reverberated in the postwar years. Despite an abbreviated period of war nostalgia, however, the Royal Navy became lost in the economic and political concerns of the mid 20th century. Harrington laments that "there is little cultural history of military matters of any kind…As for cultural history of the modern Royal Navy, there simply is none."[7] This lack of research leaves many questions to be answered if the 19th century fascination with the navy described by Conley is to be carried through to the 2005 poll that showed Britain's continued favor for the Senior Service.

This project attempts to explore the relationship between navy and society in order to begin bridging the gap in scholarship for the decades after 1960. To do so, it examines the development and implementation of Royal Navy recruiting films from 1960 through the present. In approaching the topic through recruiting, it is possible to examine how individual British citizens have encountered the Royal Navy through the service's official productions. The findings in this project do not incorporate other print media, specifically magazines and newspapers, nor do they account for the work done by navy recruitment officers.[8] The following analysis details only those *visual* media sources

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[7] Ralph Harrington, "The Mighty Hood: Navy, Empire, War at Sea and the British Naval Imagination, 1920-60," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38 (2003): 172.
[8] This thesis does not explore to what degree the Royal Navy was represented in popular culture during the period of 1960 through the present. A study of such sources, to include newspapers, popular magazines, television and film would yield a better idea of the representations of the Royal Navy in larger British society. One such study is S.P. MacKenzie's "Broadcasting the New Navy: The BBC-TV Series Warship (1973-1977)," *War & Society* 25.2 (Oct 2006): 105-122. MacKenzie explores the production and reception of the BBC television series *Warship*, which used professional actors to portray life onboard a Royal Navy

produced specifically for Royal Navy recruitment. The restricted range of source materials means that these findings are by no means exhaustive. These film productions constitute one medium by which the Royal Navy sought to represent itself in a widely accessible way. They show the desire of the navy to portray itself as an extension of British ideals in order to both encourage young people to join its ranks, as well as to provide the British people with a positive image of one of its most important institutions in a period of extraordinary political and cultural change.

Royal Navy Recruiting Films of the Imperial War Museum

The trend of recruiting films produced by and for the Royal Navy between 1960 and 1990 can be summarized in terms of both format and content. In general, recruiting material became shorter, going from films of just over thirty minutes in length to television and radio commercials of thirty seconds. The change is directly related to the medium through which these images reached the general public, with the rise of television over the period leading to the now-familiar commercial format used in the 1980s and 90s. The production value of films, as might be expected, increased over time as well, as film production and editing techniques improved.

The more important change to occur over the late decades of the 20th century had little to do with the length of the productions and even less to do with changes in camera technology or editing. The content of the advertisements shows a navy that is constantly reevaluating its image in an effort to better appeal to young potential members. This

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frigate. The series was heavily supported by the navy, which donated the use of several fleet units including a frigate and nuclear submarine for filming.

period after 1960 is one of tremendous political and social change in Britain, much of which is reflected in the commercials themselves. The films described in the following pages are chosen as representative of those from their respective periods, based on the collection of recruiting advertisements in the Imperial War Museum's collection. The museum's film archive in London is the "official repository of film for the British Armed Forces" and is therefore one of the most exhaustive collections of Royal Navy recruitment material in the world. Before looking more closely at specific trends found within these sources, it is helpful to first layout a broad chronology of changes in representative recruitment films over the decades after 1960. Drawing from this chronology, it then becomes easier to evaluate the major trends identified in the recruiting materials.

A film produced in 1961 entitled "His First Draft" serves as a starting point to evaluate naval recruitment in the modern era. This rather lengthy film (at just over 30 minutes) was intended to be a recruiting tool and an instructional film for new enlistees.[9] The production of "His First Draft" coincided with the end of conscription in the United Kingdom just a year before. For the first time since before World War II, the Royal Navy was charged with maintaining an all-volunteer force. The film's opening sequence shows a man no more than 20 years old as he is driven to his ship at Portsmouth Naval Base. The car meanders along the base waterfront to deposit the young sailor, Mike Thorn, at his new command. Sighting the HMS *Victory* at her moorings, the civilian driver remarks, "They don't make (ships) like that these days." The shot of Nelson's legendary tall ship is cut to an equally impressive view of the young sailor's vessel.

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[9] The evaluation of "His First Draft" as both a recruitment and training film comes from the labeling given by the Imperial War Museum archivist, which cataloged it as such.

Newly commissioned, the frigate HMS *Berwick* is splendid in the morning sun. The

Seaman Thorn thanks his driver and, sea bag in tote, crosses the brow.

Stepping onto the quarterdeck, our new recruit endures a rapid succession of

encounters with officers and senior ratings, all of whom exhort him to follow orders

closely. "You'd better work hard and see that you're at the right place at the right time,"

one chief petty officer warns as he shuffles paper across his desk. After several such

terse admonitions, the young man is introduced at last to another junior sailor, who is

charged with acquainting him with the ship and her crew. The two enlisted men take a

tour of the *Berwick*, with commentary provided alternatively by the narrator and the able

seaman. Their first stop is the crew berthing area, where several junior sailors are

gathered. "It is always a bit of a shock," the narrator explains, "when you first see the

confined space that will be your home, shared with fifteen or twenty shipmates." Seaman

Thorn's shock is not so apparent, though the other sailors in the berthing still joke at his

expense about the close quarters they have all become accustomed to. The spartan nature

of shipboard life for junior enlisted is not glossed over by this film. "His First Draft"

pulls few punches in presenting the austere conditions. The daily hardships are described

as part and parcel of navy life by the narrator and by the onscreen characters. In the

scenes that follow, Seaman Thorn is taken to the ship's galley and the sick bay. Of the

food, the tour guide offers, "if you somehow manage to make a pig of yourself, you'll

wind up in the sick bay. But don't worry, the ship's doctor knows his stuff." After

several other stops, the men return to the berthing area, where they find other junior

sailors playing cards while awaiting liberty call. When Seaman Thorn announces his

dislike for card games, one of the players warns, "get yourself a hobby then. It doesn't

matter what you do, just so long as you enjoy it." With this simple warning the film

acknowledges that the prospect of long days at sea without diversion is daunting for even

experienced ratings.

The final scenes of the film show the young recruit as he completes his first short

underway period on the *Berwick*. There is little in the way of drama or excitement,

simply a fair depiction of a ship conducting training at sea. Exercises are shown that do

not involve the main character, including a test of the ship's mortar and deck guns.

Seaman Thorn stands bridge watch, where he spies an object floating off in the distance.

The narrator warns that this may be a mine, but the ship's captain is quick to identify it as

a simple oil drum. This is one of the few interactions between Thorn and any of the

ship's officers, who throughout the film are invariably presented as confident and

knowledgeable. The film concludes with a scene of the ship entering harbor at day's end.

The narrator explains that the newly-commissioned ship will complete several more such

exercises before it can "assume a role on any station, at home or abroad." Though this

final declaration and the triumphant music that accompanies the film's final scene are

grandiose, they fall short of packaging the film in a way that is exciting or particularly

enticing. Shipboard life, and therefore the life of an enlisted sailor, is uniformly

presented as tough and unforgiving.

While the junior rating endured hardships underway, a different sort of recruiting

film from ten years later showed the training and indoctrination of Royal Navy officers.

These films[10] focused on life at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) in Dartmouth,

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[10] See IWM titles DRN 2255, "And Now to Sea," and COI 1104, "Dartmouth and Beyond." Though
separated by ten years in production, the two films are closely related in style and content. The major
difference is in the inclusion of women in the 1980 film, due to the Wrens' entry to BRNC in 1976.

Devonshire. This single institution was the site of training for nearly all of the Royal Navy's officers for the duration of the 20th century. The lifestyle of the cadets at Dartmouth was the main focus of the films, showing the regimen of classroom work, drilling, and training at sea that made up the primary curriculum. A narrator explains that these cadets experience training both at the college and during long-term assignments onboard ships of the Dartmouth Training Squadron, where they learn ship handling, celestial navigation, and myriad other seamanship skills. Physical prowess is an important facet of cadet life as well, as the men are shown swimming and playing cricket. The cadets at Dartmouth are always depicted as members of the British elite: tall, fit, white, male, and upper class. Their training is presented as a necessary hardship in preparation for duty as a Royal Navy officer.

As the 1970s progressed, the Royal Navy began to develop shorter, condensed commercials in their recruiting efforts for use alongside the longer formatted films. In 1972 and again in 1976 the Royal Navy released two series of recruitment pieces that focused on the technical nature of the service and training that recruits received. The series are similar in style and content, running between forty five seconds and two minutes in length and each covering many facets of service in the Royal Navy. The 1976 series consisted of twelve thematic clips that each focused on a different element of Royal Navy service; the topics ranged from shipboard maintenance to ships' missions and amphibious operations. In one commercial, the Navy's supply and secretariat service is showcased when a malfunction on a destroyer's deck gun requires a replacement part. A narrator describes the process by which the ship's supply division orders the part and how the order is processed at a shore command. A young Wren is shown at a large

supply depot where she locates the part. In a bit of cinematic flair, the final scene shows

her personally delivering the new mechanism to the ship's helicopter pilot on the helipad

for transfer to the vessel. Another bit focusing on the same supply division shows Royal

Navy refueling vessels carrying out an underway replenishment. The film details a

refueling ship as it delivers gas and food supplies to a destroyer while a narrator explains,

"These replenishments at sea allow Royal Navy warships to stay on the move for

prolonged spells and (are) invaluable when we no longer have the use we once had of

ports throughout the world." The film concludes with a view of both ships sailing into

the sunset as the narrator boasts, "The Royal Navy is the only European navy with the

ability to deploy a force in any ocean of the world and keep it fully supplied."

Apart from the boilerplate focus on technical job description, several of the 1976

films showed a new element to the Royal Navy's recruitment strategy that would become

standard in the years following. This novel focus was on the role of the Royal Navy as a

worldwide military presence, the implications of which were translated to potential

recruits as an opportunity for exotic personal experiences. In one such ad from 1976

labeled "adventure and travel," the narrator boasts that, "The ships of the world's third

largest navy, the Royal Navy, are on constant call and patrol in the world's seas and

oceans." This statement is made over footage of Royal Navy ships sailing under the

Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, off white sand beaches in Fiji, and through the

Suez Canal. The narrator intones, "The Royal Navy (was) invited by the Egyptian

government to help in clearing the mines and wreckage of war." In a single one-minute

bit, the Royal Navy is shown as a first rate, technologically advanced fighting force and a

major player in world events. The payoff of this message to a potential recruit is the

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promise of travel while in a service that is dedicated to preserving freedom and liberty around the world.

While in the 1970s, Royal Navy recruiting materials included this travel and adventure aspect of naval lifestyle to a small extent, by the early 1980s these appeals became a main focus. A new series of recruiting commercials produced in 1982 is a clear hybridization of messages with the more exciting "adventure and travel" motif receiving equal play with the standard "training and employment opportunities." In a short recruitment film tagged "The Right Choice," a teenager living in a low-income housing project sees a Royal Navy television commercial that inspires him to enlist. The film conveniently excludes any scenes of basic training and instead jumps ahead to show his education as a ship's engineer. Next the viewer sees a trained and confident young man working onboard the HMS *Coventry* during a deployment to the Far East. While underway, the sailor is shown checking the weapon systems on a helicopter before it departs for a patrol. Once in port, however, the young man is allowed ashore for sightseeing. The film contains two considerable segments, one in Singapore and one in Hong Kong, in which the young sailor is shown enjoying the exotic culture. Beyond his immaculate uniform, there is nothing to distinguish the young sailor and his companions from any of the other excited tourists on Hong Kong's bustling city streets. By listening to the characters' dialog, the viewer is quickly led to the conclusion that such exotic experiences would never be available to the sailor had he remained a civilian. As the holiday concludes and the ship sets out to sea again, in a voiceover the young sailor confirms, "Joining the Navy was the best decision I ever made. I know I made *the Right Choice.*" This commercial is representative of the turn made in Royal Navy recruitment

strategy from one that focused on job training through detailed accounts of daily life, to one that sold a lifestyle of travel, adventure, and individual experience.

By the late 1980s, the Royal Navy had moved into the modern era of recruiting commercials, creating ads of a much higher production value that incorporated and balanced all of the recruiting "draws" present in earlier films. In a 1989 recruiting film entitled "Ambitions," a boy is seen at an air show watching planes perform acrobatic stunts overhead. The scene jumps forward and the viewer sees the now-grown man as he climbs into the cockpit of a Harrier jet onboard a Royal Navy aircraft carrier. A montage of flight deck activity precedes the plane's takeoff. As the plane launches into the sky, the narrator announces, "Give your ambitions a chance." This final shot was well chosen for the commercial's debut, which came during the first airing of the 1986 hit film *Top Gun* on British television. This convenient timeslot placement is as much a marketing gimmick as an appeal for recruits, but it speaks to the sophistication that the medium of naval recruitment has reached by the end of the 20th century.

Ads from the 1990s continue this trend, taking them to another theatrical level. A thirty second television spot from 1999 entitled "Green Reseen" shows a sailor in his early twenties whose face has been digitally colored bright green. A narrator, speaking as always directly to the viewer, explains that in the first few months the training will be slow and difficult. A montage shows the sailor and several of his bright green companions during their trials as young ratings, comically enduring frustrations in a variety of exotic settings. The narrator tells the viewer they will become "more decisive, more confident." He goes on, "You might not notice the change, but when you go home, you'll see a huge difference." This line comes over a shot of our young sailor at home

among friends, their faces colored green from a naval-themed video game the group is playing. As the young man backs away from the screen, his smiling face becomes naturally colored for the first time. The montage cuts back to him as a confident and well-trained sailor on the bow of his ship as the narrator announces the ad's tagline; "Join the Royal Navy and see the world…differently."

Surprisingly absent from the Imperial War Museum's collection were films that detailed the Royal Navy's growing submarine force. Despite their importance to the navy and to the British nation, the Polaris missile-armed nuclear submarines that came online during the early 1960s are hardly represented in the advertisements at the museum. The secondary scholarship is inconclusive on the cause for this apparent oversight. A possibility for this omission is that the ballistic submarine force, though important in the expanding Cold War, was still very small compared to the fleet as a whole. The advanced specialization required and the small crew sizes meant that the navy's efforts were better focused on larger surface contingents. Adding to this argument is another author who describes how perception of the Royal Navy is "dominated by the surface ship," and has been since Nelson's time.[11]

These recruiting films started production concurrent with the end of the National Service in 1960. Conscription, which had been in effect since 1939, was an institution that served to integrate the ideals of military service with those of the general public.[12]

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[11] Alastair Finlan, *The Royal Navy in the Falklands Conflict and the Gulf War: Culture and Strategy* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004), 15.

[12] Hew Strachan, "The Civil-Military 'Gap' in Britain," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26 (2003): 43. Strachan sees the end of conscription as the biggest change in civil-military relations for the entire Cold War period. Although primarily focusing on the British Army, Strachan's conclusions hold that a mutual mistrust between civilian government and the military. He addresses the cultural impact of this division in "Reassessing Recruiting Strategies for the Armed Services," in *New People Strategies for the British Armed Forces*, ed. Alex Alexandrou, Richard Bartle and Richard Holmes (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2001), 104. Here, Strachan discusses Britain's wartime willingness to set aside its liberal ideals, for

War, and by extension a wartime draft, according to military historian Hew Strachan, served to suppress the legacy of Victorian liberalism in British Society. Strachan writes that the practice of conscription served "not just to universalize the experience of military service but also to militarize society." The National Service, however, was understood as a wartime measure, and by 1960 there was little justification for continuing it in the face of reductions in troop numbers across all the services. The national divergence from the wartime mindset in the decade following 1945 occurred just as naturally as it had been created by the crisis of global conflict. By the 1950s, imperial loss and retreat from empire by then had become a reality accepted by the British public, as had a new economic focus on domestic rebuilding. In these circumstances, the Royal Navy, along with the British government, had to define a new role and a new relationship to the British people.[13]

Disassociation with the military became the main problem facing the Royal Navy in its efforts to recruit young Britons. To meet its (albeit diminished) manpower needs, the Royal Navy had to reach across a widening gap between itself and a postwar British society that was identifying less and less with imperial greatness. The recruiting materials are a microcosm of the changes that the fleet itself experienced. They demonstrate the service's attempt to recruit in ways that would resonate among the youth in British society. The navy shifted its focus after the early 1980s away from traditional vignettes of job opportunity and training that were a staple in the tough economic times

example the suspension of parliamentary elections until the final surrender of Germany. For further discussions on aspects of British wartime culture, see Taylor, *British Propaganda*, pg. 183 (note 13).
[13] Philip Taylor, *British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: Selling Democracy* (Edinburgh, Edinburge University Press, 1999), 240. Taylor attributes this malaise to the negative British projection during the years following 1945, in which Britain saw itself as having little to offer the world in terms of economic and manufacturing opportunity. This attitude was reinforced by British failures in Suez in 1956, and later problems on the international economic stage.

of the mid 20th century. Thereafter, recruitment films began to grapple with social

changes that affected the members of the fleet. A greater emphasis was placed, not on

job security, but on personal experience and job satisfaction that were the just rewards of

a life spent in Her Majesty's Navy.

To understand why the navy shifted its recruiting themes over the latter half of the

20th century, it is necessary to understand its history following World War II. These

changes reflect a reluctant awareness, on both the part of the Royal Navy and in the

society that it served, that Britain no longer occupied a preeminent role in world affairs.

A powerful navy, much less than a "sacred institution" of imperialism, to many

represented an anachronism given the dissolution of British rule around the world. The

influence of the Royal Navy on a global scale during this period was decidedly less than

it had been during Britain's apogee. Nevertheless, its missions were vital in the political

strategy of a leading world power that, though bereft of its territorial holdings and

economic primacy, still occupied an eminent position in a world divided between east

and west.

A Background to the 20th Century Royal Navy

In 1962, while addressing the United States Military Academy, former U.S.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson stated, "Great Britain has lost an empire, and has not

yet found a role."[14] His remark caused immediate outrage in the United Kingdom, with

front-page headlines that attacked the American diplomat's judgment. The testiness of

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[14] Douglas Brinkley, "Dean Acheson and the 'Special Relationship': The West Point speech of December 1962," *The Historical Journal* 33 (1999): 601. The irony of the statement, as well as the British response was that Acheson was among Britain's strongest supporters. At age 69, Acheson was a private citizen who had retired from public life, though he was still considered an eminent American statesman.

the British response to the speech of a retired U.S. statesman illustrated just how closely Acheson had hit home. By the early 1960s, Britain had undergone nearly two decades of declining prominence. The Royal Navy itself endured shrinking personnel numbers, ship sizes, and decreased presence around the world. The Royal Navy's changing strategic role and capabilities reflected the changing reality of the British place in the post-World War II international community.

The Royal Navy's number of ships and personnel declined steadily after 1945. In that year, the fleet boasted 900 major warships (aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, etc.) and slightly fewer than 900,000 total officers and sailors.[15] This formidable wartime level could not be sustained by Britain's bankrupt economy, despite the admiralty's wishes to maintain a sizable force in the same manner as its American allies.[16] The post-war demobilization brought much speculation about the navy's role, as the growing threat of Soviet aggression loomed ever larger in Britain's spheres of influence. During this time from 1945-1950, the Navy fulfilled many of the same missions as before the war: serving to link the British Isles with its overseas territories. As the British political situation became more tenuous in many of its former territories, so too did the Royal Navy's presence.

The 1950s saw the Royal Navy involve itself in two major military operations: first in 1950-3 in support of the United Nations in the Korean Conflict and then in 1956 during the Suez Crisis. In both of these engagements, the navy showcased its abilities as

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[15] Royal Navy website, "Historical Periods: The Second World War," (Retrieved 8 May 2010). Actual number given is 886,000 officers and men. In Oxford's *Illustrated History of the Royal Navy*, the numbers are 863,500 (pg 377).

[16] J.R. Hill, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Royal Navy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 382. Hill details the unwillingness of not only the Royal Navy, but all of the services to yield to budgetary constraints during the late 1940s. The Admiralty's 1947 plan called for a force of 150,000+ personnel. More moderate proposals for a Royal Navy of less than 100,000 men were rejected as "too sweeping" a deduction.

a first-rate, though smaller, fighting force. From a military standpoint, the Anglo-French

invasion of the Suez Canal zone in 1956 was a success.[17] Political backlash was

immediate, however, with both the Soviet Union and the United States calling for the

withdrawal of troops.

The political fallout from the Suez Crisis resulted in sweeping changes within the

Royal Navy. A house-clearing effort on the part of the Conservative government

replaced the Prime Minister as well as many top-level ministers, including the Minister of

Defense. Enter Duncan Sandys, the son-in-law of Winston Churchill, who lacked none

of the former Prime Minister's resolve. His Defense White Papers, essentially the

published strategy or marching orders for the British military, called for a 50% reduction

in military troop capacity, from the 1957 level of 735,000 to 375,000 by 1962.[18] A major

contributing factor to this decrease in personnel was the Conservatives' repeal of the

National Service, the government organization responsible for military conscription that

had continued since the end of World War II. This reduction would take the greatest toll

on the Army, but the Royal Navy also lost personnel. The navy finally dipped below

100,000 officers and men as a result of Sandys' reforms; in 1968 it counted 95,100 on its

rolls.[19] A decade later in 1979 the Royal Navy had 72,500 personnel, and the downward

trend would only continue.

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[17] J.R. Hill, *Oxford Illustrated History*, 385. In general, historical commentary agrees that the military operations in the Suez and Sinai were a success; only political pressure caused the Anglo-French withdrawal, not shortcomings on behalf of the combined Anglo-French military.
[18] Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice Between Europe and the World?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 24.
[19] Simon Ball, "British Defense Policy," in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000,* ed. by Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 540. All of the data for this paragraph is taken from Ball's source, which in turn is taken from Michael Dockrill, *British Defense since 1945* (Oxford, 1988), as well as the 1992 Defense White Paper.

As Royal Navy personnel numbers were reduced, so too were the vessels which

they manned. In 1950, the fleet boasted twelve aircraft carriers, though some were

admittedly aging vessels built before war; these would not be replaced by newer hulls.

By 1960, only eight carriers remained in service; in 1970, just three are listed in navy

records.[20] Likewise, other major surface ship classes were downsized and then totally

done away with: the Royal Navy had only three heavy cruisers in 1970, down from

twenty-nine in 1950. The story was the same for destroyers, from 280 in the 1950s to

only 81 in 1970.

There were positive moments for the Royal Navy as well during this period of

reduction. The implementation of the Royal Navy's nuclear submarine capability in the

1960s was, according to one historian, "one of the great success stories of the post-war

Royal Navy."[21] In late 1962 the United Kingdom concluded a deal with the United States

for the placement of Polaris missiles, armed with British-engineered warheads, onboard

Resolute-class Royal Navy submarines. Previous Anglo-American nuclear arms

arrangements required that release authority be held by American commanders. After the

1962 agreement, however, nuclear missiles were deployed onboard British submarines

commanded by Royal Navy officers, meaning that for the first time that the United

Kingdom possessed an "independent nuclear deterrent."[22] Today, the Royal Navy's

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[20] J.R. Hill, *Oxford Illustrated History*, 398. The numbers of ships don't agree depending on the sources.
Oxford's history gives the number of Royal Navy aircraft carriers as eight in 1960. However, Vice
Admiral Schofield, writing in 1960, lists British aircraft carriers available as only three, with Canada and
Australia each with an additional vessel; see *The Royal Navy Today* (London: Oxford University Press,
1960), 21. Neither source provides identification of specific ships, which further complicates ascertaining
which ships are being accounted for. Schofield gives the disclaimer that his list "does not include ships in
reserve or undergoing extended refits, modernization, etc." In all likelihood, he is not tallying the outdated
World War II carriers whose careers were coming to an end.

[21] Ibid., 386.

[22] Simon Schama, *A History of Britain, vol 3: The Fate of Empire, 1776-2000* (New York: Hyperion,
2000), 540. The estimated cost of an independent nuclear arsenal, when combined with British plans for

Vanguard submarines retain the United Kingdom's only operational nuclear weapon delivery system.[23]

The Falklands Crisis of 1982 was even more important for the Royal Navy in both operational and cultural terms. Despite the opinion that it was "impossible"[24] for the British to retake the islands from Argentina, given the 8,000 miles of ocean and threat of aerial attack from the South American mainland, the Royal Navy successfully recaptured the Falklands less than two months after the initial invasion. The success of the campaign caused resurgence in attention to the service fueled largely by nationalist fervor. The front page of the June 16th edition of *The Times* carried Prime Minister Thatcher's proclamation that "we have restored once again the dominance of Britain, and let every nation know that where there is British sovereign territory it will be well and truly defended."[25] Effecting this defense was the Royal Navy, which according to Major-General Jeremy Moore, commander of British ground forces in the Falklands, "demonstrated the fighting qualities which have been their tradition through centuries, whether one goes back to Drake (or) Nelson or to more recent times."[26]

continued worldwide military presence, was astronomical: $3.5 billion or roughly a third of total British expenses for World War II.

[23] Simon Ball, "British Defense Policy," 545. Ball cites how the Labour opposition argued the intricacies of the agreement, stating that the Polaris missile deal was a NATO undertaking and therefore under the egis of U.S. supreme command. In practice, however, NATO authority was delegated to the British Admiralty, in keeping with Prime Minister Macmillan's statement that Britain should be able to act unilaterally if its "supreme national interests are at stake." The return of Labour to power in 1964 saw the attempt to reemphasize the Royal Air Force by purchasing American-built strategic bombers. However, the longevity of these systems could not compete with that of the ballistic submarine; the *Resolution*-class continued service until the 1990s, when they were replaced by the *Vanguard*-class.

[24] Sandy Woodward, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1992), 72. This judgment was based on an opinion of the United States' Joint Chiefs of Staff that was well-known to the British Admiralty.

[25] Julian Haviland, "Thatcher says no need for UN negotiations," *The Times*, June 16, 1982, 1. The Prime Minister's speech was in response to questions raised about international involvement in the peace process.

[26] John Witherow, "A close-run thing, says general," *The Times*, June 17, 1982, 1.

The glow of success in the Falklands did not curtail the downsizing of the fleet,

though better, more versatile ships were developed. These ships are every bit the

equivalent to those of analogous classes in the U.S. Navy, as shown by their service

alongside their American counterparts in the 1991 Gulf War and in the invasion of Iraq in

2003.[27]   As a part of the coalition strike force, the Royal Navy and Marines played an

integral role in the capture of southern Iraq in the latter conflict. The British strike force

did depend partially on U.S. Navy air cover because of the limited number of aircraft

carriers it could deploy to the Persian Gulf, but in general the two navies shared a

symbiotic relationship.[28] As of December 2009, the Royal Navy employed 38,000 active

duty sailors serving in slightly more than 100 major combatant ships.[29]

The irony is that despite indicators which suggest a surge in popular affinity for

the armed forces especially in the 1980s and later, such public acclaim did not directly

translate into new recruits.[30] For Royal Navy recruiters the challenge became to present

the service in a way that appealed to the needs of British youths. The recruiting

advertisements reflect these changing emphases in a period of economic uncertainty,

social upheaval, and political tension.

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[27] Alastair Finlan, *The Royal Navy in the Falklands Conflict and the Gulf War: Culture and Strategy* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004), 174.

[28] Iain Ballantyne, *Strike from the Sea: The Royal Navy and U.S. Navy at War in the Middle East 1949-2003* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 184.

[29] Ministry of Defense, Defense Analytical Service and Supply, Monthly Manning Report Fact Sheet, Dec 2009. http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=48&thiscontent=160&date=2010-03-12&pubType=1&PublishTime=09:30:06&from=home&tabOption=1

[30] See reference 44 below for various citations concerning the Royal Navy's 20th century recruitment woes.

Job Opportunity and Training

Much of the content of the Royal Navy's recruitment films can be traced to Britain's economic situation in the decades between 1960 and 1990. The United Kingdom suffered a period of prolonged depression during the 1960s and 70s, marked at different times by high unemployment, sagging gross national product, and labor union strikes. A comparison of the world's leading GDPs[31] in 1952 showed Great Britain ranked third after the United States and Soviet Union, and at $44 billion, considerably ahead of West Germany, France, and Japan. Ten years later in 1962, the West German economy had eclipsed Britain's, and the other powers had closed the disparity. By 1972, Great Britain trailed the major world powers in GDP at $128 billion, barely half of France's $224 billion and West Germany's $229 billion. These troubled decades saw Britain in the midst of realigning its role in the international economy, and were a result of lost markets around the world.[32] In 1963 the United Kingdom found itself left out of the European Economic Community (EEC), and therefore at a disadvantage in developing advanced trade relationships as it had enjoyed during the early 20th century.[33]

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[31] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1983), 344. All GNP figures are taken from Kennedy's chart. He focuses on the disparity in defense spending as a percent of GNP during the mid 20th century, when Britain is forced to spend over 4% of its GDP to "provide defense forces equivalent" to its European competitors, who spend a smaller percentage comparatively.

[32] Alan Booth, *The British Economy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 85-7. Alan Booth lays out three distinct "acts" of Britain's role in the international economy during the 20th century. The first, he posits, from 1900-1930 is a period of total integration with international markets supported by colonial trade and manufacturing dominance. The second stage from 1930-1965 is one of withdrawal from a broken global economy, especially after World War II. The final stage sees Britain turn away from its longtime preference towards trade with the commonwealth to adopt a Euro-centric market closely tied with the continent.

[33] Rebecca Fraser, *The Story of Britain from the Romans to the Present: A Narrative History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 741; and Ian Cawood, *Britain in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 257. The EEC, a limited free-trade partnership that fixed prices for certain items, formed in 1957 between six of the top-performing European economies including France, Italy, and West Germany. When the United Kingdom applied for membership in 1963 and again in 1967, French President Charles de Gaulle vetoed on the grounds of limiting American influence in Europe. The British finally gained entry ten years later in 1973.

This loss of available markets caused the British economy to fall behind its European

competitors for a period lasting throughout the 1970s, earning the United Kingdom the

dubious title, "Sick Man of Europe." During this decade and into the 1980s, an

especially consistent hallmark of tough times was high unemployment. The BBC

reported three million unemployed Britons in 1982, roughly 13% of the workforce.[34] The

job prospects for young Britons, therefore, were few and far between; in 1982 the Labour

party leader Michael Foot estimated that there were "thirty two people chasing every

(job) vacancy."[35]

The Royal Navy certainly had job openings to fill throughout the period; the

reality was that, despite these difficult economic times, the fleet continued to struggle in

meeting its recruiting goals. Terms of enlistment for both officers and ratings were a

major contributing factor for personnel shortfall in the 1960s.[36] The traditional model for

commitment in the Royal Navy for officers and enlisted sailors was that of Continuous

Service, a plan enacted in mid-19th century which required a long-term initial

commitment (normally ten years), followed by an additional twelve-year period, after

which the sailor qualified for a pension. Recruiting and retention remained a problem

throughout the 1960s and 70s; in 1969 the Ministry of Defense formed a committee

headed by Lord Donaldson to find a solution to the personnel shortfall.[37] The Donaldson

committee's findings resulted in sweeping changes to the enlistment conditions of Royal

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[34] Booth, *The British Economy,* 129.
[35] BBC News, "UK Unemployment Tops 3 Million," 26 Jan 1982.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/26/newsid_2506000/2506335.stm (accessed 19
OCT 2010).
[36] Frank Twiss, *Social Change in the Royal Navy 1924-1970: The Life and Times of Admiral Sir Frank
Twiss* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1996), 177. Admiral Twiss, who retired in 1970 as Second Sea Lord,
writes of the disillusionment of the men of the Royal Navy in the long term service commitments that were
incurred by a vast majority of personnel entering the Royal Navy in the early 1960s.
[37] John Wells, *The Royal Navy: An Illustrated Social History, 1870-1982* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton
Publishing, 2004), 257.

Navy officers and sailors, allowing terms as short as four years while simplifying the process for early separation. These measures did not solve the manpower shortage, however, since many sailors who had come in during Continuous Service now found it easy to end their enlistments early. The challenge for the navy became to portray the economic benefits of naval service for a new generation of potential officers and enlisted sailors.

The principal films for officer recruitment were centered on training at Britannia Royal Naval College. The BRNC films of the 1970s offered a dry account of the life of aspiring naval officers. The training regimen of schoolwork, military drill, and seamanship was designed to provide the officers for the "General List." These were the line officers who composed the main body of leadership in the Royal Navy, and who were required to master a broad array of topics including math, science, and literature.[38] This appeal for well-rounded Royal Navy officers was founded in the educational culture of 19th and 20th century Britain, which valued liberal arts as the core pursuit of the elite.[39] The officer recruitment films, therefore, established BRNC as a center for elite education. This notion was reinforced by, among other things, the attendance of members of the British Royal Family at the school.[40] There was a clear message in the films that the navy was not looking for just anyone to serve as an officer; rather, Royal Navy officers

[38] Eric W. Bush, *How to Become a Naval Officer* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 25. Bush, a retired captain, wrote this informational volume to guide the decision of young potential officers and is itself a 100+ page commercial in written form. Bush's images and in many cases his description of life at BRNC mirror those in the recruiting films, as does his narration, which extols young men to seek out information regarding entry into the college.

[39] Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980, 2nd Ed.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 6; and David Edgarton, *Science, Technology, and the British Industrial 'Decline' 1870-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Wiener's analysis of British elite education has drawn criticism from other cultural historians, principally Edgarton who shows growing support of technology and engineering over the course of the 20th century.

[40] Prince Philip was introduced to the then-Princess Elizabeth while a cadet at Dartmouth in 1939; two of their three sons, including the Prince of Wales, were cadets at the college before joining the Royal Navy.

were people, as Fleet Admiral Mountbatten put it, "who don't want to make a lot of money, who don't want to be frightfully comfortable, but who want to be very happy and contented in their work, who want to feel that what they are doing is worth while."[41]

For recruiting enlisted sailors, the films were less discerning in the type of person the fleet attracted; instead the focus was to offer a broad array of opportunities that appealed to those who were suffering the economic malaise, as well as to career-minded recruits. Job opportunity was widely shown in the films of the late 1970s and early 80s, just as Britain was in its most dire economic straits. This time period also coincided with the Donaldson committee's amendments to the Royal Navy's enlistment terms, meaning that sailors could end their commitment much sooner than ever before. The naval artificer film from 1984[42] reflects this new appeal to short-term job benefits. In a straight-forward fashion, this film shows the progression of instruction that each sailor receives at a navy training command. The narrator explains that the students shown in training will one day be responsible for maintaining all shipboard equipment, including weapons systems. The final scene shows the young ratings graduating from the course, civilian vocational diplomas in hand, ready to report for duty. These enlisted students received a Business and Technology Educational Council (BTEC) diploma upon completion. These specific BTEC accreditations were the vocational equivalent of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) that British students generally acquired before the age of 18. Armed with these diplomas, the narrator promises, these graduates have the opportunity for quick promotion while in the service and all the necessary qualifications to continue their careers in the private sector. An intentional

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[41] Eric W. Bush, *How to Become a Naval Officer* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 25.
[42] COI 1140.

byproduct of the navy's focus on technical training, especially in the 1960s and 70s, was to show the technological advancements that the navy was making throughout the period. Even as funding for new units stagnated, research and development in the fleet continued in full force to develop better weapons, platforms, and computer systems. These proved a force multiplier for the fleet, helping to soften the impact of diminishing manpower.

After the 1980s, the distinction between officer and enlisted opportunities became increasingly blurred in the recruiting materials. In the 1961 film there were clearly-defined roles for officers and ordinary sailors; the later films slowly transitioned away from denoting differences in rank. For example, the 1989 "Ambitions" trailer in which the young man becomes a pilot after attending an air show as a boy does not show any of the advanced education or training at BRNC that would be required of him. In this regard, the recruitment films produced in the 1980s and 90s were more impressionistic than their predecessors. Instead of detailed yet mundane discussions of training that could be translated to careers outside of the navy, the commercials in the 1990s gave the notion of whole-person development, as exampled in the "Green Reseen" piece. Here, the navy offered a way to escape being "green," to become "more decisive" and "more confident," but never really gave any details of life in the service. To their young potential sailor, these advertisements managed to offer travel, adventure, and a path to manhood while remaining short and somewhat vague. The end-state of the commercials is less tangible than a vocational diploma or university degree. Instead, these ads offer both officers and ratings a challenging path to manhood, full of fun and adventure.

This endpoint is a promising conclusion to the changes that Royal Navy recruitment experienced as it matched its strategies to the British job market. The

recruiting films from before the 1980s, when the economy was at its worst, had technical

training as a major focus, with the hope that new skills might lead to employment in the

civilian sector. As education and job opportunities in Britain improved over time,

however, changing ideas about career progression allowed the navy to adopt new

strategies. Jerry Plant, a Royal Navy human resource manager, explains that after the

economic recovery in the 1980s, workers became increasingly willing to sacrifice job

security in order to seek more diversity in both training and job experience.[43] This

"freeing" effect on the British worker allowed recruitment films to focus on the

fulfillment and job satisfaction of naval service. Ultimately, the Royal Navy's recruiting

responses to the needs of the job market were unsuccessful, with different authors

observing personnel shortfalls for the entire period of 1960-1990.[44] Greater success for

the fleet was to be had in the realm of recruiting from non-traditional sources, principally

for the ranks of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

Gender and Race

The strong trend of liberalism within British society that Hew Strachan sees as

"inimical to the communal ethos of the armed services" ironically became a driving force

behind many of the changes that occurred beginning in the 1970s. As both women and

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[43] Jerry Plant, "Portfolio Careers," 116. Plant sees more than just economic factors affecting the change in careers; he cites the impact of social change in redefining the dynamic of finding long-term employment. These changes, shown later, also have major impact on the Royal Navy. Plant establishes the Navy's new policy is to develop officers along four career paths; linear, expert, spiral, and transitory. Of these, three are specifically aimed towards gaining expertise in at least one specific skill set, and two cater to workers who seek job diversity and new training. Only the linear model, the "most traditional," has the express expectation that the employee will gain all of their training and spend most or all of their career within the same organization. This is also the career path that expects the least job specialization.

[44] Some of these have been cited previously: Twiss, *Social Change*, 177 discusses personnel problems in the early 1960s. John Wells, *The Royal Navy 1870-1982,* 257 gives recruiting shortfalls in the 1970s as nearly 20% of desired applicants. Hew Strachan, among others, have documented the late 20th Century woes of the armed forces in meeting declared recruiting quotas.

ethnic minority groups sought more equality and opportunity, the Royal Navy found it necessary, and often beneficial, to adapt its policies.[45] The Royal Navy, however, was not a passive player in the incorporation of minorities, simply bowing to pressure from the feminist or ethnic movements of the 1980s. Instead, the two sides shared in the responsibility of bringing about integration. The general pattern that developed is one in which the navy responded to popular pressure for such inclusion with targeted recruitment efforts before ultimately incorporating minority themes into their mainstream advertisements.

This process is best displayed in the Royal Navy's gradual incorporation of women, an important step in bridging the social gap between itself and the British population as well as a very effective means of securing new recruits. Women's integration into the navy was not an overnight occurrence, however; instead this change would come in gradual advancements over the course of several decades in which the Royal Navy continually reassessed its employment of women. The story of women's entry into the navy is rooted in that of the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) or "Wrens" as they were colloquially called, which came into existence in the later years of World War I. The rationale behind its founding, as expressed by the First Sea Lord John Jellicoe in a letter to King George V in 1917, was in "substituting women for men on certain work on shore directly connected with the Royal Navy."[46] Though disbanded in

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[45] Caroline Kennedy-Pipe and Stephen Welch, "Women in the Military: Future Prospects and Ways Ahead," in *New People Strategies for the British Armed Forces* ed. Alex Alexandrou, Richard Bartle and Richard Holmes (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2001), 50. Kennedy-Pipe and Welch describe the feminist movement's interest in ending the male-dominated military complex that received so much power and prestige as a function of the state. This led to societal pressure on the military to change its employment of women in noncombat and later combat roles.

[46] Ursula Stuart Mason, *Britannia's Daughters: The Story of the WRNS* (London: Leo Cooper, 1992), 1. This famous letter was written to George V in his capacity as a professional naval officer. In *The WRNS: A History of the Women's Royal Naval Service* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989), WRNS

1919, they were reinstated on the eve of World War II, and by 1944 counted 74,000

officers and ratings. The strain of that conflict quickly led to an expansion of the roles

filled by Wrens, as a need for labor saw women working as mechanics, electricians,

cryptologists and virtually every other non-combatant role.[47]

When the war ended, many expected that the WRNS would too; this was not the

case. The service was made permanent by the Admiralty Board in 1946, and was,

according to the Admiralty "regarded, in all respects…as part of the Royal Navy itself."

Natural changes occurred in terms of training and employment over the course of the

following half century. In 1976 the first female cadets were admitted into Britannia

Royal Naval College to train alongside male officer candidates. The WRNS would more

or less continue in this capacity of filling shore assignments until 1993, when the

Admiralty fully integrated the service into the regular Royal Navy. During the period

before 1993, the WRNS was held on even terms of *stature* within the navy's

organization, though women never received equal pay for performing identical jobs filled

by men.[48] Women who served on surface ships after integration "produced exactly the

same quality of performance as did their male peers" and the women themselves believed

"they could do the job infinitely better than all men."[49]

Commandant Marjorie Fletcher confirms that the original intent of the service was to carry out "domestic and clerical duties," usually as cooks, secretaries, and storekeepers.

[47] Mason, *Britannia's Daughters*, 70. Mason describes Wrens who, after completion of extended training, showed enough skill and proficiency to be qualified as inspectors in manufacturing plants, and some who were trusted with relaying vital information concerning major military operations. The future Queen Elizabeth II, then only a teenager, famously served during the war in the British Army's equivalent of the WRNS, training as a truck mechanic.

[48] Marjorie Fletcher, *The WRNS*, 130 (note 46). It is difficult to adjudge to what degree of legitimacy that the WRNS was held by individuals within the navy, but the official treatment of the service was to offer training and placement equivalent to those available to men. Pay, on the other hand, was governed by the foregone conclusion that Wrens would not receive equal pay, even by the 1980s. The money-saving advantage this offered perhaps contributed to the navy's affinity for the WRNS, though this ulterior motive is not hinted at in any of the sources.

[49] Finlan, *Royal Navy in the Falklands*, 159.

This sequence of gradual incorporation over several decades is played out in the recruiting videos. A simple account of the quantity of WRNS recruiting films from the decade that followed the end of the National Service, which did not apply to women, suggests that the WRNS was an area where the navy felt it could make up for lost numbers. The Imperial War Museum's film archive holds five titles that span the years from 1961-73.[50] While this number seems small when compared to the number of ads produced for men in the same period, the WRNS ads are only slightly less. Addressing women directly and separately from their male counterparts, the WRNS films contain Wren-specific training and opportunities. They give specific focus to the women's education in clerical duties, radio and signals operations, and computer monitoring as seen in the 1976 promotion. These duties are supplemented in many of the films by the women's participation in social event planning. In the 1970 film "A Life that is Different," one of the roles of the Wrens joining a shore establishment is to plan and attend the NAAFI dance.[51] The prevailing message in the WRNS recruitment films is in line with the stated goal of the organization's founding: to "free up a man for the fleet." While the wartime necessity of every able-bodied man to serve no longer exists, the film's message still communicates that Wrens are necessary to hold shore commands so that men can be sent to the (implicitly more important) task of manning Her Majesty's ships.

This picture is true of the women recruited for officer training as well. A 1980 film entitled "Life with a Future" joined several others that focused on Britannia Royal Naval College. This film, however, is centered on the experience of female cadets at

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[50] Specifically, see IWM entries under WRNS heading.
[51] COI 1054. The Navy, Army, and Air Force Institute (NAAFI) is the commissary and recreation organization of the British armed forces.

BRNC, the first class of which arrived in 1976. When compared to its strictly-male predecessors, this film of training at Dartmouth provides insight into a navy that is working to redefine the roles of its female members. The film begins with a shot of a Wasp helicopter's rotors as the aircraft prepares for takeoff. Upbeat music plays as the film cuts to an aerial view of the college. A narrator announces this to be "the traditional home of officer training for the men and women of the modern navy." The film is quick to point out, however, that the women trained at Dartmouth will not serve on a ship. The narrator goes on to explain how the Wrens will fill one of many shore-based duties such as supply, food service, and personnel administration. The female cadets are nevertheless exposed to the various functions of Royal Navy units afloat during short, day-long training voyages just off the coast. A young male officer explains the importance of this training to a group of female students, stating that "although (they) won't be employed at sea," experience on ships will help them to better understand and serve in their future roles ashore.

"Life with a Future," like the counterparts intended for male recruits, provides a montage of scenes showing the women partaking in various drills aboard the ship. In one exercise, a man overboard scenario is recorded with one of the young women acting as the conning officer, in charge of positioning the ship to recover the sailor in the water. A male lieutenant stands at her side for the entirety of the drill, feeding her commands which she in turn relays to the helmsman. To a critical observer, this unusual amount of extra instruction undercuts the legitimacy of her training as it makes clear that she and the other women onboard are not expected to gain proficiency at their temporarily assigned tasks.

While not expected to become proficient at sea, the film makes it clear that experience in a social setting is integral to the Wrens' training. "Apart from the hard work," one woman says, "there's a great deal to do socially." Clips are shown of female cadets participating in sports; swimming, tennis, and "more unusual sports" like shotgun shooting are all displayed. As shown in previous films for enlisted Wrens, the female cadets at BRNC are likewise charged with hosting dinner parties. In the dinner shown, the male cadets and officers attend in formal military attire while their female colleagues appear in civilian dresses and act both as party attendees and as stewardesses. The president of each female class, the narrator explains, also serves as the "social secretary" and organizes social functions not just for the female cadets but for the college as a whole. The film's final scene shows the college's formal dress parade. The women appear and march as a separate unit from their male counterparts. They likewise wear a different white uniform than the men in dark blue, who march with swords that the women are not issued.

A large percentage of women seemingly had little problem accepting the less-than-equal treatment of both officer and rating Wrens during the 1970s. That decade is described as "a major success story" in terms of recruitment into the WRNS.[52] The service at the time could only accept two out of every twelve women who applied, resulting in a higher standard of personnel. This in turn boosted the Wren's position of greater integration into the regular navy.

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[52] John Wells, *The Royal Navy: An Illustrated Social History 1870-1982* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton, 1994), 257.

While women's recruiting was going on long before their full integration into the Royal Navy, the recruitment of ethnic minorities was far less of a focus for the Royal Navy as well as the Ministry of Defense. Much of the discussion regarding ethnic inclusion in the British military is very recent, as is the related research and literature.[53] A concerted effort on the part of the Royal Navy to recruit Britain's ethnic minorities simply does not exist before the 1990s. The Royal Navy, alongside the British Army and Royal Air Force, had no response to the growing number of ethnic minorities in the population, as is readily noticeable when evaluating any of the films prior to the 1990s. The Ministry of Defense acknowledged this oversight in 1997, when they began a comprehensive radio and television advertisement campaign aimed at Britain's large minority population.[54] In the public announcement of the plan to increase ethnic recruitment, the Chief of the General Staff, Britain's senior military officer Sir Roger Wheeler acknowledges that the armed forces, "haven't got it (ethnic integration in the military) right in the past, but we're going to get it right now, and more importantly: come and join us."[55]

Several demographic factors play into these new minority initiatives. The steady rate of population increase during the 1990s helps to explain the relative newness of the ministry's campaign efforts. The 1991 census found roughly 3 million non-white

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[53] Asifa Hussain, "Managing Ethnic Minority Recruitment in the Uniformed Services: A Scottish Perspective," in *Human Resource Management in the British Armed Forces: Investing in the Future* ed. Alex Alexandrou, Richard Bartle, and Richard Holmes (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2001), 113. Hussain's article focuses on the representation of minority groups in the uniformed services (military, police, and fire) in Scotland, where she is a research fellow for the Ministry of Defense and the University of Glasgow. Scotland's minority population is proportionally smaller than the national average, leading to the difference present in much of her research.
[54] BFA 748. This public service video details the launch of the ethnic minority recruiting team and a campaign to "fight segregation and racism within the military."
[55] Ibid.

residents in the UK, roughly 5.5% of the overall population.[56] This was an increase of

almost 1 million residents (3.9% of the population) from 1981. By 2001, the total

minority population had jumped to 4.6 million or 7.9% of the population.[57] An estimate

from that same year found the ethnic composition of the British armed forces was only

1.1%.[58] An important aspect of this ethnic growth (in terms of military recruitment), was

the relative youth of the growing minorities. In 1996, 67.6% of the minority population,

some 2.2 million people, was under the age of 34, compared to the 47% of the white

population, 24.8 million people, in the same age groups.[59]

    These figures are open to interpretation because the citizenship status, as well as

the national allegiance of many minority residents are unclear from the census data. A

2004 survey by the Office of National Statistics, the department that conducts the census,

helps to explain this disparity to some degree.[60] Of the major minority groups, 76% of

residents of the United Kingdom of Indian descent identify themselves as British; 82% of

ethnic Pakistanis identify themselves as British, and the same is true for over 80% of

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[56] Tony Champion et al., *The Population of Britain in the 1990s: A Social and Economic Atlas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 28. The non-white or 'minority ethnic' population (as designated by the 2001 census) is further broken down into self-identified nation of origin. The principal categories include Indian (1.8% of total population in 2001), Pakistani (1.3%), Black Caribbean (1.0%), and Black African (0.8%).

[57] National Census, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/expodata/spreadsheets/d6588.xls. A second source, Cawood, *Britain in the Twentieth Century*, pg. 377, gives ethnic population numbers from the year 1999. Cawood shows the minority population to total 3.7 million people or 6.5% of the overall population. The increase in just two years of nearly 1 million illustrates the rate at which the minority population in the UK was growing in the period of the late 1999s when the Royal Navy launched its recruiting efforts.

[58] Asifa Hussain, "Managing Ethnic Minority Recruitment in the Uniformed Services: A Scottish Perspective" In *Human Resource Management in the British Armed Forces: Investing in the Future* ed. Alex Alexandrou, Richard Bartle, and Richard Holmes (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2001), 118.

[59] Percentage extrapolated from table in Arthur Marwick's *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1914-1999* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), pg 372.

[60] Office for National Statistics, "National Identity" (2004), http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=459. The survey details percentage by ethnic group that identify as British, English, Welsh, or Scottish.

Caribbean Black residents. The majority of these ethnic groups are far more likely to consider military service than those who do not identify themselves as culturally British.

The advertising campaigns to reach out to ethnic communities in order to overcome the disparity between the minority population and its representation in the military use all of the traditional recruiting elements once used on potential white recruits. Rather than creating a new series of recruiting ads that *specifically* address a certain group, the Royal Navy simply incorporates ethnic minorities into their existing efforts. A series of radio advertisements from the late 1990s are illustrative of this. One such ad portrays a telephone conversation between a Royal Navy sailor Shakuliz and his friend Salim.[61] In it, Shakuliz wakes his friend with a phone call, and teases him for being asleep (presumably somewhere in Britain) while he has spent the day in Brazil, "diving with all the latest gear." Shakuliz tells his friend of the adventure and training he has experienced, exclaiming, "That's the brilliant thing about the navy, you can do all this stuff." Shakuliz quickly ends the call as he and his mates are off for sightseeing; a voiceover by a third party asks, "How far could you go with the Royal Navy?" If not for the character's names spoken just once at the beginning of the thirty-second bit, there would be no difference between this commercial and any other. The voice actors have no discernible accent that might suggest English is their second language. The similarity of the messages suggests that the Royal Navy is targeting the majority of the ethnic population that culturally identifies themselves as British. The appeal, therefore, is to a British audience regardless of race, with the underlying assumption that the youth

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[61] COI 25074. The exact spelling and pronunciation of the names are difficult to distinguish in the recording, though they are clearly not Anglo-Christian names. Salim, a name Muslim name of Arabic origins, can commonly be found in different forms in the Middle East, East Africa, and in India and Pakistan, all areas of British colonization.

generation is decidedly less focused on issues of race as they are excited about opportunities for travel and fun.

This assumption is upheld in the subsequent recruiting materials archived both at the Imperial War Museum and elsewhere available on the internet. This simple inclusion of minority groups in films with essentially the same theme has become the norm for Royal Navy recruiting ads. In an ad currently in circulation[62] in the United Kingdom, a young female doctor of African descent describes how her medical career has become more challenging and more fulfilling since joining the navy. The title screen bears the Royal Navy logo with an image of a sailor in uniform. As the sailor begins to salute, the image transforms several times in less than a second, showing men and women of every ethnic background in a wide array of navy uniforms, all performing the same gesture.

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There are two narratives that emerge from the Royal Navy recruiting films. One is the role of each individual sailor in the service; this story is told through the changing representations of training, experience, and personal growth and satisfaction that are present in all of the recruiting material. This is important in terms of recruitment, because it allows young people to place themselves in the role of a Royal Navy sailor. The second narrative is that of brand marketing that is intrinsic to the navy's commercials. This purpose for naval advertisements has less to do with filling personnel quotas, and is more centered on portraying an official image of the Royal Navy to broader British society. These images cast the fleet as an extension of national policy and changing British culture, showcasing how the mission and makeup of the service has

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[62] Royal Navy Recruitment, "Royal Navy Doctor," http://www.visit4info.com/advert/Royal-Navy-Doctor-MoD-Royal-Navy-Recruitment/44731. Accessed 5 Dec 2010.

changed in response to or anticipation of shifts both in government and in broader British society.

These dual functions of military advertising –to recruit sailors and to portray the navy in a positive light– are not mutually exclusive. The place of an individual sailor told through the recruiting videos is closely aligned with national identity and the growth of youth culture in Britain. Mary Conley shows how mining the national affinity for its naval heritage proved fertile ground for gaining young recruits in the late 19th century. The Edwardian navy's sheer popularity and widespread positive cultural representations resulted in willing recruits who were as attracted by the image of becoming a Royal Navy sailor as they were by the opportunity for romantic adventure around the empire.[63] At this height of cultural prestige, the Royal Navy's sailors were "trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, and advancement of all righteous causes and subduing the earth."[64] They were the purveyors of British paternalism to the peoples of the empire; in essence, these men were standard bearers of the imperial state.

In its later 20th century advertisements, the Royal Navy has sought to represent its sailors in the same role. Instead of colonization and conquest, however, their goals are altruistic. On an individual level, the advertisements show the men and women of the navy are adventure-minded and idealistic. They are the special group who, according to the various recruiting taglines from over the years have "'answered the call,' 'seen the world differently,' and who 'live a life without limits.'" Their faces have changed alongside that of British society; male and female; white, black and Asian. This multiethnic picture is in tune with recent scholarship about the changing nature of

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[63] Conley, *Jack Tar*, 9.
[64] Ibid., 101. The quote, taken from 19th century author Thomas Hughes, describes the naval man within the context of imperial expansion and racial paternalism, important aspects of the imperial mind.

national identity in the United Kingdom. The concept of Britishness is vague and often difficult to define, described by one political philosopher as "best avoided or used with great caution and in full awareness of its ambiguity."[65] Perhaps uniquely among national identity, Britishness incorporates not only various peoples of the British Isles, but of her former empire as well. The central tenets of Britishness are perhaps best defined by Simon Schama as a combination of "a passion for social justice (and) a tenacious attachment to bloody-minded liberty," with a "roving…migratory character."[66] This essential image, regardless of race, gender, or creed, describes the Royal Navy sailor of today's recruiting films, seeking adventure as they spread British goodwill.

The navy in which these idealized sailors exist must likewise represent the society that it serves. The navy comes through in its advertisements as the technologically advanced and militarily capable force that is necessary to respond to any crisis, even those that do not directly threaten British sovereignty. The economic-driven display of training in the fleet married its image to that of technological advancement, while the changing demographics of the servicemen and women reinforce that Her Majesty's Navy is in fact a force of the people. The navy retains its international role of maintaining fair trade, providing humanitarian assistance, and intervening on behalf of the international community, just as it has done for over 200 years. This image qualifies any notion of Britain's secondary role in international politics. The recurring theme of "the world's third largest navy" is a statement of continued national prominence; Britain is Europe's leading naval force and a first-rate navy that can fulfill all of the nation's tasks.[67]

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[65] Bhikhu Parekh, "Being British" In *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question* edited by Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell in association The Political Quarterly, 2009), 33.
[66] Schama, *A History of Britain,* 555.
[67] Finlan, *Royal Navy in the Falklands*, 191.

The story of the Royal Navy in the 20th century, therefore, is not simply one of decline. The decrease in ship numbers and manpower is inverse to the rise in technology and training of an expert force. This emphasis on professionalism and training has allowed the Royal Navy to maintain a baseline of capability despite losing ship numbers. It is impossible for the navy to garner huge numbers of recruits simply through its own popular reputation as it had in the 19th century.[68] It does, however, recruit the number required to sustain its mission, without need for the National Service draft. Hew Strachan argues that the end of conscription introduced the civil-military gap that saw the conservative motives of the navy, still tied to empire, at odds with British liberalism.[69] The navy's role, as declared through its advertisements, is to serve the needs of the nation. It accomplishes this, not by impressments that fly in the face of free society, but by targeting its recruiting towards the youth population that embraces hard work, an adventurous spirit, and a global purpose.

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[68] John Wells, *The Royal Navy: An Illustrated Social History 1870-1982* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton, 1994), 272-3. The figures of Edwardian naval recruitment (cited also by Conley, *Jack Tar*, 44) are given in a period of massive naval expansion: in 1885 the fleet counted 61,000 officers and sailors, by 1902 it had doubled to 122,000.

[69] Strachan, "The Civil-Military 'Gap,'" 46.

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    *All visual media detailed in this thesis (unless otherwise noted) are housed in the collection of the Imperial War Museum (IWM) Film Archive, London.

"His first draft," DRN 1400, (1961), 32 min.
"Belfast in the Far East," ADM 2129, (1962).
"Send your coupon" COI 115 (1973) 60 sec.
1972 Series - ADM 2645:
    "Technician," 90 sec.
    "Frigate Operations," 90 sec.
    "Helicopter Operations/Anti-Ship Action," 90 sec.
    "Royal Marines," 90 sec.
    "Poster in the Rain," 45 sec.
    "Better Life," 45 sec.
    "Marine Teaser," 45 sec.
1976 Series Recruiting Ads, IWM COI 1010* (30 sec-3 min each):
    "Amphibious Operations."
    "Destroyer."
    "Navy Operations."
    "Marine Engineering."
    "Supply and Secretariat."
    "Adventure and Travel."
    "Underwater."
    "Airbourne."
    "Cold Regions."
    "Hot Regions."
    "Catapult Maintenance."
    "Deck Gun/Missile Maintenance."
"The Right Choice." IWM COI 1105, (1982).
"Making a Difference." IWM ADM 2652, (1982).
"Ambitions." IWM ADM 6940 (1989). 30 sec.
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BRNC Films:
"And Now to Sea," DRN 2255, (1970).
"Dartmouth and Beyond," COI 1104, (1980).
"Your Degree and the Royal Navy," COI 1274, (1987).

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 "Girls Ahoy," PME 239, (1962).
 "Someone Special," COI 310 (1966).
 "A Life that is Different," COI 1054 (1970).
 "The Best of Both Worlds," ADM 2636 (1971).
 "A Life with a Difference," COI 907 (1973).
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 "Alongside the Navy," ADM 2111, (1982).

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