British Journal for Military History

Volume 6, Issue 3, November 2020

Cover photo: Visit of General De Gaulle and Admiral Muselier to a naval port. 1940, The head of the Free French Forces, General Charles De Gaulle, accompanied by Admiral Muselier, visited French ships manned by members of the Free French Naval Forces at a British port. On board the French sloop La Moquese. Photo © Imperial War Museum A 2172

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Volume 6, Issue 3 November 2020

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British Journal for Military History – ISSN: 2057-0422
DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3

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EDITORIAL*

Although not our usual kind of 'special issue', this edition of the BJMH has its articles and research notes entirely focused on the Second World War. We have, in the past two years, gathered a wide range of pieces on the war. As 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the war's end, it seemed both opportune and appropriate to publish them together.

In so doing, we are delighted to offer pieces covering a wide range of aspects of the war and reflecting multiple approaches to military history. These demonstrate how military history is evolving and how it connects to the study of history more widely. Three of our articles address occupied France, venturing into the history of covert operations, the question of political legitimacy and the Italian occupation. Other pieces examine an under-studied aspect of the Chindits, 'moral fibre' (or a lack of it) in RAF Bomber Command, and more recent issues around memory of the war – and the political uses of it.

In March, we announced that we would be introducing shorter Research Notes, and we present here five Notes also dealing with the Second World War. These highlight a range of different approaches which can be used for Research Notes, and we hope they will inspire others to contribute similar pieces.

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* DOI: https://doi.org/10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1422

Who Speaks for France? Vichy, Free France and the Battle over French Legitimacy: 1940-1942

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ABSTRACT
In June 1940 the French metropolitan government signed an armistice with Hitler's Germany, which effectively removed France from the conflict. At the same time, the little known French General Charles de Gaulle was in London establishing himself at the head of the Free French resistance movement. This set the stage for arguments over who represented the French nation and its interests. This article explores how the Vichy government and the Free French movement constructed their respective claims to legitimacy using legal, moral and historical arguments. And it considers how these claims were fought through armed clashes over French colonial territory.

Introduction

On 17 June 1940 the French General Charles de Gaulle and the British Liaison Officer to the French, Edward Spears, boarded a plane bound for England. Five days later French Premier Marshal Phillippe Pétain signed an armistice with Hitler's Germany, which went into effect on 25 June. The armistice had different consequences for France and the French colonial territories. Metropolitan France or *l'hexagone* was divided into occupied and unoccupied zones in the north and south respectively. The French army was demobilised, although a force of 100,000 was retained to ensure internal order.[1] The French empire and its protector, the French fleet, remained in the hands of Pétain's government, which on 1 July settled in the French spa town of Vichy.

While Pétain's government was installing itself into the various hotels and casinos of Vichy for what it thought would be only a temporary stay, de Gaulle was finding his feet on London's political stage. On 18 June de Gaulle delivered his now famous broadcast on the BBC, encouraging Frenchmen to join him in continuing the struggle

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1423
[1]Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 127.

alongside Britain against the Axis forces. At the time, the radio broadcast received only scant attention and it was not recorded by the BBC. On 28 June, after any more 'qualified' and perhaps better-known Frenchman had failed to appear, the British government officially recognised de Gaulle as the 'leader of all the Free French.' Nine days later, on 7 August, de Gaulle and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill concluded a Memorandum of Agreement, formalising de Gaulle's relationship with the British government.[2]

The establishment of de Gaulle's Free French movement, as a rival to Pétain's metropolitan government, created a division in French politics – over what policy should be and who could legitimately speak for French interests. It forced civilians and government officials inside and outside of the French metropole to decide where to place their loyalties. On one side was the Franco-British alliance, which envisaged Axis defeat and French liberation. On the other side were promises of French renewal, which would be carried out under the guidance of First World War hero Philippe Pétain within a Europe dominated by Germany. General de Gaulle's Free French movement and Marshal Pétain's government were competing to represent France and legitimate French interests. This article argues that the battles over French legitimacy that developed between the Free French and the Vichy government were conducted on two planes. First, both sides constructed their legitimacy rhetorically, through the language of official agreements, statements and broadcasts. These arguments attempted to root authority in a legal but also a cultural and historical framework. Second, both sides sought to convey its legitimacy through more material, but still highly symbolic actions. These actions most often took place within French imperial territories. Being able to lay claim to imperial territory was a vital asset and a visible marker of loyalty to either the Free French or the Vichy government.

There is no shortage of research about French identity. Scholars have explored this concept from national and global perspectives in volumes whose chronologies span hundreds of years.[3] There is a rich collection of scholarship exploring the renegotiation of French identity after 1945 and specifically, how best to situate Vichy in the French past.[4] Researchers have also assessed the evolution of Free French and Vichy policies

[2]Ibid., p. 390.

[3]See, for instance, Fernand Braudel, *L'Identité de la France,* vols. 1-3, (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 1990). Patrick Boucheron and Stephane Gerson, eds. *France in the World: A New Global History,* (New York: Other Press, 2019); Pierre Nora, ed. *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire,* vol. 1, *The State,* trans. Mary Seidman Trouille, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[4]See, for instance, Hugo Frey, 'Rebuilding France: Gaullist Historiography, the Rise-Fall Myth and French Identity (1945-58)', in Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore (eds), *Writing National Histories: Western Europe since 1800,* (London:

and strategies throughout the Second World War. Eric Jennings, Julian Jackson, Jay Winter and Antoine Prost have considered the methods (imperial, military and legal) used by de Gaulle and Free French officials to craft the Free French as a legitimate wartime actor.[5] Peter Jackson, Simon Kitson and Yves Durand have examined the Vichy government's attempts to maintain its sovereignty and legitimacy, both inside the metropole and in the eyes of a more global audience.[6] What this article will add to these findings is a comparative perspective, namely how the notion of a legitimate or authentic French identity was debated between Vichy and the Free French between 1940 and 1942.

Having this comparative perspective is important because it showcases how Vichy and Free French officials mobilised a range of different techniques to bolster their respective legitimacy. Discrediting each other was an important part of each side's strategy. Thus, this article will focus on the official arguments that each side mobilised to enhance its own legitimacy and simultaneously delegitimise its rival. It has two central aims. The first is to provide insights into the legal and cultural arguments that were used to assert the right to speak for the French nation and French interests. The second is to assess how these rhetorical frameworks impacted concrete military actions in French colonial territories. Focussing upon the period between 1940 and 1942 captures the Free French movement while it remained an 'unidentified political object.'[7] In other words, when it was in the process of constructing and consolidating its authority. It would not take the form of a fully-fledged provisional government until 1943. This time frame also follows Vichy's tenure as the appointed authority of unoccupied France. This position would be destroyed in November 1942, when

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Routledge, 1999), pp. 205-216; Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944,* (London: Harvard University Press, 1991); Henry Rousso and Eric Conan, *Vichy: Un Passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

[5]Eric T. Jennings, *Free French Africa in World War II: The African Resistance,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015), Chapters 1-2; Julian Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle,* (London: Penguin, 2019), Chapter 6; Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *René Cassin and Human Rights: From the Great War to the Universal Declaration,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Chapters 5-6.

[6]Peter Jackson and Simon Kitson, 'The Paradoxes of Vichy Foreign Policy, 1940-1942', in Jonathan R. Adelman (ed.), *Hitler and his Allies in World War II,* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 79-115; Simon Kitson, *The Hunt for Nazi Spies: Fighting Espionage in Vichy France,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). On the importance of maintaining French sovereignty as a factor in collaboration, see, Yves Durand, 'Collaboration French-Style: A European Perspective', in Leonard V. Smith, Laura Lee Downes, Sarah Fishman, Robert Zaretsky & Ioannis Sinanoglou (eds), *France at War: Vichy France and the Historians,* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), pp. 61-76.

[7]Winter and Prost, *René Cassin,* p. 122.

German troops occupied the Southern zone in the wake of the allied Operation Torch invasions in North Africa.[8]

This article draws from a wide range of French and British archival materials. It relies upon policy making documents created by the Vichy government and the Free French movement. The documents themselves focus upon the official statements and agreements that were used to establish Vichy or Free French authority. The aim of this article is not to assess the broader propaganda campaigns that were carried out on each side. Rather, it seeks to understand how governments set about establishing their authority and the strategic tools they use to do this. Although the primary focus is on these two French actors, British policy makers also played an important role in this story. British resources were essential to de Gaulle, especially in the early days of his movement. British materials and manpower played a crucial role in supporting de Gaulle's claims of legitimacy – rhetorically and militarily. Moreover, the image of Anglo-Free French collaboration was central to the Vichy government's efforts to marginalise de Gaulle.

The Rhetoric of Vichy and Free French Legitimacy

In the wake of the Franco-German armistice, representatives of Free France and Pétain's Vichy government used a variety of official statements and agreements to assert themselves as the legitimate authorities of the French state and its interests (in the present and the future). The use of rhetoric to shore up power and influence has long been considered essential to political practice. In 1971 Maurice Cowling asserted that 'high politics' is 'a matter of rhetoric and manoeuvre' by statesmen.[9] Establishing the credibility of a government, and the policies it is making, means being able to justify those policies to a range of constituencies and interested parties. In other words, the language that justifies a policy is an essential part of constructing and implementing that policy.[10] Rhetoric, or the strategic language of high-level decision making, explains why a given policy is needed in the present, and how it will contribute to a particular vision of the future. In the words of Reinhart Koselleck, 'an ability to speak

[8]Operation Torch was the first major American led operation in the war. American and British forces invaded French North Africa on 8 November 1942. On 11 November German troops occupied the Southern Zone of metropolitan France, rendering the Vichy government largely ineffectual.

[9]Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Labour 1920-1924: The Beginning of Modern British Politics,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 4.

[10]Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics,* vol. 1, *Regarding Method,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 174.

convincingly about the future…has become one of the requisites of legitimate authority in modern politics.'[11]

The Pétain government and Charles de Gaulle's Free French movement both used rhetoric in order to lay claim to authority and to attempt to remove authority from its rival. This happened in two ways. First, each side tried to establish its legitimacy through a legal framework, which included competing notions of French sovereignty. What made these disputes particularly interesting was that they combined traditional legal arguments with moral and sentimental imagery. The result was that competing notions of French legitimacy developed around the language of official agreements as well as more historical notions of French honour and culture. Second the metropolitan government argued that France was now a neutral territory while Free French claims situated France as a combatant in the on-going conflict.

Even before the British government officially recognised de Gaulle as the head of a Free French movement on 28 June, his official addresses were resituating French sovereignty, from the metropole to London. In his first, 18 June address broadcast over the BBC, de Gaulle proclaimed, 'I…am conscious of speaking in the home of France.'[12] Thereafter, de Gaulle concluded a series of official agreements and established a number of committees that were designed to give his movement legitimacy on a wide scale. The first of these was a Memorandum of Agreement, concluded on 7 August. French Jurist René Cassin played a significant role in crafting the agreement, which established the juridical bases for cooperation between de Gaulle and the British government.[13] It also committed the British government to funding the Free French movement. The second was a declaration delivered by de Gaulle from the capital of French Equatorial Africa.[14] The Brazzaville Manifesto (27 October 1940) gave Free France its political form and led to the establishment of the Conseil de Défense de l'Empire Français (Empire Defence Council) on 29 October 1940. These shifts in imperial loyalties also signalled the importance that empire would play as tangible proof of the right to speak for French interests. Finally, the Comité National Français (French National Committee or CNF) was established on 24 September 1941. It replaced the Empire Defence Council and would remain active until 3 June 1943, when it was succeeded by the Comité Français de Libération

[11]Jon Cowans, 'Visions of the Postwar: The Politics of Memory and Expectation in 1940s France', *History and Memory*, 10, no. 2 (1998), p. 70.
[12]Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et Messages Pendant le Guerre Juin 1940-Janvier 1946,* (Paris: Plon, 1970), 18 June 1940.
[13]Winter and Prost, *René Cassin*, p. 111.
[14]Between 26 and 28 August the French Equatorial African colonies of Chad, the Cameroons, the French Congo, and Oubangui-Chari joined the side of Free France. Gabon would rally to Free France in early November.

National (The French Committee of National Liberation or CFLN). Both the Empire Defence Council and the CNF were intended to give de Gaulle's movement the trappings and appearance of a functioning constitutional authority. This article will focus on the Memorandum of Agreement, the Brazzaville Manifesto and the Empire Defence Council.

When René Cassin met de Gaulle for the first time on 29 June 1940, he recalled saying to the General, 'I understand totally that we are not a foreign legion in the British army. We are the French army.'[15] Cassin was emphasising the importance of ensuring that the Free French were viewed as the continuation of the French war effort. He did not want the notion of a French struggle to be lost in images of an exclusively British fight. However, de Gaulle went one step further. He corrected Cassin, asserting 'we are France.'[16] One way that de Gaulle and Cassin established the legal character of the Free French movement was to draw a line of continuity between the outbreak of war in September 1939 and the continuation of the struggle after 22 June 1940. The *Journal Officiel de France Libre,* published from de Gaulle's headquarters in Carlton Gardens, symbolised the legal continuity between the French Republic and the Free French movement. It published de Gaulle's statements and broadcasts as well as the text of founding documents and agreements. The *Journal* also played a crucial role in laying out the legal framework of the Free French movement and undermining that of Vichy.

Cassin recognised that Free France was not, legally, the same as a French government.[17] However, he argued that this did not matter, because Free France represented true French interests: 'to save French honor, to defend the French Empire, to free France and to give back their liberties to the French people.'[18] The fact that Free France was not a fully-fledged government was less important than its claim to represent the majority of French interests, in the metropole and abroad. Moreover, administratively and militarily, Cassin made sure that Free France developed all of the trappings of a legitimate representative body. The 7 August accords were an example of this approach. The resulting text was 'rhetorically powerful, but legally obscure.'[19] One of the most important things that the accords did was to establish the independence of the Free French movement from the British government. This made Free France a representative of French interests and the embodiment of the French war effort, rather than an agent of the British government. The accords preserved

[15]Winter and Prost, *René Cassin*, p. 112.
[16]Ibid.
[17]René Cassin, 'Vichy or Free France?', *Foreign Affairs*, 20, no. 1 (Oct. 1941), p. 104.
[18]Ibid.
[19]Martin Thomas and Richard Toye, *Arguing about Empire: Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France 1882-1956,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 166.

recognisable symbols of the French state. Free French fighters would continue to communicate in French, wear French uniforms and adhere to French military regulations. The memorandum of agreement stipulated that de Gaulle's force would 'retain the character of a French force in respect of personnel, particularly as regards discipline, language, promotion and duties.' [20] Moreover, British financial support was classified as a loan, which further enhanced the independence of the Free French, if not in the present, then certainly in the future.

Three months later, de Gaulle's Brazzaville Manifesto and the creation of the Empire Defence Council extended the authority of the Free French movement.[21] Britain recognised the Empire Defence Council on 5 January 1941. This recognition and the opening of an American consulate in New Caledonia, were used by the Free French as proof that it fulfilled international standards to be received as a *de facto* government.[22] For de Gaulle, French Equatorial Africa became a preeminent symbol of the legitimacy of his movement. Empire was the physical proof of de Gaulle's sovereignty and of his right to speak for France.[23] In his manifesto, de Gaulle stressed that his actions were being taken in the name of France. And he strengthened the image of his movement by claiming that millions of French subjects were choosing to continue the war, rather than accept the armistice. He concluded his address by calling on Frenchmen to join him in resisting the enemy, in the metropole and abroad, and laying out the foundation for the Empire Defence Council.[24]

The Empire Defence Council reinforced the legal appearance of de Gaulle's movement. Its framework and membership were defined through two *ordonnances* and a total of ten articles. Ordonnance 1, articles 4-6 gave the Council the powers that were traditionally the preserve of a sovereign state, namely, the right to pursue

[20]The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA), FO 371/24340, Memorandum of Agreement, 7 August 1940 .

[21]The Brazzaville Manifesto was the first official Free French declaration. Delivered by de Gaulle on 27 October 1940, it stated that Pétain's Vichy government was both illegal and illegitimate. The Manifesto was followed by an 'Organic Declaration' on 16 November 1940, which claimed that de Gaulle's movement represented the legitimate continuation of the Third Republic.

[22]Cassin, 'Vichy or Free France?', p. 111. New Caledonia, an isolated island in the Pacific Ocean, rallied to Free France on 19 September 1940.

[23]For more on the significance of empire to the Free French movement see, Eric T. Jennings, *Free French Africa in World War II: The African Resistance,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Chapters 1-2.

[24]"Manifeste du 27 Octobre 1940 relatif à la direction de l'effort français dans la guerre', *Journal official de la France libre*, 20 January 1941, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96166400/f3.item. Accessed 1 October 2020.

juridical, administrative and military policies in the interest of France and the French empire.[25] Ordonnance 2, article 1 listed the 9 men who would serve on the Council. These were men, according to de Gaulle, who 'symbolisent les plus hautes valeurs intellectuelles et morales de la nation.'[26] Despite its rather hazy governing structure, the Council still played an important role. It rooted the legitimacy of the Gaullist movement in French colonial territory. De Gaulle recognised that empire gave Free France and Free French Africa an authority, or a seriousness, that it could never have achieved by operating exclusively on British soil.[27]

While de Gaulle was building Free French legitimacy on the basis that France remained an active wartime combatant and ally of the British, the Vichy government was repositioning France as a neutral state. Like de Gaulle, it mobilised a combination of legal and moral arguments. The legality of the metropolitan government was established through its governing structure, and the chain of events that had led to that structure. On 9 July the French Parliament voted 624 to 4 in favour of revising the French constitution. The following day a second proposal was passed, which specifically gave Pétain the authority to modify the constitution. And on 11 July Pétain passed a series of acts which effectively ended the Third Republic. Parliament was adjourned indefinitely. Pétain's new position as Head of the French State gave him almost unlimited judicial, legislative and executive control.

From a legal point of view, the Vichy government stood on firmer ground than the Free French. Between 1940 and 1941 Vichy was granted diplomatic recognition by 40 countries.[28] These included the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Japan and the Vatican, although the USA would end its recognition after the German occupation of Vichy in November 1942, while the USSR withdrew it shortly after Operation Barbarossa was launched. Adding to this external validation, much of its internal legitimacy was derived from Pétain's personal authority. Even in the face of increasing food shortages over the winter of 1940-1941, Pétain's popularity remained largely intact well into 1942.[29] This is important because it meant that Pétain's popularity conferred a sense of representational legitimacy on the metropolitan government.

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[25]'Ordonnance No. 1, Organisant les pouvoirs publics Durant la guerre et instituant le Conseil de Défense de l'Empire,' *Journal official de la France libre*, 20 January 1941, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96166400/f3.item. Accessed 1 October 2020.

[26]Translated as: 'Symbolise the highest intellectual and moral values of the nation.' 'Manifeste du 27 Octobre 1940', https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96166400/f3.item. Accessed 1 October 2020.

[27]Jennings, *Free French Africa,* pp. 49-50.

[28] Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 134.

[29]Ibid., p. 278.

The Vichy government also rooted its legitimacy in the fact that it was governing from France itself. Official statements argued that French sovereignty resided exclusively in the metropole. On 17 June, the day that the metropolitan government requested armistice terms from Germany, Pétain and his Minister for Foreign Affairs Paul Baudouin delivered radio addresses that fixed the French nation and French sovereignty firmly in the metropole. Baudouin's address in particular, which was also reprinted across the French metropolitan and imperial press, mobilised a narrow definition of nationhood and sovereignty. He concluded that the existence of the French nation meant maintaining 'the purity of the French soul' and the 'spiritual heritage' of the homeland.[30] This kind of imagery would be essential to Vichy rhetoric throughout the war. It advanced a notion of 'true France' that celebrated the history and culture of individual French villages and regions but that called for loyalty to the body of France above all.[31] Legitimising the metropolitan government using the claim that the French nation could only exist on French soil also meant legitimising the Franco-German armistice.

The authenticity of the Vichy government was tied to its claim that the Franco-German armistice had ended France's war. The armistice allowed Pétain and Baudouin to remove France from the conflict and re-establish it as a neutral actor. In classic just war theory, neutrality is a concept that concedes particular rights but also responsibilities on its claimants. In particular, it bound Vichy to take no action that would positively benefit either the Allies or the Axis.[32] This was a position that would become increasingly difficult to sustain as the conflict continued. It will be explored further in the second half of the article.

In the immediate weeks and months following the conclusion of the Franco-German armistice, Vichy officials used rhetoric to establish a clear division between France as a belligerent and France as a neutral state. Official statements first explained why France had been defeated and then shifted the focus towards peacetime policies based on French renewal and regrowth. Pétain and Baudouin praised the heroic and noble efforts of the French forces. They explained that they had been defeated by an enemy that was technologically and numerically superior.[33] Pétain also used official statements in order to meet British challenges to the legality of his government. Churchill argued that the metropolitan government did not possess 'freedom, independence' or

[30]Ibid.

[31]Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 175.

[32]Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations,* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), p. 235.

[33]'Le Maréchal Pétain président du Conseil parle à la France', *L'Echo d'Alger,* 18 June 1940, p. 1. 'Poignante déclaration de M. Baudouin', *L'Echo d'Alger,* 18 June 1940, p. 1.

'constitutional authority.'[34] On 23 June Pétain met these accusations head on. He insisted that French forces had been outnumbered on every front and that only by accepting an armistice could France begin the process of rebuilding.[35] French renewal could only take place if it removed itself from the conflict.

Of course, an important aspect of Vichy and Free French rhetoric involved addressing each other's claims to speak for France. For both sides, constructing its respective legitimacy meant simultaneously destroying the credibility of its rival. This happened in two ways. First, Gaullist rhetoric attempted to undermine the Pétain government's constitutional *and* representative legitimacy.[36] Second, the Pétain government delegitimised de Gaulle and his adherents by taking away their claims to French identity. Essentially, it argued that Free Frenchmen were not French.

Perhaps because arguments against Vichy's legal status were tenuous at best, Gaullist rhetoric tended to emphasise at the same time that Pétain's government was both immoral and dishonourable. This more emotive rhetoric added something that purely legal arguments could not. It drew on deeply rooted social and cultural definitions of right, wrong and national honour. On 22 June, de Gaulle broadcast for the second time over BBC airwaves. He described the armistice as contrary to 'good sense, to honour and to the higher interests of the Fatherland.'[37] The next day he broadcast again, announcing that he would set up a French National Committee to represent French interests. A British government communiqué followed on the heels of de Gaulle's statement, which reinforced the illegitimacy of the Vichy government in favour of de Gaulle's Provisional National Committee. The statement alleged that the French metropolitan government could no longer be regarded 'as the government of an independent country.'[38] BBC Broadcasts in French and English stressed that the armistice deprived Pétain's government of the 'right to represent free French Citizens.'[39] In print and over the radio, the metropolitan government was uniformly

[34]'France is Not Dead', *The Times*, 24 June 1940, p. 6.
[35]TNA PREM 3/174/4, French Broadcast from Bordeaux, 23 June 1940. Philippe Pétain, *Les Paroles et les Écrits du Maréchal Pétain, 16 Juin 1940-1 Janvier 1942,* (Éditions de la Légion, 1942), p. 13.
[36]British rhetoric made many of the same arguments, in an attempt to preserve the notion of Franco-British wartime continuity. See, for instance, Rachel Chin, 'After the Fall: British Strategy and the Preservation of the Franco-British Alliance in 1940', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 55, no. 2 (2020), pp. 297-315.
[37]Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France,* p. 133.
[38]Ibid., p. 134.
[39]French Archives Nationales (hereinafter AN), AG/3(1)/257, France Libre, Dossier 2, 23 June 1940.

referred to as 'the Pétain government,' signalling that it did not represent the authentic France.[40]

Cassin knew that he could not claim that Free France was a genuine French government. But this did not stop him or de Gaulle from asserting that Pétain's government was illegal. Cassin argued that Pétain's government was 'both illegal and illegitimate….[this] fact is important both from a legal and moral point of view.'[41] From the legal side, Cassin claimed that the metropolitan government had risen to power by *coup d'état,* making it invalid. The events of 10 July had made Pétain into an absolute monarch, forced the National Assembly to assent to its own demise and violated the French Constitutional Laws of 1875.[42] From a moral point of view, he asserted that this government did not accord with 'national tradition or [have] the support of public opinion.'[43]

De Gaulle's Brazzaville declaration and the series of communiqués that he issued in its wake made similar claims. Sidestepping the status of his own movement, de Gaulle alleged that no French government existed. Vichy, he added was illegal (it was unconstitutional and a puppet government) and immoral (contrary to French honour). Il n'existe plus de gouvernement proprement français. En effet, l'organisme sis à Vichy et qui prétend porter ce nom est inconstitutionnel et soumis à l'envahisseur. Dans son état de servitude, cet organisme ne peut être et n'est en effet qu'un instrument utilisé par les ennemis de la France contre l'honneur et l'intérêt du pays.[44]

In his *Déclaration Organique* of 16 November 1940 de Gaulle laid out the juridical basis on which his movement and the Empire Defence Council was exercising power. He established legal continuity between the Third Republic, the 1875 constitution and the Free French. By departing from Republican law, Vichy had invalidated itself. According to de Gaulle, 'l'organisme dit 'Gouvernement de Vichy' qui prétend remplacer le

[40]Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (MAE), 10GMII/291, 'Relation sommaire de la situation a Londres', 17 June-20 July 1940.
[41]Cassin, 'Vichy or Free France?', p. 106.
[42]Ibid., p. 107.
[43]Ibid., p. 106.
[44]Translated as: 'There is no longer a proper French government. Indeed, the organization based in Vichy and which claims to bear this name is unconstitutional and subject to the invader. In its state of servitude, this body cannot govern and indeed is only an instrument used by the enemies of France against the honour and interest of the country.' 'Manifeste du 27 Octobre 1940 relatif à la direction de l'effort français dans la guerre ;, *Journal official de la France libre*, 20 January 1941, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96166400/f3.item. Accessed 1 October 2020.

Gouvernement de la République, ne jouit pas de cette plénitude de liberté qui est indispensable à l'exercice intégral du pouvoir.'[45]

Situating legal and moral arguments side by side was not simply a rhetorical ploy. It reflected the inherent uncertainty surrounding the character and role of both de Gaulle's movement and the Pétain government. Julian Jackson has argued that one way de Gaulle chose to sidestep the trickier questions of Free French legality was by emphasising the more nebulous notions of legitimacy or illegitimacy.[46] Moreover, legality did not always confer legitimacy. Late in October, following Pétain's meetings with Hitler at Montoire, the American Chargé in France, Harrison Freeman Matthews, suggested that the Vichy government was nothing more than a puppet state and that French 'foreign policy' was a farce.[47] By the same token, British public opinion from June 1940 tended to view Pétain's government with disdain. Ministry of Information public opinion analyses concluded 'at all levels of society the opinion is bitterly and vigorously expressed that the French people have been betrayed by 'the politicians'.'[48] Vichy's legal standing was recognised by powerful neutral actors such as the United States. But it was simultaneously undermined by American and British perceptions of the Vichy government as a tool of Germany and a puppet state. This is what made moral and honour-based arguments so important.

For the Vichy government, an important part of establishing its legal standing as the legitimate voice of France meant determining which individuals had a claim to 'Frenchness'. Andrew Shennan has shown that one of the central tenets of Vichy policy was to divide the French population on the basis of good and bad or 'French and anti-French.'[49] The result was to prohibit particular minority groups from making claims to be French. Vichy rhetoric operated in a similar way when it came to the Free French. It marginalised Free French actors by revoking their identity as Frenchmen. Talking points distributed by Vichy to its diplomatic personnel overseas following the

[45]Translated as: 'The body known as the "Vichy Government", which claims to replace the Government of the Republic, does not enjoy that fullness of freedom which is essential for the full exercise of power.' 'Declaration Organique, Complétant le Manifeste du 27 Octobre 1940', *Journal official de la France libre*, 20 January 1941, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k96166400/f3.item. Accessed 1 October 2020.
[46]Jackson, *The Dark Years,* p. 134.
[47]Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), The Chargé in France (Matthews) to the Secretary of State, 26 October 1940, Document 474, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1940v02/d474. Accessed 1 October 2020.
[48]TNA INF 1/264, 'Public Opinion on the Present Crisis', 24 June 1940.
[49]Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal 1940-1946,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 26.

failed Anglo-Free French attempt to capture the French Senegalese port of Dakar stressed that the aggression had been committed by Britain and 'l'ex-général de Gaulle.' This title would become a regular feature in Vichy's descriptions of the General and his movement.[50] According to Vichy, de Gaulle and individuals loyal to his movement or the ideals upon which it was founded were traitors to France.[51] Vice Premier Pierre Laval also castigated the British for backing the 'traitor de Gaulle.' As for other Frenchmen opposed to the Vichy government, they were those 'miserable people who fled France – most of them Jews…'[52] On the other hand, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office Charles Rochat suggested that it would be possible to rehabilitate some of the lost Frenchmen. 'The rebels are for the most part good Frenchmen who have been misled.'[53] Making loyalty to the Free French movement synonymous with treason and to the very notion of what it meant to be French was a way to discredit Gaullist visions of the conflict.

Conveying Legitimacy through Action and Ownership

By the end of 1940 de Gaulle's Free French movement and Pétain's Vichy government had established the rhetorical foundations upon which they would develop and refine their respective claims to be the true representative of France. However, these arguments over legitimacy were not confined to a war of words. They were also played out in a series of high-level armed clashes in French colonial territories. Two of the most significant of these clashes took place in Dakar in September 1940 and in the French Levantine Mandates of Syria and Lebanon in June and July 1941. The clashes themselves, the rhetoric surrounding them and the retaliations that followed illustrated the role that decisive military actions played in the struggle over French legitimacy. Here, the strategic and symbolic significance of empire was at the fore.

The Vichy government used internal and external policies in order to shore up its appearance as a legitimate sovereign state. Its determination to preserve a neutral veneer, however, resulted in it pursuing a range of complex and often contradictory policies. Simon Kitson has illustrated how Vichy officials were simultaneously arresting

[50]MAE, 10GMII/338, Télégramme au départ, de Vichy, 24 September 1940. Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France,* p. 134.

[51]Although outside the scope of this article, this kind of imagery was a regular feature of Vichy propaganda until the liberation. See, for instance, Kay Chadwick, 'Radio Propaganda and Public Opinion under Endgame Vichy: The Impact of Philippe Henriot', *French History*, 25, no. 2 (2011), p. 242 & p. 248.

[52]FRUS, The Chargé in France (Matthews) to Secretary of State, 14 November 1940, Document 479, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1940v02/d479. Accessed 1 October 2020.

[53]FRUS, The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State, 20 May 1941, Document 138, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1941v02/d138. Accessed 1 October 2020.

and even executing German spies and supporters of the Free French movement.[54] Similarly, Vichy's very existence was contradictory. It could not reconcile the tension between its attempts to emphasise its own sovereignty and its decisions to pursue policies of collaboration.[55] Vichy's claim to be a neutral actor also played a significant role in how it responded to external pressure from the United States, Britain and the Free French. In November 1940 US Secretary of State Cordell Hull warned the French Ambassador that Pétain's government 'has no rights in its acts and utterances' to aid Germany in any way.[56] The Vichy government's policy choices were thus limited in material ways by its desire to preserve its claims of sovereignty and neutrality. This will become particularly evident in how it responded to threats to its colonial empire. De Gaulle also recognised that the legitimacy of his movement would be greatly enhanced by material assets, especially colonial territories. Brazzaville was a physical capital for his movement, and it provided prestige and authenticity in a way that London could not. At the same time, de Gaulle, like Vichy, also had to balance a range of potentially contradictory policies. Colonial territories that appeared to rally freely to his movement added to his representative legitimacy. They leant credibility to de Gaulle's claims that Vichy did not represent popular French opinion. However, appearing to force French colonial territories to swap allegiance at gunpoint (and British guns at that) risked damaging the image of the Free French in the eyes of the French public. De Gaulle recognised early on that any conflicts between Free French and Vichy personnel would need to be framed and justified very carefully. In the Memorandum of Agreement that de Gaulle concluded with the British government in August he was careful to stipulate that he would not consent to use Free French forces to 'make war against France.' However, de Gaulle added that 'he would not regard a puppet French Government…as being covered by the word "France".'[57]

The armed clashes that erupted over French colonial territory were a product of Vichy and Free French attempts to preserve their respective claims to legitimacy. The Free French, with British backing, directly challenged Vichy's claims to neutrality by arguing that Germany was the true powerholder in France and French territory. Strategic operations at Dakar and in the Levant States forced the Vichy government to engage militarily in order to defend its sovereign territory. Vichy responded to the attacks, rhetorically and militarily. But it was careful to situate these clashes outside

[54]Kitson, *Hunt for Nazi Spies*.
[55]Jackson and Kitson, 'The Paradoxes of Vichy Foreign Policy, 1940-1942', p. 79.
[56]FRUS, The Secretary of State to the Chargé in France (Matthews), 6 November 1940, Document 554, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1940v02/d554. Accessed 1 October 2020.
[57]TNA FO 371/24340, 'Draft Note by the Chairman of the Allied Forces (Official) Committee', August 1940.

the framework of the wider conflict in order to preserve its position as a neutral actor. According to the Vichy government, these imperial conflicts were not a continuation of the war, but rather, unwarranted acts of aggression against a sovereign and neutral state. Moreover, Vichy's response marginalised the Free French by describing the attacks as one more instance of British perfidy in a longer history of Franco-British imperial rivalry. On the other hand, the Free French movement was severely limited in terms of material resources. This meant that strategic operations at Dakar and in the Levant relied heavily on British and British colonial forces and equipment. Yet, the way in which the operations were planned and carried out recognised that they should appear to be French initiatives or to benefit French interests. Thus, military manoeuvres contained an element of symbolic as well as strategic importance.

In September 1940 a contingent of British and Free French forces sailed to the French Senegalese port of Dakar. Plans to bring Dakar over to the Free French side had begun to crystalise in late July. From the beginning, de Gaulle was adamant that the operation should retain as much French character as possible that that it should make every effort to avoid bloodshed.[58] Strategists and planners in the British Service Ministries also agreed that operations involving French colonial territories had to appear to be French initiatives.[59] These mindsets were integrated into the sailing orders issued by joint mission commander Major General Noel Irwin: participants should 'make every effort clearly to establish the Free French character of your force.'[60]

However, after Operation Menace commenced on 23 September in heavy fog, it quickly became evident that the Dakar Garrison and its leader Governor General Pierre Boisson were loath to abandon their loyalty to the Vichy government. When Boisson refused to surrender to Anglo-Free French forces, British ships bombarded the garrison. Vichy guns returned fire with deadly accuracy, despite extreme limits in visibility. Two days after the operations had begun, de Gaulle had to concede defeat. He justified his decision as a desire to avoid a fight between Frenchmen. But he also claimed that the operation had been carried out in response to numerous French citizens who had entreated de Gaulle to come to Dakar so that it could join the Free French. These calls had only been foiled by a small group of men loyal to Vichy and under the thumb of their German oppressors.[61] De Gaulle contrasted images of a

[58]TNA, CAB 80/16/58, 'Memorandum by General de Gaulle on Operation "Menace"', 19 August 1940.
[59]TNA, PREM 3/276, 'Note on Political Considerations of Dakar Movements', August 1940.
[60]Churchill College Archive Centre (hereinafter CCAC), SPRS 136, 'Sailing Orders for Dakar Operations', 20 September 1940. General Irwin and Admiral Cunningham served as joint mission commanders in charge of military and naval forces respectively.
[61]TNA, ADM 223/507, Force M to Admiralty, 23.30, 23 September 1940.

majority of 'true' Frenchmen with others of a minority of 'Vichy men' in order to marginalise the metropolitan government. He also continued to argue that the operations were entirely French in nature, and that British ships and personnel were present only in an observational capacity.[62]

In the wake of military failure at Dakar, de Gaulle tried to shore up the legitimacy of his movement by attributing the defeat to the actions of a few outlying traitors and the overwhelming pressure of the German occupiers. For Vichy, the operations were proof of the authority of the metropolitan government at home and in its empire. Its response was consistent with its claims to represent a neutral nation, and it was conceived and justified in a way that marginalised the Free French as a legitimate force. Vichy communiqués argued that the attacks were another example of British aggression, the first being the British bombardments of the Free Fleet at Mers el-Kébir in early July. Vichy's Minister for Foreign Affairs Paul Baudouin met with the French and foreign press. He distributed talking points to Vichy's diplomatic missions urging them to condemn the aggression committed by the British government against French territory.[63] A cable from Pétain to Boisson was published across the French press to further reinforce the British character of the operation and emphasise that French participants were traitors, rather than true Frenchmen. 'France' Pétain wrote, 'is following with emotion and confidence your resistance to mercenary treason and British aggression.'[64] Even the British press took note of the fact that the Vichy government was describing the operation as entirely British in nature. An article in *The Guardian* observed, 'It would appear that Vichy describes all the actions of General de Gaulle and his forces as British.'[65]

Depicting the attacks at Dakar as a continuation of those at Mers el-Kébir three months earlier allowed Vichy to marginalise de Gaulle's movement. Challenges to Vichy's sovereignty were represented as a Franco-British imperial crisis rather than a Vichy-Free France crisis over legitimacy. The violence at Mers el-Kébir and Dakar were placed side by side in a poster that asked, 'where else will Britain spill French blood?'[66] For Vichy, taking actions, militarily and rhetorically, to defend its empire was essential to its existence. A report evaluating the conflict suggested that resistance at

[62]CCAC, SPRS 136, De Gaulle to Larminat, Leclerc and Éboué, 27 September 1940.
[63]Paul Baudouin, *The Private Diaries of Paul Baudouin: March 1940-January 1941,* trans. Sir Charles Petrie (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), p. 247. MAE, 10GMII/338, Télégramme au départ, de Vichy, 24 September 1940.
[64]'More Vichy Reports', *The Guardian,* 25 September 1940, p. 2.
[65]'Dakar Forts Fire on Free French Warships', *The Guardian*, 25 September 1940, p. 5.
[66]Ruth Ginio, *French Colonialism Unmasked, the Vichy Years in French West Africa,* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), p. 16.

Dakar could be used as a tool to extract concessions from Germany.[67] As it had done after the attacks at Mers el-Kébir, Vichy launched retaliatory air raids on Gibraltar. These raids signalled its willingness to defend its territories and commitment to defining these clashes as an exclusively British attack. The willingness of Vichy's colonial garrisons to fight against British and Gaullist forces became tools that Pétain's government mobilised to reinforce its claims of legitimacy. They also undermined de Gaulle's arguments that Free French ideals and policies were consistent with the majority of French metropolitan and imperial opinion.[68]

Nearly ten months later Anglo-Free French forces carried out another attack against Vichy territory – the French mandated states of Syria and Lebanon. Between 8 June and 14 July 1941, a contingent comprising British, British Imperial and Free French troops led by General Henry Maitland-Wilson fought against Vichy forces under the leadership of General Henri Fernand Dentz.[69] The decision to intervene in Syria was taken by British officials after Vichy granted German troops access to Syrian aerodromes. The Germans used the aerodromes as bases from which to provide support to an anti-British coup that had broken out in Iraq in April and May.

The military operations in the Levant were a significant point in the battle over French legitimacy. Vichy's decision to give German forces access to French mandated territory undermined its claims to neutrality. These claims had been on increasingly shaky ground since Admiral François Darlan became Vice President of the Council (essentially Premier) in February. For British decision makers, Operation Exporter became an opportunity to secure valuable strategic territory. And for the Free French, the Levant states increased their status as a legitimate governing body.

What made the Levant operations different from those at Dakar was the strength of local nationalist sentiment. In the Levant, established nationalist groups were calling for independence from the French mandate regime. For de Gaulle and the Free French, this meant that its claims to represent the authentic French state were tied to promises to grant independence to both mandates. On 8 June General Georges Catroux, de Gaulle's choice for French Delegate and Plenipotentiary in the Levant, issued a declaration that established the Free French as the true representative of France and promised to end the mandate. Edward Spears, Britain's representative to the Free French, also recognised that military operations should be coupled with

[67] MAE, 10GMII/338, 'Conséquences de ~~l'agression~~ la victoire de Dakar', 26 September 1940.
[68] Thomas and Toye, *Arguing about Empire,* p. 168.
[69] TNA WO 216/10, Official statistics reported that the taskforce was made up of 9,000 British, 18,000 Australian, 2,000 Indian and 5,000 Free French troops. Cypher, C. in C. Middle East to War Office, 4 July 1941.

efforts to enhance the legitimacy of Free France's position in the Levant. Spears advised that statements issued in the Levant should be both anti-Vichy and pro-Free French. He believed that overt British support for Free French personnel would spark local resistance to German infiltration and encourage French administrators and their families to switch allegiance from Vichy to de Gaulle. As de Gaulle had done after Dakar, official statements stressed Vichy's inherent un-Frenchness. Spears suggested deploying Napoleon's adage, 'the man who obeys the orders of a captive General is a traitor' in order to emphasise the moral authority of the Free French movement.[70]

For de Gaulle, occupying Syria and Lebanon introduced another challenge to Free French legitimacy. Britain's obvious military and material superiority as well as its established regional interests in the Middle East threated to limit de Gaulle's ability to make and implement policy in the Levant. De Gaulle knew that his authority in the Levant relied on British cooperation, and he placed Britain under pressure to comply. He warned Churchill against undermining the French position in the Levant saying that international opinion would be 'watching closely the attitude which Great Britain will take towards the position of France in this region.'[71] A Free French memo noted that material imbalances between British and Free French power should be masked so as not to undermine Free French authority. It would be essential, the memo stressed, to present the image of an *entente parfaite.*[72]

De Gaulle's fears that Britain could compromise his legitimacy in the Levant were not entirely unfounded. British interests regionally, but particularly in Palestine and Egypt, meant that its policies towards the Levant were always conceptualised with one eye on how they would impact British prestige and influence in the Middle East. Spears, who had earlier championed Free France's position in the Levant wrote in late July, 'No French officer however high in rank must ever be allowed to run down British authorities and if any should forget, as some apparently do, that we are the predominant partner in the Alliance, they must be gently reminded of this fact. No French soldier would have a rifle in his hand or a franc in his pocket were it not for us.'[73]

For Vichy, losing the Levant territories substantially reduced its claims of imperial sovereignty. With little recourse to launch a sustained military response, Vichy tried

[70]Middle East Centre Archive (MECA), GB165-0269 Box 1A, Spears to Foreign Office, 28 May 1941.
[71]TNA PREM 3/422/6, Cypher, de Gaulle to Churchill, 29 June 194,. MAE, 18GMII/39, De Gaulle to Churchill, 29 June 1941.
[72]AN AG/3(1)/202, 'Memoire concernant l'administration des etats de Syrie et du Liban', July 1941.
[73]MECA, GB165-0269, Box 1A, Spears to Spears Mission, Brazzaville, 23 July 1941.

to discredit British and Free French policy by continuing to emphasise its legal status, national sovereignty and historic rights in the Levant. Pétain's response to Operation Exporter replicated much of Vichy's earlier rhetoric. He accused British (not Free French) decision makers of forging a false pretext for aggression in order to seize the region for themselves.[74] Frenchmen in Syria, Pétain urged, should 'fight in a just cause and for the integrity of the territory entrusted to France by history.'[75] Vichy's Minister of Defence, General Charles Huntziger made an official statement that situated the invasions in the longer history of Franco-British rivalry. He described Britain as an invader 'whose perfidy is well-known to you' and proclaimed that 'the France of the Crusaders is today the France of Marshal Pétain.'[76]

At the same time as condemning British policy, Vichy rhetoric challenged the legitimacy of de Gaulle's movement. Pétain's initial radio declaration, subsequently published in the press, attacked de Gaulle's earlier promises never to engage in a fight against Frenchmen. 'The attack is led, as at Dakar, by Frenchmen serving under a dissident flag. Supported by British Imperial forces, they are not hesitating to spill the blood of their brothers defending the unity of the Empire and French Sovereignty.'[77] Vichy's sovereignty and legitimacy were rooted deeply in its imperial territories. As it had done at Dakar, it defended its position by marginalising the Free French movement in favour of historic and emotive images of Franco-British animosity.

For Vichy, empire symbolised French power and greatness. Retaining colonial territories was a way to shore up its legitimacy. But when imperial losses were unavoidable, Vichy was careful to fashion its response in a way that retained its status as a neutral actor. In this framework, empire had to be protected from the British: 'L'histoire prouve que l'Angleterre est l'ennemi héréditaire de cet Empire qui concurrence le sien. Elle a déjà attaqué l'A.E.F. et la Syrie – non pour la 'libérer', mais pour s'y installer…'[78] Vichy's hostility to Britain was articulated in imperial and historic terms. In this framework the Free French were reduced to traitors and British agents. Vichy could not portray British actions as acts of war. Doing so would jeopardise the rights and responsibilities it was claiming as a neutral actor. Thus, British and Free French operations in French colonial territory were represented as a continuation of a much longer history of Franco-British imperial rivalry.

[74]'Le Maréchal Pétain aux Français du Levant', *Echo D'Alger,* 9 June 1941, p. 1.
[75]Our Correspondent, 'Weygand and Vichy', *The Times*, 9 June 1941, p. 3.
[76]CCAC ABMS 1/2/2, Broadcasts in French for the French Listener, 9-15 June 1941.
[77]'Le Maréchal Pétain aux Français du Levant', *L'Echo d'Alger*, 9 June 1941, p. 1. 'What Vichy Says', *The Guardian*, 9 June 1941, p. 6. 'L'Attaque contre La Syrie et la Defense de Notre Empire', *Le Figaro,* 9 June 1941, p. 2.
[78]AN F/41/266, Guide: Les Thèmes de Propagande, no date.

After a month of fighting, on 10 July, General Dentz requested armistice terms. Even in this action, he refused to recognise the Free French movement, insisting that he would negotiate only with the British. Churchill complied, informing British Minister of State in Cairo Oliver Lyttleton that it was imperative that armistice terms were signed, even if this meant excluding the Free French.[79] Armistice terms were concluded on 12 July between General Wilson and Dentz's representative, General Joseph de Verdilhac. They were ratified two days later. De Gaulle was furious by this turn of events. Churchill attributed his anger to his failure to gain recognition for the Free French movement as the legitimate voice of France. The armistice signed on 12 July still listed de Verdilhac as the representative of the French government, rather than the Vichy government.[80] De Gaulle's frustration showcased the challenges associated with constructing his movement as the legitimate French nation. It also illustrated just how quickly notions of legitimacy could be challenged and undermined through words and actions.

Conclusion

The establishment of Marshal Pétain's metropolitan government and Charles de Gaulle's Free French movement in June 1940 set the stage for arguments over which group represented authentic French interests and the legitimate French nation. For both the Vichy government and the Free French, rhetoric played a central role as a tool to establish its own or contest its rival's legitimacy. The range of rhetorical techniques deployed by each side also showed how legal, moral and historic arguments could be combined to construct a particular notion of 'Frenchness'.

The issue of legitimacy was not confined to rhetorical spats. Respective Vichy and Free French claims were also fought through pitched battles over French colonial territory. Here, empire became a strategic resource. For de Gaulle, imperial territory gave his movement a physical capital, material resources and manpower – tangible tools with which to wage war. For Vichy, empire was also a source of material resources and a potential bargaining chip in its relations with the Axis powers. For both players, empire was also a powerful symbol of legitimacy. When battles over colonial territory did take place, they tested the rhetorical frameworks that each side had established.

In September 1940 Vichy troops triumphed over Anglo-Gaullist forces at Dakar. The willingness of Governor General Boisson and his troops to defend their garrison against any threats strengthened the image of Vichy's imperial sovereignty and damaged Free French prestige. In the Levant states in June and July 1941 Vichy troops again resisted against Anglo-Gaullist incursions. This time they were not successful. Losing claim to French mandated Syria and Lebanon was a blow to Vichy's prestige. However, the reality of Britain's strategic interests in the Middle East introduced a

[79]TNA WO 216/10, Note, Churchill to Lyttleton, 12 July 1941.
[80]TNA PREM 3/422/6, Cypher Telegram, Churchill to Lyttleton, July 1941.

new threat to de Gaulle's legitimacy. His attempts to shore up French prestige and influence in the Levantine mandates now had to contend with British interests, which were guarded by superior quantities of British material and manpower.

Debates over the legitimacy of Vichy and the Free French that began in 1940 continued to play a central role even after Vichy lost much of its credibility after the German occupation of the Southern zone in November 1942, and even into the post-war period. In August 1944 de Gaulle passed an ordinance declaring that the Free French movement had represented the Republic since 1940.[81] This eagerness to confirm the illegality of the Vichy government was born out of a desire to banish the men of Vichy from the French nation and from the understanding of what it meant to be French.

The debates over French legitimacy, which were begun in 1940, were far from finished.

[81]Julian Jackson, 'Historians and the Nation in Contemporary France', in Berger, Donovan and Passmore (eds), *Writing National Histories*, p. 240.

‘Everybody to be armed’: Italian naval personnel and the Axis occupation of Bordeaux, 1940–1943

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ABSTRACT
Bordeaux remains marked by ‘l’occupation’. Huge U-boat pens dominate the maritime districts of the city, an imposing reminder of the city's painful history. While such monuments maintain the memory of the German occupation, the Italian wartime presence in the city has been overlooked. Yet the Italian naval garrison had a huge influence on Bordeaux life. This article explores these relationships from the words of captured Italians, whose private conversations reveal how their actions were defined by violence and exploitation. This is a view of Italian soldiery that undermines the myth of the 'brava gente' – a people untainted by the brutality of war.

There is an enduring popular perception of the Italian armed forces of the Second World War as *brava gente*, ‘a good humane people, basically untainted by fascism, including its shameful racist policies, and in fact a victim of fascism and the war itself.’ Supposedly, for all of Italy’s wartime flaws, the nation did not collectively lose its decency and remained a ‘civilised bedrock’.[1] Often couched by comparing ‘good Italians’ with ‘bad Germans’, and the ways in which Italian fascism was an aberration from the *longue durée* of Italian history – it is a troubling phenomenon which has impeded investigations of Italian wartime atrocities and criminality.[2] It is a concept

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1424

[1]Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 189, p. 215 & p. 232.

[2]Filippo Focardi, *Il cattivo Tedesco e il bravo italiano: a rimozione delle colpe della seconda guerra mondiale*, (Bari: Laterza, 2013); Benedetto Croce, *Il dissidio spirituale della Germania con l’Europa*, (Bari: Laterza, 1944), 21; Michele Battini, *The Missing Italian Nuremberg: Cultural Amnesia and Postwar Politics*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan,

expressed in many popular novels, books and films, where Italian soldiers are presented as essentially harmless 'nice guys' and lovers, but not fighters.[3] This is an impression that persists in the popular imagination, though it has been challenged in recent historiography, particularly through the work of historians such as Schlemmer and Rodogno who have demonstrated how Italian soldiers should be seen as 'invaders, not victims'.[4] Furthermore, Italy's overall involvement in the war fought between 1940 and 1943 has been consistently slighted in accounts of the conflict, and while the 'voices' of British, American, Japanese and Soviet veterans abound in published works, those of Italian servicemen remain largely absent.[5,]

One source that does offer authentic expressions of Italian 'voices' are the records of the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (United Kingdom) – or CSDIC (UK). Between September 1939 and October 1945 the staff of this British-run intelligence organisation monitored, recorded, transcribed and translated the private

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2007); Filippo Focardi, 'Italy's Amnesia over War Guilt: The "Evil Germans" Alibi', *Mediterranean Quarterly,* 25/4 (2014), pp. 5-26.

[3]For example: *Mediterraneo* (Dir: Gabriele Salvatores, 1991); *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (Dir: John Madden, 2001); *La linea del fuoco* (Dir: Enzo Monteleone, 2002); *Italiani brava gente* (Dir: Giuseppe de Santis, 1965); *The Secret of Santa Vittoria* (Dir: Stanley Kramer, 1969); Eric Linklater, *Private Angelo,* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946); Eric Linklater, *The Campaign in Italy*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1959). See also: James Sadkovich, 'Anglo-American Bias and the Italo-Greek War of 1940-1941', *The Journal of Military History,* 58/4 (1994), pp. 617-642; James Sadkovich, 'Re-evaluating Who Won the Italo-British Naval Conflict, 1940-42', *European History Quarterly,* xvii (1988), pp. 455-71.

[4]Thomas Schlemmer, *Invasori, non vittime. La campagna italiana di Russia 1941-1943*, (Rome: Laterza, 2009); Davide Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian Occupation During the Second World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[5]For example: Basil Liddell Hart, *A History of the Second World War*, (London: Pan, 2014); Alan Allport, *Browned Off and Bloody-Minded: The British Soldier Goes to War, 1939-1945*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Samuel Morison, *Operations in North African Waters, 1942 – June 1943*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947); Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi invasion of 1940*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For veteran accounts, see: Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: The Red Army, 1939-1945*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2005); Richard Aldrich, *Witness to War: Diaries of the Second World War in Europe and the Middle East*, (London: Corgi, 2005); Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in WWII*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2017); Laurence Rees, *Their Darkest Hour: People Tested to the Extreme in World War Two*, (London: Ebury Press, 2011). An exception is Carlo Ferroni, *Italian POWs Speak Out at Last: Prisoners of War Break Their Silence*, (London: Teneo Press, 2013).

conversations of thousands of mostly unsuspecting Axis prisoners of war at specialised camps in southern England.[6] Over 500 Italian soldiers, sailors and airmen passed through the CSDIC (UK) camps between 1940 and 1943, and close to two thousand transcripts – variously described as 'reports', 'protocols', 'special reports', 'listening reports' and 'SR reports' at the time – were made of their conversations.[7] While there has been some research into the German transcripts and those from senior Italian army officers, the many conversations between 'ordinary' Italian servicemen have not received the analysis they deserve.[8]

These sources offer a unique insight into the thoughts of hundreds of Italian service personnel during the most catastrophic conflict in world history. While the individual conversations may offer just a snapshot of the experiences of these men, they are

[6]These being Trent Park (Cockfosters, London), Latimer House (Latimer, Buckinghamshire) and Wilton Park (Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire). See: The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA) WO 208/4970, 'Enclosure 1 – The History of CSDIC (UK)'; TNA, WO 208/4970, 'The Story of MI19'. For more on the structure and methods of CSDIC (UK) see: Falko Bell, ''One of our Most Valuable Sources of Intelligence': British Intelligence and the Prisoner of War System in 1944', *Intelligence and National Security,* 31/4 (2016), pp. 556-578; Helen Fry, *The Walls Have Ears: The Greatest Intelligence Operation of World War II*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

[7]The number of Germans was much higher. From 1939-1945, 10,195 Germans were handled by CSDIC (UK), of which 16,960 transcripts were made. This numerical disparity perhaps reflects British assessments that Italian forces posed a lesser threat. Source: TNA WO 208/3451, 'Appendix C – Analysis of Prisoners Handled and Reports Issued by CSDIC (UK), September 1939 – October 1945'; TNA WO 208/4198, CSDIC (UK), 'Enemy Atrocities', 18 November 1942.

[8]See: Sönke Neitzel, *Tapping Hitler's Generals: Transcripts of Secret Conversations, 1942-45*, (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2007); Sönke Neitzel, and Harald Welzer, *Soldaten: On Fighting, Killing and Dying*, (London: Simon & Schuster, 2013); Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi, *Noi non sappiamo odiare: L'esercito italiano tra fascism e democrazia* (Milan: UTET, 2010). Harald Welzer, Sönke Neitzel, and Christian Gudehus, eds., *Der Führer war wieder viel zu human, viel zu gefühlvoll: Der Zweite Weltkrieg aus der Sicht deutscher und italienischer Soldaten*, (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2011); Felix Römer, *Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht von innen* (Munich: Piper, 2012); Sebastian Gross, *Gefangem im Krieg Frontsoldaten der Wehrmacht und ihre Welsicht*, (Berlin: Be.Bra, 2012); Tobias Seidl, *Führerpersönlichkeiten: Deutungen und Interpretationen deutscher Wehrmachtgeneräle in britischer Kriegsgefangenschaft*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012); Frederik Müllers, *Elite des Führers: Mentalitäten im subalternen Führungspersonal von Waffen-SS und Fallschirmjägertruppe 1944/45*, (Berlin: Be.Bra, 2012).

nonetheless representations rich in colour and detail.[9] There are few other sources that bring us as close to the actual conversations of Italian servicemen during the war. Certainly, there is evidence that the Italian intelligence services (SIM) and secret police (OVRA and POLPOL) used bugging devices to record some military conversations; however it was denunciation that remained their weapon of choice. It also bears remembering that – unlike the CSDIC (UK) files – only a residue of surveillance records have survived in the Central Police Records in Rome, with tens of thousands of files were deliberately removed, destroyed or not made public.[10]

The CSDIC (UK) transcripts have their limits. We are only left with the material the British Intelligence staff thought important enough to collect.[11] Moreover, while there is next to no evidence that the Italian cohort had a great awareness they were being bugged, these conversations occurred within a martial, homosocial and prisoner community. There was always the capacity for bragging and exaggeration, stemming from the trauma of wartime experiences and the shame of captivity, to shape these conversations. Nevertheless, the transcripts are devoid of the distortions of post-war memory found in oral histories and memoirs, and the performative languages of letters. The CSDIC (UK) sources are a fascinating and rich historical resource, even if it is important to be aware of their limitations. In the same set of documents, the perspectives of influential commanders are found alongside those of humbler rank, on a range of topics of enduring historical importance – from perceptions of allies and enemies, to victory, defeat, antisemitism, experiences of combat, military leadership and the Italian political system.

Of the Italian CSIDC (UK) cohort, over eighty percent came from the navy.[12] No explicit reason is given in CSDIC (UK)'s records for this over-representation of *Regia*

[9]See: Alex Henry, 'The *Brava Gente* Caught on Tape: Listening in to Captured Italian Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen in Britain, 1940-1943' (PhD Thesis, The University of Nottingham, 2018), pp. 41-63.

[10]TNA WO 208/4193, I/SRX 7, 6 December 1940; Chiara Fonio, 'Surveillance under Mussolini's Regime', *Surveillance and Society*, 9/1/2 (2011), p. 83 & p. 90; Jonathan Dunnage, 'Surveillance and Denunciation in Fascist Siena, 1927-1943', *European History Quarterly*, 38/3 (2008), pp. 244-265.

[11]Top priority was political and military matters. Many aspects of the prisoners' personal lives were not considered sufficiently valuable and as such they are only mentioned when they intersect with political and military affairs. For example, discussion of an anti-fascist father or a mother struggling under rationing. See: TNA WO 208/4970, 'Appendix F – Editorial Section'; TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 517, 30 August 1942; TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 300, 30 November 1941.

[12]TNA WO 208/3451, 'Appendix C – Analysis of Prisoners Handled and Reports Issued by CSDIC (UK), September 1939 – October 1945'; TNA WO 208/3451,

Marina personnel. It is possibly a symptom both of practical concerns – these POWs were often captured in the seas in and around the British Isles themselves – and of the huge importance of naval matters to the domestic British intelligence services, who highly valued any information which could be used in the struggles for supremacy in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Whatever the exact reasons, the transcripts constitute a particularly significant body of testimony of the Italian war at sea (1940–1943), within which life in the French port of Bordeaux features particularly prominently.[13]

Part of the German zone of occupation,[14] Bordeaux was nonetheless home to three thousand Italian submariners, *San Marco* marines, *Carabinieri*, technicians and senior commanders of the *11° Gruppo di Sommergibili*.[15] Fighting alongside the German 12 U-Boat Flotilla, which arrived on 15 October 1942, this garrison formed the BETASOM submarine base from which several dozen Italian submarines would go on to sink or seriously damage 112 Allied ships between September 1940 and September 1943. These were victories that cost the *Regia Marina* 15 submarines and the lives of 751 Italian seamen.[16]

The operational history of BETASOM has been well-charted.[17] However, historians have overlooked the interactions of Italian service personnel with the population of

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Appendix 3 – CSDIC (UK) Analysis of PW Interrogated at CSDIC (UK) up to December 1944'; TNA WO 208/3451, Appendix II – CSDIC (UK) Yearly Comparison of SR Output'.

[13]While French, Italian and German archival material offer additional perspectives, for practical reasons they fall outside of the scope of this article.

[14]The Italian zone incorporated the eight south-western French *départments* of Alpes-Maritimes, Hautes-Alpes, Basses-Alpes, Haute-Savoie, Savoie, Var, Isère and Drôme between June 1940 and September 1943: See: Ian Ousby, *Occupation: The Ordeal of France, 1940-1944*, (London: John Murray, 1999), pp. 103; Emmanuele Sica, *Mussolini's Army in the French Riviera*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

[15]Mathieu Marsan, 'Bordeaux-Bacalan: Des Bassins à Flot à la Base Sous-Marine', *Aquitaine Historique*, 120 (2013), p. 3.

[16]BETASOM was the Italian military acronym of 'Beta' ('B' for Bordeaux) and 'Som' ('*Sommergibile*' – submarine). See: http://www.regiamarina.net/detail_text.asp?nid=90&lid=1. Accessed 30 December 2019; Francesco Mattesini, *BETASOM: La guerra negli oceani (1940-1943)*, (Rome: Ufficio storico della marina militare, 2003), pp. 8-9; Dominique Lormier, *Bordeaux sous l'Occupation*, (La Crèche: Geste, 2015), pp. 38-56; Walter Ghetti, *Storia della Marina Italiana nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale: Vol. II*, (Rome: De Vecchi, 2001), p. 26; Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *Sea War: 1939-1945*, (London: Blandford Press, 1987), p. 106.

[17]Mattesini, BETASOM, pp. 27-484; Jean-Pierre Gillet, *Les Sous-marins Italiens en France: Grandeur et Servitude Italienne Atlantique et Océan Indien, 1940-1943*, (Le Vigen: Les

Bordeaux. They are not considered in the research of Robène, Bodin, Héas, Langeo and Soo, and receive only a fleeting mention by Bécamps.[18] This conforms to a wider historiographic trend identified by Varley, whereby relations with Italy and the presence of Italians are overlooked in histories of the occupation.[19]

The presence of these thousands of Italian naval personnel had a major impact on the lives of the *Bordelais* they encountered. This article explores these relationships through the words of Italian submariners. The private conversations within the CSDIC (UK) transcripts – which amount to very early oral testimony of the Italian forces in Bordeaux – reveal a tendency to present their experiences as characterised by violence and exploitation of the occupied French population. This is a view of the Italian man in uniform that undermines the myth of the *Italiani brava gente*. The article thus operates on two levels. First, it provides a new perspective on the wartime history of the city and those who occupied it. Secondly, it is representative of wider issues concerning the experience of Italian occupation and the attitudes of Italians as soldiers in this period.

It is important to note at the outset that the *Regia Marina's* submariner and *San Marco* marines were something of an 'elite' force – especially when compared to the under-

Editions Lela Presse, 2002); Juan Benítez, 'The Italian War in the Mid-Atlantic: Blockade Runners and Submarines in the Canary Islands (1940-1943)', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 100/2 (2014), pp. 186-197; Marco Mascellani, ed., *Vedetta Atlantica: Storie di vita nella base dei sommergibili Italiani a Bordeaux, nelle pagine della rivista di Betasom*, (Sarasota: Bianchi Gianni, 2011), pp.10-49 & pp. 382-404.

[18]Luc Robène, Dominique Bodin and Stéphane Héas, 'Bordeaux et les Politiques d'Équipement Sportif Durant l'Occupation (1940-1944): Des Enjeux Idéologiques aux Contingences Locales', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 13/2 (2005), pp. 175-192; Erwan Langeo, *Bordeaux 1940-1944: Les Bases de Sous-Marins*, (Bordeaux: Association Bunker Atlantique Patrimonie Archéologie, 2017); Scott Soo, 'Ambiguities at Work: Spanish Republican Exiles and the Organisation Todt in Occupied Bordeaux', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 15/4 (2007), pp. 457-477; Pierre Bécamps, *Bordeaux sous l'Occupation*, (Rennes: Ouest France, 1983), p. 47, p. 64, 77 & pp. 80, 87.

[19]Karine Varley, 'Between Vichy France and Fascist Italy: Redefining Identity and the Enemy in Corsica During the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47/3 (2012), p. 506; Karine Varley, 'Vichy and the Complexities of Collaborating with Fascist Italy: French policy and Perceptions Between June 1940 and March 1942', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 21 (2013), p. 318. See also: Romain Rainero, *Mussolini e Pétain Storia dei Rapporti tra l'Italia e la Francia di Vichy (10 giugno 1940 – 8 settembre 1943)*, (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito – Ufficio Storico, 1992).

trained and poorly equipped massed ranks of the conscript army.[20] Significantly for the tales of violence and brutishness recounted below, the proximity to similarly 'elite' German U-Boat personnel appears to have radicalised many Italians. Many BETASOM veterans – both marines and submariners – would fight for the Italian Social Republic (RSI) between 1943-45. By highlighting the radicalism among Italian submariners in Bordeaux, this article expands on and develops the research of Capra Casadio, who has charted the 'radicalisation' and 'fascistisation' of the naval special units through the years preceding the 1943 armistice.[21]

Encounters with French Men

For Italian submarine crews in the Atlantic, the war at sea was bloody and fraught with danger. Whilst it is tempting to think of modern naval warfare as fought over vast distances, with few opportunities to witness the human costs from up close, several CSDIC (UK) reports document the costs of this brutal warfare. Seaman Stefanni remembered that the *Baracca* often came across corpses floating in the water and, on one occasion, 'an entire ship's bridge' - the only remains of a convoy devastated by aerial attack.[22] When a gas explosion on the *Ferraris* killed two of his comrades, Gunner De Seta told how their remains were stored in empty torpedo tubes for the remainder of the voyage.[23] In July 1942, Petty Officer Lazzari could not believe the sheer numbers of 'submarines we have lost from our Atlantic base!'[24] Engineer Lieutenant Varoli recalled in March 1943 that 'nobody was saved from the *Granito*,' nor from the *Alabastro*, the *Veniero*, the *Marconi*, the *Malaspina* and the *Marcello*.[25] These men experienced the ghastly consequence of warfare first hand. Across all of Italy's naval

[20]Brian Sullivan, 'The Italian Soldier in Combat, June 1940-September 1943: Myths, Realities and Explanations', in Paul Addison and Angus Calder, eds., *Time to Kill: The Soldier's Experience of War in the West. 1939-1945*, (London: Pimlico, 1997), pp. 177-205.

[21]Fabio De Ninno, *I sommergibili del fascismo. Politica navale, strategia e uomini tra le due guerre mondiali*, (Milan: Unicopli, 2014); Luigi Fulvi, Giuliano Manzari, Tullio Marcon, Ottorini Ottone Miozzi, *Le fanterie di marina Italiane*, (Rome: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1998); Massimiliano Capra Casadio, *Storia della Xa Mas 1943-1945*, (Milan: Mursia, 2016).

[22]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 151, 15 October 1941.

[23]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 284, 26 November 1941.

[24]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 331, 29 July 1942.

[25]TNA WO 208/4193, I/SRX 42, 5 March 1943. Respectively these were sunk on 14 September 1942 (Mediterranean); 7 June 1942 (Mediterranean); 28 October 1941 (Atlantic); 10 September 1941 (Atlantic); 22 February 1941 (Atlantic). See: Kevin Moeller, 'The Italian Submarine Force in the Battle of the Atlantic: Left in the Dark' (Masters Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, 2014), pp. 78-82.

theatres of operations, the Italian submarine service suffered 3,144 personnel killed and lost 98 vessels, which amounted to two-thirds of its total strength.[26] These remain proportionally in line with *Kriegsmarine* U-Boat losses in the Second World War. Of the 1,167 U-Boats commissioned between 1935 and 1945, 757 were sunk – a loss-rate of 65 percent. Over 30,000 German submariners were killed with their vessels, roughly 57 percent of U-Boat crewmen.[27] Italian submariners were not insulated from the grim attrition of Second World War maritime warfare.

Threats to personal safety did not stop when the submarine crews returned to base. CSDIC (UK) documents provide repeated examples of violence between Italians and the local male population. Even if one allows for occasional exaggeration or bragging, the recorded conversations suggest a constant climate of tension. For example, Petty Officer Marchiol described an incident during which an inebriated French man aggressively insulted him as a 'sale macaroni!'[28] The French drunk was not satisfied merely with verbal aggression: 'then he raised his hand to strike me. I gave him a shove and he tripped over the curb and finished up on the steps of the bar. He drew a knife and went for me.'[29] Luckily for Marchiol, his assailant was soon restrained, arrested and beaten by the *Carabinieri*. The account of the attack, which did not suggest any great personal valour on the part of Marchiol, grants it an air of authenticity. According to Marchiol, when he was questioned by the secret police, the attacker confessed he acted out of hatred for Italians.[30]

A February 1943 conversation between three naval Petty Officers made clear the dangers faced by submarine crews in Bordeaux. As Petty Officer Pullio explained, in the wake of numerous lethal attacks against them, naval crews took up the habit of carrying sidearms as they moved through the city.[31] Ordinary Seaman Stefanni confirmed this practice amongst BETASOM personnel, 'there's a lot of disorder at the Atlantic base. The sergeants and officers went about armed with pistols after there had been some cases of attacks made on one or two of them who were alone […]

[26] http://www.regiamarina.net/sub_casualties.asp?nid=196&lid=1 . Accessed 30 December 2019.
[27] Axel Niestle, *German U-Boat Losses During World War II: Details of Destruction*, (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2014), p. 11; Timothy Mulligan, *Neither Sharks Nor Wolves: The Men of Nazi Germany's U-Boat Arm, 1939-1945*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999), pp. 251-256.
[28] Translation: 'dirty macaroni'. 'Macaroni' is a French anti-Italian ethnic slur similar to 'wop'.
[29] TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 465, 18 August 1942.
[30] Ibid.
[31] TNA WO 208/4191, I/SRN 1034, 12 February 1943.

even the biggest fool carried a revolver down there, or a dagger or something.'[32] It reached a point where orders were issued from BETASOM commanders 'for everybody to be armed.'[33] Stefanni stated that when the 'civil population' began turning away from Italians on the street, even spitting on the ground as they passed, 'several [civilians] got beaten up – we didn't stand for that […] We were ordered to hit back. The commander said: "The first man who appears here in this base with a black eye will be sent back to Italy (in disgrace)".'[34] Street fights 'were just everyday routine.'[35] When it came to 'proper' conduct in an occupied territory, maintaining peace with the civil population was subordinated to protect national honour by means of rough justice. Insults from French civilians against the Fascist ideal of the 'Italian warrior' were countered with direct violence, but the Italians were expected also to demonstrate their martial masculinity in such clashes.

While Bordeaux lacks a strong reputation for acts of resistance, the city was by no means a safe haven for Axis personnel. In August 1940 alone, a German sailor was killed, shots were fired at a German patrol and three people were arrested for subversive activity. In September, the telephone cable between La Rochelle and Royan was cut. All this took place before the establishment of an organised resistance framework.[36] The first successful SOE operation in occupied France – 'Josephine B' – took place in June 1941 in the Bordeaux suburb of Pessac, causing substantial damage to a power station and hampering BETASOM operations for weeks.[37] On 20 October 1941 the resistance killed a German *Feldkommandantur* officer; the Germans shot 98 French hostages in reprisal. On 21 October 1942, there was another killing of Axis personnel in Bordeaux.[38] Spanish Republican exiles working for the Organisation Todt were particularly prone to acts of violent resistance, acting as accessories to the shooting of the *Feldkommandantur* officer and mortally wounding another German officer with a sharpened key in 1941. They would go on to commit further attacks on the occupying forces in December 1942 and January 1943.[39]

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[32]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 165, 17 October 1941.
[33]Ibid.
[34]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 166, 17 October 1941.
[35]Ibid.
[36]Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 286-287.
[37]Michael Foot, *S.O.E.: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive, 1940-46*, (London: Vintage, 2014), p. 243; Michael Foot, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France, 1940-1944*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp. 157-159.
[38]Jackson, *Dark Years*, pp.182, 423.
[39]Soo, 'Ambiguities at Work', pp. 470-471.

Several Italians under CSDIC (UK) observation remarked upon the brutality of German reprisals following such acts of resistance. The Italians in Bordeaux appear divided in their reactions, with some disconcerted by the level of German violence, and others joining such repression.[40] Chief Boatswain Pontone recalled an incident when a tram refused to stop for him and a waiting German. In response, 'the German pulled out a pistol and started firing at the tram; he broke all the windows and wounded two people.' When the tram stopped, the German climbed on board, 'pointed his pistol at the driver and ordered all the passengers to get out […] The German told me to get in […] All the other passengers were left standing in the street.'[41] Petty Officer Grupposo described how even minor infractions by the civil population could be punished by withholding meat for two weeks and that eleven Frenchmen were publicly executed by firing squad when accused of signalling to Allied bombers.[42] While both seem to be uncomfortable witnesses, neither Pontone nor Grupposo condemned these actions.

Petty Officer Spinelli cited an even bloodier response to the shooting of a German major in the city, whereby dozens were shot and a substantial fine levied.[43] Yet there is evidence that some Italian troops joined in with such practices. Seaman Stefanni reported that, 'when the air raid sirens went, both German and Italian patrols would go round firing at lighted windows,' without warning and with no consideration of who was inside. [44] Italian marines apparently 'used to set off in parties of six or seven in the evening as if they were going on a binge.'[45] German troops – especially those returning from service on the Eastern Front – had a well-documented habit of shooting up the French towns were they were billeted if 'provoked' by shut cafes and brothels.[46] Italian troops, however, do not. Even accounting for the fact that the *San Marco* battalion

[40]The views of the Italian POWs to their wartime allies are no less diverse in the main body of CSDIC transcripts. Though brutish and brutal German behaviour was often remarked upon. See: Henry, 'The *Brava Gente* Caught on Tape', pp. 89-95. The complexity of this relationship is further expanded upon in, Lutz Klinkhammer, Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi and Thomas Schlemmer, eds., *Die Achse im Krieg: Politik, Ideologie und Kriegführung, 1939-1945*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), pp. 108-146.

[41]TNA WO 208/4191, I/SRN 956, 8 February 1943.

[42]TNA WO 208/ 4192, I/SRN 1105, 14 February 1943.

[43]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 280, 26 November 1941. This is possibly a reference to the reprisals taken in the wake of the lethal shooting of the German officer on 21 October 1941. See above.

[44]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 180, 19 October 1941.

[45]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 180, 19 October 1941.

[46]Robert Gildea, *Marianne in Chains: Daily Life in the Heart of France during the German Occupation*, (London: Pan, 2003), p. 78.

was a particularly 'radical' unit, the trigger-happy nature of Italian marines in Bordeaux, and the readiness of some to condone German repressive measures, is remarkable.

Occupied Bordeaux thronged with young men on the hunt for sex and alcohol to escape the realities of war and, for submarine crews, the probability of death. In such an atmosphere it is scarcely surprising that instances of violence between Italian sailors and French civilians created serious issues of public order. The situation was aggravated by tensions generated by sexual relations with local women, where the sometimes sexually predatory nature of the occupying forces and the bonds forged between occupier and occupied from genuine affection, attraction, or meretricious calculation created tensions. The Loire ports of Nantes and St. Nazaire have been described as a 'partying mecca,' where the 'freewheeling atmosphere could easily slip into drunken brawls.'[47] When, in September 1941, two German soldiers were injured in such an altercation in Nantes, the investigating French police commissioner wrote: 'incidents often happen in these places because of the mingling of males and females and the abuse of alcohol.'[48] As the CSDIC (UK) accounts demonstrate, Bordeaux was little different. Whether the violence came from idealistic *résistants*, inebriated Frenchmen riled by an Italian marine chatting up his girlfriend or the Italian servicemen themselves, Bordeaux – and many French cities like it – was a dangerous and violent place during the Occupation. This is a bleak view – the Italian naval personnel here did not view their French neighbours as *les soeurs latines* but with animosity and aggression.

Petty Officer Marchiol described how much he 'loathed' the French workmen he came across in Bordeaux stating, 'they stood about doing nothing. If it was a question of smuggling, then they were ready enough […] but for honest work they were useless.'[49] As Chief Boatswain Pontone told in January 1943, tensions between French civilians and Italian naval personnel worsened in the aftermath of air raids by the RAF.[50] As Italian sailors passed through the town in their uniforms, 'the French pelted us with tomatoes and rotten eggs and spat at us […] the first evening the sailors just let things happen but on the second evening they jumped off the trams and there was a free fight.'[51] Sartre and Knapp have written of the anger among French civilians in the wake

[47]Nicholas Stargardt, *The German War: A Nation Under Arms, 1939-1945*, (London: Vintage, 2015), pp. 127-128.
[48]Stargardt, *German*, p. 127.
[49]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 351, 2 August 1942.
[50]See: Denis Richards, *RAF Bomber Command in the Second World War: The Hardest Victory*, (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 82; Claudia Baldoli and Andrew Knapp, *Forgotten Blitzes: France and Italy Under Allied Air Attack, 1940-1945*, (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 4, 26.
[51]TNA WO 208/4191, I/SRN 865, 6 January 1943.

of Allied bombing raids.[52] Often this was directed at the bombers themselves, but it holds that their ire also be aimed at the occupying forces who were the raid's primary target.

When one considers why this level of aggression developed there are several possible political explanations. In addition to simply being an occupying force, the Italians' belated entry into the war and their poor military performance along the *Ligne Alpine* in June 1940 resulted in a French tendency to deny Italy's legitimacy as conqueror.[53] The Germans had at least comprehensively defeated the forces of the Third Republic on the battlefield. This bred a contempt towards the Italian presence, compounded by an irritating Italian self-satisfaction at finally being in control of long-desired French territory.[54] From the Italian perspective, the Fascist Government and its propaganda had identified France as one of Italy's foremost rivals during the interwar era.[55] Count Galeazzo Ciano's famous *Diario* abounds with references to efforts to stoke Francophobia among the Italian populace.[56]

Such Fascist propaganda rested on a long-standing historical foundation. Antagonism between Italy and France pre-dated even the unification of Italy. It was French troops that had crushed Mazzini's fledgling Roman Republic in 1849 and French military protection of the Papal States that had prevented Rome's absorption into the Italian state until 1870.[57] In the mid-1930s, French political and public opinion was outraged

[52]Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Paris Under Occupation', *Sartre Studies International*, 4/2 (1998), pp. 9-10; Andrew Knapp, 'The Destruction and Liberation of Le Havre in Modern Memory', *War In History*, 14/4 (2007), p. 489.

[53]Italian assaults against fortified positions on the French frontier would cost an already defeated French army fewer than 200 casualties, while the Italians lost 631 killed, 2,631 wounded and 616 missing, with 2,151 succumbing to frostbite. See: Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory: The Mediterranean Theatre in World War II*, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004), p. 43.

[54]Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 82; Philippe Burrin, *France under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise*, (New York: The New Press, 1996), p. 166; Varley, 'Complexities', pp. 319-321; Varley, 'Redefining Identity', p. 507.

[55]MacGregor Knox, 'The Fascist Regime, its Foreign Policy and its Wars: An Anti-Anti-Fascist Orthodoxy?', *Contemporary European History*, 4/3 (1995), pp. 347-365; Arturo Marzano, 'La <<guerra delle onde>> La risposta inglese e francese alla propaganda di Radio Bari nel mondo arabo (1938-1939)', *Contemporanea*, 1 (2012), pp. 3-24.

[56]Galeazzo Ciano, *The War Diaries of Count Galeazzo Ciano, 1939-1943*, (London: Fonthill Media, 2015), pp. 37, 38, 40, 51.

[57]Christopher Duggan, *Francesco Crispi, 1818-1901: From Nation to Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 334-336, pp. 407-409 & pp. 610-611. See

by the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and intervention in the Spanish Civil War. From November 1936 to October 1938, France had even withdrawn its Ambassador from Rome in protest.[58] While it is unlikely that many French civilians would have pulled a knife on an Italian sailor exclusively to right the wrongs of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, or that Italian submariners would go on violent benders as revenge for the *Risorgimento* era, it seems probable that mutual antipathy between Italians and French men was underpinned both by personal tensions, sexual jealousies and political factors that pre-dated the outbreak of hostilities in the summer of 1940.

Sex

The shame of defeat and occupation precipitated a wartime crisis in French masculinity. This would dramatically influence post-Liberation French society through the 'massive demonstration of sexual violence' against women accused of collaboration, who had their heads publicly shaved as punishment.[59] That the violence directed at Italian forces in Bordeaux also stemmed in part from this crisis in French masculinity seems likely, not least because, as the transcripts reveal, sexual relations between local women and Italian sailors were rife. As the commander of the submarine *Glauco* said, 'at Bordeaux all my crew managed to find girlfriends. They got on well with the French girls.'[60] This highly sexualised environment is reflected in the great many sexually explicit cartoons and jokes found among the pages of the *Vedetta Atlantica*, the BETASOM base newspaper made by submariners for submariners.[61]

Seaman Stefanni reminisced that 'every Italian in Bordeaux had a mistress, from the ordinary seaman to the admiral.'[62] A radio-telegraphy Warrant Officer described how there were 'plenty of women in Bordeaux ready for a bit of fun.' His own mistress was the wife of a captured French pilot.[63] So numerous were these relationships that the military authorities established a dedicated office to examine 'all letter[s], photographs etc. (belonging to missing submarine men)' and destroyed them. This was because, according to Sub-Lieutenant Villa, 'married men, especially, may have

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also: Michael Broers, 'Cultural Imperialism in a European Context? Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Napoleonic Italy', *Past and Present*, 170 (2001), pp. 152-180.

[58]Jackson, *The Fall of France*, pp. 65, 70-71.

[59]Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Gender and Punishment in Liberation France*, (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), p. 240.

[60]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 83, 15 August 1941.

[61]Like a more reverent *Wipers Times*, *Vedetta Atlantica* was published in 37 editions between 6 November 1941 and 1 December 1942. See: Mascellani, *Vedetta Atlantica*, pp. 53-380.

[62]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 231, 28 October 1941.

[63]TNA, WO 208/4189, I/SRN 94, 22 August 1941.

compromising letters and photographs.'[64] In this case the Navy placed the protection of these men's marital betrayal over transparency for families in Italy.

It is clear there was genuine affection and even a level of innocence in some of these relationships. Relations between Italian men and French women were not exclusively sexual. For example, Torpedo Rating Diddi spoke of an evening he shared with some comrades and women at a 'lock-in' at a restaurant, *Giuliella's*. 'We made [the proprietor] shut the doors at eleven o'clock. We had brought a kilogram of Gorgonzola cheese with us […]. We spent the whole night eating […] we had a wonderful time.'[65] Petty Officer Paoli said that some of the women 'got genuinely fond of us,' and that 'one or two of the older men lost their heads' when it came to their French girlfriends. He knew of one man who had refused to go back to his wife and family in Italy on leave because he wished to spend it with his mistress instead.[66] For all the complications of occupation it is not a surprise that some individuals sought company and escape from the war in this way.

A similar dynamic was observed between German prisoners of war and American women during the Second World War where 'the authorities had trouble keeping local girls away from the prisoners.' Searches of POW bunks would often uncover stashes of contraceptives.[67] A further example from this time were the forbidden sexual relationships between German women and the 1.5 million French POWs used as labourers throughout the Reich.[68] Whilst sexual fraternisation with the occupiers could be motivated by a range of factors – financial, political, self-preservation – many French women did so for comparatively innocent reasons. As Madame Sandrine from Toulouse remembered,

> We had lived through a dismal period: women wanted to enjoy themselves, to push away all this dreariness, all the problems, especially in the towns. Who had the money to have a good time? The Occupying forces, the black-market racketeers, those who were making the big money.[69]

[64]TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 557, 11 September 1942.
[65]TNA WO 208/4191, I/SRN 464 B, 18 August 1942.
[66]TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 571, 12 September 1942.
[67]Matthias Reiss, 'Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire: Masculinity and the Treatment of German Prisoners of War in the United States during World War II', *The Journal of Military History*, 69/2 (2005), pp. 492-497.
[68]Raffael Scheck, 'Collaboration of the Heart: The Forbidden Love Affairs of French Prisoners of War and German Women in Nazi Germany', *The Journal of Modern History*, 90/2 (2018), pp. 351-382.
[69]Hanna Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-1948: Choices and Constraints*, (Harlow: Routledge, 1999), p. 71 & p. 84.

The Italian sailors stationed in Bordeaux, after all, found themselves in a country which had been abruptly stripped of some 1.5 million young Frenchmen with the 1940 capitulation.[70]

To argue that *all* such relations discussed in the CSDIC (UK) transcripts were defined by affection would be misleading. Petty Officer Marghetta said, 'there's not a decent woman in Bordeaux – they're all prostitutes.'[71] There was a sinister side to many encounters between Italian men and French women. As Petty Officer Paoli mentioned, some Italian sailors would exploit the genuine feelings felt towards them to cynically borrow money from their admirers.[72] That the level of sexual exploitation could descend to the grooming and rape of underaged girls is made clear by Ordinary Seaman Stefanni. He recalled that there reached a point when some Italians became 'fed up with going with women, so they [began] to run after young girls.'[73] Shortages of luxuries, money and even food in Bordeaux meant that all it could take to attract such girls were gifts of make-up or perfume.[74]

> Some girls they were, I can tell you! Bit by bit, they all went the same way! There was a shortage of food you see; they had no money, and stuff like a bottle of scent, for which they used to pay next to nothing, now costs a heap of money. […] I bought six or seven litres and made a lot of little friends! […] So I got to know a girl, and the second day I used to bring her a lip-stick or a little bottle of scented water; then to win her over completely you went to the cinema, and when you went in you made a sign to the proprietor, and he at once gave you a dark box […] The girl would ask "why in here?" but she didn't go away. Then the fun began.[75]

Evidence of this darker side to Franco-Italian sexual relations gives valuable context as to why 'feelings against Italians were particularly strong after the Liberation.'[76] Stefanni's example of evident sexual exploitation involved the cooperation and

[70]Stargardt, *German*, pp. 127-128.
[71]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 334, 30 July 1942.
[72]TNA, WO 208/4190, I/SRN 571, 12 September 1942.
[73]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 149, 15 October 1941. Other instances of Italian soldiers sexually harassing French children can be found in Sica, *French Riviera*, pp. 103-104.
[74]For more on economic shortages in the city see: Lormier, *Bordeaux*, pp. 80-83. TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 334, 30 July 42 and TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 223, 28 October 1941, both describe the massive increases in the cost of consumer goods during the occupation period.
[75]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 149, 15 October 1941.
[76]Virgili, *Shorn*, pp. 14-15.

collusion of French and Italian men. French women and girls in this context were caught between foreign occupation and wider patriarchal oppression. They stood to be liberated from more than just Axis subjugation at the end of the war.

For other Italian sailors, sex was directly purchased and prostitution became a booming industry in Bordeaux. One prisoner recalled a sex worker who had amassed savings of 40,000 francs.[77] But it was evidently not without its risks. Petty Officer Villosio reported that the availability of opiates in some Bordeaux brothels could turn their customers 'half crazy'.[78] Contracting sexually transmitted diseases was, of course, another danger and it is clear from the transcripts that they were rife amongst Italian personnel in Bordeaux. Seaman Stefanni estimated that 'seventy percent of the Italians at Bordeaux had some form of venereal disease, and I can't tell you how many have been sent home suffering from syphilis.'[79] Sub-Lieutenant Villa reported that, 'there were two hundred cases of syphilis among officers and petty officers in Bordeaux […] and as for gonorrhoea! It's got to the point that a man who hasn't caught gonorrhoea is looked upon as a fool.'[80] This was a state of affairs bluntly corroborated by Petty Officer Di Cesare who claimed that, 'at Bordeaux everybody has gonorrhoea.'[81] Petty Officer Della Barbera was nostalgic for the days when one did not have to worry about such things. He blamed the Germans for the rise in sexually transmitted infections, saying 'there wasn't nearly so much venereal disease before they arrived in the port.'[82]

Prostitution was an ongoing concern for the authorities in occupied France and, given what is revealed in the transcripts, this seems only prudent. There was a well-developed system of regulated prostitution across the occupied zone, including Bordeaux. Yet so called 'covert' – unregulated – prostitution remained common and the target of many official clamp-downs. For instance, French police in Angers uncovered 41 covert prostitutes of whom 12 had sexually transmitted infections.[83]

[77]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 166, 17 October 1941.
[78]TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 434, 14 August 1942.
[79]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 247, 16 November 1941.
[80]TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 588, 11 September 1942.
[81]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 330, 29 July 1942.
[82]TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 322, 27 July 1942. Similar charges would be levelled the Allies in Southern Italy. See: Julie Le Gac, "'*Le mal napolitain*": les alliés et la prostitution à Naples (1943–1944)', *Genre et Histoire*, 15 (2014/2015).
[83]Gildea, *Marianne*, pp. 76-77.

Outside France, Italian health reports from Greece also expressed concern over high rates of venereal diseases among Italian garrisons, particularly in urban areas.[84]

Seaman Grosso of the submarine *Glauco* – a vessel which operated across the Mediterranean and Atlantic – said that 'we all paid visits to the brothels before leaving' on a submarine patrol.[85] But as the following excerpts make clear, the submarine crews that operated out of Bordeaux were far from the only units in the Italian Navy to pay a physical cost for habitually visiting brothels. Midshipman Gianni described the situation at Cagliari where there was 'a lot of gonorrhoea. […] a friend of mine caught it and I went with the same girl a few days later.' He suffered from a similar fate in La Spezia where he said, 'once I went to a brothel with two friends and we all three got gonorrhoea.'[86] Gianni's candid admission underlines the absolute normality of venereal disease among Italian naval personnel, a cause neither of surprise nor of shame.

As Midshipman Manisco of the 10 Flotilla MAS made clear, it was a trend that could have an impact on the operational effectiveness of Italian vessels. He described how a submarine carrying Italian *Maiale* human torpedoes was compromised when one of the torpedo's crew contracted gonorrhoea while ashore. It took him out of action and meant that a reserve crew had to be used.[87] The Italian military were not alone in facing manpower problems as a result of hospitalization due to venereal disease in the Second World War, it was a phenomenon shared by almost every other European army at the time. In France in 1939, General Montgomery issued a memorandum to his 3 Division on the 'Prevention of Venereal Disease' following 44 cases admitted to the divisional Field Ambulances in just one month.[88] Among the US Army in Italy in April 1944 the 'VD rate' was approximately 163 per 1,000 men, a rate five times the 'acceptable standard' calculated by the War Department and a level Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force medical officers thought could compromise Allied success.[89] This demonstrates a grubbier side to traditional ideas of the Allied

[84]Paolo Fonzi, 'The Italian Occupation of Crete during the Second World War', in Emmanuele Sica and Richard Carrier, eds., *Italy and the Second World War: Alternative Perspectives*, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 69.
[85]TNA WO 208/4189, I/SRN 84, 14 August 1941.
[86]TNA WO 208/4190, I/SRN 768, 21 December 1942.
[87]TNA WO 208/4191, I/SRN 802, 30 December 1942.
[88]Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, *Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man*, (London: Viking, 2007), p. lxiii.
[89]Mary Lou Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 163. For further comparison see: Mary Lou Roberts, 'The Price of Discretion: Prostitution, Venereal Disease, and the American Military in France, 1944–1946', *The American Historical Review*, 115/4 (2010), pp. 1002-1030; Le Gac, "'*Le mal napolitain*'".

and Italian war, which conveniently overlook the contracting of and passing on of sexually transmitted diseases to the sexual partners of servicemen.

Conclusion

Even seventy-five years after its liberation, Bordeaux remains physically marked by the German occupation. The huge concrete U-boat pens – built to protect *Kriegsmarine* vessels from Allied bombing – dominate the maritime district.[90] They serve as an imposing reminder of a painful period in the city's history, one marked by the pressures of collaboration, resistance and the everyday fight for survival. While such architectural monuments keep the memory of the German occupation alive, the Italian military presence in the city has been overlooked. This article goes some way to correcting this imbalance through the words of Italian servicemen themselves. It also fills a gap in the historiography to consider those Italian CSDIC (UK) transcripts which feature the voice of lower-ranking naval personnel. The conversations offer a very rare glimpse into the way Italian servicemen in this period spoke of their experiences and interacted with one another, and they provide an opportunity for Anglophone audiences to hear authentic voices of the Italian experience of the Second World War. This is a significant perspective in national contexts where this conflict is still so culturally, politically and socially influential, and yet wider understanding of the 'Italian War' remains limited.

Even though the words in this article come from the occupiers themselves – the perpetrators of repression – this perspective has not obscured the grimness and brutishness of the Italian presence in the city. It is the issue of how Italian servicemen acted in their role as occupiers that stands as one of the most arresting topics. A site of widespread exploitation and violence, Bordeaux – as throughout so much of the Italian wartime empire – suffered greatly under the Italian presence between 1940 and 1943. Frequent bloody clashes with local men meant that personal protection was ensured by carrying sidearms and daggers. Perceived slights to Italian honour were met with officially sanctioned brute force and many Italian marines demonstrated little reluctance to join their German colleagues in terrorising the local populace.

Meanwhile, Bordeaux's women faced sexual exploitation on an almost systematic scale. The high rates of sexually transmitted infections and references to violent drug use make it clear that such encounters could be incredibly risky. That some Italian personnel pursued young girls removes any gloss provided by those French women

[90]For more on the wartime and peacetime uses of the vast German-built submarine pens at Bordeaux see: Mathieu Marsan, 'La Base sous-marine de Bordeaux, sous le béton la culture', *In Situ*, 16 (2012), pp. 1-21. Similar structures remain on the waterfronts of the other major German bases in western France – Brest, Lorient, St-Nazaire and La Rochelle.

and Italian men who were genuinely fond of each other. While lacking the concentration camps, massacres and wanton reprisals of Italian occupation policy in the Balkans,[91] there is nonetheless a distinct grubbiness and bloodiness to the Italian military presence in Bordeaux, much of which had support from official channels. The CSDIC (UK) transcripts reveal a side to the Italian experience of the Second World War that fundamentally contradicts the image of the *Italiani brava gente*.

[91] In Yugoslavia, Italy's military and political administrators ruled with an iron fist and rightly earned the title 'pioneers of repression'. Policies rooted in anti-Slav racism and Italian colonial practices would cost the lives of thousands of Yugoslavs. See: Lidia Santarelli, 'Muted violence: Italian war crimes in occupied Greece', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9/3 (2004), pp. 280–299; James Burgwyn, 'General Roatta's war against the partisans in Yugoslavia, 1942', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 9/3 (2004), pp. 314–329; Rodogno, *Empire*, pp. 332-334; Elena Aga Rossi and Maria Teresa Giusti, *Una guerra a parte: I militari italiani nei Balcani, 1940-1945*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011), pp. 23-126.

A 'Lack of Moral Fibre' in Royal Air Force Bomber Command and Popular Culture

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ABSTRACT
Royal Air Force aircrew endured mental and physical stresses during bombing operations. Their chances of completing a tour of operations unscathed were around one in four, and many were aware the chances were slim. Some who refused to fly were accused of 'lacking moral fibre' (LMF). Although this was not a medical diagnosis it is frequently viewed through the lens of mental health and reactions to trauma and it has become a powerful and important cultural phenomenon. This article re-examines LMF in the culture of the wartime Royal Air Force, before considering how and why LMF is remembered by veterans and in popular histories since the war.

Introduction

'Lack of moral fibre' (LMF) was a metaphorical 'dreadful stick' intended to deter aircrew refusals to fly and displays of 'cowardice' during the Second World War.[1] Cases were rare, but there are tales of humiliating parades; offenders were publicly stripped of their 'wings' and rank and marched away. LMF was never a medical diagnosis, but its history is complicated by how changing medical theories are understood and by assessments of the numbers involved using imprecise definitions. By re-examining the historiography of this accusation and many of the sources historians have used, this article explores beliefs about courage and ostensible cowardice within Royal Air Force (RAF) Bomber Command during the war itself, and how it has been remembered. It argues that LMF is shrouded in myths influenced by changing medical beliefs, the limitation of archival sources, and veterans' hopes for recognition. The article is in three sections and examines the LMF procedure during

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1425

[1]Imperial War Museum (IWM), Sound Archive, 22367, Bird, P D. See also Edgar Jones, 'LMF: The Use of Psychiatric Stigma in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War' *The Journal of Military History*, No. 70, (April 2006) p. 440.

the war, the historiography and how the process has been remembered in veterans' oral testimonies. The first part uses archive material and medical sources to examine the deployment of this assertion during the war in the context of beliefs about mental health, military discipline, and morale. It argues that LMF was an executive process intended to reduce the numbers of aircrew who refused to fly. However, as will be discussed, it was frequently conflated with mental health issues and often regarded as a medical problem. As Daniel Ussishkin argues, by the twentieth century, it was recognised that military discipline resided in the individual, and it was thought that modern society produced 'men who were selfish, effeminate, individualistic and excitable.'[2] The consensus of medical opinion during the war was that people diagnosed with hysteria or anxiety were thought to be predisposed to illness or were simply the wrong 'type.'[3] Aircrew were expected to be the pinnacle of society and the military hierarchy however, and in 1939, the RAF was unprepared for neuropsychiatric casualties or men who refused to fly. By 1945, medical professionals were more inclined to accept that everyone had a limit to their endurance. However, there has been a further, significant paradigm shift since then. Rather than the individual being at fault, the primacy of a traumatic event has become established in both the medical profession and in popular understanding.[4] It is now accepted that anyone can succumb to trauma and since the creation and popularisation of the diagnosis in the 1980s, LMF is often recalled in the context of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The second part of this article considers the historiography of LMF as well as discussing its cultural representations in film, television and published veteran memoirs. LMF has continued to be regarded as a medical issue by many. The concept of LMF has remained a popular trope within the RAF, among veterans and within the general population. It has been amplified and mythologised over the last seven decades. The final section uses oral histories recently recorded for the International Bomber Command Centre's (IBCC) Digital Archive and considers veterans testimonies about LMF as victim narratives. The article concludes that tales of LMF were embellished and circulated verbally throughout the RAF, during training and on operational stations. Many aircrew who were assumed to be LMF may have been posted away for medical or other reasons. This article argues that for many airmen, witnessing the humiliating ritual was not necessary; rumours of LMF were as effective and made a lasting impression on them.

[2]Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale: A Modern British History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 49, p. 61.

[3]The National Archives (hereinafter TNA) AIR 20/10727, David Stafford-Clark, 'Personal Observations on Flying Stress.'

[4]Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'A paradigm shift in the conceptualisation of psychological trauma in the 20th Century', *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, Vol. 21, No.2, (2007), pp. 164-175.

LMF during the war

In 1939, the British government determined to avoid a costly repetition of the volume of shell shock cases from the First World War. A memorandum was distributed explaining that the term 'shell shock' was not to be used.[5] The symptoms of thousands of men suffering from shell shock during the First World War were explained by their own inherent weaknesses rather than the trauma of industrial warfare.[6] Often hidden from the gaze of their immediate superiors, soldiers were increasingly expected to find their discipline from within, but men who had fought in the previous war did so knowing there was the ultimate sanction of execution for desertion or cowardice. This was not the case in the Second World War, but as aircrew were selected and well-trained volunteers, it was expected that the numbers of those who found themselves unable to perform their duties would be limited. Even so, some symptoms of stress were expected, and the Air Ministry published 'Pamphlet 100' informing Medical Officers how to support aircrew. The pamphlet outlined prevalent theories on the causation and symptomology of neuroses. The warning signs of a 'pre-neurotic state' included:

a. Fatigue.
b. Increased indulgence in alcohol or tobacco.
c. A tendency to become unsociable or irritable.
d. Loss of interests, disinclination for effort.
e. Emotional crises, loss of self-control.
f. Falling off in flying efficiency.
g. Physical symptoms such as loss of appetite, of sleep or of weight, the presence of tremors and tachycardia, and typical anxiety facies.[7]

Medical Officers were to refer individuals to specialists at RAF hospitals. From there, airmen could be returned to duty, be admitted for convalescence or invalided from the service.[8] The RAF was under the illusion, that as an elite with a high proportion of

[5]'Neuroses in War Time: Memorandum for the Medical Profession' *British Medical Journal,* Vol. 2, No, 4119, (1939) p. 1200.
[6]Mathew Thomson, 'Status, Manpower and Mental Fitness: Mental Deficiency in The First World War' in: Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison, and Steve Sturdy, (eds.), *War Medicine and Modernity,* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp. 154-155.
[7]TNA AIR 2/8591, Air Ministry 'Pamphlet 100 'Notes for Medical Officers on the Psychological care of flying personnel' May 1939. Tachycardia is the medical term for a heart rate over 100 beats per minute. Anxiety facies are the typical facial expressions and appearance of someone experiencing anxiety. For the flyers' experience in the First World War see: Lynsey Shaw Cobden 'The Nervous Flyer: Nerves, Flying and the First World War', *British Journal of Military History* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2018, pp.121-142.
[8]TNA AIR 2/8591, Air Ministry 'Pamphlet 100'.

officers, aircrew would not be too susceptible to stress, but after some squadrons experienced unsustainable losses, they found that this assumption was false.[9]

The term 'lack of moral fibre' was first used at a meeting 21 March 1940 to discuss the increasing number of airmen who refused to fly on operations, and a set of rules was circulated to all Commands the following month.[10] A revised version dated 28 Sept 1941, stipulated the management of airmen, 'who though not medical cases, come to forfeit the confidence of their Commanding Officers without having been subjected to any exceptional strain of operational flying.' Often referred to as the 'waverer letter', it stated, the individual, though physically fit, must be proved to be lacking in moral fibre. There must be no question of any medical disability, and if the individual shows any medical symptoms to account for his inability to face operational flying he must be regarded as a medical case.[11]

On an operational station, it is likely that only senior officers knew the content of the letter regarding LMF, and it must be remembered that the guidance on LMF was altered throughout the war.[12] It also meant different things to different people. Senior officers often believed LMF required a medical diagnosis, while the RAF's medical consultants and some Medical Officers were determined to ensure that LMF was an executive and not a medical matter.[13] However, the distinction between LMF and psychoneuroses was never resolved. Medical Officers were caught in the middle of the conflict, while RAF personnel and members of the public were left to rely on rumour and speculation for their understanding of LMF.

Both psychological illnesses and a lack of discipline were thought to be influenced by issues of class and an individual's inherent weakness of character. As Martin Francis argues, concepts of fear and bravery within the RAF were 'closely attuned to the emotional codes and standards of a wider society'. Reactions to stress and anxiety were shaped by the concepts of Edwardian stoicism and masculinity.[14] Wartime psychiatry rested on the belief that some people were predisposed to mental

[9]Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe 1939 – 1945*, (London: Allen Lane, 2013), p. 242.
[10]John McCarthy, 'Aircrew and Lack of Moral Fibre in the Second World War' *War and Society,* Vol. 2, No. 2, (1984), p. 87.
[11]TNA AIR 2/8591, Letter S.61141/S.7.C, 28 September 1940.
[12]McCarthy, 'Aircrew and Lack of Moral Fibre', p. 88.
[13]TNA AIR 29/764/6, RAF Hospital Rauceby, May 1943.
[14]Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force 1939-1945,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 203, p. 130.

breakdown through inherited or acquired characteristics.[15] The RAF's medical consultants believed that non-commissioned officers (NCOs) broke down more frequently because of these fixed and 'inherent qualities'.[16] In the previous war, officers were diagnosed with anxiety while similar symptoms displayed by other ranks were interpreted as hysteria.[17] In the 1940s, eugenicist discourses were still prevalent in a class bound society.[18] The attitude to class within the RAF was similar; ground personnel and women in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force were expected to be less disciplined and more prone to mental health problems.[19] Responsible for investigating potential cases of LMF, Wing Commander James Lawson found that almost half were from wireless operators and gunners and 'that the educational standard was the main cause.' He felt that some aircrew struggled with the 'unwelcome knowledge, however true, that they were of inferior quality.'[20] Medical Officer, Squadron Leader David Stafford-Clark suggested that aircrew sergeants, especially air gunners and flight engineers, were more prone to neuropsychological illnesses or LMF because, for a problematic minority, their motive for volunteering to become aircrew was often 'simply glamour and promotion'.[21] Lawson and Stafford-Clark were not representative of most officers on operational stations who had to decide what to do with a 'wavering' airman however. Both were actively involved in the process of LMF and in defining what it meant. Stafford-Clark devoted time and effort considering the management and treatment of personnel, while Lawson was in charge of the LMF process.[22] Both were, and have continued to be, influential in creating the social, and

[15]Mark Harrison, *Medicine and Victory: British Military Medicine in the Second World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 58-59.

[16]Charles Symonds and Denis Williams, 'Personal Investigation of Psychological Disorders In Flying Personnel of Bomber Command.' Air Ministry, *Psychological Disorders in Flying Personnel of the Royal Air Force Investigated During The War 1939-1945*, (London: HMSO, 1947), p. 51.

[17]Richard Gillespie, *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1942), p. 210.

[18]Felix Brown 'Heredity in the Psychoneuroses' *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine,* Vol. 35, No. 12, (1942), pp. 785-790.

[19]Francis, *The Flyer, pp. 49-53.* For more on the role of the medical officer and mental health within Bomber Command see Dan Ellin, *The many behind the few: the lives and emotions of Erks and WAAFs of RAF Bomber Command 1939-1945*. PhD thesis, University of Warwick, (2015), pp. 246-297.

[20] Wellcome Collection (WC), WL, PP/DSC/E/1, Stafford-Clark, Private Papers, Letter from Wing Commander Lawson to David Stafford-Clark 14 August 1945.

[21]David Stafford-Clark, 'Morale and Flying Experience: Results of a Wartime Study', *Journal of Mental Science*, Vol. 95, No. 398, (1949), p. 16.

[22]Air Historical Branch (AHB), James Lawson, 'Memorandum on executive action (LMF)'; David Stafford-Clark, 'Aspects of War Medicine in the RAF' *British Medical*

cultural perceptions around the concept of LMF. The treatment aircrew received varied between stations and depended on senior officers' interpretation of the procedure. The disproportionate number of NCO cases may partly be explained because senior officers could not observe aircrew in the sergeants' mess; consequently, they were less able to offer advice, prophylactic treatment or rest.[23] Often, neither Medical Officers, nor Commanding Officers wanted to be responsible for the process. By 1944, some senior officers noted the 'confusion which arises between "Anxiety" and LMF cases' and concluded that it was 'entirely a medical matter.'[24] LMF was a medical responsibility at other stations too. In May 1944, a Medical Officer recorded 'Lack of confidence – Nil' in 12 squadron's Operational Record Book.[25] The management of LMF cases was inconsistent throughout the war and across different stations. However, many of the beliefs about LMF were consistent with what the aircrews themselves understood about LMF, then, and decades later. LMF was equated with fear, cases occurred in 'epidemics' and effective leadership was believed to help reduce the likelihood of occurrences.[26]

Many sources give an insight into the development of the LMF policy by the Air Ministry, but they are not relevant to its practical application. Historians have used sources about the medical treatment of neuropsychiatric patients by the RAF, but while the consultants and Medical Officers had a role to play, LMF was not a medical diagnosis. The problem was, and remains, a matter of definition. It relied on senior officers making a judgement about the motives. morale, and mental health of an individual. Some aircrew who refused to fly flagrantly disobeyed orders, while others were suffering from neuropsychiatric disorders. Unfortunately, there was never an effective administrative procedure in place to make a distinction between the two.[27] Historians have attempted to find the numbers involved, but there is no definitive answer. Sources from early in the war offer a snapshot of the procedure before it was well established, but later sources tend to be rather generalised.[28] In April 1945, the Director-General of Medical Services reported that

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Journal, Vol. 1, No. 4282, (1943), pp. 139–140; Stafford-Clark, 'Morale and Flying Experience', pp. 10-50; David Stafford-Clark, *Psychiatry Today*, (London: Penguin, 1952).

[23]Symonds and Williams, 'Personal Investigation', p. 38.

[24]TNA AIR 29/851, 31 Base, Stradishall, Base Commanders conference 3 March 1944.

[25]TNA AIR 27/168, 12 Squadron operational record book.

[26]Symonds and Williams, 'Personal Investigation', pp. 53-54.

[27]Lynsey Shaw-Cobden, *Neuropsychiatry and the management of aerial warfare: the Royal Air Force neuropsychiatric division in the Second World War*, PhD thesis, University of Oxford, (2016), pp.194-197.

[28]TNA AIR 2/8591, Aircrew who refuse or are unfit to fly: disposal policy.

> Each year there are about 3000 cases of nervous breakdown in air crew and about 300 cases of lack of confidence. A third of the neurosis cases occur in Bomber Command.[29]

James Lawson's papers are perhaps the best source we have. Dated 23 November 1945, it is probable that the figures in his memorandum are the final total of cases examined: [30]

Total submitted	4059
Officers	746
Airmen	3313
Total classified	2726
Officers	389
Airmen	2337

Lawson found that a third of cases were in Bomber Command, that LMF was applied to more NCOs than officers,[31] and that more gunners and wireless operators were submitted than other trades.[32] The evidence also highlights that a large proportion of cases occurred at training units.[33]

The 'waverer letter' is also worthy of a re-examination. The paragraphs concerning medical diagnoses were altered in different versions of the letter, but the three categories of airmen who were deemed not to cope with the stresses of flying remained relatively unchanged. The 1943 letter categorised them as:

(i) Those who though medically fit… come to forfeit the confidence of their Commanding Officers without having been subjected to any exceptional flying stress…
(ii) Those who are given a permanent medical category… solely on account of symptoms which are nervous in origin arising from inability to stand up to the strain of their duties, and without having been subjected to any exceptional flying stress…
(iii) Those not included in (ii) above who are given a medical category lower than A1B or A3B… on account of physical disability; physical illness or

[29]TNA AIR 2/6252, Psychological disorders in flying personnel: occurrence reports.
[30]AHB, Lawson 'Memorandum'.
[31]Ibid.
[32]WC, PP/DSC/E/1, Letter from James Lawson to David Stafford-Clark 14 August 1945.
[33]AHB, Lawson 'Memorandum'.

> injury complicated by nervous symptoms; or nervous illness caused by factors entirely unrelated to their duties…[34]

Whether they were LMF or given a medical diagnosis, officers in the first two categories lost their commission, and NCOs were re-mustered to a ground trade or transferred to the Army. Officers and NCOs in category three were invalided from the service or re-mustered to ground duties.[35] Some at the Air Ministry were aware that there was little separating the treatment of airmen discharged under the first two categories of the letter

> In effect we accord to the airman who had honestly tried to make good but who failed and was declared permanently unfit for flying duties because of inherent physical disability the same treatment, so far as the outward and visible signs were concerned, as we accorded to "W" cases.[36]

Throughout the war, those in both category one and two had permission to wear their aircrew badge withdrawn. However, all versions of the letter made it clear that the LMF procedure did 'not preclude court martial for flagrant cases of refusal to fly', and although the airman's documents were to have a 'W' marked on his Form 1580, no reference was 'to appear on any documents issued to the airman on discharge from the service.'[37] Archived examples of the paperwork required for the LMF procedure include a signed statement by an airman and reports by the Commanding Officer and Medical Officer. They show that the procedure in the waverer letter could be followed without the humiliating ritual.[38]

The waverer letter encouraged the Medical Officer to take the responsibility for the decision, but the RAF's neuropsychiatric consultants argued that the amount of flying stress endured was 'best judged by men who themselves have experience of operational flying.'[39] Although few Medical Officers flew on operations, the importance

[34]TNA AIR 19/632, Letter S.61141/S.7.C, 1 June 1943.
[35]Ibid.
[36]TNA AIR 19/632, Air Council conclusions of a meeting 24 August 1943.
[37]TNA AIR 19/632, Letter S.61141/S.7.C, 1 June 1943. The letters are dated 28 September 1940, 19 May 1941, 16 June 1941, 19 July 1941, 19 September 1941, 1 June 1943 and 1 March 1945.
[38]TNA AIR 2/8591, Aircrew who refuse or are unfit to fly.
[39]TNA AIR 2/4935, Consultants in Neuro-psychiatry 'Comments on the memorandum on the Disposal of Members of Aircrews who Forfeit the Confidence of their Commanding Officers, S.61141/S.7.c (1), 1 June 1943.

of the role of the Medical Officer is often stressed.[40] David Stafford-Clark's opinions in particular have been influential in the understanding of LMF. Contrary to the Air Ministry's three categories, he placed airmen in four distinct groups consisting of temporary and permanent failures. Only a minority who suffered exceptional strain would return to flying duties; almost all the others required 'executive and not medical action.'[41] Stafford-Clark believed that few required 'recourse to the services of a neuro-psychiatrist'.[42] However, although he had the confidence to categorise airmen, many others did not. Qualifying in psychiatry after the war, he was not a typical Medical Officer. The treatment of wavering aircrew varied considerably between stations and depended on the knowledge and understanding of individual Medical Officers, who sought the opinion of a specialist more frequently.[43] While Medical Officers found predisposition to neurosis in 45 percent of cases, neuropsychiatric specialists found it in almost 75 percent.[44] Aircrew themselves, had an inherent suspicion of 'trick cyclists' as they called psychiatrists, and this has also fed into the myth of LMF.[45]

Aircrew were seen by neuropsychiatric specialists at Not Yet Diagnosed Neuropsychiatric (NYDN) centres. They were based at RAF Hospitals, and led by a neuropsychiatric specialist, provided for both in and out-patients.[46] An article in the *British Medical Journal* claimed that every new patient was 'reviewed completely and anew'.[47] However, the psychiatrist, Eric Jewesbury, stressed the importance of the opinion of others. He wished that the staff on stations had the confidence to shorten

[40]120 medical officers were qualified pilots by 1945. See: 'Aviation Medical Research: Air Marshal Whittingham's Address' *British Medical Journal,* Vol. 1, No. 4390, 1945, p. 271. Some doctors flew on operations. See for example: Roland Winfield, *The Sky Belongs to Them,* (London: William Kimber, 1976), p. 134.

[41]TNA AIR 20/10727, Stafford-Clark, 'Personal Observations'; Stafford-Clark, 'Aspects of War Medicine', pp. 139-140; Stafford-Clark, 'Morale and Flying Experience', pp. 10-50.

[42]TNA AIR 20/10727, Stafford-Clark, 'Personal Observations'.

[43]Charles Symonds and Denis Williams, 'Investigation of Psychological Disorders in Flying Personnel by Unit Medical Officers', Air Ministry, *Psychological Disorders in Flying Personnel of the Royal Air Force Investigated During The War 1939-1945*, (London: HMSO, 1947), p. 92.

[44]Symonds and Williams, 'Investigation of Psychological Disorders', p. 92.

[45]Tom Sawyer, *Only Owls and Bloody Fools Fly at Night,* (William Kimber, London, 1982), p. 136, See also: Campbell Muirhead, *The Diary of a Bomb Aimer*, (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount, 1987), p.124.

[46]TNA AIR 2/5998, Organisation of Neurology and Psychiatry in the Royal Air Force.

[47]S. I. Ballard and H. G. Miller, 'Neuropsychiatry at a Royal Air Force Centre: an Analysis of 2,000 Cases' *British Medical Journal*, No. 2, Vol. 4357, (1944), p. 42.

the tours for some aircrew without referring them to specialists.[48] Like Stafford-Clark, Jewesbury criticised the LMF procedure and had his own system of categorising aircrew depending on the amount of individual predisposition and flying stress experienced. He did not think it was right that ground personnel could be given a medical discharge and pension for a condition aggravated by their service, while aircrew with a neurosis could be 'ignominiously reduced in rank' or discharged without a pension. He felt it was unnecessary to stigmatise aircrew by removing their flying badge and also pointed out the similarities between the treatment of airmen in categories one and two.[49] Medical professionals like Jewesbury and Stafford-Clark refused to label aircrew as LMF, and the numbers assessed by Jewesbury suggest that many station Medical Officers felt the same. Airmen who were not given a medical diagnosis were attached to RAF Uxbridge, RAF Eastchurch or, after October 1943, the Air Crew Disposal Unit (ACDU), for an executive decision.

RAF Eastchurch, infamous in stories about LMF, became the reselection centre in May 1943.[50] Aircrew from the ACDUs continued to be sent there for reselection, and other airmen briefly posted to reselection centres spread rumours that added to the mythology of LMF.[51] The conditions at RAF Eastchurch were not pleasant but aircrew were not cruelly treated. Found 'unfit to captain an aircraft', a Flight Sergeant posted there was tasked to paint posts around the parade ground. However, he soon realised that it was only necessary to attend the morning parade and it was common practice for personnel to leave the camp through a hole in the fence.[52] A Senior Medical Officer, highlighted that delays in reselection from Eastchurch were caused by the necessity of further investigation of both medical and executive cases.[53] Airmen were not badly treated at ACDUs either, and it is clear that individual cases were still being investigated at both establishments. Airmen at Chessington, Usworth and Keresley Grange were entertained with dances, trips and lectures, and it is possible to follow

[48]A typical first tour was expected to be 30 operations, although the squadron commander had some discretion. Pathfinder crews were expected to complete 45 operations in their first tour. See: Mark K Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare: The Allied aircrew Experience in the Second World War*, (London: Frank Cass, 1995), p. 125.

[49]TNA AIR 49/357, Eric Jewesbury, 'Work and Problems of an RAF Neuropsychiatric Centre'.

[50]TNA AIR 28/243, Eastchurch.

[51]TNA AIR 28/243, Eastchurch; Miles Tripp, *The Eighth Passenger*, (Ware: Wordsworth, 2002), p. 39; Don Charlwood, *No Moon Tonight*, (Manchester: Crecy Publishing, 2007), p. 56.

[52]Norfolk Record Office (NRO), Wartime Memoirs, MC 2153/3, 926X7, Roy J. Larkins, 'The Pilot who missed the war: an everyday story of flying folk 1623560 Flight Sergeant Larkins, R.J.', pp. 461-470.

[53]TNA AIR 28/243, Eastchurch.

the progress of individuals through the system. Some visited Ear, Nose and Throat specialists and had decompression tests. Airmen sent to the ACDU were not treated harshly or hastily and were not all found LMF. Some were downgraded medically, while others were Court Martialled. Personnel were also interviewed by Wing Commander Lawson and his importance in the LMF process is clear.[54] Lawson highlighted that the treatment of airmen varied throughout the war and at different stations. He thought it unfair that wireless operators could remain in the RAF as ground based wireless operators, while other aircrew had no relevant trade.[55] In an attempt to avoid using LMF procedure, some airmen were transferred to different aircraft types or given temporary medical categories. In contrast, others were told they were 'yellow' and dismissed or dealt with by the orderly room NCO. Reflecting on the airmen he interviewed, Lawson believed that most were happy to be removed from flying 'whatever the consequences', and many were relieved to be able to discuss their fears. He maintained that many classified under the memorandum 'accepted the decision without demur' but that 'all those who resented the decision' were found to be 'medically unfit'. Some men were more upset to have a medical diagnosis than to be labelled LMF, and while many were not concerned about the loss of rank, all mourned the loss of their flying badge.[56]

The military has a long history of employing the fear of punishment to deter men from avoiding duty,[57] and the fear of being thought of as LMF and experiencing the ritualistic stripping of rank and aircrew badge in front of their peers, was a cruel but effective deterrent. There is evidence that this ritual did occasionally occur, but it was not official policy. It is the narrative of this ritual however, that spread and effectively discouraged aircrew from refusing to fly. Airmen would have no way of knowing what happened to others once they left the station, but they understood that those found to be LMF were conscripted into the Army, sent to the coal mines, or forced to do menial tasks if they remained in the Air Force. It was also understood that a mark on their record would hinder their employment after the war. Recruits and trainee aircrew learned of the concept of LMF as they picked up the service 'slanguage'.[58] LMF was one of the many new acronyms they learned in the RAF, and for many, there was little between the judgement of LMF and a diagnosis of mental illness. LMF was one of the many phrases in the force's vernacular to filter into the wider population. The Oxford English Dictionary records the first use of the term in Terrence Rattigan's

[54]TNA AIR 29/603/13, Air Crew Disposal Unit.
[55]TNA AIR 2/8592, Aircrew who refuse or are unfit to fly.
[56]AHB, Lawson, 'Memorandum'.
[57]Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale*, pp. 21-50.
[58]E. H. Partridge, 'Slanguage' in R. Raymond and D. Langdon, (eds) *Slipstream: A Royal Air Force Anthology*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1946), pp. 60-65.

Flare Path in 1942.[59] In the play, a pilot confesses he is losing his nerve and would be 'grounded. Lack of moral fibre.'[60] An article in the *Daily Express* in January 1943 discussed men who were 'reduced in rank for loss of moral fibre',[61] and the Secretary of State for Air was questioned about LMF in Parliament.[62] The limited number of mentions of LMF in the press should not be regarded as being due to a lack of knowledge of the term. It was agreed in a secret meeting in 1943, that the LMF 'arrangement would be difficult to defend if it ever attracted public criticism.'[63] From then on, reporting on LMF in the press was restricted.[64] The practice of LMF was officially discontinued in May 1946, but as Edgar Jones has argued, the 'term had become part of RAF culture, and it continued to be used in peacetime'.[65] As Martin Francis maintains, many of the myths about the RAF were already in place by 1945. The concept of LMF became increasingly important culturally as documents were declassified, people began to talk about their experiences, and challenge the stereotypical image of the heroic and glamourous flyer.[66]

Historiography and Post War Representations of LMF

In *The Flyer,* Francis examined cultural representations of airmen in the press, literature and cinema. His chapter 'The Flyer and Fear', discusses the concepts of courage and cowardice and how fears impacted on their identity.[67] Their masculinity was a complex construction encompassing a combination of the gentle, thoughtful artist and a cold-blooded killer.[68] A similar wide variety of cultural sources as those used by Francis have influenced public understandings of LMF and it has become increasingly well known outside the RAF. Reports in the press complained that airmen were reduced in rank and had their records marked LMF, and another referred to LMF as 'medical

[59]Oxford English Dictionary, (2019), https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122086 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[60]Terrence Rattigan, 'Flare Path' in: *The Winslow Boy: with two other plays, French Without Tears, Flare Path*, (London: Pan, 1950), p. 227.
[61]'Clipped wings' *Daily Express*, 4 January 1943, p. 2 and 'Clipped wings' *Daily Express*, 6 January 1943, p. 2. See the Air Ministry response to the article in TNA, AIR 19/632.
[62]Hansard, ROYAL AIR FORCE (REDUCTIONS IN RANK) HC Deb 28 July 1943 Vol 391 cc1607-8W https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1943/jul/28/royal-air-force-reductions-in-rank Accessed 17 February 2020.
[63]TNA AIR 19/632, Air Council conclusions of a meeting 24 August 1943.
[64]AHB, James Lawson, 'Memorandum'.
[65]Jones, 'LMF', p. 454.
[66]Francis, *The Flyer*, p.7
[67]Ibid., pp. 106-131.
[68]Ibid., pp. 201-204.

phraseology adopted by the Cabinet.'[69] In the film, *Appointment in London*, a pilot is clearly suffering from stress towards the end of his third tour,[70] and although Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, is about an American experience in Italy, it and its adaptations, have also influenced the ideas about mental health, morale and duty.[71] The concept began to be associated with Bomber Command crew more than those in other commands as it became more widely known. References to LMF began to appear in memoirs published from the late 1950s, and as Frances Houghton has discovered, it has left 'a visible imprint' in their writing.[72] Miles Tripp's autobiography, *The Eighth Passenger* was one of the first Bomber Command veteran narratives published, and is probably the first to describe the LMF ritual.[73] However, it was something that he had heard happened at a neighbouring squadron, rather than an event he witnessed.[74] Very few actually claim to have witnessed it. The first published account is probably in Norman Longmate's *The Bombers: The RAF Offensive against Germany 1939 – 1945*. He quotes an airman who witnessed a 'punishment' at RAF Langar.[75] Two memoirs report similar parades at RAF Wickenby, but at different times.[76] Other texts have also been influential in the construction of the public memory of LMF during the last decades of the twentieth century. In his novel, *Bomber,* Len Deighton brought LMF to millions of readers,[77] and Martin Middlebrook's *The Nuremberg Raid* helped to construct a popular narrative of aircrew being victims of poor strategic and tactical planning.[78] In *Bomber Command*, Max Hastings reiterated the LMF ritual, but by his calculation that one in

[69]G. Alligham, 'L. M. F' *Daily Mail*, 20 April 1945, p. 2; 'RAF Discharges, protest against offensive phraseology' *The Manchester Guardian,* 20 June 1945, p. 8.
[70]Philip Leacock, *Appointment in London,* (British Lion Film Corporation, 1953).
[71]Joseph Heller, *Catch 22,* (London: Vintage Books, 1994); Mike Nichols, *Catch-22,* (Paramount Films, 1970); Luke Davies, and David Michôd, *Catch 22,* (Hulu, 2019).
[72]Frances Houghton, *the Veterans' Tale: British Military Memoirs of the Second World War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 199. See for example: Charlwood, *No Moon Tonight*, p. 56; John Wainwright, *Tail-End Charlie: One Man's Journey Through a War*, (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 178-185; Sawyer, *Only Owls and Bloody Fools*, pp. 135-137, and Harry Yates, *Luck and a Lancaster: Chance and Survival in World War Two*, (Marlborough: Airlife Publishing, 2005), p. 48.
[73]Houghton, *The Veterans' Tale*, p.19.
[74]Tripp, *The Eighth Passenger*, pp. 39-40.
[75]Norman Longmate, *The Bombers: The RAF Offensive against Germany 1939 – 1945*, (London: Hutchinson, 1983), p. 188.
[76]Jack Currie, *Lancaster Target*, (1981) (Manchester: Crecy Publishing, 2008), pp. 113-114; Muirhead, *The Diary of a Bomb Aimer*, p. 31. Currie left RAF Wickenby in February 1944. Muirhead was posted there in May 1944. See: TNA, AIR 27/167, and AIR 27/2145.
[77]*Len Deighton, Bomber (London: Grafton, 1978), p. 294.*
[78]Martin Middlebrook, *The Nuremberg Raid,* (London: Cassell, 1980), pp. 55-57.

seven airmen failed to perform their duty due to 'morale or medical causes', he also effectively conflated LMF with medical diagnoses.[79] The television play, *The Brylcreem Boys,* and a radio adaptation of Deighton's *Bomber* brought many themes associated with war trauma to new audiences. In what is effectively a flashback, the cast of *The Brylcreem Boys,* relive the traumatic Nuremberg raid in their hospital ward.[80] The aircrew are medical cases, but reviews and notes in the script discuss the play in terms of LMF, shell shock and PTSD.[81] The adaptation of *Bomber* pitted a crew against their senior officers and the enemy defences.[82] Both plays have references to anti-aircraft fire, night-fighters armed with upwards firing *Schräge Musik* cannon, and exploding aircraft mistakenly thought to be 'scarecrow shells'. Both conform to the trope of aircrew as victims and arguably, both have influenced the popular memory of Bomber Command.

The first academic study of LMF was by John McCarthy in 1984. He investigated its origins, tracked how the procedure changed during the war and attempted to calculate the numbers involved. He pointed out the weakness in Hastings' calculations and, making the distinction between issues of morale and medical diagnoses, he suggested that less than one percent of Bomber Command aircrew were LMF.[83] He discussed stress and the concept of predisposition, as well as highlighting the roles of Medical Officers, the RAF's consultant neuropsychologists and ACDUs. In *The Right of the Line,* John Terraine examined LMF from the perspective of fear and bravery. Quoting extensively from the Lawson memorandum held by the Air Historical Branch, he concluded that less than half of a percent of bomber aircrew were LMF.[84] Terraine saw the RAF as an elite and downplayed the cultural importance of LMF, but both he and McCarthy attempted to put the numbers in perspective and were the first to use many of the archival sources that would be revisited by other historians.

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[79]Max Hastings, *Bomber Command*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1980), pp. 214-216.
[80]Roger Bamford and Peter Durrant, *The Brylcreem Boys,* (BBC2 Playhouse, 1979); Peter Durrant, *The Brylcreem Boys,* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014), p. 28. The play aired on BBC 2 in 1979 and was repeated in 1981.
[81]Durrant, *The Brylcreem Boys*, p. 71. See also: Internet Movie Data Base, 'BBC2 Playhouse (TV Series) The Brylcreem Boys' https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0926882/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl#synopsis; British Film Institute 'The Brylcreem Boys', https://www.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2b6bbc4da9 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[82]Joe Dunlop, *Bomber - Len Deighton,* BBC Radio 4, 1995. The play was repeated in 2011.
[83]McCarthy, 'Aircrew and Lack of Moral Fibre', p. 97.
[84]John Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, (1985), (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), pp. 532-536.

The next academic studies were published ten years later. Alan English examined the role of Medical Officers and Neuropsychiatric Specialists. He was one of the first to make use of David Stafford-Clark's work and Ironside and Batchelor's *Aviation Neuro-Psychology*.[85] He stressed that RAF specialists largely conformed to theories of predisposition and breeding. Quoting a consultant neurologist, he acknowledged that 'flying stress' was an umbrella term for the physical stresses of flight, not a diagnosis or the name of a new disorder. English calculated that 9431 aircrew were removed from flying duties.[86] However, by speculating aircrew 'were killed or wounded because they, or one of their companions, were mentally unsound' and combining LMF airmen with those with a medical diagnosis, English fuelled the controversy surrounding the subject.[87] In perhaps the most comprehensive study of this topic to date, Mark K Wells compared the management of emotional casualties by the British and American air forces. He discusses the work of ACDUs and was the first to examine the importance of NYDN centres.[88] By considering Lawson's figures and those from a Flying Personnel Research Committee report, he estimated that there were only around 200 LMF cases in Bomber Command each year.[89] Wells uses many of the same sources as English, but written and published in 1995, neither were able to consider each other's work.

Later studies examined the use of psychiatry in the services. Sydney Brandon looked at recruitment, training and NYDNs. He concluded that the LMF procedure was neither necessary nor effective.[90] Ben Shephard examined the concept of predisposition and the wartime understanding that neurosis only followed a traumatic event if the patient gained an advantage through it.[91] He investigated the roles of the RAF's consultant neurologists and psychiatrists and concluded that men were treated

[85]Alan English, 'A Predisposition to Cowardice? Aviation Psychology and the Genesis of Lack of Moral Fibre' *War and Society,* Vol. 13, No. 1, (1995), p. 24; Alan English, *The Cream of the* Crop: Canadian Aircrew, 1939-1945, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp. 72-73; David Stafford-Clark, 'Morale and Flying Experience', pp. 10-50; R. N. Ironside, and I. R. C. Batchelor, *Aviation Neuro-Psychology*, (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1945).
[86]English 'A Predisposition to Cowardice?' pp. 20-27.
[87]English, *The Cream of the Crop*, p. 100.
[88]Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, pp. 189-193.
[89]Ibid., pp, 204-205.
[90]Sydney Brandon, 'LMF in Bomber Command 1939-45: Diagnosis or Denouncement?' in Hugh L. Freeman and G. E. Berrios, (eds) *150 Years of British Psychiatry, Vol. 2: The Aftermath*, (Athlone, 1996), pp. 119-129.
[91]Ben Shephard, 'Pitiless Psychology: the role of prevention in British military psychiatry in the Second World War' *History of Psychiatry*, Vol. 10, No. 40, (1999), pp. 491-524.

harshly as a deterrent to preserve the fighting force.[92] Edgar Jones attempted to 'assess the impact of the procedure on morale and performance and answer why the deterrent of LMF was needed.'[93] He placed it in the context of both shell shock and contemporary attitudes to combat and PTSD. He was the first to quote from a report by Squadron Leader Eric Jewesbury, the neurologist at RAF Hospital Rauceby, but there are contradictions in his work. Jones claimed that aircrew ranks and badges were lost at NYDN centres before they were posted to ACDUs, and he also mentioned that specialists saw aircrew as out-patients at NYDN centres. It was not within the remit of neuropsychiatric specialists to make an executive decision about an individual's right to wear wings. Unless they were admitted for further tests and observation, aircrew who attended hospitals such as RAF Rauceby as outpatients return to their units; they also were not LMF. Like English, by discussing the treatment of patients with diagnosed medical conditions at NYDN centres, he conflates LMF with medical illnesses. He also fuelled the mythology around LMF by suggesting that Wing Commander Lawson's papers were lost.[94] In *Bomber Boys*, popular historian, Patrick Bishop used two anonymised cases of LMF as well as referencing previous studies and their primary sources. He concluded that 'no one seemed to know what happened to LMF cases after they disappeared from sight.'[95] However, by including an example of a crew who was court martialled, his later *Air Force Blue*, conflated LMF with the kind of outcome the procedure was intended to avoid.[96] Richard Overy's summary of LMF avoids these pitfalls. He describes it as 'a stigma designed as an emasculating deterrent to any sign of weakness.' He discusses predisposition and stress but makes the distinction between those with diagnosable 'neurotic conditions' and those who were 'defined as fully fit but fearful.' Highlighting that that only around a quarter of those referred to a neuropsychiatric specialist were passed to an executive board for a decision on LMF, he referenced Wells and quoted from Jewesbury's report.[97] This review of the literature highlights that the limited sources on and around the subject have been used and reused in order to calculate the numbers involved and to describe and explain the process. However, those who failed to make the distinction between LMF, medical cases and court martials have contributed to the mythology and notoriety of LMF.

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[92]Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves,* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), pp. 209-297.
[93]Jones, 'LMF', p. 441.
[94]Ibid., pp. 439-458.
[95]Patrick Bishop, *Bomber Boys: Fighting Back 1940-1945,* (London: Harper Press, 2007), pp. 238-255.
[96]Patrick Bishop, *Air Force Blue: The RAF in World War Two – Spearhead of Victory*, (London: William Collins, 2017), pp. 281-283.
[97] Overy, *The Bombing War*, pp. 353-354. The figures Overy uses were taken from Lawson and the Flying Personnel Research Committee.

Bloggers and public historians who have written specifically about LMF tend not to have engaged with new primary sources, rather they have relied on material published by those discussed above.[98] These are important cultural sources as they influence both public understanding of the war and how veterans themselves may frame their experience in their testimonies. However, the nuances and distinctions between the executive and medical treatment of airmen are often lost in popular memory, and as Wells maintained, emotional responses plague discussions of the LMF disposal policy.[99] Repetitions of myths, inaccuracies, generalisations and unsubstantiated conclusions also riddle the history of LMF. After the publication of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 3* in 1980, PTSD 'has mutated from a diagnostic category to a social trope.'[100] Retrospective diagnoses of PTSD are often inferred or applied to RAF aircrew and numerous other sources link LMF with PTSD.[101] As Tracey Loughran, Edgar Jones, Simon Wessely, and others have argued however, shell shock, PTSD and LMF are not synonymous. There is an element of cultural construction to the manifestation of the symptoms of functional somatic syndromes and it is a mistake to diagnose PTSD retrospectively.[102] The majority of the documents used by historians in previous examinations of LMF have been 'top down' sources written by medical professionals, senior officers and officials in the Air Ministry. Few describe the process from a first-person perspective, and many veterans' testimonies amplify the mythologies created

[98]See for example: 'Ted Church: Tail end Charlie Aircrew Stress: LMF Records of Psychiatric Casualties in the RAF During WW2' https://tailendcharlietedchurch.wordpress.com/halifax-bomber/halifax-aircrew/aircrew-stess/?fbclid=IwAR1HUNVMO8YzPgEExCzk2l63-MKectkUvDxRiDYwbj6G2nQF6QHrMWzvsGg Accessed 2 February 2019.
A recent play, 'Wireless Operator' also discusses LMF in its publicity see: Silksheen Productions, 'Wireless Operator' 2019, http://wirelessoperator.co.uk/background/ Accessed 17 February 2020.

[99]Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, p. 197.

[100]Grace Huxford, Ángel Alcalde, Gary Baines, Olivier Burtin, and Mark Edele, 'Writing veterans' history: a conversation on the twentieth century', *War and Society*, Vol. 38, No. 2, (2019), p. 21.

[101]See for example: Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 26; Ron Butcher, *Been There, Done That: Through Treacherous Skies*, (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2006) pp. 106-107.

[102]Tracey Loughran, 'Shell-shock, trauma and the First World War: The making of a diagnosis and its histories' *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, No. 67, Vol. 1, (2012), p. 103; Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'War syndromes: the impact of culture on medically unexplained symptoms' *Medical History*, Vol. 49, (2005), p. 57; Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'Psychological trauma: a historical perspective' *Psychiatry*, Vol. 5, No. 7, (2006), p. 219.

during and since the war. As with veteran memoirs published after the 1980s, when veterans discuss LMF in oral history interviews, their memories are sometimes coloured by their understanding of PTSD.

Oral histories and victim narratives

The history of Bomber Command is an example of difficult heritage, and frequently divides opinion.[103] Strategic bombing has always been controversial and does not fit comfortably with the dominant cultural memories and an over simplified narrative of a 'just war'. Bomber Command veterans have been labelled as heroes, as victims of poor leadership or as villains.[104] As Frances Houghton has highlighted, many Bomber Command veterans are of the opinion that they were omitted from much of the formal post-war commemoration and 'dominant national recollections'.[105] In 2016, a veteran expressed his disappointment in the Bomber Command Clasp: 'We've never got credit for what we did… we got a stupid little medal, it's not a medal it's a piece of tin'.[106] Bomber Command only recently received official recognition with the memorial in London and the issue of the Bomber Command Clasp in 2012 and 2013. However, veterans continue to tell interviewers that despite their losses, a 'proper' campaign medal was not awarded, Churchill ignored them in his victory speech, and

[103]Sebastian Cox, 'Setting the Historical agenda: Webster and Frankland and the Debate over the Strategic Bombing Offensive against Germany, 1939-1945' in Jeffrey Grey, (ed) *The Last Word?: Essays on Official History in the United States and British Commonwealth* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), p. 147. See also Conan Lawrence and Dan Ellin, 'After Them, The Flood: Remembering, Performance and the Writing of History' In: Michael Pinchbeck and Andrew Westerside (eds) *Staging Loss: Performance as Commemoration,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 117-118; Andrew Knapp, *The horror and the glory: Bomber Command in British memories since 1945.* (2016) Mass Violence and Resistance, pp. 32-33. Available at: http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/68690/2/Civilians_AndrewKnapp_Draft3_CA%2526AK.pdf Accessed 17 February 2020.

[104]For a discussion of the historiographical and cultural representations of Bomber Command see: Mark Connelly, *Reaching for the Stars: A History of Bomber Command,* (London: Tauris, 2014), pp. 137-157.

[105]Frances Houghton, 'The "missing chapter": Bomber Command aircrew memoirs in the1990s and 2000s,' in Noakes, L. and Pattinson, J. (eds), *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 170. See also Lawrence and Ellin, 'After Them, The Flood', pp. 117-118;

[106]International Bomber Command Centre Digital Archive (IBCC) Julian Maslin, 'Interview with George Eric Cromarty,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/3387 Accessed 17 February 2020.

Arthur Harris, their Commander, did not receive a peerage.[107] Still shrouded in myth, LMF is a powerful and popular motif in these memories and is often used as an emotive example of injustice within their narratives. Believing they are still fighting for recognition, some veterans privilege anecdotes that reinforce a victim narrative. As well as LMF, they discuss the 'chop rate' (the number of air crew killed), being outgunned by night fighters, the danger from flak (anti-aircraft fire), and how the RAF lied to them about 'scarecrow shells' for example.[108]

As part of the 'memory boom' identified by Erika Doss, as they reached their old age, many Second World War veterans felt the need to tell their stories and actively to transmit the past to future generations.[109] At the time of writing, over 1,100 oral history interviews have been recorded for the IBCC Digital Archive. Almost half have searchable transcriptions; from these, 76 mention LMF.[110] George Doble's recollection of LMF conforms to the typical narrative of injustice

> I've known an instance of a guy who'd done thirty ops and he was told he'd got to do an extra five… and he said, "I'm not doing it." He said, "I've had enough. I've done my bit and that's it." And that's where this business of LMF comes in and they were sent to Eastchurch, where the LMF place was, and they were demoted, AC2s, and, I don't know, just, used as spare parts I suppose.[111]

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[107]IBCC, Tom Ozel, 'Interview with Bernie Harris. Two', https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/3419 Accessed 17 February 2020.

[108]IBCC, Tom Ozel, 'Interview with Harry Irons. Two,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/items/show/3430; Gemma Clapton, 'Interview with John Cuthbert,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/8396 Accessed 17 February 2020. See also IBCC interviews with Jack Smith and Philip Bates.

[109]Erika Doss, 'War, memory, and the public mediation of affect: The National World War II Memorial and American imperialism', *Memory Studies*, Vol.1, No. 2, (2008), p. 229. See also Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory*, (London: Transaction, 2004), p. 44.

[110]IBCC, https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/ Accessed 17 February 2020. Interviewees were encouraged to tell their own stories. Not all were asked about LMF.

[111]IBCC, Chris Brockbank, 'Interview with Ronald George Doble,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/8411 Accessed 17 February 2020.

Many interviewees took the place of a previous crewmember, or had a crewmember replaced; Alexander Lamb's navigator just 'disappeared' at a training unit.[112] Other narratives of LMF include considerable amounts of flying stress. Percy Cannings told how the sole survivor of a mid-air collision was subjected to the LMF ritual in front of his peers.[113] However, 13 interviewees are vague as to whether the reason airmen disappeared was due to illness or LMF. Alun Emlyn-Jones knew his pilot refused to fly because of pain following an injury, but was unaware how he was categorised.[114] Thomas Payne's 'frozen' gunner 'was taken away' by ambulance never to be seen again, but Payne presumed 'he was marked LMF'.[115] Other interviewees saw LMF as a disciplinary process. Richard Franklin recalled that his flight engineer was 'placed under arrest' after he refused to fly.[116] Seven interviewees describe the LMF ritual that occurred on other stations, but only three claim to have personally witnessed the humiliating stripping of rank and badges. Charles Green recalled a gunner who refused to fly after being 'hose-piped' by night fighters

> …this air gunner came in and he was ruddy crying. Absolutely crying. A bloke. You know. And he was trembling all over and he was saying, "never again. I'm not going never again. Never again." … Everybody was talking about it… Then one day we were called out on parade… Everybody on the parade ground. Everybody. And they marched this lad out, air gunner, and stripped him of his, stripped him off of his, he'd been court martialled 'cause he wouldn't, wouldn't fly again. And they stripped his tapes off and his brevet off and everything… they were that ruddy cruel but I know they marched him off and that was it.[117]

[112]IBCC, Bruce Blanche, 'Interview with Alexander Lamb,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/3459 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[113]IBCC, Adam Sutch, 'Interview with Percy Cannings,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/8372 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[114] IBCC, Anne Roberts, 'Interview with Alun Emlyn-Jones,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/8832 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[115]IBCC, Chris Brockbank, 'Interview with Thomas Peter Payne. Two,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/collections/document/8893 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[116]IBCC, Sue Walters, 'Interview with Richard Franklin,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/10811 Accessed 17 February 2020.
[117]IBCC, Brian Wright, 'Interview with Charles Frederick Green,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/5756 Accessed 17 February 2020.

Interviewees had no way of knowing what happened to others, but their testimony often includes aspects of the accepted narrative of LMF that were outside their experience. Several spoke of airmen having 'LMF' rubber stamped in red on service documents and the shame of having this classification follow them into civilian life after the war.[118] Only one source found for this study gives a first-person narrative of the LMF procedure. Flight Sergeant Roy Larkins was posted from Coastal Command to RAF Eastchurch in February 1945. Rather than being publicly humiliated, a 'sympathetic officer' told him to hand in his flying badge, stripes and crown. He was given a choice of outcome, and after a period of leave and some time at RAF Silloth as an orderly room runner, he was transferred to the mines. Larkins maintains that he was not LMF, but that he was victimised by his Commanding Officer.[119] His testimony demonstrates that the LMF procedure was applied without recourse to the humiliating ritual stripping of badges. In 36 of the IBCC's interviews men disappeared and were only presumed to be LMF. In the Imperial War Museum (IWM) sound archive 40 oral histories with veterans of Bomber Command have been tagged with 'lack of moral fibre' and are available online. All know the story, but none witnessed the humiliating parade. Most who remember someone on their squadron as potentially being LMF say they were quietly and quickly posted away.[120] A squadron commander admitted he occasionally 'had to send odd people off on LMF'; they saw the Medical Officer and were 'quietly shipped out'.[121] The evidence shows that it was more common for men to be discreetly removed from the station before any of the three categories in the waverer letter was applied to them. The ritual stripping of brevet and rank was not a common occurrence. The rumour of it was enough and many men posted away for medical or other reasons were thought to be LMF.

Oral and written accounts created years after the events they describe must be used carefully. Veterans' memories can be vague and although these oral histories possess the 'powerful authority of survivor testimony',[122] they are hard to corroborate using other sources. Noble Frankland, Bomber Command veteran and historian, questioned eyewitnesses who asserted 'I know, I was there'.[123] Brian Harris had heard of LMF

[118]IBCC, Chris Brockbank, 'Interview with Hugh Parry. One,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/8890; Tom Ozel, 'Interview with Harry Irons. Two,' https://ibccdigitalarchive.lincoln.ac.uk/omeka/admin/collections/document/3430 Accessed 17 February 2020.

[119]NRO, Larkins, 'The Pilot who missed the war', pp. 461-485.

[120]See for example: Imperial War Museum (IWM) Sound Archive, 29529, Austin, T.

[121]IWM, Sound Archive, 22367, Bird, P D.

[122]Houghton, 'The "missing chapter"', p. 162.

[123]Noble Frankland, *History at War*, (London: Giles de la Mare, 1998), p. 27.

during the war but admitted to learning about it in the books he had read after the war.[124] The veterans interviewed for the IBCC Digital Archive suffer from the fallibility of memory, but their discussions of LMF are largely conjecture; LMF was something that happened to someone else. Veterans are also part of 'mnemonic communities'.[125] They produced their testimony within the social, cultural and political context of the present, shaped by what they have seen, heard and read.[126] Some embellish their narrative, tell the interviewer what they think they want to hear and project a favourable image of themselves. Originally influenced by wartime rumours, their understanding of LMF was reworked by their engagement with cultural sources, popular memory and histories since the war.[127] Veterans joined associations and formed 'fictive kinship' groups and 'families of remembrance'.[128] They shared their stories amongst themselves at reunions and in association newsletters. During the war, the stigmatising LMF procedure and reassuring concept of 'scarecrows' both affected the morale of aircrew and helped them to continue flying operations. Since the war, these tropes have continued to resonate as part of the narrative veterans employ to gain recognition and to counter arguments that they were war criminals. The veteran interviews recorded for both the IWM and the IBCC appear to reinforce many of the myths about LMF. However, reading them across the grain, and in sufficient quantity, offers a new insight into LMF.

Conclusion

During the war, the different versions of the Air Ministry's waverer letter were open to interpretation. Working together, the Commanding Officer and Medical Officer were entitled to categorise an airman as LMF, but most tried to avoid making such a decision. The waverer letter was amended throughout the war, and its interpretation varied from station to station depending on the senior officers' beliefs and style of leadership. The LMF ritual was performed at some stations, but it was not part of official policy and far more men were passed to a NYDN centre or ACDU for assessment. Senior officers were keen to remove suspect aircrew from the station as quickly as possible to avoid any contagion. This also contributed to aircrew's suspicion of the RAF's psychiatrists and their mistaken understanding of the classification as a medical diagnosis; it fed the rumours of LMF. Once someone was removed from

[124]IWM, Sound Archive, 18747, Harris, B. See also: Rodney Earl Walton 'Memories from the Edge of the Abyss: Evaluating the Oral Accounts of World War II Veterans', *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 37, No. 1, (2010), p. 26.

[125]Huxford, Alcalde, Baines, Burtin and Edele, 'Writing veterans' history', p. 22.

[126]Houghton, *The Veterans' Tale*, p. 246; Alistair Thomson 'Anzac Memories Revisited: Trauma, Memory and Oral History', *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 42, No. 1, (2015), p. 26.

[127]Walton 'Memories from the Edge', pp. 26-28.

[128]Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, *Commemorating War,* p. 29.

operations however, a considerable effort was made to rule out a medical reason why they should not fly before their brevets were taken from them.

The conditions at RAF Eastchurch and ACDUs were not as terrible as was rumoured; the established LMF procedure required decisions by Senior Officers, neuropsychiatric specialists, James Lawson, and a final board. It is important that all those discharged from flying duties, under both category one and two of the letter, lost their flying badges. This included men who were LMF and men who were medically downgraded; it is likely that anyone who saw the marks on their uniform where their wings and badges of rank once were assumed that they were LMF. Their sighting then became another anecdote reinforcing the myth. Due to the limited number of archival records, historians have explored medical sources, but this is not why LMF continues to be conflated with medical diagnoses. The RAF's medical consultants argued that LMF was not a medical issue and attempted to change the procedure. At odds with the Air Ministry's categories for disposal of airmen, Jewesbury and Stafford-Clark both described four categories according to predisposition and the amounts of stress experienced, but Stafford-Clark's treatment of aircrew should be regarded as unusual. The history of Bomber Command is far more complex than the simple binary narratives of heroes or villains, victors or victims. Further mythologised and amplified after the war, LMF is part of the cultural memory constructed by veterans and their families as part of the victim narrative used to push for recognition for Bomber Command.

From over 125,000 aircrew in Bomber Command, only a tiny percentage were removed from flying in any of the three categories. More aircrew were removed from flying duties during training – but stories about aircrew who were washed out during training are not as useful to either the wartime narrative of LMF or the post-war victim narrative of a draconian policy. It is a mistake to apply an anachronistic diagnosis retrospectively, but it has become common to consider LMF through the lens of trauma and to claim that those who were LMF were suffering from undiagnosed PTSD.

Veterans reiterate the rumours they heard about LMF during the war and embellish their tales with information from popular history and cultural sources, but they have no idea what happened to their colleagues after they disappeared. Airmen 'disappeared' from bomber stations for many reasons during the war. Men were sent on leave, they were attached or transferred to other squadrons, or posted away after completing their tour. Some were sent to NYDN centres for assessment, a few were LMF and of course, many failed to return from operations. LMF was never a medical condition, but as part of the rumours about it that served to keep aircrew flying, a number of those who departed from their squadron for medical or disciplinary reasons were regarded as LMF. RAF personnel confused LMF with both psychological casualties and court martial cases at the time, and they continue to be conflated by

veterans and historians today. The rumours of what happened to airmen after they disappeared were almost as effective as actually witnessing a ritual parade. These horror stories reinforced the procedure as a deterrent to prevent airmen from refusing to fly. They continue to be repeated by surviving veterans. Although it was an indeterminate category, LMF has solidified since the war to become an important part of the history of Bomber Command.

Anne-Marie Walters vs. George Starr: Reflections on Gendered Representations within the Special Operations Executive

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ABSTRACT
This article explores gender relations within the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the Second World War. To do so, it scrutinises the story of its agent Anne-Marie Walters. Although SOE was a trailblazer in recruiting women for military missions, this case study shows how gender prejudices could mark the experience of female agents. Walters' story indeed shows that her gender involved not only a limitation of her actions in the field, but also how it diminished her credit within SOE's headquarters and even how it was used against her when she reported serious misconduct by her senior officer.

The SOE and Womanpower: a "broad-minded staff"?

> Some people have suggested that we should never have sent women on these missions at all. I cannot agree. Women are as brave and as responsible as men; often more so. They are entitled to a share in the defence of their beliefs no less than are men. The war was not restricted to men. From the purely tactical point of view, women were able to move about without exciting so much suspicion as men and were therefore exceedingly useful to us as couriers. I should have been failing in my duty to the war effort if I had refused to employ them, and I should have been unfair to their abilities if I had considered them unequal to the duties which were imposed upon them.[1]

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1426

[1]Maurice Buckmaster, *They Fought Alone: The Story of the British Agents in France,* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1958), pp. 213-214.

Such is the tribute that Maurice Buckmaster, chief of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) F section, paid to the female agents he sent to occupied France during World War II. Created, to quote Churchill himself, to 'set Europe ablaze', the SOE oversaw cooperation between their agents and French resistance forces against the Nazi occupation. As such, it was responsible for establishing communications with underground forces in occupied countries and for contributing to organise them.[2] To that end, the SOE sent between a few hundred and more than a thousand agents to France.[3]. Their missions required the kind of military training that was essential to their own survival, as well as to their general efficiency. Handling explosives, using a variety of weapons and training for combat became their routine.[4]

At the time, the role devoted to women within the military was always that of auxiliaries: combat was for men.[5] Women were seen as needing protection from the rigours of battle. All the allied armies involved in the French field during World War II, whether the Free French, or the British or US forces, employed women to undertake non-combatant functions, so as to free more men for combat. The British army was the most liberal: women's auxiliary forces were created as early as 1917 and the second National Service Act of 1941 extended conscription to single and widowed women aged 20 to 30 – always to incorporate them into auxiliary forces.[6] None of the female recruits were supposed to be put in a situation where they might use lethal weapons, except for those who expressed the willingness to do so.[7]

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[2]David Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

[3]Sébastian Albertelli, *Histoire du sabotage. De la CGT à la Résistance* (Paris : Perrin, 2016) https://www-cairn-info.janus.biu.sorbonne.fr/histoiredu- sabotage--9782262067823.htm. Accessed 6 October 2020, Chapter 11, paragraph 31.

[4]Juliette Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the SOE in the Second World War,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 51-76.

[5]Yannick Ripa, Julie Le Gac, Élodie Jauneau & Fabrice Virgilli, 'La féminisation des armées européennes', *Encyclopédie pour une histoire nouvelle de l'Europe*, 2016 : https://ehne.fr/article/genre-et-europe/quand-la-guerre-trouble-le-genre/la-feminisation-des-armees-europeennes. Accessed 6 October 2020; Luc Capdevila, François Rouquet, Fabrice Virgili & Danièle Voldman, *Sexes, genre et guerres : France, 1914-1945,* (Paris : Payot & Rivages, 2010).

[6]Ripa et al, 'La féminisation des armées européennes' ; Christine Levisse-Touzé, 'Les femmes dans la France libre', in Mechtild Gilzmer, Christine Levisse-Touzé & Stefan Martens (eds), *Les femmes dans la Résistance en France,* (Paris : Tallandier, 2003), pp. 165-185.

[7] Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines,* p. 26.

Therefore, the SOE challenged military traditions in many ways. The recruitment of women for military action was one of them. Since these recruits were volunteers, the SOE was even free to hire married women, mothers and young single women.[8] As a result, the service was able to infiltrate some fifty women into France, including those working for the French Services, alongside, at the very least, 450 men, or more probably, 1000 to 1800 men.[9] The SOE's allied counterparts, the Free French Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action (BCRA) and the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were comparatively more reluctant to recruit women. According to recent studies, out of 400 to 600 agents sent to France by the BCRA, only four were women.[10] Meanwhile, of the 82 agents were sent to France by the OSS, only one was a woman.[11]

These facts indeed give credence to the long-time representation of the SOE as 'a broad-minded staff', to quote Michael Foot, whose masterly work initiated SOE studies.[12] More nuance has been brought to the picture by gender historians. First, it should be noted that circumstances played a major part in this process: the competition between services for recruits was fierce, and the SOE targeted special competences, among which the ability to speak French and to *pass* for French so as to escape arrest and repression.[13] Faced with a lack of available men, the SOE turned to women. However, the figures speak for themselves: to deduce, from the small proportion of female agents in its ranks, that the SOE made no difference between men and women in recruitment and that gender differentiation was less outright within headquarters than on the field seems to be an optimistic reading.[14]

Indeed, Juliette Pattinson's work shows a more nuanced reality.[15] Following her lead, this analysis scrutinises how gendered representations influenced not only the experiences of agents on the field, but also the credit given respectively to male and

[8]Ibid., pp. 43-53
[9]Albertelli, *Histoire du sabotage*chapter 11, paragraph 31.
[10]Guillaume Pollack, « Genre et engagement dans la Résistance : l'exemple d'Anne-Marie Walters », *Genre & Histoire* [Online], 19 | Spring 2017, put online 1 July 2017, Accessed 10 October 2020. http://journals.openedition.org/genrehistoire/2697 (paragraph 11; Albertelli, *Histoire du sabotage,* chapter 11, paragraph 31.
[11]Fabrizio Calvi, *OSS : la guerre secrète en France, 1942-1945: les services secrets américains, la Résistance et la Gestapo* (Paris : Hachette, 1990), pp. 707-711.
[12]Michael R. D. Foot, *SOE in France. An account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France, 1940-1944* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 47.
[13]A question studied by Juliette Pattinson in *Behind Enemy Lines.*
[14]Pollack**,** 'Genre et engagement dans la Résistance'.
[15]Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines.*

female agents within SOE headquarters. To do so, it will focus on the story of Anne-Marie Walters, a woman dropped into occupied France as a liaison officer at the age of 20 and who worked under the orders of George Starr, to whom she referred as 'le Patron'. Although their respective stories have often been discussed by historians much can still be learned from their personal files and war memoirs, as well as from diverse reports and testimonies referring to their action.[16]

> '[...] la présence d'une telle auxiliaire, avide de plaire et d'étonner, paraît insupportable à l'homme dont la réussite problématique est uniquement basée sur le mystère'[17] (One can imagine how the very presence of such an aide, so eager to please and to amaze, seems unbearable to a man whose problematical success is only based on mystery').

That is how Raymond Escholier describes the shock of the meeting between Anne-Marie Walters and George Starr in his book based on testimonies of former resistance members from South-West France collected in the immediate aftermath of the war. In many ways, the story could end there: the impossible dialogue and cooperation between a young woman who joined the resistance in search of adventures and an older agent driven cantankerous by the months he has already spent within the resistance. Starr (aka *Hilaire*) was indeed sent to France at the end of 1942; Walters (aka *Colette*) only joined him in early 1944.

But one cannot ignore how gendered representations shaped this pithy description of Walters. Over the course of her time within the resistance in South-West France, she was regularly reminded of her status as a woman, either by Starr himself or by other agents and local resistance members. According to her memoirs, not only were her skills largely underemployed compared to those of male agents, but she also had to deal with doubts on her morality. This went from irritating jokes to a scandal used to justify her being sent back to London.

Many episodes echo the description left by Escholier and reveal that despite her training and abilities, *Colette* sometimes had a hard time being taken seriously in the field. This had direct consequences on her tactical employment, and on her own views on the assignments she should undertake. For example, when she was asked to assist Claude Arnault (aka *Jean-Claude*) in training local maquisards, she first refused, arguing that it was not a task for a woman. She finally accepted, but they disapproved of this

[16]Pollack**,** 'Genre et engagement dans la Résistance'.
[17]Raymond Escholier, *Maquis de Gascogne,* (Genève : Editions du Milieu du Monde, 1945), p. 81.

undertaking, she never renewed the experience [18]. Walters' hesitations confirm that the taboo surrounding women in combat was partially internalised, even if *Colette* happened to lament the limits of her mission, concluding at the end of 1944: 'My work up to D-Day was neither particularly difficult nor particularly interesting.[19] 'Hilaire seemed to object to sending me on very risky jobs, although I told him often enough that I'd do anything he wanted. The main fighting I did was getting into buses, which was no small enterprise!'[20] According to Walters, a certain woman in the resistance bemoaned the fact that London had wasted a trained agent by employing her to complete tasks that could be undertaken by locals.[21] But it was SOE policy to confine female agents to the functions of *liaison agent* or radio officer except in cases of force majeure.[22]

Things got worse when *Hilaire* engaged in the organisation of a maquis group in June 1944. A maquis was indeed supposed to evolve to become a formation of military camps where the resistance lived and fought. As such, it was a masculine universe. Starr's maquis was composed of 300 young men and he placed it under the command of the French maquis chief Maurice Parisot, who also had his own men. If most maquis groups used women as *liaison agents*, their presence was always temporary, and they rarely shared the daily life of the *maquisards.* When they did, it cast a shadow on their morality. From this point of view, Walters was no exception. When Starr started his maquis, he let Walters know that she was no longer indispensable to his guerrilla plans. He asked her to join the village of Castelnau-sur-Auvignon, which was a centre of the maquis activities, to 'help with washing up and other fatigues "proper to women"',[23] she remembers in her memoirs, adding:

> I began to see the change that would take place in my life: he had his 'staff' now, mostly young French officers who had been hiding for the past few months and working with the Resistance. I would no longer be a confident, he was too busy. And I was a woman, and not supposed to understand 'military strategy' […].
>
> I had dinner with the Patron and his personal staff; I was made to understand that I was to consider myself lucky to be treated with such honour […].[24]

[18]Anne-Marie Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony,* (London: Pan Books, 1951, 1st ed. 1946), pp. 66-77.
[19]Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines,* pp. 60-63.
[20]The UK National Archive (hereinafter TNA) HS9/339/2. Miss A.M. Walters, 18 September 1944, *Report on Mission in France*.
[21]Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony*, pp. 66-77.
[22]Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines,* pp. 60-67.
[23]Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony*, p. 134.
[24]Ibid., pp. 134-135.

Whether this was the explanation Starr gave her, or Walters' own analysis, the order seemed clear: she was invited to follow the maquis' movements to help, but not to join the fight. From then on, she moved from village to village, following the maquis' relocations.

In many places, local inhabitants put a room at her disposal to give her some privacy. But she also recalls times when she had to share a tiny shelter with maquis men. In each case, she had to redouble her efforts to preserve her own reputation. One day in Castelnau, she went to the river to have a wash. Here is how she remembered it later: '[...] there I found all the rest of the maquis indulging in a thorough morning toilet… I tried not to see them, washed my face hurriedly and ran all the way up again. And so it went on. After four days of this, I went to Nasoulens, scrubbed myself in the duck-pond and slept fifteen hours […]'.[25] Later, she had to share a room with six Spanish guerrilleros who joined the French maquis. She was unable to change clothes for an entire week. Finally, her roommates noticed the discomfort of her situation and found a way to give her some privacy so she could wash. Afterwards, she remained convinced that their memory of female combatants in the Spanish Civil War explained their concern.[26]

Such care was not always the norm and Walters' memoirs also relate moments when her very presence alongside the maquisards tarnished her reputation. Later in the summer of 1944, the maquis men were given a rest period after several deadly battles. As a result, 800 young men were camping around the village of Aveyron-Bergelle, where she stayed. She herself enjoyed a few days without her exhausting journeys as *liaison agent*, but tried and kept a careful balance in her interactions with the maquis men:

> I relaxed gratefully. I spent long hours […] reading and resting or discussing things with the young staff officers […]. They were gay and intelligent and most of them had long record of underground activities. But I found that social relations with them were no simple matter: young men frustrated of the company of women for long periods are not easy to deal with. It was difficult to be both amicable and distant, friendly to all and friendly to none. I liked one of them in particular, a Toulouse medical student, but he had to suffer the constant jeers of his friends.[27]

[25]Ibid., p. 136.
[26]Ibid., pp. 154-155
[27]Ibid., p. 207.

The very presence of Walters among the maquis men was enough to create suspicion of immorality: she had to establish boundaries herself and to stress her precautions in her memoirs. Even if her story is also one of comradeship with many of the maquis, she was obviously not entitled to entirely share in the brotherhood which bounded male fighters. She was even suspected of sowing discord between them and was sometimes clearly told that she was not welcome to stay with some maquis groups. Let us recall that her functions involved crisscrossing the Gers department and the Pyrenean region by bicycle. On a warm summer day of 1944, she decided to trade her lady's tweed suit for pink shorts. When she met Yves de Changins, a Jedburgh of the Bugatti mission, he made her aware of how inappropriate he found her attire: 'My dear girl, do you know that a maquis is a place where women are not meant to be, as a rule? And what do you think the men say when they see you trotting past in shorts?'[28]

During the same mission, she asked if she could spend the night within a maquis camp – she had just arrived by bicycle, at night, to bring a message. According to her memoirs, American Major Horace Fuller – also a Jedburgh of the Bugatti mission – abruptly answered: 'Hate having women in the maquis'. He let her stay for the night, however, after discovering that she was ill.[29] No doubt that Jedburgh, whose teams were all-male, considered women agents as troublesome amateurs – even when these women had spent more time than them in the field. Furthermore, the experience of other female agents in the field confirms that to be taken seriously in their job, they had to put aside any expression of their femininity.[30] That is likely the main reason for Colette's disgrace: she did not respect these implied rules.

Meanwhile, her relationship with Starr slowly deteriorated between her arrival in January and the summer of 1944. He finally replaced her as a liaison agent; her job was to be done by Philippe Gunzbourg and Marguerite Merchez. Now out-of-work, she decided to write a 'maquis gazette' to entertain maquis men before combat. Starr then tried her patience by ordering her to become the secretary of the chief of a Spanish maquis group. The guerrillero Tomas Ortega (Camilo) brought valuable men to the maquis and Hilaire planned to stay in his good graces. Walters' new mission was mostly to become the confidante of an expatriate resistance member who often got lost in his memories of Spain:

> I wasted hours with Alcazio in Castelnau.[31] At two in the morning, he would call me to type reports for him […]. At three or four in the morning, I usually

[28]Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony,* pp. 216.
[29]Ibid.
[30]Patinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 1.
[31]Most names are modified in the original version of 1951. For clarity, this article uses the names of the French edition (2012).

> succeeded in extracting myself from Alcazio's confidences and take the crumbled piece of paper with his six-line report to the Patron. The Patron would smile and throw it in the fire without even bothering to read it.[32]

It is hard to imagine a male agent accepting such an affront and such a waste of his ability. Colette was indeed hit hard by her relegation, reporting in her memoirs:

> […] the Patron called me to his PC [Poste de Commandement or local headquarters]. I felt a little more like an orderly every time he did: ended were the days of chatting in the garden and allowing me to carry out my missions according to my own initiative.[33]

On 28 July 1944, Starr sent her back to London to report on her mission. She followed this order, despite her disappointment at leaving the region before its Liberation,[34]

The origin of the dispute between the organiser and his liaison agent remains obscure. According to researchers who have seen Walters' personal archives, Starr had her arrested for having sexual relations with a maquis man and finally decided to send her back to London for this very reason. Burésie, a Russian veteran of the Foreign Legion who became Starr's bodyguard, would have carried out this arrest. Colette always refuted the accusation.[35] It should be noted that almost two months had passed between the moment the relationship between Starr and Walters started to deteriorate and her effective dismissal, which tends to suggest there is another cause that is independent of her supposed affair. Such a criticism would obviously never have been made against a male agent, as during their training, the SOE hired women to check that the agents would not talk about their mission, even in the company of an 'agent provocateur'. This was not a part of the training of female agents.[36] Furthermore, once in France, some male agents felt that a dissolute life was the best cover for their secret activities, and nothing suggests that the SOE disapproved such choices.[37]

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[32]Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony,* p. 140.
[33]Ibid., p. 186.
[34]Ibid., p. 221. For the exact date: TNA HS9/339/2. Miss A.M. Walters, 18 September 1944. *Report on Mission in France*.
[35]Daniel Hewson, postface to Anne-Marie Walters, *Parachutée au clair de Lune. Une Anglaise dans la Résistance française* (Marseille : Gaussen, 2012), pp. 257- 264 - translation from : Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony*.
[36]Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 72 ff.
[37]Ibid., p. 114 ff.

A question remains, was Walters' story the reflection of the SOE adapting to the customs of the French resistance? The traditional gendered division of roles adopted within the resistance has been amply demonstrated.[38] This was always an argument for Buckmaster, who claimed that his service had to fall in line with the resistance's practices. Nevertheless, the arbitration of the feud between Starr and Walters reveals a different story.

Arbitration: Double Standards or Unfounded Allegations?

Sent back to London at the end of July 1944, Walters started a long journey through Spain and Algiers. By the time she arrived in London, Starr's report on her had already been received at SOE headquarters. He blamed her for a lack of discipline, her superficiality, and her loose morals.[39] Part of his accusations were supported by other reports and testimonies, all marked by strongly gendered biases.[40] Her personal SOE file reveals ambivalent comments. In July 1943, a report stated that she was

> A keen, very intelligent girl with a realistic practical sense. Ample courage, determination and a sense of humour. She has marked latent possibilities but is at present immature, inexperienced and not sufficiently in control of herself for subversive work. With maturity she should prove a girl of exceptional qualities.[41]

The following October, the tone had evolved:

> She is well-educated, intelligent, quick, practical and cunning. She is active minded, curious and has plenty of imagination. She is keen and, on the whole, worked hard, displaying outstanding initiative. Nevertheless, she is erratic and was inclined to be inattentive when she was not particularly interested. She has a very strong character, is domineering, aggressive and self-confident. She is vain and rather conceited. She has been badly spoilt […]. She is rather an exhibitionist and hates being ignored. She resents discipline or any attempt to thwart her wishes. She is irritable and impatient of the mistakes of others less quick and intelligent than herself. She is inclined to get over-excited and is slightly hysterical. She is rather more immature than would appear at first sight […].She would make as many enemies as friends. She will not hesitate always

[38]Catherine Lacour-Astol, *Le genre de la Résistance,* (Paris : Presses de Sciences-Po, 2015) ; Margaret Collins Weitz, *Les combattantes de l'ombre. Histoire des femmes dans la Résistance,* (Paris : Albin Michel, 1997).
[39]Hewson, pp. 257-264.
[40]Robert Gildea, *Comment sont-ils devenus résistants ? Une nouvelle histoire de la Résistance, (1940-1945)* (Paris : Editions des Arènes, 2017), pp. 141-142.
[41]TNA HS9/339/2. SAB reports STS, 7-29-43

> to make use of her physical attractiveness in gaining influence over men. In this respect she is likely to have a disturbing effect in any group of which she is a member. This influence was clearly discernible here. She has the brains, and to some extent the character to do valuable work. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether she should be employed. As an individual she is likely to be conspicuous. She would almost certainly resent occupying a subordinate position, yet she does not appear to be temperamentally suited to have authority over others. She will probably exercise an unsettling influence upon many with whom she comes into contact […].[42]

Other instructors drew similar conclusions.[43] Even if seen as vividly informed by gendered representations, these previous reports gave credit to Starr's discontentment. They seem to show that there was nothing else there than a conflict of personalities in which Walters' chances were tenuous. She was younger – Starr was forty at the time – less experienced, and overall a woman who did not comply with the discretion expected from her gender. None of this was to plead in her favour. But negative reports within SOE were not restricted to women. Male or female, SOE recruits were expected to develop aggressivity, and presented strong-minded and unusual personalities.[44] Starr himself made many mistakes during his training, defying secrecy and security orders many times.[45] Joining the SOE after his younger brother John, George Starr made the following impression on his instructors:

> He has given for reason of wanting to do the work, the fact that he was not going to be beaten by his young brother. He is continually making aggressive contradiction and assertions and is the worst type of know-all, namely one who is often right and can seldom be proved wrong. He is a bore who has a very high opinion of his own ability. From the point of view of security, he will probably be conscientious […]. He is the least popular member of the group.[46]

Neither Starr's nor Walters' file was unanimously laudatory – far from it. They do not appear sufficient as evidence to take one's word over another. The situation even worsened with Walters' arrival in London; in September 1944, she brought far more serious accusations against Hilaire:

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[42]TNA HS9/339/2. STS 37 B – 26-10-43

[43]Ibid.. [Training reports]

[44]Pollack**,** 'Genre et engagement dans la Résistance', paragraph 13; Alain Dewerpe, *Espion, une anthropologie historique du secret d'État contemporain* (Paris : Gallimard, 1994), pp. 213-214.

[45]TNA HS/9/1407/1. GR. Starr (@Hilaire, Gaston). STS 23a 7/7/42. STS 23a. L/Sgt Ree, 21/7/42.

[46]Ibid.. STS 5 –25/6/42

> Hilaire is a very courageous, very patient and disciplined person but he has been in France too long and is very tired, I also believe very depressed at not having seen his wife and children for so long; he deserves a well-earned rest and a long one. We got along very well up to D-Day as long as we were leading an ordinary agent's life, but after it suddenly became difficult, he went for days and nights without sleeping one minute, was very worried and concerned with the first maquis organisation and very much over-worked. Thus it was that he simply followed blindly his impulses (and sometimes shrewdly given advice) without stopping to think of the consequences.
>
> A small example: he adopted a Russian as 'Garde de corps' (which was hardly necessary in a maquis of 1200 men). The Russian, Burésie, was an ex-Foreign Legion soldier, a dangerous and blood-thirsty character and slightly mad who suggested and carried out horrible tortures on captured miliciens […]
>
> It was also quite wrong in my opinion to lower oneself to the standards of the Gestapo by torturing miliciens and collaborators to make them reveal the whereabouts of their colleagues – some were beaten until blood spurted all over the walls, others were horribly burnt : one man's feet were held in the fire 20 minutes and his legs were slowly burnt off to the knees; other tortures are even too horrible to mention. A good number of people were also shot. Had Hilaire not been influenced in all this (and Burésie played a great part in suggesting, encouraging and carrying out those tortures) I am sure he would never had started this.[47]

These allegations were likely to damage the reputation of the entire organisation. Buckmaster investigated them on his own and totally cleared Starr, concluding at the end of December 1944:

> […] I have carefully investigated the charge against Lieut/Colonel G.R. Starr in connection with the incident of the alleged tortures of German officers, and find quite definitely that the charge is totally unsubstantiated. I would add that in my personal view it is a travesty of the facts to impute sadism to Colonel Starr […]. I should be most grateful if something could be done to offer him a job in his present rank […].[48]

[47]TNA HS9/339/2. Miss A.M. Walters, 18 September 1944. Report on Mission in France.
[48]TNA HS9/1407/1. From Colonel Buckmaster to AD/E, 30 December 1944, Confidential – Copy.

All accusations were purely dismissed by the command of F Section, without further explanation. Starr was expected to finish his mission without interference and even his future assignment was about to be planned. The entire event left very few traces and it is likely that the protagonists were forbidden to talk of it outside of the SOE. On 4 November 4 1944, Walters signed the usual form by which agents committed themselves not to disclose details about their mission without authorisation.[49] A discrete allusion in her memoirs – originally published in 1946 – tends to prove that she always stuck to her version. She quoted a conversation she had with André Bonnet, a double agent made cynical by the spectacle of the Gestapo's treacheries and tortures. When she argued that resistance fighters proved that 'humanity isn't bad', she remembers him answering: 'You've been away so much […]. You don't know everything that goes on, even in this maquis. When men are pushed to a certain pitch, they do anything.'[50]

This is the one and only public trace of the matter. Buckmaster had made up his mind, based on his evaluation of his agents' personalities. And this evaluation was obviously biased. While Starr's future within the SOE was being settled by Buckmaster, Walters was dismissed as soon as Starr sent his first negative report on her. Thus, when she stopped over in Algiers on her way back to London, she was asked to return to South-West France to coordinate Jedburgh teams. We can only suppose that this proposal was made by the Massingham section of the SOE which operated from Algiers and whose shortage of recruits was even worse than that of the London branches. According to Walters, F section refused a reassignment because of Starr's report. In any case, while Buckmaster always thought very highly of Starr, he lost all faith in Walters. On 8 January 1945, he summarised his position in irrevocable terms:

> When the matter was first raised […] I explained that Colette (Miss A.M. Walters) was an unreliable witness because she suffered from the deluded idea that every man she came across fell in love with her and she bore a grudge against Starr because he did not comply.
>
> Col. Starr appreciated her courage which was of high order, but so far from having a high opinion of her capacity as an agent and of her judgment, requested her removal. The matter boils down to the word of an excitable and romantic-minded young girl against that of a hard-bitten and utterly reliable Lt-Col. who is easily the most popular and most respected agent in the South-West of France. My opinion of Starr is reinforced by that of Col. Monnet, commanding the Brigade of the Armagnac who gave him very high praise indeed.

[49]TNA HS9/339/2. *Declaration.* 4 November 1944.
[50]Walters, *Moondrop to Gascony,* p. 209.

> I think that [the] suggestion that Starr should be asked to reply in person to the allegations of Miss Walters is an excellent one, but I cannot help the feeling that a mountain is being made of a molehill and that Starr will be disagreeably surprised to learn that the people whom he believed to have his confidence doubt his word.[51]

All was said in a few words: it was more important to preserve Starr's reputation than to investigate Walters' allegations. It is true that Buckmaster was already thinking of Starr's next mission, whereas Walters, as a woman, was not meant to be employed again. Buckmaster would not change his mind, even when proof would accumulate against Hilaire. To him, it was the word of the 'romantic-minded' Miss Walters against that of the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Starr. His insistence and the caricature he gave of Walters as a superficial 'girl' even suggests that he used common biases against women to discredit her and bury the case.

Using Common Gender prejudices to Discredit an Embarrassing Witness?

The virulence of Buckmaster's notes have indeed two potential explanations: either he was convinced that Colette lied shamelessly, or he felt that he had to protect Starr to keep him available for further missions, and protect the entire SOE from a pending scandal. Many clues give credence to Walters' version of events. First, her report provides multiple details; if these were lies, the deception was carefully built. In addition, Starr had been noticed for his aggressivity ever since his training period.[52] He also might have had a penchant for violence; his personal papers contain this undated note:

> When I got back to England, I faced a court of inquiry for ill-treating German prisoners. Anne-Marie Walters had started it because she hated my guys because I threw her out of France and sent her home for indiscipline. Very lucky I didn't have her shot. She never forgave me, and when she got back, she started these stories […].[53]

Lastly, it seems that Starr, a former MI5 agent in Belgium, who was repatriated via Dunkerque, had pursued his secret activities at the beginning of the war and was tortured by the enemy. [54] Raymond Escholier suggested it in his book, adding in very chosen words that Starr's practices were more than unorthodox:

[51]TNA HS9/1407/1. From Col. Buckmaster to AD/E, 8 January 1945.
[52]TNA HS9/1407/1. STS 5 – 25/6/42.
[53]Imperial War Museum, London (IWM) 03/3/1. Papers of George Starr. Dossier 2, Tape 1-9.
[54]TNA HS9/1407/1. From Colonel Buckmaster to AD/E, 30 December 1944.

> Nothing was above his courage. It is true that Hilaire carries for ever in his flesh the indelible marks of German fierceness. One of his close relations got to see his torso, tortured by Nazis in 1941; he described for me this scarred back, crisscrossed, lacerated, burnt: a real lunar landscape, he said.
>
> That does not predispose one to indulgence. Furthermore, the Secret Service does not recruit among little saints or kind souls. Its agents do not care very much for their one life, and even less for that of others. This is not where you find conformist minds. Lawrence's disciples escape common measure […]. With all due respect to sensitive hearts, their law is often that of the jungle. […] Were they to hesitate to strike when necessity commands it, their entire underground work would fall apart […]
>
> After that, don't be surprised if colonel Hilaire has today his apologists and his detractors, his followers and his resenters, if from both sides of the 'Channel' an atmosphere singularly charged with admiration and hatred surrounds this mysterious and unemotional man […].[55]

Grateful to Starr for his actions within the resistance, that book will not say more.

This excerpt already tells a lot about torture, which is rarely evoked in testimonies and archives except to denounce the enemy's practices. Altogether, these allusions tend to confirm Walters' allegations. There is more, convergent testimonies led the SOE to open a court of enquiry despite Buckmaster's protests. After the facts, Starr stated that he had asked for the procedure himself, so as to clear his name.[56] Yet, nothing in his file confirms this declaration. What is certain is that the enquiry process was brought about by the spontaneous testimonies of officers who had heard Starr himself talk of the facts.

On 30 October 30 1944, Starr was in the United Kingdom, where he raised the issue of torture during a mess dinner in the presence of about fifteen officers among which was Lieutenant-Colonel L. H. C. Woolrych. On 2 November, Woolrych sent this letter to Air Commodore Archibald Robert Boyle, in charge of air security within the SOE:

> […] There is no doubt, both from Miss Walters' report and from Lt Col. Starr's own narrative on Monday, that they tortured prisoners in a fairly big way. It might be answered, of course, that this was the work of the FFI which Lt Col Starr was powerless to prevent. He recounted to us, however, with

[55] Translated from: Raymond Escholier, *Maquis de Gascogne,* pp. 29-30.
[56] IWM 03/3/1. Papers of George Starr. File 2, Tape 1-9.

> considerable relish, the episode of a capture he made personally, and for which, of course he must accept responsibility. Apparently, he was out in his car with his Russian 'bodyguard' Burésie, when he saw a large car approaching at speed and driving towards the Spanish frontier […]. He found it to contain a German man and woman aged about fifty and twenty-three respectively. Both had Gestapo badges; the girl was far gone in pregnancy. Apart from the fact that they were Gestapo he had no evidence against them and did not even know who they were. He handed them over to the Russian who tortured both of them in the most revolting fashion for 7 days. As they were both unwilling to talk, Starr had them both shot, after refusing the girl's plea to have her life saved if only on account of the child.
>
> Starr's recital caused something like consternation amongst my officers who felt it was hardly worthwhile winning a war on these terms. The indignation was increased when a rumour got about that there was a possibility of a further decoration being awarded to Starr. In fact, one officer who was present, who had won the DSO in the last war, declared that he would throw back his decoration to the army as a protest if a similar decoration were to be given to this man.
>
> […] I cannot help feeling that conduct of this kind must do a great deal to queer the pitch of the Allied Crimes Commission and may, indeed, cause an awkward repercussion for the Organisation.[57]

With so many witnesses and a second written testimony, the SOE finally had to face up to the problem. On 5 January 1945, the SOE's hierarchy noted that Walters's allegations did not concern a one-off event but regular practices over the course of an extended period of time.[58] A court of enquiry was set up to hear officers present during Starr's dinner confidences, as well as Walters and Yvonne Cormeau, Starr's radio officer on the field.[59] Neither French witnesses nor the Russian Burésie were summoned.[60] This strategy obviously aimed to prevent the matter from growing to an international scale. At the same time, this made Starr's defence easier, as he was free to invoke the initiative of Burésie and individuals within the French resistance groups.

[57]TNA, HS9/1407/1. From L.H.C. Woolrych (cdt group B) to Air Commodore A.R. Boyle.
[58]TNA HS9/1407/1. Copy. Personal and confidential. From A/CD to AD/E. 5 January 1945.
[59]TNA HS9/1407/1. Personal and Confidential. From Commandant, B group to col. Ram. 20 January 1945.
[60]Hewson, pp. 257-264.

In the end, this protected the SOE's reputation which would have been jeopardised by such facts becoming public. The problem was to be solved by discretion.

The court of enquiry heard the witnesses in February 1945. The hearings and the court's conclusions were included in Starr's personal file. Unfortunately, they are barely readable: the ink has for the most part faded, not to mention that the file has probably been expunged.[61] A file had been gathered for Starr's defence where the SOE's highest-ranking officers sang his praises. In a document dated end of December 1944, Brigadier Mockler-Ferryman stated that Hilaire was 'A brave, reliable, hard-working, persevering and tactful officer, but inclined to be swayed by the opinion of those around him. Thorough knowledge of France and all types of Resistance work'.[62] Not only did he vouch for his agent, but he also provided him with a line of defence and concluded that in the near future, Starr's knowledge of France would be useful to the service.[63] Needless to say, Buckmaster's contribution to this concert was in unison.[64] Major-General Gubbins soberly added in January 1945: 'I concur'.[65]

The SOE's opinion was forged. Starr was to be supported by all means, whereas Walters' disloyalty was to be sanctioned. Moreover, attacks on her reputation became a part of the strategy to stifle and bury an embarrassing story. Hilaire had taken the precaution to send his negative report on Colette to London before she arrived there, which preventively discredited her word. The officer who debriefed her four days before she had given her own report – most probably Vera Atkins[66] – declared in September 1944:

> Miss Walters. She seems to have an idea of the unfavourable reports received by us and is in a most aggressive mood […]. I do not doubt her courage, which I believe to be very great, but having said that, one has said everything. She has neither loyalty nor discretion […].[67]

Questioning the loyalty of Walters in such circumstances is consistent with the practices of a secret service jealous of its reputation. She had accused a senior officer, breaking the code of silence as well as the hierarchical traditions, we can suppose that

[61]TNA HS9/1407/1. *Court of Enquiry to investigate the conduct of Lt-Col. G.R. Starr of SFHQ Mission "Wheewlright"*; and Hewson, pp. 257-264.
[62]TNA HS9/1407/1. Special confidential report – Type of Commission "Emergency". Document signed by Mockler-Ferryman, 22/12/44
[63]Ibid.
[64]Ibid. Documents by Buckmaster, 3/1/45 and 4/1/45.
[65]Ibid.
[66]Hewson, pp. 257-264.
[67]TNA HS9/339/2. VA/FR/7269. 14/9/44. Misses Fauge, Wilen, and Walters.

any junior officer in her position would have suffered counter-accusations of disloyalty. More astonishing is the way Buckmaster used her gender to compromise and silence her. From the autumn of 1944, the chief of F Section wrote numerous reports and notes attacking her on her morality as a woman rather than dwelling on her qualities as an agent. Studied for themselves, the declarations he made only serve to show how strong gendered representations were, even within a service known as a trailblazer of women's recruitment for military missions. However, when seen in the context of the multiple accusations made against Starr, they become a strategy to undermine a key witness in an affair likely to have an impact on the reputation of the entire service. The obvious conclusion is that Buckmaster, consciously or not, used common gendered biases to undermine Walters and to counter her accusations.

This strategy proved to be more than efficient. With SOE command standing behind him, Hilaire was totally cleared by the court of enquiry.[68] Following the line suggested by his superiors, he argued during his hearing that if Burésie and some French resistance members had tortured enemies, it was without his knowing. Thus, he could return to service and be sent to Germany, where he worked as a bomb-disposal expert for SHAEF until 1947.[69] He received the Distinguished Service Order in July 1945 and a Military Cross in April 1946.[70]

As for Walters, she was also eager to pursue the war to its very end. After her return to London in the autumn of 1944, she relentlessly asked to meet with Buckmaster to obtain a new assignment. Without surprise, her requests were denied. The SOE's Air Branch – whose officers had contributed to accusations against Starr – pleaded her case in vain in December 1944: 'D/AIR was very anxious for something to be settled, as he felt that this organisation was responsible up to a point for placing her after her outposting'.[71] Yet, Buckmaster always stood by the argument that, since British agents were no longer welcome on French soil, she was unemployable.[72] She never won her last battle, the recovery of her personal belongings that she had left behind in France before being sent back to London. She was told that as they had been bought with SOE funds, they were not hers.[73]

Tired of fighting, she finally had her father write Buckmaster a letter trying to settle the matter man to man. The exchange was delightful. Walters' father chose the following line:

[68]IWM 03/3/1. Papers of George Starr. File 2, Tape 1-9 and Hewson, pp. 257-264.
[69]IWM 03/3/1. Papers of George Starr. File 2, Tape 1-9
[70]TNA HS9/1407/1.
[71]TNA HS9/339/2, *Matters Outstanding, From F/FIN to F/AIM.* 6 December 1944.
[72]Ibid.
[73]TNA HS9/339/2 - Letter from Col. Buckmaster to F. P. Walters, 27 January 1945.

> I have always doubted whether it was right to invite young girls to accept such risks, and to place their parents in the cruel dilemma that they must either veto a patriotic ambition, with all the effects on family life that would produce, or accept to share the responsibility for something they do not approve […]. I do therefore beg that you will see her and allow her to speak freely with you […].[74]

Buckmaster's response sounded final:

> I am extremely glad that you have written thus frankly about your daughter and am most anxious that any feeling of unfairness or bad treatment should be thoroughly ventilated. I should be extremely glad to see you regarding her as she has been somewhat of a problem to us.[75]

Conclusions

Walters' evaluations show that in the space of a few months, she went from being seen as a courageous but undisciplined agent to being considered a heavy burden to the organisation. In all fairness, this probably would have been the case for any junior officer in her situation, as she had reported her commanding officer's misconduct in the field.

What is more interesting is how quickly gendered biases were used against her. If enlistment to the SOE represented to some extent a way towards emancipation for women, their journey within the service was marred by prejudice from the early days of training to the very end of their missions. Walters' story reveals not only how much gender weighed on the way agents' words were received, but also how easily the SOE could discredit its female agents when command felt it necessary to protect the organisation

Finally, she found some recognition in the media – albeit a media under vigilant SOE control, which kept a right of censorship on any public intervention by a former agent. She gave an interview to the BBC in the spring of 1945 and contributed to some newspaper articles.[76] She even went back to South-West France in the company of an American press attaché – to the great displeasure of the SOE, which feared she would spread rumours about Hilaire.[77]

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[74]TNA HS9/339/2 - Letter from F. P. Walters to col. Buckmaster, 22 January 1945.
[75]TNA HS9/339/2 - Letter from Col. Buckmaster to F. P. Walters, 27 January 1945.
[76]TNA HS9/339/2 - *'Cut Material for Parachute Girl'*; and TNA, HS9/339/2 - 'Went to join the Maquis – Her own Account of Secret Activities'.
[77]TNA, HS9/339/2 - Notes and letters April 1945.

Most surprisingly given the history of events described here, Walters was awarded an MBE during the same period and with the following commendation:

> She worked courageously for six months in difficult conditions, and her commanding officer has commented on her personal courage and willingness to undergo any danger. It is recommended that this FANY officer be appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (Civil Division).[78]

The SOE's command might have felt that it was somehow necessary to balance its judgement given her contacts in the press; such a citation had also the advantage of erasing all traces of previous disagreements.

The matter indeed did end there.

After the war, Walters married the French resistance member Jean-Claude Comerts, and lived in France and Spain, where she specialised in the translation and adaptation of adventure novels for young people, – a socially more acceptable activity that must have pleased her father.[79]

[78]TNA, HS9/339/2 - Walters' Service History, April 1945. FANY is an acronym for First Aid Nursing Yeomanry – a source of many SOE agents.
[79] Hewson, pp. 257-264

The Forgotten Chindits – 23 British Infantry Brigade

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ABSTRACT
In March 1944 Japan launched its Operation U Go offensive which resulted in the well documented battles of Kohima and Imphal in north east India. At the same time 23 British Infantry Brigade was finalising Long Range Penetration training before participation in Operation Thursday, the second Chindit campaign that was already underway in north eastern Burma. That plan was changed, and the brigade was diverted to operate in the mountainous Naga Hills to protect the eastern flank of Kohima and disrupt Japanese supply lines from Burma. Much has been written about Burma, Kohima, Imphal and the two Chindit operations, but surprisingly little on the activities of 23 British Infantry Brigade in 1944. This article seeks to redress some of that imbalance by considering: how the brigade prepared for the Long Range Penetration role; how it operated in the Naga Hills; how those operations differed to Operation Thursday; and finally, if this was an effective use of the brigade.

Introduction

Japanese forces invaded British controlled Burma in January 1942 and by June had steadily driven the defeated British forces to the north east border of what was then British controlled India. In broad terms, a military stalemate followed until early 1944. This was despite an unsuccessful 1943 British offensive in the Arakan Division of Burma, the present day Rakhine State area of Myanmar, and a British Long Range Penetration operation into north eastern Burma that was launched from the Imphal Plain of north east India in February 1943.[1] Japanese and British forces remained in contact with each other in the Arakan Division and to the south of the Imphal Plain from 1942 to 1944 where fighting continued in both areas for the control of local hills and roads. Meanwhile, Britain was building up forces to defend India and retake Burma. However, the Japanese pre-empted matters by launching a diversionary Arakan

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1427
[1]The place names used in this article are those in use at the time.

offensive, Operation Ha Go, followed by their primary offensive, Operation U Go, towards Imphal and Kohima.

The 70 British Infantry Division, of which 23 British Infantry Brigade was a part, arrived in India in March 1942 and was then held in reserve to the east of Calcutta until September 1943 when it was ordered to convert to the Long Range Penetration (LRP) role. The division, and the brigade then became a part of the Special Force that is generally referred to as the Chindits. Much has been written about the two Chindit campaigns of 1943 and 1944, but remarkably little about 23 British Infantry Brigade as it did not in the end take part in Operation Thursday, the 1944 Chindit campaign. Instead, in March 1944, the brigade was given two principal tasks: firstly to secure Kohima's eastern flank, where British forces were surrounded by the Japanese; and secondly to cut the Japanese Fifteenth Army's supply lines from Burma. Robert Lyman's excellent work on the 1944 Japanese U Go offensive has a chapter on 23 Brigade's operations in the Naga Hills and there are some insightful references within Raymond Callahan's work on the battles of Imphal and Kohima, but these appear to be all that exists in the historiography apart from personal memoirs, a few lines in regimental histories, and an occasional reference in works having their main focus on the Kohima, Imphal, and Chindit campaigns.[2] What began as a brief enquiry into the brigade's Naga Hills operations has shown that more scholarly work is needed to record, and honour the memory of the men of 23 British Infantry Brigade – the forgotten Chindits.

The term British has been used throughout this article for what at the time were British Empire forces in India and Burma. These forces were made up from: the British Army in India, an all-British force with officers and other ranks (BORS); the Indian Army which had British and a few Indian officers, but Indian and Nepali other ranks; and British-officered troops from other parts of the British Empire, most notably West and East Africa. Most of the divisions and brigades that fought in India and Burma were mixed formations of British, Indian, Gurkha, and West and East African battalions but by far the numerical majority came from the Indian Army. 70 British Infantry Division, of which 23 British Infantry Brigade was a part, was an exception as it remained an all-British division.

Long Range Penetration

A brief overview of the Long Range Penetration (LRP) role is useful here. Although it will be shown that 23 British Infantry Brigade operated in the Naga Hills in ways that differed to LRP as applied on the contemporaneous Operation Thursday, both shared

[2]Robert Lyman, *Japan's Last Bid for Victory – The Invasion of India 1944,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011), chap. 8; Raymond Callahan, *Triumph at Kohima-Imphal*, (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas, 2017), pp. 119-120 & p. 173 footnote 31.

the same Special Force Chindit, ethos and training. The Chindits were the brainchild of Orde Wingate, an unconventional warrior by any standard, of whom it was said, 'In the army he had been a difficult and abrasive colleague, who had inspired deep loathing and resentment, and at the same time, respect, loyalty and devotion.'[3] Wingate first came to the notice of Archibald Wavell in 1940 when he was General Officer Commanding Palestine and Trans-Jordan. At that time Wingate was running counter insurgency gangs, the Special Night Squads, against Arab insurgents. By late 1941 Wavell had become Commander-in-Chief (CinC) Middle East and Wingate was involved in the use of irregular Abyssinian forces against the Italian colonial regime. Wavell became CinC India in late 1941 and in 1942 at a time of widespread defeat in the Far East was keen to do something to raise morale and take the offensive,

> 'Wavell signalled Middle East, and asked for officers, who had run the Abyssinian Patriot Forces to come to INDIA and do something. Several volunteered including one Lt. Col. Wingate. When the others heard he was coming they withdrew their names.'[4]

This extract comes from the notes for a recently discovered post-war lecture given by the officer who took over command of the Chindits after Wingate's death in 1943. It provides an interesting commentary on Wingate and the opinions of some of his fellow officers in Abyssinia. A more recent assessment of Wingate describes him even less charitably 'as a charismatic zealot, without much other skill as a commander, whose ability to inspire others with his faith allowed him to waste precious manpower on schemes of dubious military value'.[5] Nevertheless, the politically astute Wingate used Wavell, who by mid 1943 was Viceroy of India, and head of the Imperial Administration, to further his proposals for LRP.

While Wingate's plans for LRP in Burma had their roots in the unconventional warfare techniques he had employed in pre-war Palestine, and refined with Gideon Force in Abyssinia, he cannot be credited with inventing LRP. The idea of weakening an enemy by striking behind his lines is as old as time and can be found throughout the history

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[3]David Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits – Redressing the Balance,* (London: Arms & Armour Press, 1994), p. 9.

[4]UK National Archive (hereinafter TNA) CAB 106/171, Lecture Notes on Chindits by Major General Lentaigne, 1946, p. 2. This file provides considerable information and new insights on the Chindits as a whole, and does not seem to have been used by scholars before.

[5]Daniel Todman, *Britain's War – A New World 1942-1947*, (London: Allen Lane, 2020), p. 340. For a balanced summary of the 'Chindit controversy' see Callahan, *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima,* Appendix C - Note on Chindit Historiography.

of warfare.[6] LRP as understood in the context of the Second World War had its origins in late 1940 with the Long Range Desert Group that operated deep behind enemy lines in North Africa in an independent reconnaissance and raiding role against Axis infrastructure. What Wingate did do that was new was combine his own experience, the role of the Long Range Desert Group, and his appreciation of the capability of modern air transport to formulate his proposals for LRP in Burma in 1943 and 1944.

Wingate arrived in India in February 1942 and Wavell employed him to apply unconventional warfare techniques against the Japanese who at that time were pushing British forces out of Burma. In 1943 this became Operation Longcloth, the first Chindit campaign. With Wavell's support Wingate then went on to win over Churchill, and with his backing, convince the Joint Chiefs of Staff to support a second Chindit campaign, the much larger Operation Thursday of 1944.

So, what was LRP? When British forces first came into contact with the Japanese in Malaya and Burma in 1941 and 1942 they frequently found themselves either outflanked or with a well defended Japanese roadblock behind them that prevented further manoeuvre or withdrawal. Operation Longcloth was in some ways designed to mimic the Japanese approach, but on a larger scale. Wingate's plan was for a force to establish itself in a position deep in Japanese held Burma where they would disrupt Japanese lines of communication and supply in support of a planned 1943 British offensive. That offensive was called off, but Wingate pressed for the operation to go ahead anyway with the objective of destroying roads, railway lines and bridges in occupied Burma. The damage caused was quickly repaired, and with over 30% of the 3,000 strong force either killed, wounded or missing, and some 600 of the survivors unfit for future service, the benefits gained for the price paid remain controversial to this day.[7]

By late 1943, the story of Britain's war against Japan was one of consistent failure following defeat in Malaya, the loss of Singapore, expulsion from most of Burma and

[6]Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits,* provides a hagiographic description of Wingate & his career.

[7]Perhaps the best four works on the controversy are: Martin Sambrook, *Lions in the Jungle,* (Place not given: Chindwin Publishing, 2019), this is based on a University of Buckingham M.Res. thesis; Michael Calvert, *Chindits,* (London: Pan, 1973)*;* Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits,*; and Callahan, *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima*. For Operation Longcloth casualties see, Frank McLynn, *The Burma Campaign,* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), p. 157, where from 3,000 men of 77 Brigade who went into Burma only 2,182 survived, 450 were killed with the remainder missing or died in captivity - a loss rate of 30%.

the failure of the 1943 British Arakan offensive. Against this bleak backdrop, and despite Operation Longcloth's questionable results, a political opportunity was taken to portray Operation Longcloth's apparent successes as an example of British aggression and innovation at a time when the United States and China were shouldering most of the burden of fighting Japan in terms of manpower and resources deployed. At a May 1943 press conference, held immediately after Wingate had returned from Burma, he said, 'I am quite satisfied with the results. The expedition was a complete success.'[8] Wingate then built on that by then sending two officers, who had taken part in the operation, to lecture in the U.K. and the U.S.A.[9] An enthusiastic British press went much further: Reuters with, 'The British Ghost Army'; and the Daily Mail with, 'Clive of Burma'.[10] But many in the hierarchy of the Indian Army and the Imperial Administration not only disagreed, but disliked the press hyperbole. A post-war comment, 'Never have so many marched so far for so little' is representative of that viewpoint and some see it as present also in the tone of the post-war official history. This was edited by Woodburn Kirby, a Delhi staff officer that Wingate disliked and who had suggested after Operation Longcloth that Wingate should be sacked.[11] Nevertheless, the politically astute Wingate used the publicity, his considerable advocacy skills, and Wavell's patronage to argue for a second and much larger scale LRP operation. This became Operation Thursday which began in February 1944, the objective was to underpin a Chinese offensive from north eastern Burma to reopen a part of the Burma Road, a supply line to China cut by the Japanese in 1942.[12]

We see in all of these examples Wingate's unconventional and politically opportunistic approach to waging war, indeed General William "Bill" Slim, who commanded British forces in northern India in 1943 and 1944 saw Wingate as becoming ever more expansive and unrealistic in his views with the passage of time.[13]

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[8]Louis Allen, *Burma – the Longest War,* (London: J. M. Dent, 1986), p. 146.

[9]TNA CAB 106/171, p. 4; Lentaigne notes that privately Wingate's own report said, 'the Burma Rifles were first class, his British troops generally useless and his Gurkhas worse than useless.'

[10]Frank McLynn, *The Burma Campaign,* (London: Vintage, 2011), p. 158.

[11]Ibid., in turn citing a 1952 regimental history of the 2 King Edward VII's Own Goorkha Rifles.

[12]TNA CAB 106/171 pp. 7-8 where Lentaigne notes that XIV Army had set the objective for Wingate as support to Chinese forces coming south; while Wingate's own orders to his command differed from that in many important ways. After Wingate's death and his taking command, Lentaigne refocussed on the XIV Army objective.

[13]William Slim, *Defeat into Victory,* (London: Pan, 1999), pp. 216-220 where Slim records Wingate proposing LRP as the optimal way to defeat the Japanese, with conventional forces holding the front until LRP collapsed it from the rear; and McLynn, *The Burma*

Operation Thursday took place between February and August 1944, in the Mogaung-Indaw-Myitkyina area of north east Burma and has been well documented elsewhere. What is worth highlighting was the use of some 17,000 LRP trained men, deployed in columns of approximately 300 to 400, that either marched in, or were flown in by gliders and United States Army Air Force transport aircraft. Four major strongholds were built, and these became substantial installations with airstrips large enough to land transport aircraft such as the Douglas C-47 Dakota and Curtis C-46 Commando, and in the case of the Broadway stronghold, six Supermarine Spitfire fighters, a radar installation, anti-aircraft guns, 25-pounder field artillery, and a substantial garrison.[14] Supplies could be flown in, or air dropped to a stronghold or to the columns when on the move. The columns also built light aircraft strips to evacuate their wounded back to the strongholds and then India. Light aircraft were also used to deliver orders and send back captured documents, prisoners etc. The strongholds were used as secure bases from which the columns could fan out to disrupt Japanese supplies and communications, and by concentrating a number of columns, carry out attacks on Japanese held towns and transport hubs in support of the Chinese offensive. Sadly, Operation Thursday's objectives were altered as it went along. The operation against Japanese infrastructure became secondary to frontal attacks on fortified towns such as Myitkyina for which the columns were not properly equipped. Heavy losses were incurred and Operation Thursday is subject to the same enduring controversy as Operation Longcloth.[15]

For LRP operations the officers and men were trained to undertake long marches in jungle, cross small rivers, build small bridges, carry out demolition, patrolling and ambushes, with columns concentrating for a major attack, and all with a 65 pound pack plus a personal weapon, grenades, ammunition and water. The men travelled comparatively light in equipment, if not in weight carried terms, and were supported only by their mules and by air dropped food and supplies.

The men could physically carry only five days rations and ready use ammunition so the importance of regular supply drops, and the weakness of that lifeline in the Naga Hills became apparent when the monsoon hampered drops from early May onwards. A Chindit column would have been an unusual sight, typically half a mile long it

Campaign, p. 274 with Wingate suggesting a 100,000 strong LRP force that would march from Burma across Indo-China. Both are examples of Wingate's unconventional ideas, and feed into the Chindit myths and controversy.

[14]Woodburn Kirby (Ed.), *History of the Second World War, The War Against Japan Volume III,* (London: H.M.S.O., 1962), p. 205.

[15]https://chindits.wordpress.com/2011/04/16/the-chindits-in-photographs/ contains images from both Chindit operations. Accessed 2 April 2020.

progressed in absolute silence, even the mules had been silenced by having their vocal chords cut, there were only whispers at the nightly bivouac, and often no fires to heat water and food. The columns' mules carried radio sets, medical equipment, 3-inch mortars, Vickers machine guns, flamethrowers and some small anti-tank weapons.

Figure 1: By Sergeant Arthur Sampson – a 23 Brigade Chindit.[16]

The war diaries for 23 British Infantry Brigade as an LRP formation show it having nine columns, plus a Rear Headquarters that remained in India. There were eight fighting columns each of 300 to 400 men; and a field headquarters (HQ) column with a stronghold guard force and additional specialists such as Royal Engineers, and Royal Signals. A typical Special Force column had an infantry company of four platoons armed with rifles and light machine guns, a heavy weapons platoon, a commando platoon for demolitions and booby traps, a reconnaissance platoon with a section of Burma Rifles, and attached Royal Air Force, Royal Engineers, Royal Signals and Royal Army Medical Corps personnel.

[16]Alf Sampson, *Bless 'em all,* (London: ISO Publications, 1990), p. 110. Sergeant Sampson, originally 1 Essex, was a commercial illustrator before the war, and served in 23 Brigade's HQ Intelligence Section - Column 32.

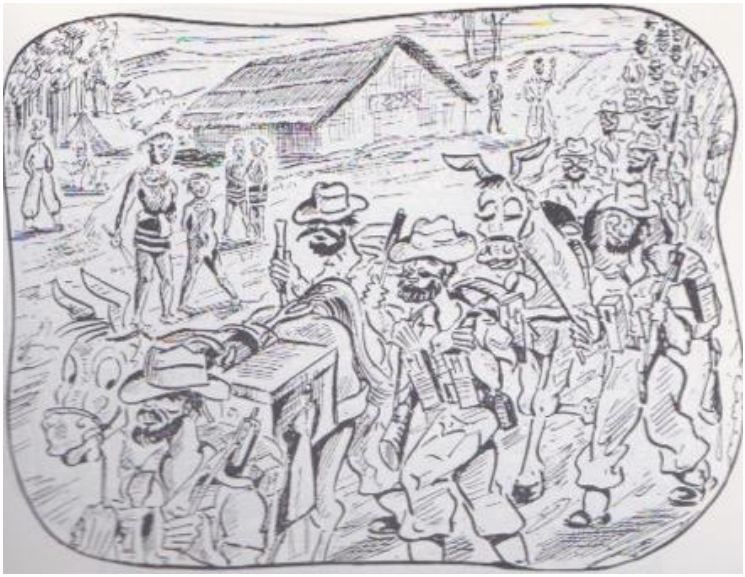

Figure 2: Column 32 leaves Grimsby II for Ukhrul.[17]

Elsewhere in Burma, the British had by 1944 learnt not to retreat when surrounded or outflanked by the Japanese. Instead a fortified box was created and all within it would fight on while supported by air dropped supplies and Royal Air Force (RAF) fighter bombers. The February 1944 Battle of the Admin Box in the Arakan Division was an example of this successful new tactic. It was applied again at Kohima and Imphal.[18]

Implicit to the new LRP and Box tactics were British and American air supremacy and the availability of large fleets of transport aircraft; two things notably absent in Malaya and Burma in 1941 and 1942. Most of the air transport employed in the China-India-Burma theatre was provided by the United States Army Air Force. Once again, 23 Brigade was an exception as it relied on three RAF Squadrons for re-supply in the Naga Hills and on RAF fighter bombers for air support. Only the light aircraft were provided by the United States Army Air Force.

[17]Sampson, *Bless 'em all,* p. 133.
[18]James Holland, *Burma' 44,* (London: Penguin, 2016) is one of many sources including Louis Allen, Frank McLynn, and William Slim, all of which are referenced below.

23 British Infantry Brigade

The brigade was formed in September 1939 from regular British Army units, known as the (Suez) Canal Brigade, and based there to protect it. The brigade subsequently became a part of 70 British Infantry Division and fought in Iraq, Syria, at Tobruk and in Operation Crusader in 1941. In early 1942 it arrived in India and at the time of its 1943/4 LRP training and operations the brigade's order of battle was:

1 Battalion The Essex Regiment
4 Battalion The Border Regiment
2 Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment
60 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery
12 Field Company, Royal Engineers
Royal Signals Squadron

The 2 Duke of Wellington's Regiment was the exception; it joined 23 Brigade in October 1943 following the long fighting retreat from Burma of 1942 and subsequent rebuilding. A more detailed description of these units can be found in Appendix 1.

By any measure 70 British Infantry Division was experienced. In August 1942 Slim observed, 'It was one of the best British formations I have met, with a magnificent battle-hardened spirit gained in the Middle East.'[19]

23 British Infantry Brigade Activities in India 1942-1943

Japan invaded Burma in December 1941 and in early March 1942 70 Division was ordered to proceed to Rangoon, but by 9 March Japanese troops were already there, and the division was instead diverted to India. The brigade arrived in Bombay on 10 March and moved overland by rail, and by road for the guns, to Khunti, an established garrison town to the west of Calcutta.[20] By the time the brigade arrived there in April it was clear that Burma would be lost, so 70 Division was held in reserve against an invasion of India.

The brigade's war diaries for 1942 and 1943 show an emphasis on conventional infantry and gunner training, increasing equipment levels, and some jungle training at Saugor in India's Central Provinces. The infantry units also provided detachments to assist the police in dealing with civil unrest at the time of the Quit India campaign and the 1943 Bengal Famine.[21]

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[19]Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 141.

[20]Jack Bartlett & John Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* (Sleaford: Richard Kay, 2000), p. 202.

[21]The UK National Archive (TNA), WO 172/869, 1 Essex War Diary 1942, entries for 14 October & 29 November; and TNA, WO 172/858, 2 Duke of Wellington's

By late 1943, and after initial selection of the men for the LRP role, the brigade slightly exceeded what would be the normal establishment for a British infantry brigade. The data shown in Table 1 below excludes attached Medical Officers, Chaplains, a Royal Signals detachment, and a sizeable Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) detachment that remained with the rear headquarters in India.

Unit	Officers	Other Ranks
1 Essex Regiment	37	789
2 Duke of Wellington's Regiment	39	806
4 Border Regiment	37	898
60 Regiment, Royal Artillery	40	591
12 Field Company, Royal Engineers	7	248
Totals	160	3332

Table 1: Manpower returns, end 1943 - after LRP selection.

After the defeat of the 1943 British Arakan offensive, the Japanese counter-attacked there and elements of 23 Brigade were quickly deployed there from reserve in India to the Bawli Bazaar area as a backstop against breakthrough. The units involved were 1 Essex, 4 Border, and 1 South Staffordshire - a part of 23 Brigade at that time. Apart from air attack, none of the units had any contact with the enemy, and when the Japanese counter-attack petered out in the monsoon they returned to India in June 1943.[22]

Despite Slim's opinion of August 1942 that the brigade had a 'fine fighting spirit gained in the Middle East', the November 1942 reminiscence of one gunner is very different in tone, 'The weeks and months dragged on …. All we were doing was playing soldiers.'[23]

Announcement of Long Range Penetration Role

All decisions related to the creation of the Special Force were made in London, Delhi and at the August 1943 Quebec Conference. There is no record in the war diaries of

War Diary 1942, entry for 19 September 1942; and TNA, WO 172/852, 4 Borders War Diary 1942: multiple entries between September and year end.

[22]TNA, WO 172/2500, 4 Border War Diary 1943, from April to end June; and TNA, WO 172/2074, 23 Brigade Rear HQ War Diary 1943.

[23]Jack Bartlett & John Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* (Sleaford: Richard Kay, 2000), p. 207.

70 British Infantry Division, or of 23 Infantry Brigade, of their ever having been consulted in that process. It seems 70 Division was ordered to convert to the LRP role without any say in the decision. An example perhaps of Wingate's influence at higher levels.

Interestingly Slim had no part in these decisions either. By 1943 Slim was in command of Fourteenth army which had been separated from 33 Corps in India and of which 70 Division and 23 Brigade remained a part. His noted, 'I was not, therefore consulted on the change; had I been, I would have opposed it as strongly as I could. I was convinced – and nothing I saw subsequently caused me to change my mind – that a battle-tried, experienced, well-knit British Division, like the 70th, would have more effect against the Japanese than a special force twice its size.'[24]

An announcement of the role change was made on 7 September 1943 and only seven months later on 16 March 1944 the brigade was in action in the Naga Hills.[25]

The LRP announcement was not however universally popular. The gunners of 60 Regiment Royal Artillery (60RA) were told their regiment was going to be broken up and the men distributed to the three infantry battalions. Jack Bartlett, a gunner, wrote, 'There was anger and resentment. We were proud of being gunners and of our battle hardened experience; yet this – and we ourselves – seemed to count for nothing, just tossed away to turn us into foot soldiers.'[26] It was a view shared by 60RA's commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Peel, a regular Royal Artillery officer, who had been in command since 1924. Peel objected strenuously to the role change, but then found himself abruptly transferred out to command a regular gunner unit. Peel was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. (Mike) de Jacobi du Vallon, an LRP specialist, who did at least arrange for the gunners to remain together as Columns 60 and 88.[27]

2 Duke of Wellington's (2DoW) joined 23 Brigade on 10 October 1943. In August 1943 it had been ordered to move full time to internal security duties but this was an unpopular order at many levels within the battalion.[28] The commanding officer lobbied Delhi, and in a letter to Auchinleck, then CinC India, wrote, 'Both I, personally, and the whole Battalion have a large score to settle with the Japs, some 10 officers killed and 200 B.O.Rs killed and missing. The Battalion fought well in Burma.'[29] This time the

[24]Slim, *Defeat into Victory, p.216.*
[25]TNA, WO 172/2074, 23 Brigade Rear HQ War Diary 1943, entry for 7 September.
[26]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies*, p. 218.
[27]Ibid., p. 220.
[28]TNA, WO 172/2506, 2 Duke of Wellington's War Diary 1943, entry for 10 January 1943.
[29]Ibid., entry for 23 August 1943. B.O.R. is an acronym for British Other Ranks.

lobbying worked, and the battalion replaced the 1 South Staffordshires who moved across to 77 Indian Infantry Brigade to take part in Operation Thursday.

23 Brigade was commanded by Brigadier Lancelot Perowne who arrived in November 1943 after service in Europe commanding two anti-aircraft brigades, and two years with the Army Commandos from 1940 to 1942.[30] He replaced Brigadier P. C. Marindin who went on to command the Lushio Brigade, a part of the irregular V-Force active in occupied Burma and the Naga Hills.

Special Force Selection, Training & Armament

Reading the war diaries for the period the brigade was held in reserve in India, the training seems appropriate for a conventional British infantry brigade but this would change dramatically. During September 1943 a selection process determined who could take part: firstly, all men older than 40 were transferred out of the brigade; every remaining man then had a medical; and if not fully fit was transferred out. This winnowing continued throughout training with those unable to meet the physical demands of the LRP role transferred out. Although, and interestingly, the brigade's Operations Report notes that Medical Boards had resisted the brigade's rejection of some men, who in the brigade medical officer's view should never have taken part in LRP operations.[31]

Wingate expressed a strong preference to use British troops for LRP operations; with some arguing he did so to avoid the complex dietary requirements of Indian Army units - one source noting that 14 Army had 30 different ration scales; and others saying Wingate was expressing a distinctly racial bias.[32] Operation Thursday saw the deployment of British, Gurkha and West African troops and did not therefore conform to his preferences, but 23 British Infantry Brigade was an all British formation, and apart from a small number of men from the Assam Rifles, conformed to Wingate's preferences, or prejudices.

[30]Very little has been found on Perowne's early service record and even his 2-year period with the Army Commandos might be incorrect. He did pull together and command ad hoc forces in France in 1940 as a part of 'Beauman Division'.

[31]TNA, WO 172/4397, War Diary of 23 Brigade Rear HQ: Operations Report (hereinafter Operations Report), Medical section.

[32]Another area of Chindit contention, but see Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits*, Chapter 3 for Wingate's 1938 period support for the Zionist cause, an example of his strong views, and p. 77 for his view that British troops were the best suited to LRP; and Kate Imy, *Faithful Fighters, Identity and Power in the British Indian Army,* (Stanford Ca.: Stanford University Press, 2019), Chapter 4 - for a detailed background to Indian Army dietary issues; and David Smurthwaite (Ed.), *Forgotten War,* (London: National Army Museum, 1992), p. 132.

Over the next few months there were further movements of men between the battalions and columns to balance the numbers out at 300-400 men per column, and some inward drafts were also received. Notably, the under-strength gunners of 60 and 88 Columns received 112 men from 4 Border Regiment.[33] 60 RA also saw the transfer out of specialist artillery officers and senior ranks.

Each of the nine columns had a detachment of 3 RAF sergeants to operate the 1086 ground to air communication sets used to call in air drops and air support from RAF fighter bombers. An RAF pilot also joined each column to provide expertise for the selection of drop zones, light aircraft airstrips, and the longer strips that columns expected to build as a part of a 'stronghold'.[34] Detachments of Assam Rifles joined just before the columns went into action and provided a field headquarters protection force, scouts, translators and local intelligence skills. Each column had its own Medical Officer, a Royal Engineers platoon and a Royal Signals detachment to communicate with the brigade's field headquarters – Column 32. The brigade's Rear Headquarters and REME detachment remained in India with the brigade's motor transport.[35]

After the LRP announcement the tempo of training changed immediately, indeed dramatically, with daily physical training at 5am. By October the brigade had moved back to Saugor and the jungle, where 10 mile road marches quickly built up to 35 miles over 2 days in the jungle. This led up to a series of exercises in early 1944: Promised Land, Essence, Orange, and Torch.[36] Beginning in January, Promised Land had a 7 day 86 mile approach march through jungle, supported by mules and air drops; Essence, over 5 days followed, with columns concentrating to build a stronghold and airstrip, and then carry out a defence; Orange lasted a fortnight; and finally Torch a multi-column exercise that included concentrating the brigade to capture an enemy airstrip after a 20 mile night approach.[37] This series of exercises completed on 11 March by which time Operation Thursday had been underway in north east Burma for four weeks.[38] The brigade was then expecting a further three months of LRP training in Assam before being flown in to a new operational area at Pakokku in Burma, some 200 miles distant from the main elements of Operation Thursday.[39]

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[33]TNA, WO 172/4647, 60 RA War Diary 1944, entry for 9 January 1944.
[34]W. A. Wilcox, *Chindit Column 76,* (London: Longmans, 1945), Introduction.
[35]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* p. 221.
[36]Ibid., pp. 224-225.
[37]TNA, WO 172/4397, 23 Brigade Rear HQ War Diary 1944, entries January - March.
[38]Useful background information on Operation Longcloth can be found in http://thechinditsociety.org.uk/operation-longcloth Accessed 11 January 2020.
[39]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* p. 233; and Operations Report: Introductory section.

For 60RA the LRP role was a real shock; they not only had given up their cherished 25 pounder guns but had to improve their proficiency as infantry and learn how to use 3-inch mortars and the Vickers machine guns that went with the columns by mule. The columns also had flamethrowers, referred to as 'lifebuoys' from the shape of the fluid tank, with some reports noting they had been issued only two weeks before the operation, how awkward they were to load on to the mules, and how poorly they were constructed. In one attack two flamethrower operators were quickly killed in what were described as 'disastrous circumstances', after using up the ten second capacity fuel tank.[40] The columns also had access to PIAT's, a cumbersome infantry anti-tank weapon, but these were never used.[41] It is thought that the 60RA columns' flamethrowers and PIATs were left behind after the initial stage of operations in the Naga Hills when Columns 60 and 88 went ahead with porters instead of mules. Another column noted that it never fired its Vickers machine guns. Interestingly, the Border Regiment columns used two 3.7" howitzers in support of attacks on Japanese occupied villages although there is no record of this weapon ever being standard issue to LRP columns. This was a type of howitzer in widespread use within the Indian Army and in mountain gun form could be broken down for transport by mules. It seems likely these guns were borrowed from the 25 Mountain Regiment Indian Artillery, a part of 33 Indian Infantry Brigade, that had taken over responsibility for the security of Mariani and the railway after 23 Brigade moved on and into the Naga Hills.

The 60RA manpower returns for April 1944 show it having a strength of 35 officers and 821 other ranks including 112 men transferred in from 4 Border, some ex REME from its gunner period, plus 8 RAF, 2 Padres, 2 Royal Army Medical Corps, and an unspecified number of Assam Rifles. By March 1944, a once conventional British infantry brigade had been transformed.

A Change of Plan

While the brigade was readying itself for Operation Thursday, the Japanese Burma Area Army was preparing for Operation Ha Go, a diversionary attack in the Arakan Division of Burma, and their primary Operation U Go, a major offensive into India via Imphal. British intelligence knew the attacks were coming but did not know precisely when and where they would fall.[42] This is not the place to describe Operations Ha Go and U Go in detail as others have already, and very capably, done so.[43] On 29 March

[40]Operations Report: Special Weapons section.
[41]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* p. 239.
[42]Slim, *Defeat into Victory,* pp. 289-90.
[43]See in particular Lyman, *Japan's Last Bid for Victory* and Callahan, *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima*. These books provide a full analysis of U Go; and in Lyman's Chapter 6 an excellent section on 23 Brigade; see also Slim, *Defeat into Victory,* a very readable

the Japanese cut the road from Dimapur to Imphal, the road the British relied on to supply units in the Imphal Plain and further south. The Japanese had opened up a route for themselves to the British supply dumps at Dimapur but surprisingly did not immediately exploit that opportunity. Instead, a small British force at Kohima, just 46 miles from Dimapur, was surrounded on 4 April by a Japanese division. It was not just the place and timing that came as an operational surprise, it was the size of the Japanese force that had reached Kohima using roads and tracks from Burma. The Japanese had chosen to travel quickly by travelling light and in expectation of living off captured British supplies as they had done in 1941 and 1942. This was a strategy the men of Japan's Burma Area Army would rue when the British denied such supplies to them.[44]

The brigade's war diary records that on 8 March 1944 it was released to Slim's direct command from Wingate's Special Force. Slim wanted the brigade to protect the railway to Ledo and the eastern flank of Dimapur, Kohima and Imphal.[45] It was not however an uncontested decision. Unsurprisingly, Wingate was incensed that any part of 'his' Special Force should be handed over to another commander – even to Slim who was nominally his superior. But Slim argued with his superiors that the anticipated U Go events demanded he be given additional forces, and it was Slim and not Wingate that won that debate.[46] Once again the 70 Division and 23 Brigade's Rear Headquarters War Diaries carry no information on that decision process. The brigade diary shows that by 29 March it had completed Exercise Torch and was moving by train to a new LRP training area near Lalaghat in Assam when it was 'deflected for operations' in the Kohima-Dimapur area.[47] By 1 April the brigade was on its way to Mariani, all training had been cancelled and within two weeks it was operating in the Naga Hills.

The Naga Hills

As a place to operate this was unlike anything the brigade had either been trained for or seen before. The brigade's war diary describes them as a 'tumbled mass of jungle covered hills rising sheer out of the Plains to an average height of 4-6000 feet. Geologically the terrain resembled nothing more than a crumpled starched table-cloth though the "grain" of the country lies generally North & South.'[48]

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memoir from the British side of fighting the Japanese in Burma and India, McLynn, *The Burma Campaign,* and Allen, *Burma – The Longest War 1941-1945*.

[44]Kazuo Tamayama & John Nunneley, *Tales by Japanese Soldiers,* (London: Cassell, 2001), pp. 196-211, account by Staff Sergeant Yasumasa Nishiji.

[45]Kirby *The War Against Japan, Volume III,* p. 183

[46]Robert Lyman, *Slim – Master of War,* (London: Robinson, 2004), p. 187.

[47]Operations Report: Introductory section.

[48]Operations Report: Terrain, Climate & Inhabitants section.

The Naga Hills lie to the east of Kohima as shown in Figure 3 below. The term hills is something of a misnomer as they are a series of sharp ridges and deep valleys containing fast flowing rivers and large streams; the area is also covered in dense jungle and subject to high rainfall. The ridgelines lie at anywhere between 2,000 to 6,000 feet altitude, so a typical day's march might only be a few lateral miles but could involve a 4,000 foot descent and a similar climb to the village on the next ridge by means of a single file track. The Naga people built their villages on ridges, perhaps as 'reminders of not-so-distant headhunting days when every village was a castle and height its best friend.'[49] By 1944 inter-tribal fighting and head hunting had been suppressed under the influence of Christian Missionaries and British District Commissioners, nevertheless the Naga communities remained isolated from India, isolated from modern life and dependent on traditional subsistence farming.[50] The Operations Report notes

> The Nagas themselves displayed throughout this phase the most unswerving loyalty and could be trusted thoroughly as guides and informers. … Had the inhabitants, or any portion of them, been actively hostile it would have been almost impossible.[51]

A recently published doctoral thesis by Khrienuo Ltu on the wartime experience of the Naga peoples reinforces the Operations Report which was written immediately after the campaign.[52] At that time the British colonial administration operated in a paternalistic and fairly 'hands off' manner in the Naga Hills but throughout the campaign was diligent in paying for Naga guides, labour and food in Indian silver rupees. On occasion rice was also air dropped to Naga villages stripped of food by the Japanese. Khrienuo Ltu's thesis brings out the considerable harm that war brought to the Naga peoples.

The literature contains numerous examples of Japanese troops treating the Nagas badly. An RAF officer, Flight Lieutenant Wilcox, attached to Column 76 (2 DoW) wrote,

> The Japanese had already cornered all but a few of the pigs, rice and fowl. This afterwards proved the case in every village we occupied. … We were shown

[49]Wilcox, *Chindit Column,* p. 15.
[50]Khrienuo Ltu, *World War II in North East India,* (Norway: Barkweaver, 2019), Chapter 4.1.
[51]Operations Report: Terrain, Climate & Inhabitants section.
[52]Khrienuo Ltu, *World War II in North East India,* (Norway: Barkweaver, 2019). This provides remarkable insight into the Kohima and Imphal battles from a purely Naga perspective.

> letters, in bad English, in which the enemy had demanded – tins of rice and pigs or we burn the village down and shoot you.[53]

Unlike the British the Japanese either expropriated food or paid for it with worthless paper notes. The Japanese abduction and rape of Naga women was reportedly common.[54]

During the final stage of the brigade's operations around Ukhrul other tribes became more prevalent, such as the Tungkhuls and Khukis. These were seen by the British as being less cooperative than the Naga to the north. In one case an ambush in the process of being set by an Essex column was itself ambushed – with the war diary observing it had been betrayed to the Japanese.[55]

Operational Timeline: 3 April to 9 August 1944

It remains difficult to develop a complete and reliable operational timeline for each column. The war diaries were written on a brigade and battalion basis, rather than on a column basis, so gaps and inconsistencies exist.[56] What is seen in broad terms is described below, and a more detailed chronology, albeit incomplete and probably containing some errors, can be found in Appendix 2. 23 Brigade's operations can be divided into five distinct phases with Figure 3 indicating the principal locations of interest.

The brigade's initial task was the defence of Mariani and a section of the Ledo railway line between Jamulgiri and Nazira. This phase lasted from 3 April to 20 April 1944 when 33 Indian Infantry Brigade took over responsibility for security of the railway. The first column arrived at Mariani on 3 April and the remainder were in place by 10 April. A stronghold, Norwich, was built in a Reserved Forest Area to the north of Mariani.[57] Norwich was connected to Mariani and Jorhat by road and connected by a track to Mokokchung and Wokha that a 1500 strong Naga labour force later upgraded and extended to Phakekedzumi for use by jeeps.

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[53]Wilcox, *Chindit Column,* p. 15.

[54]Ibid., pp. 67-69.

[55]Operations Report: Introductory section.

[56]Secondary source material exists that might allow completion of this work, but discrepancies exist with the primary sources and call the secondary sources into doubt as they were often written many years later.

[57] https://www.burmastar.org.uk/stories/60-and-80-column-chindits-1944/. Accessed 11 January 2020.

Figure 3: 23 Brigade Operations Area – Not to scale – approx.: 1 mile/mm[58]

Surprisingly, it is difficult to know exactly where the brigade's strongholds were located, perhaps because they proved to be of much less importance to the brigade than was the case for Operation Thursday where whole brigades and large volumes of supplies, including field artillery, were flown into airstrips big enough for transport aircraft operations. The mountainous Naga Hills precluded the building of such large airstrips. Neither were the strongholds used as defended bases from which columns

[58]The base map for Figure 3 was traced from a reproduction contained within the TNA Operations Report but the original is small, is in poor condition, not to scale, and is barely legible. It has therefore been modified by the author to provide an approximate and relative location for the principal areas and places of interest. The place names used in this article and Figure 3 conform with the Operations Report spellings; other spellings exist in other sources.

could dominate a surrounding area. A reminiscence by Thomas Joesbury of Column 60 indicates that Norwich was built by the two 60RA columns (60 and 88), and it seems likely they also built the other two strongholds as these two columns' movements are closely associated with the movement of Column 32, the brigade's field HQ.

The second activity was described as 'The Approach March' and began at Norwich with the columns progressively setting off after April 7 for what Jack Bartlett of 60RA called, 'a rather long walk'.[59] The third activity followed, from about 15 April to 5 June, was described as 'The Conclusion of the Approach' or 'The Period of Ambushes' in 'The Initial Operating Area' as shown in Figure 3. Here there were a large number of small unit actions at or near to Wokha, Phakekrima, Nerhema, Phakekedzumi, Jessami and Meluri, where a second stronghold, Grimsby, was built.

The Japanese began withdrawing from Kohima on 4 June after which the brigade received new orders for a fourth activity, 'The Pursuit', which lasted from 5 June to the end of July. The Pursuit eventually saw all columns move south over a distance of some 100 miles to concentrate in the Ukhrul area. The brigade was ordered to follow, harass and destroy the remnants of Japanese forces retreating from Kohima. The four Border and Duke of Wellington columns were however retained in the Kohima area for two weeks to prevent any Japanese slipping away to the east before being released to move south to Ukhrul. The Border, Duke of Wellington and HQ columns followed more southerly routes from their positions towards Ukhrul, whereas the four Essex and 60RA columns left on a more demanding south easterly route from Phakekedzumi and Jessami through the Somra Tracts towards Fort Keary and Ukhrul. The brigade's first column arrived in the Ukhrul area on 24 June, three weeks after the Japanese began their retreat from Kohima.

The fifth, and final activity, in late July, was 'The Withdrawal' which followed the columns making contact with British forces moving out from Kohima and Imphal towards the Chindwin River.

The individual memoirs from Bartlett and Wilcox provide insight into the physical demands of operating in the Naga Hills and both accounts are at times deeply moving.[60] Both memoirs point to the recurring themes of the men's increasing physical weakness, tiredness, sickness, hunger when supply drops failed; and the constant support of the Naga people whose villages the columns used for bivouacs and on occasion fortified.

[59]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* p. 236.
[60]Ibid., and Wilcox, *Chindit Column.*

The brigade's Rear HQ war diary refers to the calling up from the Norwich stronghold of two 3.7" howitzers for use by the Border Regiment's 55 Column and the 'brigade field headquarters defence force', probably 60RA and Assam Rifles. These guns were used in unsuccessful assaults on Phakekedzumi and Nerhema where the well dug in Japanese could not be overcome.[61] There is a further mention of these guns at the Border Column's crossing of the Laniye River at the beginning of the Pursuit, and they were used again near Ukhrul in the closing stage of Pursuit operations.

Attacks were made on dug in Japanese positions at the Naga villages of Phakekrima, Phakekedzumi, Jessami and Nerhema. These were all unsuccessful despite being carried out by one or two columns, and at Nerhema and Phakekedzumi several times with 3.7" artillery and air support from RAF fighter-bombers. The war diaries otherwise record a continuous set of small-scale actions involving patrols, ambushes, and the laying of booby traps on tracks and paths used by the Japanese and JIFS.[62]

With little flat land in the Naga Hills the Operation Thursday practice of building airstrips for light aircraft and the clearing of drop zones for large transport aircraft was abandoned. Unlike the main Chindit operations that relied on American transport aircraft 23 Brigade was supported by the RAF's 117, 194 and 216 Squadrons. These carried out 560 successful supply drops and lost three aircraft and crews over the drop zones. A total of 782 sorties were allocated from which 161 were aborted over the drop zones and 61 aborted elsewhere for technical reasons. The average supply drop was 6,500 pounds/sortie with an average of 8 sorties/day for an overall success rate of 70% delivered. Most supply drops were made directly on to the villages where material could be retrieved by the men, and Naga villagers who prized the parachutes and packing material. An undisclosed number of civilians and troops were killed during air drops as most supplies were free dropped, or at best dropped using smaller, cheaper, and less effective 'parajutes'. Over 31,000 parachutes and 'parajutes' were used.[63] It was very difficult for the RAF pilots to locate the drop zones in poor weather and under complete cloud cover during the monsoon period, and even more so during the Pursuit Phase when the columns were moving along deep valley bottoms. The usual practice of marking the drop zones with smoke from small bonfires on the hilltops proved ineffective in both bad weather and in the valleys, so towards the end of the campaign plans were underway to introduce radar beacons. War Diary data shows that in June and July, during the Pursuit Phase, the drops were about 40 to 50%

[61]Operations Report: Introductory section.
[62]The terms JIFS, Japanese Indian Forces, or INA, Indian National Army refer to former British Indian Army soldiers captured by the Japanese and then recruited to fight on the Japanese side. Two brigades of the INA took part in Operation U Go.
[63]Operations Report: RAF Support section.

successful; with the two 60RA columns reporting having run out of all rations for four days before receiving a partial air drop on 5 July.

The men suffered from very poor nutrition, partly because of the monotony of the American supplied K-ration packs and partly because these were never intended to be a source of long term nutrition.[64] During the seven week Pursuit Phase, much of the route was in areas with few or no villages, and, as noted, with the men often in the valley bottoms and under clouds, the air drops became less frequent and at times impossible. This greatly exacerbated the poor nutrition issue.[65] Some 'comfort packs' of jam and bread, as well as British C-rations were dropped but in general the men had no option but make do with K-rations. With the poor diet, and sickness progressively taking hold, the columns had by now all amalgamated on a battalion basis. In general a 'Recce Platoon' or 'Commando Platoon' made up of the fitter men and Naga guides went ahead and the remainder of the column silently followed behind to the next bivouac.

In the absence of light aircraft strips United States Army Air Force light aircraft were used to snatch messages and captured documents from strings stretched between pairs of tall bamboo poles. Orders, maps and rupees were also free dropped to the columns in arrow-like bamboo containers. A total of six light aircraft strips were built including three at the strongholds at Norwich, Grimsby and Grimsby II.

With so few light aircraft strips, and with an unexplained June suspension of all light aircraft flying, there were long journeys back to Grimsby and Grimsby II for most of the sick and wounded who were carried on litters by relays of Naga porters before being flown back to the light aircraft base at Jorhat.[66]

[64]Julian Thompson, *Forgotten Voices of Burma,* (London: Ebury Press, 2009), p. 181, where Major Whyte, R.A.M.C., of Operation Thursday, notes a K-ration day pack contained 4,000 calories whereas the men needed more than 6,000 calories per day. K-rations were intended for use by airborne troops, tank crews and others, but only for short durations.

[65]Operations Report: Medical section.

[66]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* p. 247.

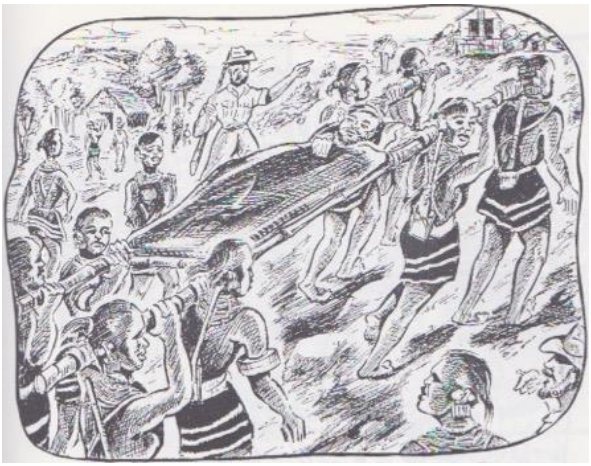

Figure 4: Evacuation of wounded by Naga Porters.[67]

The war diaries record the four Essex and Royal Artillery columns moving over single file tracks once they left Phakekedzumi, and as they went southeast the terrain became higher, the tracks narrower, less common, more overgrown, steeper and more precipitate in terms of drops to one side. The tracks also provided perfect cover for ambushes which pressed on the minds of the leading platoons. By this time these columns were reliant on Naga porters as the mules had been left behind.

From reading the war diaries the minor importance of the strongholds is apparent. Norwich was garrisoned, by the Assam Regiment and Assam Rifles after the brigade's field HQ, Column 32, left for Grimsby. Unlike Operation Thursday, which built four large strongholds, 23 Brigade's strongholds can at best be seen as stepping-stones and temporary halts on the brigade's long march to the south. Further research work on the chronology of events in Appendix 2 would undoubtedly yield more insight.[68]

Post-Operations Events

The poor physical state of the men after the operation is a universal theme in many individual memoirs, and in general it took two to three months of rehabilitation before

[67]Sampson, *Bless 'em all,* p. 123.

[68]Unless otherwise stated these dates and events are from the following: TNA, WO 172/4878 1 Essex 1944; TNA WO 172/4876, 2 Duke of Wellington's War Diary 1944; TNA, WO 172/4868, 4 Border War Diary 1944; TNA, WO 172/4647, 60 Royal Artillery War Diary 1944; TNA, WO 172/4401, Royal Signals War Diary 1944; and the Operations Report.

any of the units were fit enough to undertake even light infantry training.[69] Global events overtook plans to use the brigade in Malaya in a future LRP or Airlanding role. By late 1944 many of the men, who by then had four or more years of overseas service, were eligible for repatriation. So many men from 60RA were repatriated in late 1944 that those left behind were transferred to 2 Queens Own Royal Regiment, by then under the command of 60RA's former commander, Lt. Col. du Vallon. For a similarly depleted 2DoW there would be a 1945 return to Burma but in a lines of communication and internal security role in the Rangoon area.

Analysis

A description has been given of the conversion of what had been a conventional British Infantry Brigade to the LRP role, and from that it is obvious we are not dealing here with what we would today call Special Forces, such as the wartime Army Commandos, or the Parachute Regiment, elite units made up of selected volunteers drawn from other formations. Undoubtedly the quality of the brigade was lifted during the 1943/4 LRP selection and training process and by the winnowing out of men who could not meet the expected standards for LRP, but that is a far cry from 23 Brigade becoming an elite formation, despite its presence within the Special Force.

The brigade covered a great distance over tracks in the Naga Hills and the best measure of what the columns went through can be found in a post-war Essex regimental history[70]:

Column 44: 337 miles covered, 62,900 feet up & 60,700 feet down.
Column 56: 341 miles covered, 65,400 feet up & 62,900 feet down.

Highest point reached: 8,500 feet – near Somra.

Killed in action:	2 officers and 32 other ranks
Died of wounds:	5
Died of sickness on route:	6
Died in hospital:	2
Wounded evacuated:	3 officers and 28 other ranks.

[69]TNA, WO 172/4868, 4 Border War Diary 1944, entry for 1 October.
[70]T. A. Martin, *The Essex Regiment 1929-1950,* (Chelmsford: Essex Regiment Association, 1952), p. 120. With thanks to the Prince Consort Library, Army Information Service, for access to this monograph.

Casualties	Officers	Other Ranks	Total
Kiled	5	69	74
Missing	0	5	5
Wounded	13	75	88
Evacuated Sick	10	262	272
Totals	28	411	439

Table 2: 23 Brigade Casualty Data.[71]

Total killed, wounded & missing: 167 - approximately 5% of brigade.

Evacuated sick: 272 - approximately 8% of brigade.

It has not been possible to correlate from the war diary material the various reports of what were a large number of small actions to determine which columns were the most effective in killing Japanese, nor do the war diaries allow any confirmation of the brigade's claim to have killed 854 Japanese, an exchange ratio of about 11:1.[72]

Compared to Operation Longcloth's 30% killed, wounded and missing, and Operation Thursday's 27%, the figures for 23 Brigade are significantly lower at 5%. This reduction reflects the evacuation of sick and wounded by air or by Naga porters and jeep passable tracks back to nearby British controlled areas. The Chindits of Operation Longcloth had no such opportunity and were simply left behind. On Operation Thursday many sick and wounded were flown out although some British wounded were shot by their own side rather than allow them to become prisoners.[73]

Like their fellow Chindits from Operations Longcloth and Thursday, 23 Brigade was a spent force by the end of July 1944.[74] The Brigade's Operations Report laments the fact that it was never able to get to grips with and kill the enemy on a large scale; particularly during 'The Pursuit' when moving towards and operating around Ukhrul. This is a remark deserving analysis. Firstly, the repulses at Nerhema and Phakekedzumi by well dug in Japanese bring into question whether the brigade's lightly armed men

[71]Operations Report: Medical Section - for data in Table 2.
[72]Ibid.: Conclusions section.
[73]John Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay,* (London: Cassell, 2012), p. 259.
[74]McLynn, *The Burma Campaign,* p. 360, for Operation Thursday, where from about 17,000 men who went in 1,034 were killed or missing and 2,572 were wounded, a loss rate of 27%.

could ever have succeeded in large scale attacks on dug in Japanese troops when it took tanks and field artillery for regular infantry to achieve that at Kohima.[75] Secondly, the brigade arrived in the Ukhrul area from 24 June onwards, with two of the war diaries reporting columns having passed through 'The Valley of Death' near Somra where the track was knee deep in mud, abandoned weapons, dead Japanese, dead mules, and even skeletons dating from 1942. These entries show that the bulk of the Japanese survivors from Kohima had already passed by and is consistent with the Japanese beginning their retreat from Kohima on 4 June. By the time the columns arrived in the Fort Keary – Ukhrul area only Japanese and JIF stragglers remained.

Sickness is noted in the war diaries and in the personal accounts from Wilcox and Bartlett, so it is no surprise that 10 officers and 262 other ranks were evacuated. The brigade medical officer borrowed 5 jeep ambulances from another British brigade and these proved vital in the absence of airstrips. Most of the wounded were carried back on litters by Naga porters to jeep passable roads at Mokokchung, Wokha and Phakekedzumi. In total 75% of the brigade experienced severe diarrhoea and stomach cramps, the so called Naga Hills Tummy, the cause of which was unknown at the time, but was later identified as the presence in Naga Hills' water of magnesium sulphate - more commonly known as the laxative Epsom Salts.[76] Malaria was not a problem to begin with but as the men became weaker cases increased. There were also some cases of tick-borne typhus, which in a few cases were fatal; in general, these were more prevalent in the Border and Duke of Wellington columns retained in the Kohima area before their release to The Pursuit, a period when they operated in an area where many dead Japanese and mules lay by the tracks. The insanitary nature of all the villages is recorded in the personal accounts,

> We stayed overnight at Kuluzu Bagwema. I tried to sleep in a stuffy corner of the hut, but as usual the fleas, combined with pain of sores now appearing all over my body, were successful in keeping me awake.[77]

As noted earlier the reliance on K-rations resulted in a monotonous diet which was not balanced from a long-term nutrition or palatability perspective. The ration packs could not easily, or regularly, be supplemented by other ration types, although some fresh food supplements and British C-rations were supplied by air. Buying fresh food from the Nagas on any scale was never possible as they were subsistence farmers and had been subject to Japanese depredation. The result was everyone lost a lot of weight, with reports of 14 to 28 pounds (6 to 12 kilos) as normal.[78]

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[75]Robert Lyman, *Japan's Last Bid for Victory*, Chapter 7.
[76]Ibid., p. 169.
[77]Wilcox, *Chindit Column*, p. 99.
[78]Operations Report: Medical section.

The Royal Engineers attached to the columns cleared and prepared the six light aircraft strips, each some 300 yards long by 35 yards wide, and they opened up and maintained over 200 miles of jeep passable roads. To do this they recruited and supervised a 1500 strong Naga labour force paid for in Indian silver rupees. They also built a number of small bridges and carried out various demolition works. Most notably they laid numerous booby traps for the column's ambushes, with one of the engineer officers killed setting a booby trap.[79] The DoW and Brigade HQ engineer platoons were involved in building a temporary bridge over the Laniye River to the south of Phakekedzumi and Jessami where an existing structure, and the initial temporary repair, were carried away by flood water. Boats and wire were then air dropped to allow the remainder of the columns to ferry across.

Perhaps most telling of all are consistent post-operation reports of the men needing 'blanket treatment' of up to a month to physically recuperate on clean water and a balanced diet. Even so around 50% of the men still felt too weak to take up an offer of 28 days local leave.

A brigade of some 3,300 very fit, strong men began operations in early April, but by late July was a spent force – something it shared with the men of Operations Longcloth and Thursday.

Conclusions

With a summary of the brigade's LRP selection and training process, armament, logistics and operations we now have a basis for answering the question was this an effective use of the brigade?

Starting at the strategic level, a respected writer on such matters, the late Colin S. Gray, observed on Burma that, 'The war there is a tale of great courage on both sides, of the mutual difficulty of surviving nature as well as the enemy, and of the eventual achievement of military competence by British and Indian troops, well led by General William J. Slim … (but) the campaign ultimately had no strategic significance for the war as a whole.'[80]

Perhaps this is true in Grand Strategic terms but Britain nevertheless had good reasons to defend India and regain its lost Asian colonies. Between 1940 and the late 1943 opening up of the Mediterranean to through shipping, the only route from the United Kingdom to British forces in the Middle East was around the Cape of Good Hope,

[79]Operations Report: Engineers section.

[80]Colin S Gray, *War Peace and International Relations,* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 203.

into the Indian Ocean and onward to Egypt. Indeed, it was the security of the Indian Ocean that allowed 23 Brigade to move safely to Egypt in 1941 and again to India in 1942.[81] But Japan's 'Naval Operation C' of April 1942 proved over a period of just 11 days the vulnerability of Britain's Indian Ocean supply lines. Keeping the Japanese Navy out of the Indian Ocean, and keeping Japanese land forces contained in Burma and out of India, were important British strategic priorities; albeit ones lying below the Battle of the Atlantic, and campaigns in North West Europe and the Mediterranean. Gray also observes that after the 1942 Battle of Midway the U.S.A. knew that the road to victory and Tokyo lay through the Pacific and not through China with its requirement for supply via India and the Burma Road.[82] However, given the strategic importance to Britain of Indian Ocean access, this discounting of the Burma theatre is problematic. A deep subtext would always bedevil Anglo-American cooperation in Burma. For the U.S.A. China was always the priority; for the British it was India, and both sides regarded Burma as a kind of subculture to their own predilections and aspirations.[83] The 1944 destruction of Japanese forces at Imphal and Kohima secured India from invasion and with Japan on the ropes in the Pacific there was no compelling strategic case to retake Burma; apart that is from restoring the prestige of an already failing imperial power. Gray sums it up nicely with, 'As Stalin waged war in 1944-5 with eyes fixed firmly on the post-war order, so too did Britain in Asia in the same period.'[84]

The brigade's operations in 1944 did have strategic relevance. Nevertheless, one cannot help thinking that a quality brigade like this would have been better employed in a conventional role in India and Burma in 1944/5, or better still in North West Europe where Britain faced a severe manpower crisis after the Normandy Landings. If this view is accepted for 23 British Infantry Brigade then breaking up 70 British Infantry Division for Operation Thursday was even more strategically misguided.

Next we can consider the operational level and will begin with the question – was 23 Brigade's operation in the Naga Hills really necessary? Firstly, the British did need to know if the Japanese were infiltrating men and supplies through the Naga Hills to Kohima and Imphal, but arguably that knowledge could have been provided by Naga scouts that the British had already recruited and armed as a network of intelligence gatherers, Force V and others, that have not been discussed in this paper. A counter argument is that the brigade's multiple small scale actions in the Naga Hills in April, May and early June alerted the Japanese to the presence of British forces and

[81]Andrew Boyd, *The Royal Navy in Eastern Waters Linchpin of Victory 1935-1942,* (Barnsley: Seaforth, 2017) provides an excellent overview of the Indian Ocean's importance.
[82]Gray, *War Peace and International Relations,* p. 204.
[83]McLynn, *The Burma Campaign,* p.19.
[84]Gray, *War Peace and International Relations*, p. 204.

discouraged any flanking attacks on say Mariani, the railway, and more importantly Kohima. By late April the Japanese were desperately foraging for food after the failure of their strategy to live off captured British supplies. The brigade's presence in the hills undoubtedly curtailed those efforts but never did entirely cut the Japanese supply lines from Burma - some supplies of ammunition and food did reach Kohima.

Secondly, if the brigade had been spared the rigours of the initial phases of operations in the Naga Hills it could have been inserted later, say at the end of May, as a stronger, fresher force to the south of Kohima and Imphal to interdict the initial stages of the Japanese retreat. As it was, only parts of a by then weakened brigade arrived in the Ukhrul area in late June, three weeks after the Japanese had begun their retreat from Kohima, and when only stragglers remained. On balance, and with much hindsight, the initial three phases of operations seem justified, but the Pursuit much less so in terms of results gained for the price paid. In reality the final actions around Ukhrul in late June and July came too late to deliver a significant operational effect.

Thirdly, and remaining at the operational level, the brigade's operations in the Naga Hills were not an LRP operation. The brigade did not take up a position deep behind enemy lines, and neither was it deployed to support an offensive. Indeed, the reverse applies, 23 Brigade's operations were defensive in nature until 'The Pursuit' at the end.

What is incontestable is the brigade's suitability for the tasks given to it as a result of its equipment, LRP training, and as the veterans recall, its Chindit spirit. Arguably an Indian Army infantry brigade familiar with mountain warfare, such as the Gurkhas, could have carried out the early operations. However, at this point, the Gurkhas were neither equipped nor trained for long duration independent operations of this nature.[85] Unlike Operation Thursday, 23 Brigade did not operationally depend on large strongholds and airstrips for transport aircraft and reinforcement by air, indeed the fragility of air supply in the Naga Hills quickly became apparent when the monsoon broke in May. Light aircraft operations were helpful but in reality contributed little real value when only a few sick and wounded were evacuated that way.[86] The construction of more than 200 miles of jeep passable roads did much more to ease the travails of the sick and wounded and again shows that 23 Brigade's penetration was never deep in the manner of Operations Longcloth and Thursday.

In common with the mainstream Chindit columns the brigade's effectiveness as a fighting unit decreased over the four months it marched and fought in the Naga Hills. Chindit operations in general were not intended to last more than ninety days so by late July the terrain, poor rations, infrequent air drops, sickness, and the dispersed

[85]Gurkha units did take part in Operation Thursday but were not a part of 23 Brigade.
[86] Wilcox, *Chindit Column,* p. 61.

nature of the columns meant the brigade could not successfully take on the Japanese in anything but small-scale actions.

Balancing what was achieved against how hard it was for the men, it seems that LRP was a poor use of what had previously been a fine conventional fighting force. Conventional formations such as 17 Indian Division were in contact with the Japanese for longer, had numerous tough encounters, survived, and continued to fight on. That was beyond the capability of 23 Brigade by August 1944.

There is no basis for claiming that Operation Thursday was weakened by the diversion of 23 Brigade to the Naga Hills. It is true that the initial plan was for 23 Brigade to be held in reserve for the later stages of Operation Thursday but that plan was later changed for the brigade to operate independently around Pakokku, some 200 miles south of Operation Thursday's area of operations![87] More contentious are claims that Operation Thursday diverted substantial Japanese forces, and perhaps as much as one and a half divisions, away from Kohima and Imphal that might otherwise have overwhelmed the British defence.[88] This exaggerated claim ignores the fact that if there had not been an Operation Thursday then 70 Division and the other Chindit formations would instead all have been available to support British forces at Kohima and Imphal. But now we are entering into the contentious debate on the effectiveness of Operation Thursday and LRP as a whole. However, we can conclude here that diverting 23 Brigade to the Naga Hills did not damage Operation Thursday.

Finally, and at the tactical level, we have seen that 23 Brigade's operations in the Naga Hills consisted of long marches, patrols, ambushes, setting booby traps, holding villages and tracks, denying supplies, gathering intelligence etc. On only three occasions did the brigade attempt to overcome well dug in Japanese positions defended by fifty to a hundred Japanese and on all three occasions failed despite the use of two columns, two 3.7" guns, and RAF fighter bomber support. The topography of the hills prevented the massing of columns and the attacks on Japanese defended villages were further constrained to very small fronts by the narrow ridges and access tracks. Without heavier artillery and tank support even small groups of well dug in Japanese proved to be immovable.

So, there was both a strategic and an operational purpose for 23 Brigade's time in the Naga Hills. The brigade was also an obvious choice for the operation even though many aspects of it were not LRP as we understand it from Operations Longcloth and Thursday. Tactically the brigade operated well and did so in difficult circumstances, in

[87]Kirby, *The War Against Japan, Volume III*, p. 184.

[88]See Rooney, *Wingate and the Chindits,* p. 247, where it is claimed one and a half Japanese divisions were diverted from Kohima and Imphal by Operation Thursday.

accordance with training and orders, and at a great cost to the health of the men involved. It was a costly expenditure in men for the advantages gained.

Finally, can we provide any fresh contribution to the controversial Chindit debate?

The author 'Jack' Masters who commanded 111 Brigade during the final stages of Operation Thursday, closed his 1960 autobiography by saying:

> But now sixteen years have passed and perhaps this is the place to look back with the same far, high view that we used before entering Burma. The course of the campaign confirmed that the original expansion of the Chindits was a mistake. War demands a return for value, and after a certain point we could not give that return by our special tactics…. During this time no-one knew quite what the Force as a whole was supposed to be achieving.[89]

Masters made two points. Firstly, and unlike Operation Thursday, the three objectives for 23 British Infantry Brigade in the Naga Hills were clear and consistent: to secure the flank of British forces at Kohima; to interdict Japanese supply lines; and to harass the Japanese retreat. Secondly, Masters questions the military value of LRP as championed by Wingate in 1943 and 1944. This a theme that Slim addressed in 1955 with his views on special and specialised forces in general:

> We employed most of them in Burma, and some, notably the Chindits, gave splendid examples of courage and hardihood. Yet I came firmly to the conclusion that such formations, trained, equipped, and mentally adjusted for one kind of operation only, were wasteful. They did not give, militarily, a worth-while return for the resources in men, material and time they absorbed.[90]

Despite 23 British Infantry Brigade's efforts, successes and sacrifice, Masters and Slim were right.

[89]Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay,* p. 286.
[90]Slim, *Defeat into Victory,* p. 546.

Appendix 1 – 23 British Infantry Brigade 1943/4

1 Battalion The Essex Regiment – Columns 44 & 56.[91]

This regular British Army battalion moved from the Canal Zone to the Sudan in early 1940 as a part of 10 Indian Infantry Brigade under the command of Brigadier William Slim. He was not best pleased at having lost a Punjabi Battalion he had trained in India and which 1 Essex had replaced. In November 1940 1 Essex took part in the brigade's operations against Italian forces occupying an old fort at Gallabat on the Sudan-Abyssinia border.[92] The Italians used their local air superiority to the full and with smoke in artillery barrages, there were erroneous reports of gas, and without respirators some fled. Much of what happened remains unclear, perhaps deliberately so. The Essex war diary and the official history agree that during the initial attack the advanced elements of 1 Essex were caught out on rocky ground where no shelter could be found, they were badly mauled by the fort's defenders, and grass fires. The official history simply records Slim recognising the hopelessness of the situation and deciding to withdraw the brigade from Gallabat.[93] Stewart is less complimentary in saying that this was one of only two instances in the Second World War where British officers lost control of British troops in battle, the other was before the fall of Singapore.[94] A post-war analysis of Gallabat can be found in 1 Essex's 1940 war diary and notes that from a strength of 760 men before the action it had 48 in hospital, 240 sick with malaria and further casualties of 68 killed, wounded and missing in the Gallabat action.[95] In a later and further example of selective reporting and discretion an Essex Regimental history from 1950 is virtually silent on the Gallabat action.[96] Slim was similarly discreet when he used the term 'a British battalion' rather than naming 1 Essex in his memoir, and neither does Slim mention his sacking of the battalion's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Paxton. That sacking laid the seeds for another Essex officer, Lieutenant General Noel Irwin, later 4 Corps commander, and reportedly a good friend of Paxton, attempting to sack Slim in 1942, and again in 1943 by blaming Slim for the failure of his own Arakan offensive.[97] The battalion quickly put the Sudan behind it and went on to acquit itself well against insurgent forces in Iraq in

[91]The Special Force Column Numbers are shown as Column xx to aid later reference.
[92]William Slim, *Unofficial History* (London: Cassell, 1959), Chapter VI contains a detailed narrative of the action at Gallabat.
[93]I. S. O. Playfair, *History of the Second World War – The Mediterranean and The Middle East, Volume 1*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1954), p. 398; and TNA, WO 169/287, 1 Essex War Diary for 1940; a report dated January 1947 has retrospectively been added to this diary.
[94]Andrew Stewart, *The First Victory,* (London: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 114.
[95]Martin, *The Essex Regiment,* p. 34.
[96]Ibid., pp. 34-38..
[97]Russell Miller, *Uncle Bill* (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 2013), p. 205.

1941, and then against Vichy French forces in Lebanon and Syria, a complimentary letter from Slim can be found in the Essex's war diary for this later period. The battalion went into Tobruk by sea in October 1941, and from there broke out, losing a further 130 men, in fierce fighting around Ed Duda as a part of Operation Crusader.[98]

2 Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment – Columns 33 & 76.
This regular Army battalion was at Peshawar in India in 1942 when the Japanese invaded Burma. It had a strength of 32 officers and 785 other ranks. The unit war diaries for February to end March 1942 were destroyed in the retreat from Burma but short retrospective summaries were added later and note that it arrived in Rangoon on 14 February 1942, and was in action on 22 February when attached to 46 Brigade and 17 Indian Infantry Division. Elements of the battalion defended the Sittang River Bridge before that was demolished on 23 February which left many of its own men and most of its equipment on the wrong side. The battalion subsequently took part in 17 Indian Division's fighting withdrawal to Imphal, arriving there on 21 May 1942. Shortly afterwards the unit's reported strength was just 6 officers and 188 other ranks, it had also lost all of its transport and heavy equipment.[99] The rebuilt Duke of Wellington's battalion joined 23 Brigade on 19 October 1943.[100]

4 Battalion The Border Regiment – Columns 34 & 55.
This was a Territorial Army unit that mobilised to France in October 1939. As a part of 25 Brigade it undertook line of communication duties and fought in the retreat from France before being evacuated from Dunkirk, Cherbourg and Le Havre in June 1940. After a period of recovery in the UK 4 Border deployed to Egypt, arriving there in time to take part in the 1941 campaign against Vichy French forces in Syria and Lebanon. Like 1 Essex it was shipped into Tobruk in late 1941 and then took part in heavy fighting around El Adem as a part of Operation Crusader.[101]

60 Field Regiment Royal Artillery – Columns 60 & 88.
This was a Territorial Army regiment, founded in 1922, and based in the North Midlands. The regiment's headquarters and one battery of four 18 pounder field guns were based at Nottingham and similar batteries were based at Leicester, Lincoln and Grimsby.[102] Deployed to France in January 1940 it fought in the retreat from Belgium

[98]TNA, WO 169/1717, 1 Essex War Diary,1941.
[99]TNA, WO 172/858, 2 Duke of Wellington's War Diary, 1942.
[100]TNA, WO 172/2074 23 Brigade Rear HQ War Diary, 1943.
[101]Phillip Shears, *The Story of the Border Regiment,* (London: Nisbet, 1948), pp. 56-62; Douglas Sutherland, *Tried & Valiant – the story of the Border Regiment 1702-1959,* (London: Leo Cooper, 1972), pp. 193-7. With thanks to the Prince Consort Library, Army Information Service, Aldershot, for access to these monographs.
[102]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* p.4.

to Dunkirk where some of the regiment organised their own evacuation by commandeering a damaged coaster, the Bullfinch, that they repaired and sailed from the beach until taken under tow to the UK.[103] By January 1941 the regiment was equipped with 25 pounders and was on route to join 23 Brigade in Egypt. Arriving there in May 1941 it had a strength of 31 officers and 494 other ranks and took part in 23 Brigade's campaign against insurgents in Iraq and then Vichy French forces in Syria and Lebanon. The regiment then joined 7 Support Group, an ad hoc mobile formation of artillery and infantry attached to 7 Armoured Division. In December 1941 it took part in fierce fighting at Sidi Rezegh after which it had a strength of just 20 officers and 350 other ranks and one remaining battery of guns. The commanding officer of 7 Support Group was awarded a Victoria Cross for his leadership and bravery at Sidi Rezegh.

12 Field Company Royal Engineers.

Confusingly some of the brigade's 1943 war diaries refer to the formation of a ninth column, of Royal Engineers, but this never came to pass. Instead 70 Division's 12 Field Company was broken up.[104] A platoon was a part of the brigade's field HQ, Column 32, and was based at various strongholds during column operations. A small rear element remained with 23 Brigade's Rear HQ that never left India. Each of the eight fighting columns had a Royal Engineers Officer and an average of eighteen sappers that were normally deployed ahead in the Commando or Reconnaissance Platoon.

23 Brigade Field Headquarters - Column 32.

This was the brigade's field headquarters together with elements, for most of the time, of Column 60 from 60RA which, with some Assam Rifles men, acted as the HQ defence force. The war diaries are of little help in determining the exact composition of the HQ column. Sergeant Alf Sampson's book and sketches provide a rich seam of material.[105]

[103]Ibid., chap. 8.

[104]TNA, W0 172/2686, Burma 1943, 12 Field Company RE War Diary: November 1943.

[105]Sampson, *Bless 'em all*.

Appendix 2 – Timeline of Events

Unless otherwise stated the dates below are taken from the 23 Brigade Rear HQ War Diary, the Operations Report and the unit War Diaries. It should be noted that inconsistencies exist here and in the original primary source material.

23 Brigade Field HQ: Column 32 & Dates of major events.

29 March: Japanese forces cut the Imphal to Dimapur road.[106]

3 April: first 23 Brigade column arrives at Mariani to defend railway.

4 April: Japanese forces arrive at Kohima, fighting there begins, British forces are quickly isolated and besieged.[107]

7 April: Start of 'The Approach March' as Column 34, 1 Essex (1E), leaves Norwich for Mokokchung, and then onwards to Mangazumi and Wokha. Initial rise of 2300 feet.

10 April: remaining eight columns at Mariani/Norwich.

20 April: a relieving force from 161 Infantry Brigade makes contact with besieged forces at Kohima. Bitter fighting continues there until early June.[108]

20 April: 33 Indian Infantry Brigade take over responsibility for railway & Mariani.

22 April: Column 32 (HQ) begins move forward to Mokokchung.

26/27 April: the monsoon begins, very heavy rainfall in the Naga Hills from then on.

29 April: Column 32 at Mokokchung.

2 May: Corps asks 23 Brigade to remain in current positions until Kohima area cleared of Japanese.

6 May: 4 platoons of Assam Rifles join Column 32 at Wokha.

8 May: Wokha road destroyed by landslide.

18 May: Column 32 leaves for Khuzami.

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[106]Lyman, *Japan's Last Bid for Victory,* p. 77.
[107]Ibid., p. 81.
[108]Ibid., p. 102.

23 May: L1 light aircraft crashes at Grimsby.

24 May: Column 32 (HQ) moves southeast from Mokokchung towards Phakekedzumi.

24 May: Column 32 (HQ) sends 2 platoons to join Column 55 (1 Essex) for attack on Phakekedzumi.

27 May: HQ platoon patrol kills 2 for 2 missing who return later.

28 May: 3 HQ platoons seconded to 4B for attacks on Phakekedzumi.

29 May: Assam Rifle subedar drowned.

31 May: Column 32 (HQ) calls for 2 x 3.7" howitzers to be brought up from Jorhat for Phakekedzumi attacks.

4 June: Japanese forces at Kohima begin to withdraw.[109]

5 June: HQ forward platoons reach, occupy Phakekedzumi.

6 June: Royal Signals (field HQ) note numerous ear and skin infections; unhappy at having to handle signals traffic for other, non LRP, brigades in area.

7 June: Corps orders 'maximum effort all columns to close on Ukhrul' to harass and destroy retreating Japanese – beginning of The Pursuit.

10 June: Naga tribesmen bring in 4 wounded Japanese prisoners.

14 June: Command conference at Phakekedzumi.

19 June: Dakota Y194 crashes on supply drop.

22 June: Brigade field HQ and remaining men leave Grimsby to join columns moving south towards Ukhrul, approximately 100 miles away. 60/88 and 1 Essex columns leave mules and some equipment behind, replaced by Naga porters. [110]

24 June: Column 32 (HQ) begins to arrive at Jessami.

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[109]Ibid., p.215.

[110]Bartlett & Benson, *All the King's Enemies,* chap.31. This does not square with the War Diary and Operations Report, one of many inconsistencies in all sources.

2 July: Column 32 at Paowi – western route to south and Ukhrul.

5 July: ordered to pull out after reaching Ukhrul.

9 July: Column 32 (HQ) mules carrying 3.7" guns and rations attacked twice.

10 July: 2 prisoners taken to Ukhrul.

11 July: Column 32 (HQ) now all at Ukhrul, patrols in action until July 21.

19 July: RAF film unit arrives, 13 Japanese killed, 3 prisoners.

21 July: 1 killed 4 prisoners taken.

22 July: Column 32 (HQ) at Imphal.

27 July: Column 32 (HQ) at Dimapur for return to India.

8/9 August: Wavell and Gifford address the men.

22-31 August: Royal Signals (HQ) – all columns arriving Bangalore for 'blanket treatment', most 24 Royal Signals men still in hospital.

3 September: Royal Signals (HQ) – 28 local leave passes issued but only 50% of men feel well enough to take them and go.

6 September: 23 Brigade at Jhansi, Brigadier Lentaigne, Special Force commander addresses brigade, 'You will all be home for Christmas 1944.'[111]

1 Essex: Columns 44 & 56

7 April: Start of 'The Approach March' as Column 34 leaves Mariana/Norwich for Mokokchung, and then onwards to Mangazumi and Wokha. Initial rise of 2300 feet.

16 April: Column 44 in contact with 50 Japanese near Phakekrima, 10 killed for 1 own killed and 1 own taken prisoner who despite being very badly treated and bayonetted, escapes and returns.[112]

[111]TNA, WO 172/4401, 23 Brigade Royal Signals War Diary. Reflecting a policy that men with four or more years overseas service would be repatriated.
[112]TNA, WO 172/4787, 1 Essex War Diary, entry for 15 April.

18-25 April: both columns in Phakekrima area in continuous contact with dug in Japanese at village. Numerous attacks, all fail. 1 own killed 25 wounded. RAF attack village on 24 & 25.

28 April: Essex columns occupy Phakekrima, enemy gone.

28 April: Essex column finds one of own, captured, bayonetted, wounded.

1 May: Essex Columns attack Japanese patrols and a party of 100 with mules south of Phakekrima, 30+ Japanese killed for 2 own wounded.

2 May: moving towards Kohima.

3 May: Essex Columns own drop zone attacked by 24 Japanese 6 wounded for 3 own wounded.

5 May: Essex Columns ambush small Japanese patrol, 4 killed for 4 own wounded.

6 May: 1 mile south and east of Kohima.

12 May: at Nerhema, under enemy probing attacks for next 3 days.

15 to 21 May: dilatory attacks on both Essex columns in Nerhema area, all beaten off. Active patrolling underway.

19 May: Essex Columns attack Nerhema after Direct Air Support (DAS) by RAF, broke into, but could not overcome Japanese defences. 1 killed own and 1 wounded.

20 May: booby traps taking a toll of Japanese on tracks, killed 7+.

22 May: further attack on Nerhema called off after probing attack beaten off.

23 May: Essex Columns attack Nerhema again, break into Japanese position but then repulsed by counter- attack, 1 own killed and 4 missing. Nearby patrols kill 1.

24 May; Essex Columns attack Nerhema again, broke in again and held, this time, but position not fully cleared of enemy.

27 May: Nerhema attack called off.

28 - 30 May: Essex Columns note enemy at Nerhema, and in surrounding area seem to be withdrawing.

1 June: ambush kills 1 of 3 Japanese.

5 June: ordered south from Gariphema.

10 June: Essex Columns begin to arrive Phakekedzumi.

12 June: leave for Jessami begin to arrive from 13 June.

16 June: Columns 44 & 56 move to Phakekedzumi/Grimsby, then follow Columns 60 & 88 (60RA) on way to Ukhrul via Fort Keary. 'We had been sodden for weeks, were covered with mud, and we stank. Hollow-eyed, wasted, hungry, and yet incapable of eating more than a minute meal, we talked of nothing else but food.' And earlier, 'many were marching with temperatures and tick typhus had begun to break out.'[113]

22 June: Somra area and 'Valley of Death.' A post war memoir notes the track, 'at Tusom Khulen near to Point 7946 (8500 feet) was very steep and slippery, and along the ridge the track was knee deep in mud and the jungle very wet. Skeletons and decomposing bodies of Jap troops were to be seen all along the route. Progress was very slow. Known to all ranks as Death Valley.'[114] This date is inconsistent with War Diary, should be earlier.

24/26 June: Four Essex and 60RA Columns begin arriving in Fort-Keary area to start operations against Japanese forces from Kohima.

29/30 June: mortared retreating Japanese 20+ killed?

14 July: contact made with 33 Indian Infantry Brigade.

24 July: Essex columns arrive Dimapur.

2 Duke of Wellingtons: Columns 33 & 76
10 April: Column 76 leaves Norwich for Mokokchung.

11 April: Column 76 arrives Mokokchung and then moves on to Wokha.

13 April: Column 33 on way to Wokha makes contact with party of 50 Japanese, withdraws to protect brigade HQ.

[113]Martin, *The Essex Regiment,* p. 118.
[114]Ibid., p.98.

15-22 April: Columns 33 & 76 in Wokha & nearby, Japanese have gone.

26 April: Column 33 has 26 own killed or missing during an unsuccessful attack on a prepared Japanese ridgeline position and bunkers at Phakekrima. Ten Japanese killed, RAF air support called up before second attack, but Japanese positions found abandoned on 28 April.[115]

28 April: light aircraft pick up 1 DoW wounded from Grimsby.

1 May: Columns 33 & 76 in Tseminyu area, no Japanese found but further JIFS surrender. Begin move towards Kohima flank.

6/7 May: Columns 33 & 76 ambush Japanese & JIF patrol near Gariphema, 12 killed, and useful maps obtained, no losses. Ongoing contacts south of Nerhema 5 killed for 2 wounded.

10 May: occupy positions south of Nerhema having killed 12.

17 May: Column 33 & 76 bivouac area attacked by 50 Japanese with artillery, decision made to break out towards Khesami, 3 own killed and 2 wounded for 17 Japanese killed. Weather very bad, mules and men falling off tracks, 3-inch mortars fell down hillsides but recovered. Notes of increasing 'K-rationitis' – severe diarrhoea and cramps – with many men sick.[116]

22 – 28 May: Columns 33 & 76 in continuous patrol and ambush actions around Chozumi and Khesima. Direct air support attack on Chozumi aborted. 30+ enemy killed in ambushes.

30 May: under enemy attack all day, 18 enemy killed 4 wounded for own losses of 3 killed and 2 wounded. Withdrew at night.

31 May: enemy bunker part destroyed.

1 June: Columns move to Theprezumi to assist 33 Column with attack on up to 200 Japanese, but by 5 June Japanese had gone.

2 June: held up by enemy bunkers, 1 killed for 1 own killed.

3 – 11 June: ambushes set and encountered on road. Killed 4 on 4 June.

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[115]TNA, WO 172/4878; and Wilcox, *Chindit Column*, pp. 72-74.
[116]TNA, WO 172/4876, War Diary for 2 Duke of Wellington's 1944, entry for 17 May.

11 June: 4B & 2DoW Columns move west towards Kohima area to block Japanese exfiltration through hills.

20 June: 4B & 2DoW Columns released to move south from Jessami towards Ukhrul. No actions until 1 July when 6 enemy killed in ambush.

4 July: 2DoW Columns blocking Ukhrul-Kamjong road to Chindwin.

11/12 July: 2DoW ambush Japanese stragglers, 3 killed for 1 own killed. Many dead Japanese and dead mules in area.

16 July: 2DoW columns at Ukhrul.

21/22 July: 2DoW columns at Dimapur.

4 Border: Columns 34 & 55
14 April: Columns 34 & 55 leave Mariani/Norwich for Mokokchung.

18 April: first skirmish with enemy, killed 16 for 1 own wounded.

20 April: Columns 34 and 35 at Mokokchung on way to Phakekrima ambush 20 Japanese, killing 12 with 3 wounded prisoners taken; 3 own wounded.

1 May: Both Columns at Phakekedzumi, kill 30 in attack on dug in Japanese, and 4 more in an ambush nearby but fail to take village. 2 own killed 5 wounded.

4 May: Recce Platoon ambush kills 6.

8 May: ambush kills 4 of 7, no loss.

9 May: Columns 34 & 55 complete light airstrip at Grimsby, Naga reports of 150 Japanese in area.

10 May: RAF direct air support attack on own troops – no casualties.

12 May: attacked by enemy 1 own killed and 1 wounded.

18/19 May: Columns 34 & 55 use 3 inch mortars on Chozumi and later ambush Japanese patrol, 17 killed for no loss.

21 May: Columns ambush Japanese at Sakrabama where 7 killed.

25 May: ambush kills 3 for no loss.

1 June: Columns at Thetsemi, mortar attack dug in enemy position kill 9, but no major assault made.

3 June: attack on Japanese roadblock unsuccessful, 1 own killed 2 wounded.

4 June: Chozumi bombed by 12 RAF fighter bombers.

5 June: 24 RAF aircraft attack Phakekedzumi, position occupied for no loss.

11 June: 4B & 2DoW Columns move west towards Kohima area to block Japanese exfiltration through hills. Five other columns including 1E and 60RA begin march by different south easterly routes for Pursuit operations against Japanese retreating from Kohima.

12 June: Columns in Gariphema area, ambushed by enemy, 1 own wounded, various ambushes and small actions over next ten days, 20+ enemy killed.

17 June: Columns at Thetsema, ambushed and killed 16 with 4 wounded for no own loss. 3.7" guns in use against Evening Hills position.

19 June: Gariphema clear of enemy.

20 June: 4B & 2DoW Columns released to move south towards Ukhrul.

21 June: 4B Columns make contact with 1/1 Punjabi from Kohima.

24 Jun: 4B Columns leave for Paowi, 16 Japanese killed in ambush, another ambush kills further 2.

27 June: patrol kills 7 near Paowi.

29/30 June: further 4B ambushes kill 14 of enemy.

3 to 10 July: numerous 4B ambushes on road, estimate 215 enemy killed; most in poor physical condition.

5/6 July: uses 3.7" guns on enemy party of 500 near Ukhrul, unknown number killed (?), shelled by enemy 4 own killed, 3 wounded.

7 – 13 July: continuous ambushes and patrol actions, killed 9 enemy.

12 July: 4B Columns kills 4 enemy on road, now able to evacuate own wounded out by road to Ukhrul.

15 July: Columns at and around Ukhrul, no further actions.

19 July: at Dimapur.

60 Royal Artillery: Columns 60 & 88
21 & 22 April: Columns 60 & 88 leave Norwich for Mokokchung.

28 April: Columns 60 & 88 leave Mokokchung for Khuzami.

17 May: Columns 60 & 88 attack Jessami, 18 killed for 1 own wounded.

17 May: Columns 60 & 88 attack Japanese at Jessami and Khanjang, kill 19 for 1 own wounded, capture a large amount of Japanese supplies and documents. Continue to operate and fight in this area for some weeks.

22 May: 2 ambushes kills 21 for 5 own wounded. 1 prisoner handed over to Nagas to take back to HQ.

27 May: ambush, fails.

30 May: tracks blocked around Jessami.

31 May: at Grimsby under enemy attack, 3 own killed, 1 wounded.

1 June: Recce platoon kills 3 but then attacked by 40+.

2 June: Recce platoon's way ahead blocked by bunkers.

5 June: Column 60 ambush 'spoiled by Nagas." – but not a Naga area.

6 June: Columns 60 and 88 leave HQ/Phakekedzumi/Grimsby for Fort Keary and on to Ukhrul; daily ambushes and patrol actions follow until arrival at Fort Keary.

10 June: unsuccessful attack on Kharasom Kuki, 1 own killed 5 wounded.

17 June: direct air support bombs own troops at Kharasom Kuki, no radio comms, so could stop it.

23 June: Columns 60 & 88 report, 'Eight hours taken to pass through 'The Valley of the Shadow of Death' near Soma where very deep mud on track is full of dead Japanese, dead mules, and skeletons'. Soma is between Phakekedzumi and Fort Keary.

28 June: Columns 60 & 88 begin to arrive Fort Keary.

1 July: Columns 60 & 88 run out of rations in bad weather, buys local bullock, next drop received 5 July but only partially successful.

9 July: Recce patrol in action, kills 3, captures 2 INA.

July 13 – 17: Quieter, patrols out but few contacts.

14 July: Columns 60/88 merged, ambushes enemy several times, kill 17, no loss.

17 July: final patrol action near to Ukhrul kills 1 Japanese.

25 July: Columns 60 & 88 at Dimapur.

The Politics of Commemoration: Britain and D-Day, 1984-1994

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ABSTRACT
Commemorations are about the present more than the past, as they reveal how different groups of people believed historical events should be understood within their own modern context. Both Margaret Thatcher in 1984 and John Major in 1994 were aware of the complicated political implications of British commemorations of D-Day. While Thatcher managed the potential international diplomatic traps that were thrust upon her in 1984, Major's intentional efforts to use public festivities to boost domestic political support in1994 were far less successful.

British Prime Ministers, at *Question Time* and elsewhere, are not unaccustomed to criticism. So it was not out of parliamentary tradition, on 21 April 1994, for John Smith, Leader of the Opposition, to accuse John Major of 'constantly getting things wrong', nor, later in the day, for Terry Lewis, Labour MP from Worsley, to refer to 'the Prime Minister's incompetence'.[1] What was perhaps surprising, however, was the source of this criticism. John Major's Government, in Parliament and even more so in the Press, was being excoriated for its planned observance of the 50 Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy. The Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher were expert at invoking the Second World War in the service of their political goals. From Churchillian comparisons to the Falkland Islands, the Party and its leaders regularly referred to an image of wartime Britain that resonated well through the 1980s in a nation struggling with both its postcolonial identity and its sense of its place in the world. All the more surprising then, as *The Independent* declared in a front-page article, 'that the Conservatives, of all parties, should turn out to have a tin ear for patriotism.'[2]

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1428r
[1]*Hansard*, HC Deb. 21 April 1994 vol. 241 cc. 1034-8; HC Deb. 21 April 1994 vol. 241 cols. 1038-52.
[2]Neal Ascherson, 'D-Day: The best way is humility', *The Independent*, 22 April 1992.

Commemorations tell us far more about the visions of the people doing the commemorating than they do about the events that are the ostensible subjects of their efforts. This is especially the case when national identity seems contingent on specific ways of understanding the past.[3] After all, as *The Guardian* once facetiously editorialised, 'As far as the British people are concerned the history of planet earth goes like this. 1) The earth cools. 2) Primitive life forms emerge. 3) Britain wins the Second World War.'[4] The nostalgia of war hearkened back to a time when Britain, with its empire securely in place, stood alone and saved the world from fascism.[5] Forty years later, Britain's place in a postcolonial world was far more complicated than those reassuring visions of the past. While Margaret Thatcher was adept at the politics of public memorialising, a decade later, John Major found the politics of reading the popular culture much trickier, leading to costly failures rather than political success.

While there was consensus that the 40th anniversary of D-Day needed to be marked, there was no real sense of urgency. Though the Queen's intention to attend ceremonies in Normandy was announced in November 1983, a variety of questions in Parliament indicate that specific planning did not really get under way until well into the spring of 1984, and plans for Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of the House of Lords to attend were not in place until May.[6] For the Government, the main purpose of the ceremonies was to emphasise the strength of the Anglo-American relationship, past and present, and by implication, future. The anniversary of the

[3]See, for example, John Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[4]The author went on to suggest that only other possible events of note were the Beatles' appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show and England's 1966 World Cup victory. *The Guardian*, 7 June 2000. See also: Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939-1991,* (London: I B Taurus, 1997); Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz,* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991); Paul Gilroy, '*There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[5]This was always, of course, a construction; see Calder, *Myth of the Blitz*; and especially Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[6]'Queen expected to join D-Day veterans on Normandy beaches', *The Times*, 3 November 1983; for Parliament, see HC Deb 09 December 1983 vol. 50 c. 260W, HC Deb 27 March 1984 vol. 57 col. 104W, HC Deb 04 April 1084 vol 57 col. 588W, HC Deb 06 April 1984 vol. 57 col. 699W, HC Deb 10 April 1984 vol. 58 cols. 185-7, HC Deb 25 April 1984 vol. 58 cols. 506-7W, HC Deb 03 May 1984 vol. 59 cols. 539-44, etc.

landings on 6 June was well placed for these purposes, coming on the heels of the European elections and immediately followed by the G7 Economic Summit in London. By focusing on the Normandy landings, it was easy to justify the exclusion of the Soviet Union. Cold War adversaries did not have to discuss their wartime alliances because the scope was defined by the amphibious assault on the beaches of western France, conveniently ignoring the fact that the opening of a second front implied pretty clearly that there must be fighting on another front elsewhere. Instead, the Soviets could be moderately praised in their absence.[7] The Germans, too, were not invited, a bit awkwardly (this issue returned ten years later). Even the Canadians, despite the presence of large numbers of veterans, were rendered almost invisible, not least because Queen Elizabeth was described as representing them as well as the British, though Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was also present.[8] The Commonwealth was therefore where it belonged, subsumed under a British identity. The Germans were defeated and absent; the Soviets could be praised but elsewhere; the French, to Francois Mitterand's apparent disgruntlement, were forced to show at least a modicum of gratitude for the costly military operation that was patently, if not exclusively, on their behalf. That left the British and the Americans, acknowledging their past accomplishments by paying tribute to the soldiers who had been there, enacting their historical partnership in a way that could hardly have served the Conservative Government better.

The United States, of course, was more than a cooperative partner; in an election year, the Americans had their own European agenda. President and Mrs. Reagan made an extended European trip, offering a multitude of photo ops in the President's ancestral land of Ireland before the ceremonies in Normandy, and staying on in London for the economic summit. These kinds of events played to Reagan's strengths, and it was especially helpful for him to look like a world leader when Walter Mondale and Gary Hart were slogging it out in Democratic primaries for the opportunity to face him in the November election. The press repeatedly commented on the control that the American presidential team exerted over the structure of the ceremonies. They took place, for example on Utah Beach, one of the American landing sites, though certainly not the most important tactically. The British responded by holding additional ceremonies elsewhere; the Queen went to Arromanches near Gold Beach for a parade of veterans, as well as visiting Commonwealth and Canadian cemeteries. This required the Queen to do something she was known to dislike, and had not done

[7]'D-Day tribute on the beaches', *The Times*, 7 June 1984, among others; Reagan coupled praise with criticism of the Soviet Union's continued presence in Eastern Europe.

[8]'Busy royal schedule revealed for D-Day celebrations', *The Times*, 15 May 1984.

since her Silver Jubilee in 1977: travel by helicopter.[9] Newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic noted that President Reagan's address was perfectly timed for the morning news programs in the United States to carry it live, but the tone was generally one of bemused tolerance rather than irritation (with the possible exception of the French).[10]

The Conservatives were not pitch-perfect in their commemoration. Certainly, there was resentment, despite the official message, of what was often perceived as an American attempt to control D-Day to the exclusion of recognition of the British role. Americans were prone to discussing Omaha and Utah, and forgetting the landings at Sword, Juno, and Gold Beaches. Montgomery was often overshadowed by Eisenhower. Even more significantly, though, the Government, in its focus on message, missed the mark with the people who made the message possible. They realised that the presence of veterans was absolutely necessary, and that they must be seen as helping those who could not make their own arrangements. Though they reported to the House of Commons on the number of private schemes for D-Day visits (and indeed more than a few had sprung up in the previous years), this year and this event were special. In a written response, John Stanley for the Ministry of Defence explained that 'exceptionally in this case, arrangements will be made to enable a representative group of D-Day veterans to visit Normandy on 6 June at public expense.' Targeting veterans who would not be financially able to go otherwise, the British Legion identified up to 400 participants for Government support.[11] When, however, the Ministry was asked about providing support for war widows, the response was negative: 'This visit has been organised for those who took part in the D-Day

[9]Ibid. The helicopter use (and the Queen's aversion to it) was mentioned repeatedly in the press; see additionally 'Queen must overcome her dislike of helicopters for D-Day visit to France', *The Times*, 26 May 1984; 'Queen pays homage to the dead', *The Times*, 7 June 1984.

[10]Reginald Dale, 'American News: Reagan sets off to win European acclaim and impress home voters', *Financial Times*, 1 June 1984; Rich Jaroslovksy, 'Politics '84 – Election Year Extravaganza: Reagan Offers Peaceful Diplomacy Scenes to Counter His Bellicose European Image', *Wall Street Journal*, 6 June 1984; 'D-Day tribute on the beaches', *The Times*, 7 June 1984; Reginald Dale, 'Weekend Brief: Never far away from the old votes back home', *Financial Times*, 9 June 1984; for more on Mitterand's frustration, see also Reginald Dale, 'Reagan Rubs Raw Nerves in Europe / Controversy over US President's visit to West Germany', *Financial Times*, 19 April 1995. *The Guardian*, in contrast, referred to the 'contrived tedium' of the coverage of Reagan's visit, the D-Day ceremonies, and the summit, calling for more 'hard news' and less of what it termed the 'gigantic balloon of empty tomfoolery', 9 June 1984; even the highly-supportive *Financial Times* referred to the coverage of Reagan's participation at the ceremonies as 'ballyhoo', Ian Davidson, 'Foreign Affairs: One summit really matters', 4 June 1984.

[11]HC Deb 04 April 1984 vol. 57 col. 588W

operation, and the number of applications by D-day veterans has already greatly exceeded the number of places available.'[12] This was a public relations mistake that cost much more than the travel expenses of the widows, and in the end the Government paid those, too. After a hue and cry in the public, the press and in the Commons, the policy was reversed, and 53 widows traveled to Normandy as the guests of the Government.[13]

The Conservatives were not the only ones to underestimate the extent of veteran involvement, despite the almost universal invocation of the veterans themselves as the subject of the commemorations. The Imperial War Museum planned only a new 'small display' to occupy 'two new free-standing cases in front of existing D-Day photographic display.' It consisted of uniform items and models of landing craft, as well as a variety of printed matter: newspapers, cartoons, propaganda, and maps, as well as both personal letters from soldiers and official communications from Montgomery.[14] The Museum planned some simple souvenirs for their shop, including one in their series of documents packs, to contain facsimiles of printed matter similar to those on display.[15] Exhibits were also mounted at the Museum's other sites: HMS Belfast (which itself participated in the D-Day naval bombardment of Juno Beach), Duxford Airfield (which was an American fighter base in June 1944), and the newly-opened Cabinet War Rooms.[16] Interest, however, was greater, and snowballed in unexpected ways. In February 1984, the Museum was contacted by the manager of the Dominion Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, asking them to mount a display at the theatre to coincide with a planned week of screening of 'The Longest Day' in mid-March. Museum staff produced a captioned photo montage for the event, in the name of good publicity.[17] That display, in turn, was seen by a veteran who served as an

[12]HC Deb 08 May 1984 vol. 59 col. 298W

[13]Philip Webster, 'War Widows to join D-Day trip', *The Times*, 30 May 1984; Alan Hamilton, 'D-Day celebrations. War widows disgusted at last-minute offer of trip', *The Times*, 31 May 1984; HC Deb 06 June 1984 vol. 61 col. 191W.

[14]Handwritten notes, undated [1984], 'D-Day Display'; for reference to 'small display', see Penny Ritchie Calder, Exhibitions Officer, correspondence, 23 January 1984. In "D-Day Display 1984," Imperial War Museum Exhibition files.

[15]Undated (1984), 'Overlord Imperial War Museum Documents Pack', 'D-Day Display 1984', Imperial War Museum Exhibition files.

[16]See Imperial War Museum Press Notice, 'Fortieth Anniversary of D-Day', May 1984. For more on the opening of the Cabinet War Rooms, see 'The Arts: Underground where the war was won – Gillian Darley visits the Cabinet War Rooms, now open to the public, and is much impressed', *Financial Times*, 24 May 1984.

[17]IWM Internal Memorandum, from Exhibitions Officer (Penny Ritchie Calder) to Director (Dr. Alan Borg), 24 February 1984; see also Borg's handwritten response on the memo, as well as Ritchie Calder's internal correspondence with the Photography

officer in his local British Legion branch, who contacted the Museum to ask if they could borrow the montage for an exhibition he and his fellow members were putting on in their village hall on Saturday, 9 June 1984. According to his correspondence, their plea to their members was quite successful, and they expected to 'have quite a good show' as they were 'doing quite well for exhibits'.[18]

In 1984, veterans spoke usually as individuals. They wrote letters to the editors of various newspapers, agreeing or disagreeing with a variety of leading articles, book reviews, and news coverage, offering no coherent vision of what commemoration should look like. Alan Forrest wrote movingly in *The Financial Times* of a visit with a fellow Normandy veteran, timed (as were those of others he met there) intentionally to 'avoid the enormous "bull" surrounding the Queen's visit.' They questioned why they had come: 'it certainly isn't to tell old soldier's tales, to bask in heroes' sunshine, or even to put wreaths on graves (a fairly unproductive exercise).' He went, he determined, 'to remember my friends who lost their innocence and their lives in those bloody hedge rows.' Forrest and his companion watched children building sandcastles, and his friend, with his own memories, said 'that's what beaches ought to be for.' The account concluded, however, with a sombre reflection on the visit and the children who had clamoured for stories of the battle; they veterans, like Henry V, were glad to have been there, 'but I suppose we were avoiding that little boy's question – "Did you kill a lot of Germans, sir?"'[19]

That individuality, and that level of nuance, were both gone by 1994. Though one reviewer declared on June 9 that 'we may forget D Day for another 10 years now', it did not entirely go away.[20] Veterans continued to travel to Normandy each June, without the international pageantry. The press were practically gleeful in their reporting on the new official Museum for Peace in Caen. Despite 'concern that the Americans, with strong financial backing, were trying to rewrite history and eclipse the British role' and 'that French historians were underplaying the importance of

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and Production staff of the Museum, and her confirmation dated 29 February 1984 with the manager of the Dominion Theatre. 'Dominion Cinema: proposed D-Day display', in 'D-Day Display 1984', Imperial War Museum Exhibition files.

[18]I cannot identify the veteran until I can ascertain whether or not he is still alive; the documentation, dated 28 March 1984 and 7 April 1984, as well as the British Legion branch letter to its members, dated March 1984, and the flier announcing 'A Commemorative Exhibition of the 'D'-Day Landings in Normandy', are included in the above-named file, housed at the Imperial War Museum.

[19]Alan Forrest, 'D-Day: a requiem on the beaches: Alan Forrest on memories of forty years ago', *Financial Times*, 2 June 1984.

[20]B. A. Young, 'The Arts: Radio – crime, punishment and living history', *Financial Times*, 9 June 1984.

Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, the Allied Commander-in-Chief during the first few weeks of the invasion', the museum focused particularly on British contributions. Topping the exhibits of pride were a massive portrait of '"Monty" and his Rolls Royce', and a 'full-scale replica of an RAF Typhoon' despite American efforts to include a Mustang. Though Americans were 'reported to be "seething" at being outmanoeuvred by the British campaign', *The Times* concluded that the 'British success can be put down to hard work, perseverance and gentle diplomacy with the French.'[21] This approach does not seem to suggest that Thatcher's theme of Anglo-American cooperation was holding up terribly well. Of course, Thatcher herself was not holding up very well, either; despite winning her third term in 1987, she was forced out in a leadership struggle in 1990 and left the House of Commons in 1992. Her successor, John Major, found a different commemorative world in 1994.

Though he defeated Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party in the general election of 1992, Major's standing was never terribly secure. By 1994, the Conservatives were dealing with considerable intra-party factionalism, and Major survived a leadership challenge only a year later, only to be comprehensively beaten by Tony Blair and the Labour landslide of 1997. With the Cold War over, Britain's 'special relationship' with the United States was more complicated while giving less international status; Britain was no longer needed as the European stalwart opposing the Soviet Union, key to a NATO alliance that was now changing beyond recognition with the admission of former Soviet-bloc countries. The ten years between 1984 and 1994 had also been a decade when the silence surrounding postcolonial society was definitively broken, and the end of empire acknowledged, if not come to terms with. The Falkland War had been the last hurrah of imperialism; the participation of its veterans, a company of 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, in the 1984 D-Day commemorations, was perhaps the last echo of that cheer. Major and the Conservatives, desperate for political capital, failed to recognise that the commemorative language had changed, and suffered for it.

The 50 anniversaries of D-Day, VE-Day, and VJ-Day, were the responsibility of a specially-created World War II Commemorations Team, which fell under the supervision of the Ministry of Defence but also worked extensively, particularly for the D-Day commemorations, with the new Department of National Heritage (created in 1992).[22] For 1994, responsibilities for events were divided: Defence was in charge of coordinating the June 4 to 6 ceremonies in the English debarkation ports, across the channel, and in Normandy, including participation in the international event at Omaha Beach as well as services at several Commonwealth War Graves Commission

[21] 'Diplomacy wins on D-Day memorial', *The Times*, 6 June 1988.

[22] See 'Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the End of WWII: Post-Exercise Report', Ministry of Defence, Restricted – Management. Obtained via Freedom of Information request; personal copy.

cemeteries, and a veterans' march-past at Arromanches. National Heritage planned an event focused on civilians, and planned an extensive family fun day in Hyde Park for early July. These plans ultimately faced three challenges of increasing importance. The first two, both related to the June events, seemed to threaten the Government's plans, but were solved and these commemorations were ultimately widely praised. The third, however, brought the Government criticism, mockery, resistance, and eventually forced a complete capitulation to an unexpected and unexpectedly uniform interpretation of how D-Day could be marked.

The first challenge was directly parallel to ten years earlier: what to do about the Germans? The intervening decade had not made this one any easier to resolve. The German government sought an invitation to the ceremonies as a sign that Europe was now united in peace, and an acknowledgement that the Germans who were now friends and trading partners (and fellow members of the European Union) were not the same as the Nazis who were defeated half a century earlier. In November 1993, however, the *Daily Mail* reported that the Queen did not want the Germans given 'equal status' with the Allies, and that there were also concerns raised 'in the French government and along Allied veterans' groups.'[23] At the official launch of the Government D-Day commemoration plans, held in January 1994 at the Imperial War Museum, John Major explained that the Germans would be participating in celebrations of 50 years of peace in 1995, but that D-Day 'is essentially an occasion for the wartime allies', though again the Russians (no longer Soviets) were also excluded, though this time silently.[24] Some rumblings continued on both sides about the appropriate role for the Germans; while the liberal press and younger generations often advocated being inclusive, the veterans' perspective usually sounded much like

[23]John Deans, 'Surrender by Kohl in the battle of D-Day', *Daily Mail*, 26 November 1993; see also Peter Shard, 'Germans plead to join party for D-Day', *Daily Mail*, 2 July 1993; Steve Doughty, 'Britain may bar Kohl from 1994 D-Day memorial', *Daily Mail*, 9 November 1993.

[24]Quoted in Christopher Bellamy, 'Major puts D-Day plan into action', *The Independent*, 7 January 1994. See also Louise Jury, 'Major promises millions for D-Day 50 years on', *The Guardian*, 7 January 1994, and Bill Mouland, 'Time to remember: Major's vow as D-Day Veterans look back with pride', *Daily Mail*, 7 January 1994. The Government was quite satisfied with the launch at the Museum; see letter from the Ministry of Defence to Alan Borg, Director of the Museum, 11 January 1994; Section 44: Notable Anniversaries; (i) 50th Anniversary D-Day; Imperial War Museum Archives. The Imperial War Museum was regularly considered an appropriate host for these kinds of events; the Southern and Normandy Tourist Boards held a press conference there to announce their own commemorative plans on 3 June 1993; Imperial War Museum Internal Memorandum, 25 May 1993; Section 44: Notable Anniversaries; (i) 50th Anniversary D-Day; Imperial War Museum Archives.

that of Brian Jackson, who reminded a reporter that 'after all we fought for six years to stop the Germans from marching down the Mall.'[25] However, the compromise of excluding them from D-Day but including them the following summer to mark the end of the war and the beginning of the peace settled most of the debate.[26]

The second crisis averted was quite different, centring on hotel rooms rather than diplomatic exchanges. More than nine months before the anniversary, the *Daily Mail* was already complaining that French hotel owners were price gouging and cancelling reservations, exploiting the veterans making what was likely to be their last trip.[27] The situation was deemed bad enough to merit parliamentary intervention. In November, the Prime Minister informed the House of Commons that the Ministry of Defence had approached the French government, with the result that there was now an office in Caen 'to deal with all queries concerning accommodation in Normandy.'[28] This was not enough, apparently, as the housing crisis reappeared in the spring, this time with a much clearer set of villains. The headline in the *Daily Mail* screamed of 'Anger as British D-Day veterans lose their hotel rooms in Normandy to an invasion of American TV networks.' According to the article, it was actually the French government that had requisitioned the rooms on behalf of the TV personnel, because French officials wanted the rooms the networks had originally reserved, and so needed to move them somewhere else. So the real villains of the story were the French government, though it's always safe to blame things on American television. There were heroes as well, however, as 'French families, shamed by the shabby treatment of the men who fought to free them, deluged the authorities with offers to put them

[25]Quoted in Marianne Darch, 'Disgruntled veterans blame Tories for D-Day "muddle"; Marianne Darch finds opinion is divided on how the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Normandy should be celebrated', *The Independent*, 19 April 1994.
[26]See, for example, 'The Kohl shoulder: Snubbed German leader orders all-out boycott of D-Day celebrations', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 1994; Steve Crawshaw, 'Dear Helmut Kohl; the Chancellor of Germany seems miffed that his European partners haven't invited him to their D-Day party in June. Never mind, Mr Kohl, perhaps you can come to next year's peace jamboree – if you're still in office', *The Independent*, 10 March 1994; Neal Ascherson, 'D-Day was for the liberty of all: the Germans should be there too', *The Independent*, 13 March 1994; Ian McDonald, 'Letter: No to Kohl', *The Independent*, 20 March 1994; 'Time for Goodwill towards Germany', *The Independent*, 21 March 1994; 'Kohl welcomes Major proposal on German participation in D-Day celebrations', *Financial Times*, 24 March 1994.
[27]Tracey Harrison, Tim Jotischky, 'No room for heroes: D-Day veterans lose bookings as greedy French hotels sell out to highest bidder', *Daily Mail*, 23 August 1993.
[28]HC Deb 23 November 1993 vol 233 c32W. See also 'D-Day victory on rip-offs', *Daily Mail*, 24 November 1993.

up.'[29] Under extensive pressure from across the press spectrum as well as behind the scenes, the French government almost immediately retracted the eviction notices, and another potential crisis was averted.[30]

The peace for the Conservatives was quite brief, however. On April 12, the Department of National Heritage announced the second phase of D-Day events, focused on civilians. Whispers of concern about this approach had been raised months before; one letter to the editor despaired that 'The memory of a great battle in which thousands died or were maimed is being celebrated as a Hollywood extravaganza, so that the tourist industry can make a killing 1994-style – even if it dishonors and degrades the dead of 1944.'[31] Certainly, the tourist boards had long been in action, preparing for 1994 and the opportunity to draw significant tourist spending to their areas. The Southern Tourist Board had been promoting the anniversary for two years, and launched their press campaign at the Imperial War Museum in June 1993. By January 1994, they were sending the Museum their 'D-Day pack', with separate brochures targeted at British and American veterans, posters, a video, and an eight-page 'Travel Trade & Veterans Newsletter' for November 1993, with a 'D-Day 50th Anniversary Year' logo and detailed plans for commemorative events throughout southern England and Normandy.[32] Commercial tie-ins with the anniversaries abounded; while there had been souvenirs for sale for the 40 anniversaries, the number and array increased exponentially in the 1990s. The Imperial War Museum put on a far more complex show, 'From D-Day to Victory', which ran for more than a year and a half from its festive and VIP-studded launch when Viscount Montgomery official opened the exhibition in February 1994, through autumn 1995. Far more than the two new display cases of ten years earlier, this exhibition filled a double-height gallery space and included 'four a/v programmes, five other complicated a/v elements,

[29]'Unhappy landings: Anger as British D-Day veterans lose their hotel rooms in Normandy to an invasion of American TV networks', *Daily Mail*, 4 April 1994.

[30]See, for example, Julian Nundy, 'France liberates D-Day veterans' occupied hotels', *The Independent*, 5 April 1994; 'No room for such thoughtlessness', *The Independent*, 5 April 1994; Peter Shard, 'French yield to the D-Day heroes; France surrenders to the wounded heroes', *Daily Mail*, 5 April 1994; Paul Johnson, 'The French can't forgive us because they owe us so much; as the row rumbles on over D-Day celebrations', *Daily Mail*, 5 April 1994; Lynda Lee-Potter, 'Making room for the heroes', *Daily Mail*, 6 April 1994.

[31]Sidney Vines, 'Letter: Remembering the war dead with pomp', *The Independent*, 8 November 1993.

[32]Included in Section 15 – Exhibitions; (d) Temporary Exhibitions; (28) D-Day Exhibition; Imperial War Museum Archives.

and 70 large, detailed graphics panels.' It also went 25% over budget.[33] The Museum Shop offered a much wider variety of souvenirs as well; in addition to updated document and photograph packs, they planned cassettes, a 'D-Day commemorative medallion'; a variety of items targeted at children, and one of the many anniversary-themed books to be published that year.[34] Additionally, numerous private companies marketed mugs, t-shirts, recordings, key chains, badges, and a variety of other memorabilia, including those distinctively British collectibles, thimbles and tea towels.[35]

Coming from private entities, none of this seemed to arouse much criticism. Coming from the Government, however, such a festive – and commercial – approach quickly drew criticism. Negative reaction was not immediate; the only press outlet that was troubled from the first was *The Guardian*, which was saddened by 'a messy pot-pourri of militarist nostalgia, austerity of kitsch and theme park merchandising – plenty of sound and hype, all signifying virtually nothing.'[36] The *Daily Mail*, in contrast, wrote happily of the 'huge tribute' announced by the Government, with no hint of concern about the 'military parades, exhibitions of World War II equipment, firework displays, star-studded concerts, fly-pasts, gala dinners, street parties and reunions', all endorsed by Dame Vera Lynn, the now 77-year-old 'Forces Sweetheart', singing 'We'll Meet Again' at the launch.[37] A day later, however, the tabloid had changed its tune, in response to an immediate outcry from organized veterans groups claiming that D-Day was about commemorating the dead and wounded, and that celebrations would be better deferred to the summer of 1995. As Albert Page of the Portsmouth branch of the British Legion explained, 'All we want is to pay our respects. No one in Britain was having a party 50 years ago. Thousands of men were being killed and maimed every day.'[38] The tabloid agreed, invoking the dead and asking 'Do we really want to

[33]See correspondence; 'Launch of 'From D-Day to Victory', 17 February 1944 [sic], Acceptances'; Imperial War Museum Internal Memorandum, 'D-Day exhibition: increase in costs', 13 February 1994; in Section 15 – Exhibitions; (d) Temporary Exhibitions; (28) D-Day Exhibition; Imperial War Museum Archives.

[34]Imperial War Museum Internal Memorandum, 'Plans for forthcoming D-Day anniversary', 13 July 1993; Section 44 – Notable Anniversaries; (i) 50th Anniversary D-Day, Imperial War Museum Archives.

[35]A number of which are in the author's personal collection, thanks to the amazing resource of eBay.

[36]Geoff Mulgan, 'Lost leaders who can't tell a convincing story', *The Guardian*, 13 April 1994.

[37]John Deans, 'An unforgettable day: Major mobilises Britain for a huge tribute to D-Day heroes', *Daily Mail*, 14 April 1994.

[38]'Old soldiers up in arms at street parties plan', *Daily Mail*, 15 April 1994.

remember their sacrifice with EastEnders and street parties?'[39] The protesters and press particularly fastened on a proposal for 'spam fritter contests', which seemed to sum up the ways that the Government was trivialising sacrifice in the name of scoring political points. Within days, Ian Sproat at the Department of National Heritage and John Major himself were facing questions and criticism not just in the tabloids but in *The Times, The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and the House of Commons. Both the Royal British Legion and the Normandy Veterans' Association condemned the approach and claimed not to have been consulted during the planning process. Instead, the Government had hired a public relations firm, Lowe Bell, at a cost of £62,500. It did not help the Conservatives' position that the head of the firm, Sir Tim Bell, was a close associate of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

Criticism intensified in the press and in Parliament.[40] On 19 April, John Major was asked in the House of Commons why he had not consulted with veterans' organisations. Major responded that that the Secretary of State for National Heritage had met with members of both the British Legion and the Normandy Veterans' Association that morning, which did not impress his audience.[41] Things only got worse on April 21, when John Smith accused the Government of getting everything wrong and the Prime Minister's response was so interrupted that Madam Speaker had to intervene for order; later, Terry Lewis referred to Major's 'incompetence'.[42] The press did not let up; the *Daily Mail* wrote that 'It's rather like inviting jugglers to the Cenotaph' (21 April); the *Financial Times* punned about 'History frittered away' (22 April); the *Independent* claimed that for 'D-Day; the best way is humility' (22 April) and '"Light-hearted" approach draws heavy backlash; Little was done to reconcile opposing camps arranging event' (22 April). Day after day in Parliament the Prime Minister and

[39]Ludovic Kennedy, 'The Day of Reckoning; Fifty years ago, 100,000 men like these died to free the world from unspeakable evil. Do we really want to remember their sacrifice with EastEnders and street parties?', *Daily Mail*, 15 April 1994.

[40]See, for example, Paul Eastham, 'It's right to rejoice over D-Day, Minister insists', *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1994; Alice Thompson and John Young, 'Pressure grows on Government to tone down D-Day events', *The Times*, 19 April 1994; John Deans, 'Call off the D-Day revels', *Daily Mail*, 20 April 1994; Philip Stephens, 'Red faces over white cliffs backlash', *Financial Times*, 21 April 1994.

[41]HC Deb 19 April 1994 vol. 241 cols. 735-40. Major also pointed out that Field Marshall Lord Bramall, himself a Normandy veteran and career soldier until he retired as the last serving World War II veteran, was on the Committee. Lord Bramall at this time was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. Bramall soon told the press that thought he had been involved in the planning for the June events, he had not had anything to do with the proposed July festival.

[42]HC Deb 21 April 1994 vol. 241 cols. 1034-8; HC Deb 21 April 1994 vol. 241 cols. 1038-52.

Government faced questions about the procedures followed, the parties consulted, and especially about Lowe Bell, its selection, and its fees. It was Vera Lynn, however, who really sunk the plan. Siding with 'her boys', she announced that she would not sing at any Government event that the veterans' groups had not approved. The Government was forced to back down, though in stages; ultimately, the festival was held, without controversy, as part of the VE Day celebrations the following summer. While the plans were dropped, the Conservatives continued to pay for them, as the press continued to mock the spam fritters and what they represented for months. Similarly, few in the Opposition resisted opportunities to remind the Government of its 'embarrassment', as one member called it, on the floor of both Houses. Some members more gently referred to 'the muddle the Government got themselves into', others stated more baldly that 'the Government made fools of themselves about D-Day.'[43] Instead of uniting the nation – or at least a good portion of it – behind him, John Major found himself in an even more precarious political position than before the start of the commemoration season.

In the end, the Government was accused repeatedly of failing to understand the difference between 'celebration' and 'commemoration' – this must have been hard to take, given that the word 'celebration' was used liberally both in 1984 and from 1993 to early 1994, until it suddenly became the sign of the blundering idiocy of the Conservatives. Again, and again, they were accused facetiously of confusing D-Day and VE-Day. It was not, however, that the Government did not understand the past; rather, it was that they did not understand the present. As Geoff Mulgan wrote in *The Guardian*, the debacle was 'confirmation that this generation of leaders is virtually unable to think historically, still less to imagine its own place in the scheme of things. . . our political leaders are mute, beyond the occasional vision of an England of village greens and warm beer. It is as if for them history really has come to an end.'[44] The vision is of village greens and warm beer, yes, but also of an Empire in its place and a secure and central position in a global hierarchy. Freezing a certain vision of the past allowed Conservative British Governments to establish a political base despite a very different present; this worked in 1984, but a decade later, it was the present that had become another country.

[43]Quotations are from HC Deb 04 May 1994 vol. 242 cols. 722-816 and HL Deb 10 May 1994 vol. 554 cols. 1503-19; there are many other examples.
[44]Geoff Mulgan, 'Lost leaders who can't tell a convincing story', *The Guardian*, 13 April 1994.

Between Propaganda and Facticity: News Reporting of Non-White Service in the World Wars

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ABSTRACT
The expanding interest in the non-white experience of the World Wars is engaging a growing number of scholars within military history. However, the challenge of documenting the historically marginalised non-white voices remains. This Research Note specifically examines news-reporting of non-white soldiers from South Africa and examines the challenges of colonial and imperial reportage. For this, the Note critically analyses articles published by The Cape Standard (a non-white South African news weekly) on the experiences of non-white soldiers from South Africa who were captured during the Second World War. The Note considers the importance of wartime reporting to bridge the source-gap and to reconstruct subaltern histories of non-white military service.

Over the past two decades, a combination of renewed interest in penning soldiers' war narratives and the decentring forces of Subaltern Studies has forwarded the fervent agenda of documenting non-white experiences in white colonial wars.[1] Scholarship across the academic spectrum is challenging the previously established homogenous accounts of diplomacy and politics that remove agency from the anonymous actors of conflict. To do this, innovative methodologies are being employed which, in turn, are inspired by previously neglected sources. Peter Jackson's film *They Shall Not Grow Old* (2018) represented this ideational shift most explicitly in

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1429
[1]Coined by Antonio Gramsci, 'subaltern' refers to any class of people who are subjected to the hegemony of another powerful class. The term was adopted in post-colonial studies by a collective of South Asian scholars who used it to classify colonial populations who were excluded from socio-political and geographic power-structures of the imperial system.

relation to the World Wars as a documentary film focused on soldiers, and not leaders, inspired much excitement among academics and military history enthusiasts. Naturally, such a de-centring has also placed a spotlight on non-white experiences which, due to institutional prejudice and neglect, had not only been erased post-war(s) in public memory but the previous lack of scholarly enthusiasm has also led to a loss of valuable oral and autobiographical accounts that could have been collated in the decades following the war(s).[2] With such handicaps, historians of the World Wars must turn to alternate primary sources that can reveal embedded histories of non-white actors. This research note discusses one such source – newspapers – focusing on the coverage given to the South African 'Coloured' ('mixed-race') soldiers as part of the imperial forces in the Second World War.[3]

South Africa's 'Coloured' community bears a long of history of military service in colonial armies. First recruited by the British in the frontier wars in the Cape Colony, they subsequently served in the South African War (1899-1902), the World Wars, and in the Border Wars of the 1970s-80s. However, throughout these broken periods of service, like other non-white soldiers, they experienced military inequality with lower rates of pay, limited opportunities of promotions, reduced benefits, and swift demobilisation at the end of conflicts. Within public histories and memory, the experiences of colonial soldiers were abated – their service for the Empire reduced their legitimacy within nationalist narratives, while imperial proponents heavily engaged in the 'white-washing' of war narratives, marginalising the memory of non-white participation.[4] Within the World War compendium, South Africa suffered the

[2]Nevertheless, there are, of course, attempts by some scholars to record these voices. For example, Nancy Lawler, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Ivoirien Tirailleurs of World War II'*, (Ohio University Press, 1992); Suryakanthie Chetty, '"Our Victory Was Our Defeat": Race, Gender and Liberalism in the Union Defence Force. 1939-45', in Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, Katharina Lange, Dyala Hamzah & Ravi Ahuja (eds), *The World in World Wars: Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from African and Asia*. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 457-481.

[3]The term 'Coloured' has been strictly used in its historical context to describe South Africans with a 'mixed' parentage of 'white' and 'non-white' (usually African) lineage.

[4]Months before the liberation of Paris in 1944, several top French, British and American officials clambered to create an 'all-white' division to liberate the fallen capital. General de Gaulle did not want an army of colonised 'natives' to liberate the city even though they had fought, bled, died, and won back France. The 'white-washing' of the Free French Army was successfully carried out before the August liberation. Moreover, the *Senegalese Tirailleurs* were not just removed from their victory march, they were also stripped of their uniforms and repatriated. De Gaulle's 'white-washing' continued post-war in academia (until the 1970s when a new generation of scholarship

additional brunt of scholarly isolation by global academic communities with the advent of Apartheid. Thus, even today, most overarching histories on the Second World War have reduced South Africa's contributions to no more than a page.[5] This Research Note is part of a larger project that seeks to reconstruct the neglected experiences of the Union of South Africa's Coloured, Indian and Malay soldiers in the Second World War. Collating first-person accounts of these soldiers has been challenging given that most soldiers were illiterate and uneducated and, post-conflict, no efforts (comparable to projects in the West) were made to collect and preserve these voices. However, in this hunt for the non-white voice, an important source has been uncovered, a non-white South African weekly newspaper, *The Cape Standard*.

The Cape Standard weekly was published from 1936 to 1947 by an Indian company (Prudential). It had an approximate readership of 45,000 among the Coloured, Indian and Malay communities.[6] The newspaper was sympathetic to anti-segregation causes, critical of the ruling United Party, and frequently highlighted the contributions of non-white South Africans to civil society. It also gave space to Communist groups within these communities and regularly published non-white protest poetry. Facing financial set-backs, the weekly was forced to reduce its production in its final years (with only two issues per month and an over-load of advertisements) and ultimately had to close shop. However, its short life coincided with the most traumatic conflict of the twentieth century and resulted in a robust coverage of the Second World War that ranged from news from the front to the contributions of South Africa's non-white communities.[7] One of the most unique aspects of the weekly's reporting was its

began to push back against this racial exclusion) and in popular historical memory (existing to date).

[5]Bill Nasson identifies five causes for South Africa's 'shrinking history' of the Second World War in academia and public imagination : (i) frontier wars and rebellions, and not World Wars, are usually the subject matter of local historical dramas; (ii) academia's preoccupation with interpretations of segregation and Apartheid; (iii) rising international condemnation of Apartheid in the post-war years resulted in the marginalisation of South Africa from commemorative events; (iv) within South Africa, remembrance of these wars has indubitably been linked to politics and the World Wars were not politically 'usable'; (v) South Africa's role in international histories was first reduced to Jan Smuts' role as Field Marshal in the War Council, and then entirely neglected, save for some scant references. Bill Nasson, *A Jacana Pocket History of South Africa at War 1939-45,* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2012), pp. 20-22.

[6]Gavin Lewis, *Between the wire and the wall: a history of South African 'Coloured' politics,* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1987), p. 184.

[7]The *Standard's* cooperation and aid in DNEAS' press campaigns, as well as the popularity of their war reporting, enabled their access to returning soldiers (those on

emphasis on representing the non-white voice. They regularly interviewed returning soldiers and veterans, published 'letters to the editors' (and excerpts of personal letters) from deployed and captured soldiers, meticulous lists of men who had been recruited, caught, killed, and those who had been awarded, and photographs. Under then Editor, George Manuel, the weekly coordinated with the Directorate of Non-European Army Services (DNEAS) for recruitment and press campaigns, sourcing several articles and photographs from the Directorate. Despite its occasional (yet lengthy) Communist-leaning articles, its issues were also distributed amongst soldiers in transit camps within the Union.[8]

At first glance, the *Standard* appears to be a treasure trove of neglected non-white accounts, particularly from the interviews. However, closer inspection reveals the layers of filtration that the accounts were sieved through before being published. These layers can be discerned by analysing the motives of both, the interviewer and the interviewee, the motive of the newspaper to publish the piece, its intended audience, the prevailing socio-political circumstance, and even the structure and format of the piece.

As with print journalism, the weekly was promoting an agenda – that of the valorous, competent, and sacrificial service of non-white communities to the cause of the Empire and the Union of South Africa. This was part of the communities' struggle to gain first-class citizenship of the Union. This in turn meant that the narratives of soldiers were presented through a politicised lens. For example, take the case of prisoners of war (POWs). Post-war, within public history and memory, repatriated Allied European POWs did not receive a 'Hero's welcome'. Previous historians studying war and captivity have discussed the 'sense of shame' that soldiers felt on being captured, and during the period of captivity. This translated into post-war memory of their experience as they shied away from vocalising their stories.[9] Contrary to this trend of

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leave and repatriated ex-POWs) for interviews. Department of Defence Archives Pretoria (DOD): DNEAS, Box 36, 8/21, Cape Corps: Propaganda and Press Matters.

[8]Perhaps the officers-in-charge in the DNEAS were not reading the newspaper themselves and therefore did not notice the 'proletariat' cause that the weekly occasionally championed. Files from the 'office' that handled propaganda also only talk about the printing of the DNEAS' pieces. It seems they mostly relied on George Manuel writing to them and confirming publication. In any case, it is difficult to assess how many soldiers actually read the newspaper, how they perceived its content and, whether this had an(y) impact on their experience of service.

[9]For example, see Karen Horn, *In Enemy Hands: South Africa's POWs in World War II* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Bull Publishers, 2015); Clare Makepeace, *Captives of War: British Prisoners of War in Europe in the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Frances Houghton, "'To the Kwai and Back": Myth, Memory and

concealment, the repatriated non-white Coloured prisoners' interviews were given a full front-page coverage. The *Standard's* focus on Coloured soldiers' internment in Europe (and not in other theatres of war such as North and East Africa, and the Middle-East) demonstrates the importance of 'Coloured' soldiers having participated, even in the capacity of a captive, in the 'white man's war' on the white man's land. *The Cape Standard* was concerned with the story of the soldier (and not the person). Their reporting focused on the collective experiences of the troops, intending to translate these experiences into a singular narrative for the front page. For the weekly publication, these were *men of the Cape Corps*. Thus, these first-hand accounts are incomplete as the information they narrate has been coaxed by external actors, reducing the agency of the soldier who recounts it.

The interviews seem to have been led by specific questions on life in European campaigns, questions about segregation, treatment at the hands of Germans, and their experiences with other white nationalities. In compiling these stories, the published piece presents a narrative of loyalty, of physical and mental capability, of service, and of hardships suffered by the Coloured soldier for King and Empire. By leading the interview and coaxing certain features of their captivity, POWs were manoeuvred to present an account that was symptomatic of the communities' political motivations. During this period, South Africa's Coloured leaders were pushing against the government's 'Coloured Affairs Department' (CAD) initiative that, along the lines of the Native Affairs Department, sought to separate the legislation of the Coloured community from the White populace. By presenting a narrative of common hardship, the *Standard* was making the case for continued unified governance of the Coloured and White sections of society.

Still, despite this management of narratives, there are embedded moments in the piece of soldiers asserting their agency. For example, concerning their identities - while some ex-prisoners were forthcoming with their name and addresses (thus allowing other members of the community to reach out to them), most preferred to refer themselves by their initials (such as 'Private W', 'Private A'). This can be construed as the soldiers' desire to protect the privacy of their experience. Considering that within the article there was a variation in the names, and the accounts of the ex-POWs were extensive – it is unlikely that this lack of information of the interviewees was caused by journalistic negligence. Perhaps the anonymous soldiers were deeply traumatised and did not want to re-live this trauma repeatedly in the public domain, or perhaps they did not want to publicly associate their identity with the label of 'captured soldier'. Nevertheless, the information acquired through a non-white publication is far more extensive than that presented in white publications during this period. The most

Memoirs of the "Death Railway" 1942-1943', *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, (2014), pp. 223-235.

robust coverage given to Coloured soldiers by white South African newspapers was of an incident of indiscipline in 1943.[10] 500 CC soldiers were being transferred from Cape Town to a camp near Pretoria by train. The soldiers boarded the train in a state of intoxication which got worse as the journey progressed. They were rowdy and violent and de-boarded several times to get liquor from bars near the stations. To control the situation the police were called in at Laingsburg where the detachment was alighted. Unable to manage the men, the police fired, wounding three soldiers, one of whom died. The incident occurred against the backdrop of the highly politicised establishment of the 'Cape Coloured Permanent Commission', or the 'Coloured Affairs Department' (CAD) as it was popularly known. The Anti-CAD Committee, which was gaining political traction, argued, 'these proposals are based upon the despotic idea that we are not fit to be governed by ordinary law…'[11] The unfortunate episode provided white political parties the necessary political ammunition to 'kill' the anti-CAD movement.

The following week, Dr DF Malan, then Leader of the Opposition, moved the adjournment of the House of Assembly to debate the incident which, in his words, concerned the safety of life and property. The motion was allowed and Malan proceeded to detail his version of events where he repeatedly highlighted not only the disorderly conduct of the soldiers but also their blatant insubordination of their officers. Then Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, too went against his own fervour of 1942 (when he pledged to arm all 'non-Europeans' in SA) and expressed his disappointment in the accused soldiers. He assured the parliament that a thorough military inquiry would be conducted, and if there was any doubt over its transparency, a civil inquiry presided over by the House would be launched. 'This is something of first-class importance to the country,' he announced.[12] However, a key piece of information that was eliminated by all white public narratives (and falsified by Malan) was revealed in a letter by Lord Harlech (then High Commissioner of Southern Africa) to Clement Attlee (then Deputy Prime Minister of Great Britain). Harlech informed Attlee that of the 19 officers who were supposed to accompany the troop, 17 'European' officers opted for a more comfortable train journey at a later hour, leaving the group of 500 with two junior 'subaltern' officers [he most likely meant Coloured NCOs].[13] Publicly, no mention was ever made of the absentee white officers-in-charge.

[10]The UK National Archives, (hereinafter TNA), DO 35/1119/31, *Cape Times*, 'Coloured Troop Train Disorder', 24 March 1943
[11]'Document 2 - Against the C.A.D. for Full Democratic Rights [1943]' in Allison Drew, *South Africa's Radical Tradition, a documentary history, Volume Two 1943 – 1964,* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1997).
[12]TNA DO 35/1119/31, *Cape Times*, 'Coloured Troop Train Disorder', 24 March 1943
[13]TNA DO 35/1119/31, Lord Harlech to C. R. Attlee, 29 March 1943, p.6

It is curious that an inconsequential incident of drunkenness by Coloured soldiers that caused no civilian casualties and was no more rowdy than a bar brawl demanded the 'first-class importance' of the parliament. The incident itself was not that important compared to the severity with which it was dealt with. The issue at hand was not the disorderly conduct of Coloured soldiers, but that of Coloured soldiers themselves. Non-White recruits presented an uncomfortable reality, one which was a necessity but not in conformity with the existing power structure. These amnesiac tendencies where characteristic of the white South African media which ignored their presence until it was politically expedient to the Dominion's white government. On the back of this incident, proponents for the CAD reaffirmed the need for special legislation for Coloured communities. Briefly, a case was being made for enfranchising Coloured soldiers – this too was swiftly dropped. There was little concern for the report of the investigation that was so passionately demanded once these political objectives were achieved. The *Cape Times* aptly concluded its coverage of the proceedings with – 'The matter then dropped.'

Although both cases highlight the challenges concerning the reporting of non-white service, newspaper archives remain important sources for scouting histories as-they-happened. They allow a glimpse into the day-to-day experiences of the soldiers. In the case of *The Cape Standard*, despite being 'led' accounts, they are still idiomatic accounts of the soldiers, although it is difficult to assess whether those are the stories that the ex-prisoners wanted to recount or were they simply what the interviewer and readers wanted them to recount. Of course, the historian must be cognisant of the multiple layers of politics and social strains impacting reporting. However, by employing a diversity of primary material to corroborate and revise, newspapers can be used as a foundation to explore the subaltern histories of non-white service. Wartime reporting, with the exception of first-person accounts, allows the historian propinquity to the non-white soldier's life. It allows one to assume the role of a wartime reader – one that was not just interested in news from the front, but also awaited news of the men from one's own community, seeking stories of 'adventures', valour and honour. It allows the historian to consume news of the war as it came, to imagine a participation with the community as they perceived the conflict, and to have a sense of the soldier's space in society and in the greatest conflicts of the twentieth century.

British Newsreels at War, 1939-45: A Significant Source for Scholars

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ABSTRACT
Subject to wartime restrictions, the five British commercial newsreel companies continued to produce cinema newsreels throughout the Second World War. This article summarises the voluntary and compulsory censorship arrangements for newsreel content and the rota system for filming to indicate how the Ministry of Information and the Services implicitly and explicitly controlled wartime newsreel production. As the unrivalled form of mass-communication of visual news media during the period, the newsreels contributed significantly to British wartime propaganda, and the purpose of the article is to argue for the value of the wartime newsreels as a source for scholars of the conflict.

Preparations for War

The average number of British cinema tickets sold in 1939 was over nineteen-million and included in the price of every ticket was a newsreel film.[1] Audiences had come to

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[1]Average weekly admissions to cinemas in Britain was 19.03 million. The average annual admission total was 990 million. H. E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and Cinemagoing in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 17, 2 (1954), pp. 133-170 (p. 134). As has been noted by other historians, the number of admissions does not account for multiple visits, and, therefore, does not indicate the number of cinemagoers. Anthony Aldgate highlighted how, in his article about the audience and producers of British newsreels in the 1930, Nicholas Pronay misinterpreted the figures published in Simon Rowson, 'The Statistical Survey of the Cinema Industry in Great Britain in 1934', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society,* 99, (1936), pp. 67-119 to claim that because there were 18.5 million admissions, this meant that 43% of the population were going to the cinema. Nicholas Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930s 1. Audience and Producers', *History*, 56, 188 (1971), pp. 411-477. Anthony Aldgate,

expect the full assemblage of shorter films that supported the main feature, and the term 'full accompanying programme', seen frequently in the cinema listings of local newspapers, included a newsreel.[2] The newsreel's entrenched position within the cinema programme meant that it was a form of visual news, possessing well-established exhibition networks, and the wide-reaching transmission through the screens of almost five thousand cinemas in Britain was an attractive prospect for the British government.[3] What made the cinema an even more desirable channel of communication was, that for the combined total of nearly four million cinema seats, the majority of people occupying those seats were working-class people – a stratum of society that the government had found difficult to engage via other outlets.[4]

Early in their preparations for the outbreak of an impending war, the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) recognised the potential that newsreels offered as a medium for conveying government messages, and agreed that it would be vital to integrate them into the government's wartime communication to the public.[5] However, the best way to approach the newsreel industry was uncertain. During the First World War, the War Office Cinematograph Committee (WOCC) had been able to take control of one of the four British commercial newsreels, Topical Budget: first releasing the newsreel as an 'outlet for Official propaganda film' in May 1917.[6] In this initial

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Cinema and History: British Newsreels and the Spanish Civil War, (London: Scholar Press, 1979), p. 54.

[2]'Tivoli', *Burnley Express*, 2 December 1939. 'Savoy', *Northampton Mercury*, 15 September 1939.

[3]Richard Farmer, *Cinemas and cinemagoing in wartime Britain, 1939-1945: The utility dream palace,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 8.

[4]Evidence for working-class attendance at the cinema is contained in Rowson's survey. The survey indicated that the majority of admissions were the cheaper seats, whether this was through choice or of necessity. Aldgate proposed that this was an obvious implication that 'cinema was most popular among the urban working class' – Anthony Aldgate, *Cinema and History,* p. 56.

[5]The *Committee of Imperial Defence* was 'formed for the purpose of preparing broad guidelines for the establishment of a Ministry of Information on the outbreak of war.' Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II,* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 12.; The newsreel companies had been contacted as early as 1938 by the skeleton Ministry of Information. See; The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA) INF 1/178, Letter from *Newsreel Association of Great Britain and Ireland* to D E O'Neill Secretary to R. Hon Leslie Burgin MP – Ministry of Transport. 28 September 1938.

[6]Luke McKernan, 'The Supreme Moment of the War': General Allenby's entry into Jerusalem', in Luke McKernan (ed.), *Yesterday's News: The British Cinema Newsreel Reader,* (London: British Universities Film and Video Council, 2002), pp. 41-67 (p. 47).

government intervention, the WOCC had agreed with William Jeapes, owner of Topical Budget, that he could continue to run his newsreel as before with the addition of exclusive film of the war provided by the WOCC. In acknowledgement of the new government involvement, the newsreel was renamed Topical Budget Official War News Film and then War Office Official Topical Budget.[7] However, the lack of sales of the newsreel combined with the strained relationship between Jeapes and the WOCC led Lord Beaverbrook, head of the WOCC, to buy Topical Budget outright in November 1917.[8]

The newsreel was then exhibited as Pictorial News (Official) from 23 February 1918, at which point it began to enjoy commercial success. Under Beaverbrook's control and the editorship of Holt-White, whom Beaverbrook had installed, the sales of the newsreel doubled, and it even posed a threat to the top newsreel at the time, Pathe's Animated Gazette.[9] This commercial success was beneficial in its own right but, more importantly, by doubling the sale of Pictorial News (Official), Beaverbrook had secured a much larger audience for a newsreel endorsed by the government and controlled by ministers. Beaverbrook's commercial success, however, did not provide a model for those tasked with incorporating newsreels into the propaganda of the Second World War. The CID planners failed to benefit from any precedents set in the previous war, as 'very little information about the various propaganda, censorship and news agencies of the First World War could be found'.[10]

In any case, the newsreel industry with which the CID was dealing in 1935 had developed significantly since 1917, and they were faced with a newsreel industry of increased power. The five companies (British Movietone News, British Paramount News, Pathe Gazette, Gaumont-British News, and Universal News) had formed a 'tight oligarchy' over the British newsreel industry by 1939 due, in part, to their backing from larger distribution companies: 20th Century Fox and Lord Rothermere UK, Paramount USA, ABPC UK and Warner Bros. USA, Gaumont-British UK, and General Distributors USA, respectively.[11] In lieu of distributing a state-produced newsreel as Beaverbrook had done in World War I, the planners at the CID adapted their strategy to reflect the changes in the commercial newsreel industry. The British

[7]Ibid.

[8]Luke McKernan, *Topical Budget: The Great British News Film,* (London: British Film Institute, 1991), p. 44.

[9] McKernan, 'General Allenby', p. 50.

[10]Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 13. McLaine outlines the struggles of the Committee of Imperial Defence to obtain any records relating to Northcliffe's decisions in pages 12-14.

[11]Nicholas Pronay, 'The newsreels: the illusion of actuality', in Paul Smith (ed.), *The Historian and Film Journal*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 112.

newsreel companies were approached for their co-operation in the case of a state emergency – an arrangement which the companies duly accepted. The newsreel producers were largely Conservative in their leanings and, in wartime, they felt that it would be their duty to contribute to the war effort through the production of newsreels. Safe in the knowledge that the newsreel companies had proved their willingness to toe the establishment line in peacetime, the government agreed that they could allow them to continue functioning relatively unsupervised.[12] Despite this arrangement, the newsreel companies did not evade all government control.

Conditions of Wartime Production

The first condition of wartime newsreel production imposed upon the newsreel companies by the government was the requirement to submit content as part of a voluntary censorship scheme. The newsreel companies were required to submit any content over which they had concerns might breach censorship regulations, to the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC).[13] The British Ministry of Information (MOI) needed the co-operation of the newsreel companies 'more, possibly than that of every other branch of the cinema industry', and so, after initially proposing to make newsreel censorship compulsory, the government chose instead to implement a voluntary system after concluding that the heads of the newsreel companies would respond best to this approach.[14] Despite the newsreel producers' mild protestations, in principle, the voluntary censorship was no great departure from the newsreel companies' own policies in peacetime.[15] As Rachael Low noted, the newsreel companies of the 1930s were already 'confined within the limits set by a form of self-censorship yielding to

[12]The newsreels rarely came under government criticism, apart from the occasional misdemeanour. The usual perpetrator was the editor of *British Paramount News*, G T Cummins. See; 'Shanghai's War Filmed in All Its Horror', British Paramount News Issue No. 683, 13 Sep 1937. http://bufvc.ac.uk/newsonscreen/search/index.php/story/35432 Accessed 15 Oct 2020.

[13]The BBFC were responsible for conducting newsreel censorship on behalf of the MOI.

[14]TNA INF 1/195, Letter from Sir Kenneth Clark to Lord Stanhope, 22 January 1940.

[15]There were occasions when the voluntary nature of censorship was called into question: In January 1940, Lord Denham attempted to use criticism of British Paramount News Issue No. 924 to call for compulsory newsreel censorship. However, Films Officer at the time, Sir Kenneth Clark, stressed that censorship would be 'bitterly resented and opposed by the Newsreel Companies' and that 'voluntary good behaviour is notoriously much more valuable than enforced good behaviour'. He believed that 'it would be a thousand pities to lose the greater by seeking to impose the less', and Denham's appeals were thrown out; See TNA INF 1/195, Letter from Sir Kenneth Clark to Lord Stanhope, 22 January 1940.

official and unofficial pressures both actual and anticipated'.[16] Self-regulation was already embedded in the newsreel companies' production policies, but the threat of compulsory government censorship gave producers further incentive to abide by the guidelines, and so the MOI censorship scheme remained voluntary throughout the course of the war.

In truth, much of the footage had already been subjected to military censorship by the time it reached the producers in the newsreel offices. It was, in fact, this security censorship, carried out under Defence Regulation Three, that was the most consequential for wartime newsreel content.[17] The list of 'matters specifically covered by the prohibition' included 'any information about His Majesty's Naval, Military or Air Forces and their disposition, movement or condition, or about any operations or projected operations of the forces; information about measures taken for the defence or fortification of any place; information about prisoners of war; information about munitions'.[18] The Services had the power to impound censored footage, indefinitely, until they considered it to be safe to release back to the company who owned it. Newsreel production relied on speed to exhibit footage whilst it was still newsworthy. Therefore, there was no guarantee that footage would not be rendered useless by the time it was returned to the companies for exhibition and, as such, much footage was never seen by contemporary audiences.[19]

Relations between the newsreel companies and the Services were distinctly hostile in the first year of the war. Finding themselves subjected to the above security measures which, in the opinion of newsreel employees, 'reached a level that approached hysterical', the newsreel companies resented the restraints of military control, especially as the prohibitions served to prevent the exhibition of subjects which wartimes audiences most wanted to see. On 7 October 1940, Mass Observer Len England filed a report on the newsreels which stated that there had been a significant drop in popularity of the newsreels with audiences during 1940 and, when questioned on this point by Mass Observation, the newsreel companies 'put blame on the

[16]Rachael Low, *Films of Comment and Persuasion in the 1930s,* (London, 1979), p. 2.
[17] *Defence Regulation Three* made it an offence to 'in any manner likely to prejudice the efficient prosecution of the war to obtain, possess, or publish information on military matters, the term "military" being used in its widest sense; See *Arrangements for the Application in War of "Security" Censorship of Films*. C V Usborne. TNA INF 1/178 Film Censorship Part Two. TNA.
[18]TNA INF 1/178, Film Censorship Part Two, *Arrangements for the Application in War of "Security" Censorship of Films*, Memorandum by C V Usborne.
[19]This is significant when considering popular post-war documentaries such as television documentary series, *The World At War* (ITV, 1973-1974), where footage used by producer, Jeremy Isaacs, was not necessarily seen on screens at the time.

Services'.[20] In contrast, for serving military personnel and veterans fulfilling civilian or advisory roles, the decision whether to release footage relied on the balance between 'the value of informing the public as fully as possible vs. fear of passing something valuable to the enemy', with the balance often tipping towards the latter.[21] Although as the war progressed the relationship between the newsreel companies and the military improved, and 'secrets were imparted to the principals of the news-reel companies in a way which would have horrified the early guardians of national security', the newsreel producers continued to find military interference burdensome, as they did the MOI-imposed rota system.[22]

The rota system operated on the principle that each company was assigned to film for a government department or armed service. Any footage filmed on rota was then pooled to all five newsreel companies for use in their issues. Audience consumption of visual news of the war was dependent on the cinema that they attended, so the sharing of footage equally amongst the companies was vital to ensure that valuable propaganda was exhibited on every screen nationwide. The primary appeal of the newsreel medium for the government was its potential to reach mass audiences, and the rota system was a fundamental factor in ensuring widespread distribution that satisfied the government. The newsreel companies, on the other hand, remained unconvinced by the benefits of the rota system. It was a 'situation that they resented', as the newsreel industry had previously thrived on competition.[23] However, the pleas by the newsreel producers to abandon the rota system on account of the similarity of each companies' reels were thrown out by the MOI's Honorary Trade Adviser, Colonel A C Bromhead, and this too continued for the duration of the war.[24]

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[20]Mass Observation was a social research organisation active during the war: Mass Observation Archive, File Report 444, 'Newsreel Report 3', 7 October 1940, Len England.

[21]Clive Coultass, *Images for Battle: British Films and the Second World War, 1939-1945*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), p. 41.

[22]Gerald Sanger, 'We Lived in the Presence of History: The Story of British Movietone News in the War Years', in McKernan (ed.), *Yesterday's News* (London: BUFVC, 2002), pp. 163-170 (p. 166).

[23]Coultass, *Images for Battle*, p. 41.

[24]It would have been unusual for a cinemagoer to have seen the output of all five of these newsreel companies' output. As such, the consumption of newsreels by contemporary audiences was dependent on the cinema which an individual attended. Though the rota system resulted in the inevitable similarity of content, there were still differences between how the five newsreel companies presented wartime events on the screen. A Mass-Observation report on a Gaumont-British newsreel, for example, cannot be analysed without an understanding of the nuances of newsreel production specific to the company, Gaumont-British News.

Newsreel content was deliberately shaped by the newsreel companies under implicit and explicit control from the government and the Services to present a carefully constructed narrative, and the function of wartime newsreels was to mould a predominantly working-class audience's perception of wartime events to boost morale. At a time when no other visual news media challenged the newsreel format, the ability to influence national feeling was unprecedented. Consequently, the biases and decisions made by those responsible for newsreel production directly influenced how wartime audiences viewed the events of the Second World War.

Newsreels have had an interminable effect on the way that many British people today continue to perceive the role of Britain in the Second World War. A clear example of this being how, throughout 2020, the messages created by the contemporary propagandists of the war have been regularly utilised by British politicians during the Covid-19 pandemic.[25] Evaluating the conditions under which wartime newsreels were made has never been more crucial, as the freely available digitised newsreels now have the potential to reach a larger mass audience than ever before.[26] Understanding the impact that newsreels had in the dissemination of wartime news and propaganda can improve scholars' understanding, not only of how events were presented to audiences during World War II but also of the development of the production and consumption of visual news culture over the last 80 years. Thus, bridging the gap between print and online multimedia news communication.

[25]Many Covid-19 communications in 2020 from Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, emphasised the same motifs as those exhibited in wartime newsreels. For one such example regarding the 'spirit' of the British people see; Letter from The Prime Minister to British Public, 'Letter to Nation on Coronavirus', March 2020; 'It is with that great British spirit that we will beat coronavirus and we will beat it together.'; Similar tropes feature in newsreel commentaries where attention is continually drawn to the 'spirit' of the British people under aerial bombardment: See Commentary, 'London Carries On', Pathe Gazette Issue No. 40/79, 30 Sep 1940. http://bufvc.ac.uk/newsonscreen/search/index.php/document/98288_commentary Accessed 19 Oct 2020.

[26]British Pathé and British Movietone News have uploaded thousands of newsreel films to their YouTube channels; 'British Pathé', https://www.youtube.com/user/britishpathe Accessed 12 October 2020; 'British Movietone', https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHq777_waKMJw6SZdABmyaA Accessed 12 October 2020. In October 2020, the total number of subscribers to the two channels combined amounted to over 2 million. In addition, the viewings of each YouTube video can be multiplied via the various online sharing platforms.

The Second World War Archives of the Institut Français du Royaume Uni, London

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ABSTRACT
London was the first capital city of Free France, the French external resistance movement led by Charles de Gaulle. This city also hosted a dynamic French community and since 1910 a French Institute. This piece reviews the Second World War archives held at the French Institute, with a focus on the documents of its then director, Denis Saurat, who was one of the first London French to rally to de Gaulle. However, by 1942 Saurat had become a leading anti-Gaullist and the French Institute archives allow scholars to add nuance to the history of Free France and wartime Britain.

On a sunny October day in 2011, the Head Librarian of the French Institute in the United Kingdom, Ophélie Ramonatxo led me to a basement where the dim lighting revealed shelves stacked full of books and boxes. As we waded through the rooms, I felt distinctively overwhelmed by the large supply of documents that lay in front of me. This was my first encounter with the material I would be working on over the following years, first as part of my PhD, and later for other research projects. In this brief note, I shall discuss the wealth of records which have passed through the French Institute, with a particular focus on archives pertaining to the Second World War.[1]

Ophélie Ramonatxo explained to me that only a few researchers had ever used the documents stored here. One room, for example, contained the '*fonds ancien*', a collection of books dating back to the seventeenth century. These included the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (1688) and a 1705 edition of *One Thousand and One Nights*, and such remarkable texts stood next to eighteenth century volumes by Voltaire, Fénelon, and Rousseau. In addition, a significant number of boxes contained

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1431
[1]The author would like to thank Chantal Morel, Françoise Watel, Cyril Daydé, Nicolas Christian and Italy Lotem for their help with this piece.

the untold institutional history of the French Institute, from its creation in 1910 to the present day.[2] Today, these archives are no longer stored at the French Institute and the rooms have been transformed and incorporated into a new children's library (the Bibliothèque Quentin Blake) that opened in 2015. Following a 2014 mission led by the archivist at the French Diplomatic Archives, Pierre Chancerel and thanks to the work of interns Cécilia Olympe and Lucie Humeau, the '*fonds ancien*' has been weeded and the remaining material was split between libraries in France and in the UK. The archives about the institute's history were sent to the French Diplomatic Archives in Nantes in the late 2010s.[3]

What remains in the much smaller archive of the French Institute are documents pertaining to its Second World War activities (in part because some are on loan or were donated by private individuals and therefore must remain *in situ*). These documents have received scant attention to date. And yet, they can tell us much about Franco-British wartime relations and the French external resistance in London. The British capital bears particular significance for historians of France since it was there that Charles de Gaulle created the resistance movement Free France in June 1940. At that time, the French Institute was a reputable French cultural centre, which drew de Gaulle's particular attention. As his headquarters at 4 Carlton Gardens rapidly proved too cramped for the growing resistance movement, the General mobilised the Institute – together with the adjacent French secondary school (now Lycée français Charles de Gaulle) – for the purposes of conducting propaganda and taking care of Free France administration.[4]

The lack of scholarly understanding about the French Institute's history became obvious to scholars during the 2010 commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the 18 June Appeal made by Charles de Gaulle from the BBC studio in London, which was organised by the Institute.[5] The year 2010 also marked the celebration of the

[2]On the history of the French Institute see my doctoral thesis Charlotte Faucher, 'The "French Intellectual Consulate to Great Britain"? The Institut Français Du Royaume-Uni, 1910–1959' (Queen Mary University of London, 2016).

[3]Archives du service des Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, versement 2010-2014, carton n° 1553: rapport de mission à Londres de Pierre Chancerel (2014), accessed thanks to a waiver.

[4]On the lycée see Charlotte Faucher, 'Des Origines à La Veille de La Seconde Guerre Mondiale, 1915-1939', in *Le Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle de Londres, 1915–2015*, by Charlotte Faucher et al., (London: Association des Anciens Elèves du lycée Charles de Gaulle de Londres, 2015), pp.16–53.

[5]There remain few online traces of this events, but see https://www.oliviercadic.com/actu-%E2%80%93-commemoration-18-juin-1940/de-

French Institute's centenary. In 2011, Cyril Daydé, a heritage curator at the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in La Courneuve near Paris, visited the Institute during a short mission to highlight the historical and World War Two material of the institution. At that point, the archives of the Institute had recently been catalogued by the former Head Librarian Raymond Bérard, together librarians Chantal Morel and Céline Nonon.[6] The archives therefore provided ideal, newly classified material for doctoral work which I undertook thanks to my supervisor Julian Jackson and his successful bid for an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award in partnership with the French Institute.[7]

Denis Saurat Archives

The core of the Second World War archives collection at the French Institute in London is made of the Denis Saurat collection, which was donated by the Saurat family. Denis Saurat was the Institute's Director from 1924 until 1945, when he was dismissed from his position owing to his political anti-Gaullist attitudes during the war. When I started my doctoral research, little was known about Saurat: There weren't - and still aren't - any book-length academic studies on Saurat, and historians tended to paint an image of friendship between him and the leader of the Free French. Credit must nonetheless be given to Jean-François Muracciole's short bibliographical notice in the *Dictionnaire de la France Libre,* in which he efficiently sums up Saurat's political engagement and difficult relations with de Gaulle, and to Martyn Cornick, who was the first researcher to study the Denis Saurat archives for a paper he gave in 2010 during the 18 June commemoration events at the French Institute.[8] Using this collection, my doctoral work has revealed a complicated story of tension, political disagreement and ultimate break between de Gaulle and Saurat. This rupture occurred in 1942, as Saurat had become a fervent and vocal anti-Gaullist, who was critical of the 'military one man show' and lack of democracy within Free France. Certainly, Saurat was not alone in his anxiety about de Gaulle's authoritarian tendencies.[9]

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gaulle-londres-et-la-resistance-a-l%E2%80%99honneur-a-l%E2%80%99institut-francais/ and https://www.franceinter.fr/archives/2010/06-18
Accessed 28 August 2020.

[6]Interviews with Cyril Daydé and Chantal Morel, 4 September 2020.

[7]At the time, Julian Jackson was working on Charles de Gaulle and the role of the French Institute in introducing the general to Britain audiences was relevant to his research. See Julian Jackson, *Charles de Gaulle,* (London: Haus, 2003); Julian Jackson, *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle,* (London: Penguin Books, 2018).

[8]Jean-François Muracciole, 'Saurat, Denis (1890-1958)', in *Dictionnaire de La France Libre*, ed. François Broche, Jean-François Muracciole, and Georges Caïtucoli, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2010).

[9]Pierre Bloch, *De Gaulle, ou Le temps des méprises,* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1969); Henri de Kerillis, *De Gaulle dictateur. Une grande mystification de l'histoire,* (Montréal: Éditions

However, the position of public intellectual and specialist of French politics that he had carved for himself in London's media landscape - together with his leadership of the French Institute - meant that he was one of the figures best placed to effectively harm de Gaulle.[10]

The Denis Saurat collection is a fantastic repository of information for anyone with a desire to write about the London French wartime activities, de Gaulle's developing political ideas, or Free French tensions and networks, in particular with British Francophiles. While in the summer 1940, major figures refused to rally to Gaulle's project,[11] Denis Saurat's attitude was quite the opposite. Before the fall of France, he had given lectures and written on the importance of France fighting against Germany. He found in de Gaulle a bourgeoning figure of a leader who shared some of his views on France and he rapidly put himself at the service of de Gaulle. De Gaulle was equally keen to keep Saurat in his entourage since Saurat was at the centre of a wide network of Francophiles and knew the British press very well – two elements which Saurat used to introduce de Gaulle to British audiences. Over the summer of 1940, on de Gaulle's request, the two men met almost daily. Saurat thus wrote down his many thoughts on these meetings and the Free French movement in very unconventional ways. While some of his notes do read like transcriptions of conversation he had had with de Gaulle, they also echo themes that had been important to Saurat's intellectual trajectory. Saurat also kept versions of speeches, letters, and newspapers articles about the Free France (these documents are stored in folders 21 and 35 of the archives, while the other folders are primarily collections of Saurat's fiction and non-fiction writing on occultism, poetry, folklore and British literature). In addition, these archives reveal Saurat's interest in civil matters within Free France (in particular the legal status of French men and women who had come to Britain as exiles and refugees during and after the Fall of France), something which de Gaulle disregarded in the summer 1940. They also offer a glimpse of de Gaulle's attitude when faced with early diplomatic tensions (the two men discussed in detail responses to the British naval

Beauchemin, 1945); Emmanuelle Loyer, *Paris à New York: intellectuels et artistes français en exil (1940–1947),* (Paris: Grasset, 2005), pp. 188–92; Robert Belot, *La résistance sans de Gaulle : politique et gaullisme de guerre,* (Paris: Fayard, 2006). For french left-wing circles in London see also Emmanuelle Rey, 'La dissidence socialiste à Londres: le groupe Jean Jaurès et le quotidien France (août 1940–août 1944)' (MA thesis, Paris I, 1998).

[10]Charlotte Faucher, 'From Gaullism to Anti-Gaullism: Denis Saurat and the French Cultural Institute in Wartime London', *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no. 1 (2019): pp. 60–81.

[11]Among those were Jean Monnet, then in charge of Franco British war production, leftist intellectuals (Henri Bonnet, Henri Laugier, Henri Longchambon) or pro-consuls in the colonies (the Generals Nogues, Peyrouton, Puaux and Mittelhauser).

attack on French Navy ships at Mers El Kébir in early July 1940 for example). We also learn about de Gaulle's indecisiveness when it came to attributing positions within a Free French committee.[12]

By the end of the summer 1940, de Gaulle was beginning to distance himself from this exuberant scholar of occultism for whom he now saw a more limited cultural and educative role as opposed to the more grandiose political ambition initially harboured by Saurat. In spite of the substantial gains de Gaulle made thanks to Saurat's public diplomacy strategies in the first months of Free France, the General later shattered Saurat's political aspirations. On the one hand de Gaulle no longer needed his erstwhile intellectual ally. On the other, new individuals more amenable to de Gaulle, in particular René Cassin, had joined the movement and rose to positions in education and civilian administration that Saurat had coveted.

Gradually excluded from de Gaulle's close circle, Saurat continued to support Free France through the French Institute (organising lectures in particular) and networking with British Francophiles. He also began to meet with anti-Gaullists, such as Roger Cambon the former minister-counsellor at the French embassy and André Labarthe, who had rallied to de Gaulle on June 1940.[13] At the Institute, Saurat sheltered and contributed to *La France Libre*, a largely anti-Gaullist magazine edited by Labarthe and the young philosopher Raymond Aron (issues of *La France Libre* are now part of the Free France archives of the French Institute). Saurat's anti-Gaullism is apparent throughout his archives, which thus constitute an important and rare opportunity to appreciate how some French men in London considered they were resisting the Nazi enemy, and yet did not support de Gaulle's movement.[14] While Saurat's hostility to Free France stemmed from a strong personal bitterness over how de Gaulle had gradually stopped requesting his help on the one hand, it also reflected a deep belief in democracy and international military cooperation, which he saw as two key elements of the French resistance but which ran counter to de Gaulle's strategy. In 1945, Saurat was dismissed from the directorship of the French Institute by the French authorities. By then, he considered that Gaullists had purposely conspired against him and saw himself as a victim who had been silenced.

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[12]Archives de l'Institut Français du Royaume Uni (thereafter AIFRU), Denis Saraut collection, folder 35.

[13]Robert Belot, 'Labarthe, André (1902–1967)', in *Dictionnaire de la France libre*, ed. François Broche and Jean-François Muracciole, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2010).

[14]On anti-Gaullism amongst the Resistance see also Julian Jackson, 'General de Gaulle and His Enemies: Anti-Gaullism in France since 1940', *Transactions of The Royal Historical Society* sixth series, no. xi (1999): 43–65; Nicholas Atkin, *The Forgotten French: Exiles in the British Isles, 1940–44,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

These thoughts are best illustrated in a draft of a memoir that Saurat never completed or published, and in which he reflects on the decline of his own relationship with Free France and de Gaulle, but also on what he perceived to be a toxic atmosphere within the Gaullist movement in general. The long table of content reflects Saurat's sense of self-worth: he had a high esteem of his role in London[15] and saw himself as a victim of not only de Gaulle, but also of the British.[16] The text's most defining characteristic was a feeling of resentment towards de Gaulle and one marginal comment even read "The general is the double of King Pétain; de Gaulle gives the same interpretation". Throughout the short typescript, Saurat compares de Gaulle and Pétain on multiple occasions, outlining that "there is a secret and deep harmony between these two - seemingly enemy- reigns? In reality, they were mere competitors: they wanted the supreme seat when really, there was only one seat". Later in the text, he uses the word "dictator" to describe both men (a trope that other anti-Gaullists had resorted to),[17] and in a final trait of bitter humor which reinforces de Gaulle's reputation of being wrathful, Saurat mused:

> My general, there are three things to be said against wrath:
> 1. It is a deadly sin
> 2. It is not a means of governing
> 3. This always triggers acts of counter-wrath which are also deadly sins and not a means of governing.[18]

Free French archives

The Institute holds additional Second World War archives that are testament to its wartime activities and to its role as a research centre in French studies and French history in the United Kingdom. The periodical collection is particularly impressive and constitutes an excellent complement to materials available at the British Library, the University of Oxford library and at the War and Culture Studies Archive Collection

[15]AIFRU, Denis Saurat collection, unfinished memoir: Chapter 57 : "Without me, there would be nothing"

[16]AIFRU, Denis Saurat collection, unfinished memoir: Chapter 59 : "Too pro English to be used by de Gaulle Too pro de Gaulle to be used by the English"

[17]Raymond Aron, "L'Ombre des Bonapartes", *La France Libre*, (6) 34, *August 1943*, 280–8. David Drake, *Intellectuals and Politics in Post-War France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 45. Accusations of Bonapartism were also made in the American press and French exiles in the US. See Alison Appleby, 'The British Left Intelligentsia and France: Perceptions and Interactions 1930-1944' (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2013), 179.

[18]AFRU, Denis Saurat Collection, folder 21.

at the University of Bristol (previously at the University of Westminster).[19] Periodicals in French published in London during the Second World War are precious to historians of the French in London and of the resistance; they include *France* and the aforementioned *France Libre* as well as newspapers about the colonial resistance such as *France d'abord*, *Revues des Forces Libres d'Afrique* and *France Orient*.

The Institute archives also hold the Joan Delin archive (donated by Delin in 2001), which is made up of monographs and memoirs about the French Resistance, notes and recordings accumulated by Joan Delin during research for her thesis.[20] Delin also gathered an impressive collections of primary sources on public opinion, Free French radio programs, Free French scouts in Britain, Gaullist military operation, as well as unique material such as the author's correspondence with the British Legion, documents about the Free French cadets and the Free French aerial forces. The final section of the Delin archive consists of recordings between the author and researchers, former resistance fighters, British supporters of de Gaulle and French people who lived in Britain during the war. Interviewees include the British Operation Office and historian of the SOE Michael Foot, Charles Guillois, the Breton soldier who joined de Gaulle and ran a BBC radio show in Breton language during which he called all Breton soldiers to join Free France. Others have less well-known war time trajectories, such as Mme Ragody Hughes, whose mother ran the 'Friends of Free France' association in Wales during the war. Under the auspices of this charity, she organised 'Flag days' to raise money, exhibitions to promote Free France and its ideas to Welsh audiences.[21]

Conclusion

The French Institute in the United Kingdom receives frequent requests from history enthusiasts, journalists and researchers who wish to read the Free French archives, hoping to access administrative, political, and military documents about the movement. Disappointment often follows as such material is stored at the National Archives in Pierrefitte and the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in La Courneuve ('London-Algiers collection'). And yet, the material deposited at the French Institute in London is precious in many other respects: it might not trace the

[19]On The War and Culture Studies Archive at the University of Bristol, see the brief introduction by Prof Martin Hurcombe, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce1orvqiVdU (accessed 1 September 2020).

[20]Joan Delin, PhD thesis: L'opinion britannique et les Français en Grande-Bretagne pendant l'année 1940, (University of Lille, 1993).

[21]Arlette Ragody-Hughes et John Martin, 'Centenaire De Société Franco-Britannique De Cardiff 1906 -2006' http://www.francais-a-cardiff.org.uk/history/centenary-history-en.pdf. Accessed 3 September 2020. On French charities and Franco-British groups in Britain during the war see Atkin, *The Forgotten French*.

grand narrative of the French external resistance, but rather helps to integrate the tension and disagreement, and also the role of civil society as well as journalists in supporting and examining the movement during and after the war. It is only by appreciating the challenges from within European resistance groups and the self-reflection of members of the Resistance that we can write a history of the Second World War.

NARA Escape and Evasion Reports

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ABSTRACT
This Research Note gives a brief introduction to the series of Escape and Evasion reports held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Making up a rich source base, these documents can be used to explore the operational history of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF), the history of MIS-X, escape and evasion planning during the Second World War, diplomatic history, and social history.[1] In addition, they offer a very compelling story of the relationships that flourished between aircrews and European civilians during the war.

Much of what we know about escape and evasion during the Second World War comes from memoirs written by aircrews who were helped by European civilians or by intelligence officers who spent the war years developing increasingly sophisticated protocols for getting aircrews out of Europe.[2] Scholarly attention to escape and evasion has lagged behind other aspects of the wartime experience. However, there is a rich source base, both from the American and British perspective, to support all kinds of research. There are two reasons for this excellent record keeping. The first is the fact that intelligence organizations understood they needed to know more about the experience of aircrew in Occupied Europe if they were going to better help them. The second reason is that the British and Americans agreed that they would support

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1432
[1]MIS-X was a section of the United States Department of War that was modelled after the British MI9. It focused on helping prisoners of war and servicemen who were evading capture in occupied territories.
[2]There are a number of memoirs that deal with the subject, including: Herman Bodson, *Downed Allied Airmen and Evasion of Capture: The Role of Local Resistance Networks in World War II,* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005); George Watt, *Escape from Hitler's Europe: An American Airman behind Enemy Lines,* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990); Airey Neave, *Saturday at M.I.9,* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969); Donald Darling, *Secret Sunday,* (London: William Kimber, 1975); and Lloyd Shoemaker, *Escape Factory: The Story of MIS-X,* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990).

European civilians who had helped Anglo-American aircrews, so needed to know as much as possible about these interactions.

There are excellent records at the United Kingdom National Archives (TNA) at Kew, including a large collection of documents that helped the Anglo-Americans award honours to European civilians, which contain both biographical details of helpers and narratives of evasion. The archives at Kew also contain invaluable information about MI9, the intelligence branch devoted to escape and evasion, but finding information about individual flyers and their experience requires a bit more digging. However, the collection of escape and evasion reports held by the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) allows researchers a way to easily access individual stories, as the series has been digitized by NARA.[3] Each of the approximately 2000 reports ranges in length, but many are 40 plus pages long. Every man who crash landed in Europe and made it back to the UK was interviewed at least once, and sometimes several times, about his experience.[4] One portion of the record contained a form with a list of set questions, though there was always a section where the flyer was invited to simply narrate his experience from start to finish. Interestingly, these narratives are sometimes edited by an unknown hand before they were typed up for the official record. We can find this editorialising especially when flyers were sharing information they thought other flyers should have. For instance, one man was adamant in his report that flyers should insist that civilians take them to 'les resistances' and that they should pressure the escape organizations to move them quickly. The note next to this adds: 'At the risk of being tedious, briefers must instruct air crews never to enquire about organizations, because 1) if such information gets out the helper gets shot; 2) only the Germans are making such enquiries; and 3) therefore the evader is risking his own life by his foolishness'.[5]

This example of editorialising for the sake of improving the success rate of evasion highlights how these documents could be used for research on escape and evasion at the highest levels – the planning that took place at MIS-X, the American branch of intelligence devoted to evasion. For example, the questionnaires given to flyers often asked about the aid boxes they were given. Through the answers, we can see the

[3]NARA Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, Series: Escape and Evasion Reports, 1942–1945.

[4]This is true, too, for British flyers, but those interviews are not as well organized as the American ones.

[5]Stonebarger, Gilbert Marvin (Second Lieutenant), NARA Identifier:5555487/Local Identifier: E & E 846. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

process of improvement and adjustment that took place during the war to better equip flyers before they left on bombing missions. But we can also use these records for many other avenues of inquiry: operational history, diplomatic history, social history, and more can be explored via these reports.

Operational history

Each document tells us what the mission target was for the unit in question while the narratives often relay stories about what went wrong. Gilbert Schowalter told his interviewer that, on their way to bomb Romilly, they 'left Molesworth about 1030 hours 12 December 1942. We were over the coast of France at 1150 hours. We saw ship No. 582 jettison its bombs and the men bale out. This ship slipped under and to the right of us and it was at this time that two of their crew jumped. Our No. 3 engine ran away, shortly followed by No. 2. No.1 was throwing off violently. We all landed uninjured…Our crew estimated that we had destroyed six enemy fighter planes during the attack and while coming down.'[6] Some excellent work has been done on the bombing campaigns in France and these documents can add further details about missions, what kind of enemy response the USAAF met along the way, and the end result.

Diplomatic relations

Using interpersonal relationships as a lens through which to explore diplomatic relations, I mostly use these records as a way to investigate relations between France, the UK, and the US, but Spain also features fairly prominently in these documents, as most evaders made their way through Spain, to Gibraltar. For instance, Second Lieutenant Howard Kelly crossed into Spain and was directed to approach the Spanish police who were 'pleasant to deal with'. He was briefly imprisoned, then released into a hotel, from where he contacted the American Consul.[7] We can compare this to First Lieutenant Cody Watson, who was imprisoned in Spain for 25 days[8] or Second

[6]Schowalter, Gilbert (First Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554650/Local Identifier: E & E 8. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

[7]Kelly, Howard W. (Second Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554672/Local Identifier: E & E 30. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

[8]Watson, Cody (First Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554702/Local Identifier: E & E 62. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

Lieutenant Robert Smith, who was also arrested and sent to prison in Malgrat.[9] Taking into account the dates of these encounters, somebody could use these documents to chart out the changing nature of Spain's approach to dealing with Anglo-American evaders, which would fit into a broader history of Spanish-American or Spanish-British diplomatic relationships during the war.

Social history

These records are particularly valuable for assessing the biographical history of the USAAF as each report tells us the flyer's age, length of service, peacetime profession, and address. Using them alongside similar records that we have for civilian helpers allows us to establish a collective biography of both flyers and helpers. A careful study will tell us more about their socio-economic backgrounds: How old were they? What kind of work did they do? Where in France did most flyers land? Where in France were 'helpers' located? What conclusions might be drawn about the connection between the flyers own personal histories and their decision to enlist in the Air Force? Establishing a collective biography can help us understand the connections between people that would not be apparent from individual biographies. We will be able to know more about which institutions or networks influenced people's actions and we can identify patterns of behaviour.

The narratives told by flyers help round out the biographical details, as we can use these stories to learn more about the relationships between flyers and helpers. Most flyers report that they were given immediate aid upon landing in France, which was an essential element to a successful evasion. Flyers needed additional food and drink, local intelligence, as well as civilian clothing, to be able to navigate through the country without being caught. Sometimes, as in Frank Greene's case, the immediate help was overwhelming – he reported that 40-50 French civilians came running to his crash site and his injuries were tended by a farmer's wife.[10] Others, like Carey Ford, were refused help multiple times.[11] Sometimes the flyer would be helped by well-meaning civilians who would take him to local authorities, only to be threatened with arrest at

[9]Smith, Robert E. (Second Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554649/Local Identifier: E & E 7. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

[10]Greene, Frank W. (ssg) NARA Identifier: 5554691/Local Identifier: E & E 51. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

[11]Ford, Carey Bernard (Staff Sergeant) NARA Identifier: 5554689/Local Identifier: E & E 49. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

that level.[12] One important limitation to keep in mind when using these sources, however, is the fact that these are the narratives of flyers who successfully evaded capture. There were many others who did not successfully make it out of Occupied Europe and these records do not reflect this.

At the end of the day, these records can be used for all kinds of research, but they are most impressive, I think, for lending a human element to a story that sometimes leaves it out. Books and articles about strategic bombing sometimes neglect the fact that these missions were flown by young men and those young men sometimes ended up stuck in foreign countries, attempting to return home without getting caught. Nothing reflects this human story more than the evidence in these records of French civilians tending to injured aircrew or taking care to tend to their burials if they did not survive. Mark McDermott landed safely in France, but the other members of his crew did not make it. He remembered that one of them 'had a large funeral. There were over 2,000 at the funeral. The French people took his watch, ring and bracelet. They are going to send it to his wife after the war.'[13] Another file references American aircrew who were shot and buried in France and the note reads that 'A large number - several hundred - French people came to the funeral, which irritated the Germans.'[14] Attending these funerals was not without risk for these civilians and sheltering American aircrews was punished by imprisonment, deportation, and death. The human relationships that flourished in this context are worth remembering and these documents help us do that.

[12]Kelly, Howard W. (Second Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554672/Local Identifier: E & E 30. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

[13]Mc Dermott, Mark L. (Second Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554654/Local Identifier: E & E 12. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

[14]Wemheuer, Joseph E. (Second Lieutenant) NARA Identifier: 5554676/Local Identifier: E & E 36. Record Group 498: Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army (World War II), 1942–1947, NARA [electronic record].

A Separate Peace? Reconsidering Post-conflict Military Occupations[1]

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ABSTRACT
This research note makes the case for further historical work comparing the military occupations of Japan and Iraq. Despite serious differences, a comparison of these two related events reveals long-term trends. These include Anglo-American strategic and economic thinking, questions of legitimacy in military occupations, how policy planning works, the problem of interagency rivalry in foreign policy making, and the limitations of advance planning.

Peace is a strange word. It is an abstract noun, neither singular nor plural. As we reflect on the end of the Second World War from 75 years remove, we see that it ended not with one peace, but with many separate peaces, in different places at different times. There are clear demarcation points for the end of hostilities in 1945: 8 May in Europe, 15 August in Asia. But for the vanquished, peace was a thing that developed in the space between surrender, foreign military occupation, and the eventual transition to returned sovereignty.

This long liminal space between war and peace had profound impacts on the occupied, occupiers, and on world order. It is no surprise then that American-led postwar Allied military occupations have inspired a vast historical literature. Historians have considered a diversity of national and subnational perspectives, and myriad effects

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1433
[1]As an historian of the occupation of Japan, the author has been considering the themes in this article for some time and would like to thank Stephen Stedman and the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford, Daniel Wirls at UC Santa Cruz, and Atul Bhardwaj and Inderjeet Parmar, organisers of the 'US Think Tanks and Foundations in World Politics Workshop' for providing the space to develop these ideas.

from social to political to environmental.[2] But while so much has been written on the war and on individual occupations, relatively little historical work has been done bringing the separate 'peaces' together in comparative perspective. [3] This research note presents a call for more comparative work on occupations.

Several factors have gotten in the way of such work. The expansion of the field of diplomatic history into multilingual research has reinvigorated the field and driven a corpus of excellent globalised work which looks beyond Anglo-American perspectives. However, this also leads to a sort of siloing of researchers into area specialisations. Historians with expertise in Japan, Germany, Korea, or Italy, all countries occupied in the wake of the Second World War, infrequently read each other or 'compare notes' at academic conferences as they work in what appear to be very different subfields. Rare is the historian who can conduct research in all of these languages or who has deep knowledge of the history of each country.

This siloing problem is even greater when considering the more recent but related occupation of Iraq, which is separated by not only region but also era. John Dower, a giant in the field of the Occupation of Japan, blazed a trail when he published *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9–11/Iraq* in 2010.[4] In regard to such complex comparative work, Ussama Makdisi, a specialist in modern Arab history, asks 'what

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[2]Laura Hein's 'Revisiting America's Occupation of Japan,' *Cold War History*, 11, 4 (2011), pp. 579-599, is a useful survey of the literature on Japan. For a consideration of current trends in the early Occupation of Germany, see Gareth Pritchard, 'The Occupation of Germany in 1945 and the Politics of German History,' *History Compass* 7, 2 (2009), pp. 447–473.

[3]Some examples evaluating the occupations of Germany and Japan together include, Susan Carruthers, *The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Masako Shibata, *Japan and Germany under the U.S. Occupation: A Comparative Analysis of Post-War Education Reform,* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008); and Melissa Willard-Foster, 'Planning the Peace and Enforcing the Surrender: Deterrence in the Allied Occupations of Germany and Japan,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 40, 1 (Summer 2009), pp. 33–56. Comparisons also appear in International Relations literature on nation building. For example, Francis Fukuyama's edited volume draws historical comparisons between Germany, Japan and many other American reconstruction projects and interventions in the context of understanding 21 Century American nation building in Iraq and Afghanistan. Francis Fukuyama ed*., Nation-Building Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, (Johns Hopkins, 2006).

[4]John Dower, *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9–11/Iraq,* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010). The book presents sweeping comparisons of the immediate origins and ends of both conflicts, and the third part of the work is devoted to comparing the occupations.

kind of expertise or collaboration is required to take […] [such a juxtaposition] to its full potential?'[5] There is a sense that such research focus is too big to be undertaken alone. As most work on such recent events has so far been done by political scientists rather than historians, this comparison also requires overcoming a divide by academic discipline. [6] In the face of these challenges, much remains to explore.

When looking at these 'peaces' in tandem, the connections are compelling. The occupations which began in 1945 were planned and overseen by many of the same individuals, and all were based on common assumptions and constraints. This led to similar policies and similar problems, such as the tension between troop numbers, costs, and political will, or the practice of purging elites associated with the old regime, which proved problematic and was rolled back in the cases of Germany, Japan, and Iraq. Further, despite a sense that 2003 is 'not yet history,' an increasing number of primary source documents are available that make well founded historical work possible. These include the online partial archives of former United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, a wealth of material available via the National Security Archive, and published oral histories and interviews. These can be combined with the deep existing historical literature on individual post-1945 military occupations and political science work done on Iraq to generate new historical analysis. This new area of historical research has the potential to help us better understand both the older and the more recent past.

[5]Laura Hein et al., 'Cultures of War Roundtable,' *Critical Asian Studies*, 43, 3 (2011), p. 447.

[6]James Savage's *Reconstructing Iraq's Budgetary Institutions: Coalition State Building After Saddam*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) is an example of the excellent empirical research which is possible despite archival limitations. So too is Stephen Benedict Dyson's, 'What Really Happened in Planning for Postwar Iraq?' *Political Science Quarterly,* 128, 3 (2013), pp 455-488. Inderjeet Parmar considers the start of each conflict in 'Catalysing Events, Think Tanks and American Foreign Policy Shifts: A Comparative Analysis of the Impacts of Pearl Harbor 1941 and 11 September 2001,' *Government and Opposition,* 40, 1 (2005), pp. 1-25. Political scientists have also used theoretical frameworks to consider 'why did one occupation succeed and the other fail?'. Examples of this approach include Jeff Bridoux, *American Foreign Policy and Postwar Reconstruction: Comparing Japan and Iraq,* (London: Routledge, 2011) and Jonathan Monten 'Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan,' *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 656, 1 (November, 2014), pp. 173-191. However, with a few exceptions, historians are yet to weigh in on the occupation of Iraq.

Comparing Japan and Iraq

On first sight, the American-led multilateral post-conflict military occupations of Japan and Iraq have obvious differences that discourage comparison.[7] First, as they say, the past is another country. The global situation in 1945 bears little resemblance to that of 2003. Nor did the lead occupying powers, the United States with the major involvement of Britain, closely resemble the countries they had been 60 years prior. Second, the nations of pre-occupation Japan and Iraq had very little in common. The population of Japan is largely homogenous, where Iraq contains religious and ethnic divisions. The geographies are different. Japan is an island archipelago, with no shared land borders over which chaos or outside influence could easily spill. Pre-invasion Iraq was neighbour to hostile and more powerful states, while prewar Japan had been the dominant actor in its region.

Prewar Japan was a leading world power and an established democracy. Although there was a marked rise in ultranationalism and militarization in the 1930s (largely in response to domestic terrorism), the country had complex political, financial and industrial institutions, a constitution and parliament established in the late nineteenth century, and (from 1925) universal male suffrage. As Chalmers Johnson persuasively argued, the stability and economic success of postwar Japan owes much to the legacy of its prewar system, not its seven years of foreign occupation.[8] By contrast, pre-invasion Iraq was not a major developed power. As political sociologist Larry Diamond describes, Iraq 'had no prior experience of democracy as a system of government' beyond fragmentary institutions created in the British colonial period. [9] In its recent history lay ten years of war followed by ten years of crippling international economic sanctions.

The conditions of the occupations were also very different. Years of war and a prolonged bombing campaign targeting Japan's cities, and the public surrender of the country's leadership, made it clear to the Japanese people that total war had turned to total defeat, making resistance futile. By contrast, there was no clear 'point of no return' in Iraq's case. The government collapsed, but its head of state was missing for the first nine months of occupation. In a situation where the old regime could re-emerge, and the occupying powers could leave quickly as they had a decade earlier

[7]While both of these occupations were multilateral, with a significant role played by Great Britain, this article focuses on the United States as the primary driver of policy making.

[8]Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975*, (Stanford, 1982).

[9]Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq,* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005), p. 24.

after the first Gulf War, cooperation/collaboration with the occupiers was a dangerous gamble that risked the reprisal of a future state. These conditions help explain a significant difference in the occupations; 'while not a single Allied soldier was killed in occupied Japan or Germany, the occupation of Iraq has led to [thousands of] U.S. and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilian fatalities.'[10]

And yet the 'Japan model' was consciously used to justify and define exploits in Iraq. Since then, the violence, destruction, and chaos which arose as a result of these Anglo-American actions have in turn led historians to reconsider the occupation of Japan through a more critical lens. The remainder of this piece will introduce possible points of comparison and consider what a careful examination might reveal.

Big Ideas

Comparing the cases of Japan and Iraq illuminates long-term trends in American political thought and approach to foreign policy. Generally speaking, the dominant contemporary American view of economic theory and development defined the aims and policies of both occupations. It is certainly true that this led to very different economic policies in each case. 1930s-era New Deal paradigms led to support for initiatives including land reforms and increased labour rights, while neo-conservative ideals of the 2000s created support for privatisation in both the Iraqi economy and in carrying out the occupation itself.[11] Despite marked differences, the approaches rhyme in that they were shaped by an emphasis on capitalism and free trade. Crucially, in both cases, re-entry into the international community was understood to be tied to dependence on foreign exports (in Japan silk and textiles, in Iraq oil) for economic growth.

In both cases, arguments about the justification and legitimacy of American actions reveal how U.S. policy is shaped by the racial, religious, and cultural biases held by the public and government officials.[12] For example, American policy makers used the cover of gender and women's rights to legitimise an expansionist foreign policy in both instances. Japanese and Iraqi women were depicted as 'subject-objects of American liberation and recipients of… liberal feminist tutelage.'[13] Once the occupation was underway, a powerful military figure served as the face of both occupations. Military authority was given primacy over civilian in Iraq because 'the prestige of the victorious

[10]Hein et al., 'Cultures of War Roundtable,' p. 445.
[11]Dower, *Cultures of War,* pp. 426-427, and Savage, *Reconstructing Iraq's Budgetary Institutions,* p. 48.
[12]Dower, *Cultures of War*, pp. 50-58.
[13]Lisa Yoneyama, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes,* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 90.

General was translated into his post-conflict legitimacy.'[14] However, there were other strong claims to legitimacy in Japan.

A pronounced legitimacy gap is a point of distinction between occupations. As Laura Hein argues, there were no international protests against the 1945 action. Japan itself had occupied and colonialised spaces after military victory, so domestic opinion was that the same actions were legitimate in the face of the country's own defeat. Allied occupiers also worked through existing government institutions.[15] The unconditional surrender of that government provided legal cover for such a military action.[16] None of these factors existed in the case of Iraq. Instead, the actions of the Coalition of the Willing were met with public protest around the world, and hostilities ended not with formal surrender, but government collapse and the disappearance of Iraq's leader. Rather than working through a defeated and cooperative government, plans to transition authority back into Iraqi hands were centered on 'illegitimate bodies' constructed, as one American advisor argued, because of 'the contradiction between our aspiration for democracy… and our impulse for total unilateral control'.[17] Despite, or perhaps because of, the legitimacy gap between the interventions, the perceived benevolent success of General Douglas MacArthur loomed large in attempts to claim legitimacy in the occupation in Iraq.

The Process of Planning

Occupation planning is another point of continuity and contrast. While the length of the planning periods differed greatly, in both cases planning was undermined by interagency competition, involved external experts from think tanks and universities, and created a community of 'planning alumni' who retained influence in the occupation phase and beyond. However, both processes failed to accurately predict the situation on the ground.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the planning phases was duration. Official planning for the treatment of postwar Japan began in 1942 with the creation of an interdepartmental committee drawing on staff and reports from a previous secret collaboration between the State Department and the Council on Foreign Relations begun in 1939, six years before VJ day. Planning for Iraq can be dated from November 2001, less than a year and a half before the invasion, when the Secretary

[14]Dyson, 'What Really Happened,' p. 463.

[15]Hein, 'Revisiting America's Occupation of Japan', p. 592, note 5.

[16]The motivations behind American insistence on unconditional surrender is tied to the use of the atomic bomb and has long been the subject of historical debate. The issue has been examined most recently by Marc Gallicchio in *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[17]Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, p. 62.

of Defense directed The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) to develop a plan for the forcible removal of Saddam Hussein.[18] Both planning processes were largely conducted in secret. In Japan's case, this was because revealing American postwar aims might cause division between the Allies while the war was on. In the case of Iraq, it was because the American government had not officially committed to conflict, so could not advertise looming invasion and post-invasion plans.

Wrangling between agencies was also an issue in both processes, although there was a clearer demarcation of responsibility in Japan's case. The State Department was responsible for setting long range political aims, while War and Navy departments were tasked with the practicalities of invasion and security stabilization. War and Navy had a larger voice in planning once an end of the war came into view, but by then outlines has already been set.[19] This long mid-level iterative process with regular buy-in from cabinet level officials, resulted in consensus building and a single set of approved policy documents outlining aims to guide the occupation.[20] And yet, despite that consensus, during the occupation itself the Diplomatic Section in Tokyo was undermined by restrictions to its direct communication back to the State Department in Washington.[21]

In the case of Iraq, the Department of Defense took the lead. In stark contrast to the clear division of responsibility between agencies on Japan, the first CENTCOM recommendations for Iraq included a set long range political goals.[22] In addition to the blurred division of areas of responsibility, there was not good coordination between agencies or planning groups. In fact, there was in many cases a concerted effort to avoid collaboration and information sharing. National Security Advisor Condoleezza

[18]Stephen Benedict Dyson has done the best work to date in reconstructing the Iraq planning process.

[19]Treasury was effectively kept out of Japan planning (but not planning on Germany) by State manoeuvring. For an overview of official planning on Japan, see Dayna Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), pp. 31-37.

[20]These two documents are SWNCC150/4 and JCS 1380/15. Both are available at Japan's National Diet Library website. https://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01shiryo.html. Accessed October 2020.

[21]Eiji Takamae, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy,* Translated and adapted by Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann, (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 149.

[22]End objectives according to then CENTCOM Commander Tommy Franks were the 'establishment of a representative form of government, a country capable of defending its territorial borders and maintaining its internal security without any weapons of mass destruction.' Nora Benshel et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq,* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), p. 7.

Rice, for example, 'frequently sent her own spies to the Defense Department in hopes of surreptitiously collecting the information she and her staff needed to do their jobs.'[23] The result of this is clear in a statement made by Larry MacDonald, Deputy Assistant Treasury Secretary for Technical Assistance Policy. 'People speak in shorthand about whether there was a plan for Iraq,' he said, 'I think it is more relevant to speak of plans. There were plans, there were lots of plans, created at different times by different agencies and levels of government.'[24] This disharmony continued into the occupation. Coalition Provisional Authority head Paul Bremer and others were reported to have distrusted and underused the State Department and experienced diplomats.[25] Infighting and information hoarding marked both cases, but were more damaging in the planning for Iraq.

In both cases, these planning processes established and reinforced an informal policy network of officials, academics, and think tank experts, who wrote policy recommendations and influenced opinion. In both cases, the work of anthropologists was brought in to occupation policy-making and personnel training materials in order to 'understand' spaces beyond the knowledge of most Americans.[26] During the Second World War, area specialists from the Council on Foreign Relations' War and Peace Studies Program were hired into government planning, and think tanks played an important role in providing expertise and platforms for exchanging ideas.[27] At the turn of the 21 Century, experts and elite exiled Iraqis were brought together by the State Department in planning discussion groups known as the FoI Project, and think tank publications were circulated amongst policy makers. [28]

During and after the occupations, these policy network members took on important positions in Washington, Tokyo, and Bagdad. Feisal Istrabadi and Salem Chalabi, for

[23]Zachary Shore, *Blunder: Why Smart People Make Bad Decisions,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), p. 208.
[24] Savage, *Reconstructing Iraq's Budgetary Institutions*, p. 49.
[25]Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, p. 299.
[26]Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1946) was highly influential. For more on anthropology and the 'cultural turn' in U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq, see Sheila Jager, *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007).
[27]Dayna Barnes, 'Think Tanks and a New Order in East Asia: The Council of Foreign Relations and the Institute of Pacific Relations During World War II,' *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 22, 2 (2015) pp. 89-119.
[28]For example, Paul Bremer 'forwarded a RAND corporation study on postwar governance to Secretary Rumsfeld with his summary of its lessons' in May 2003. Dyson, 'What Really Happened,' p. 478.

example, had worked as expats on the FoI's Democratic Principles working group, and later in Iraq as lead drafters of the interim constitution in 2004.[29] Chris Milligan, who was involved in USAID planning from October 2002 became USAID Deputy Mission Director in Iraq.[30] There were many such figures in the case of Japan too, although because that policy network was devoid of expatriates their influence was confined to US policy making. Robert Fearey was a junior State Department official who worked on Japan planning and was tasked with land reform policy making because of that experience.[31] For years after planning gave way to implementation, these 'alumni' continued to draw on their planning experiences and make real impact on the post-conflict landscape.

What Planning Missed

Neither occupation started as planned. Soon-to-be occupying forces experienced 'catastrophic success,' an unexpectedly early surrender or collapse and shift from invasion to occupation. In Japan, to the surprise of military and civilians alike, there was no invasion at all. Planners expected a protracted struggle, and even in plans for a sudden collapse expected mass resistance and hostility. The US military anticipated that 'at best the civil population of JAPAN proper will observe an attitude of non-cooperation.'[32] The Joint War Plans Committee warned that once an occupation began, 'suicidal elements' of armed Japanese would target occupying forces.[33] The plans for Iraq were 'predicated on the assumption that the Iraqis would be passive. Not only passive, but gratefully, happily passive.'[34] Americans also 'overestimated the degree to which the remnants of the Iraqi government would provide essential services and security' during the occupation.[35] While counterinsurgency plans for Japan went

[29]Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, p. 145.
[30]Savage, *Reconstructing Iraq's Budgetary Institutions*, p. 64.
[31]'The Occupation of Japan: Economic Policy and Reform' in Lawrence Redford ed., *The Proceedings of a Symposium Sponsored by the MacArthur Memorial, April 13-15,* (Norfolk, VA: MacArthur Memorial, 1980).
[32]'Basic Outline Plan for 'Blacklist' Operations,' 8 August 1945, RG 4, reel 607, in *General Douglas MacArthur Memorial Archives and Library Collection,* (Scholarly Resources, 2002), microform.
[33]War Plans Committee, 'Over-all Examination of Planning for the Occupation of Japan, Appendix C, Brief Plan of Blacklist,' August 3, 1945, in Kesaris (éd.), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Pacific Theater, Reel 5, 18, as cited in Melissa Willard-Foster, 'Planning the Peace and Enforcing the Surrender: Deterrence in the Allied Occupations of Germany and Japan,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 40, 1 (Summer 2009), p. 41.
[34]Unnamed former senior official, quoted in Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, p. 36.
[35]Benshel et al., *After Saddam*, p. 13.

unneeded and unused, the case of Iraq makes clear how valuable the work might have been. Very little can be accomplished in the absence of minimum security.

Policies were implemented to purge elites connected with the previous regime in Japan, Germany, and Iraq. In all three cases, these policies, also known as 'de-Nazification' and 'de-Baathification' where later understood to have hindered growth by sidelining the political and economic expertise in the occupied countries, and were rolled back. However, in Iraq de-Baathification had more serious consequences, exacerbating existing divisions within the population and fuelling insurgency.[36] The worst results of policy missteps in Japan were avoided because the occupation was perceived to have greater legitimacy, and because Japan had retained its emperor; a potent symbol of national unity, continuity, and stability, who willingly cooperated with the occupation authority.

Conclusion

75 years after the war's end, important stories of how peace came remain to be told. We are at the beginning of a new conversation about post- Second World War military occupation transitions, how they are connected to each other and to later occupations, and how they still resonate in a very different world today. Comparing these events provides fresh perspectives, and invites new conclusions about the once-familiar past. Observing Iraq and Japan together reveals more than just politically convenient use of memory, but also long-term trends in Anglo-American foreign policy and political thought. The expansionist policy choices made in 1945 and in 2003 were based on contemporary cultural assumptions and power dynamics, and on beliefs about economics, 'universal values,' democratisation, and development. More historical work is needed to understand not just why one 'succeeded' and the other 'failed,' but why there are such marked similarities in the conception, planning, and implementation of these two projects separated by decades and continents. Looking beyond one single occupation at the connections between them can help us better understand the peaces that were and the peace that was not.

[36]Diamond, *Squandered Victory*, p. 40.

Matthew Woodcock & Cian O'Mahony, *Early Modern Military Identities 1560-1639: Reality and Representation.* Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2019. X & 315pp. ISBN 978-1843845324 (hardback). Price £60.00.

Warfare in the Early Modern Period is synonymous with the Gunpowder Revolution. Historians, scholars and academics have commented on the development of firearms, including the matchlock, wheel-lock and flintlock. In addition, the use of artillery became increasingly popular throughout the Early Modern Age, resulting in improved fortifications and defensive tactics. As a result, academics have devoted significant attention to the 'heavier' aspects of warfare. However, both Matthew Woodcock and Cian O'Mahony, alongside a team of literary critics, independent scholars and historians have attempted to shed light on an often-neglected area of military history, particularly in the late Tudor and early Stuart Period. Their work focuses almost exclusively on the individual soldier, examining how Early Modern fighting men viewed themselves and others. They also attempt to explain what it meant to be a soldier in the 16th and 17th centuries. Their focus on the individual is refreshing, particularly in an area that is often dominated by tactics, gunpowder and siege warfare. Furthermore, *Early Modern Military Identities* attempts to take a cross-discipline approach to military history, using sources and methods from literature, drama and the digital humanities to examine what it meant to be a soldier in Tudor and Stuart Britain.

Early Modern Military Identities is split into a collection of separate essays, with part one focusing on masculinity and the methods soldiers used to construct their identities. Part two analyses Anglo-Irish military identities. The final selection of essays looks at military figures on the Early Modern stage, including in the plays of William Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton. We would expect any discussion of military identity, particularly in the late Medieval and Early Modern period, to comment on masculinity and David Trim's essay *Warlike Prowess and Manly Courage* does just that. He demonstrates how the values of a solider were displayed in distinctly masculine terms. However, Trim also discusses the relationship between performance and masculinity, recounting the story of Edward Stanley, a soldier who 'dressed in yellow saving his curatts,' in order for everyone to witness his courage. This focus on the performative nature of warfare is particularly insightful and shows us how masculinity was projected on the Early Modern battlefield.

Somewhat related is Matthew Woodcock's discussion of Caesar's *Commentaries*. Written by Caesar himself, *The Commentaries* recount the military campaigns of the Romans during the Gallic Wars of the first century BC. Woodcock discusses *The Commentaries* in detail, showing how they acted as a model for the Early Modern fighting man and how military identity could be characterised by the pen and sword.

In order to support his argument, he demonstrates how figures such as Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland and Sir Roger Williams, one of the best-known professional soldiers in Elizabethan England were familiar with *The Commentaries*. Interestingly, Woodcock demonstrates the importance of the 'literate soldier.' By using Caesar's works as a model, he is able to show how the ideal soldier was expected to be well read, scholarly and literate.

The essayists writing in *Early Modern Military Identities* frequently use literature and poetry to support their arguments. Philip Major's analysis of *The Highway to Heidelberg* and David Edward's commentary of O'Meara's Latin epic *Ormonious* shed further light on military identity and representation. *The Highway to Heidelberg* was written by Thomas Fairfax, a soldier who served Queen Elizabeth in the Low Countries. The Fairfax's' detailed their family genealogy, status and notable achievements in their works. Major shows how literary acumen helped to enhance a military family's reputation. Furthermore, he also illustrates how *The Highway to Heidelberg* had another, more political purpose, serving as a guide to James I and warning him about the ambitions of Imperial Spain and the dangers of Muslim Ottoman expansion. Historian David Edwards then demonstrates how the Latin poem *Ormonious* was fabricated by the Gallic poet Dermot O'Meara, to show his patron, the Earl of Ormand, in a positive light by celebrating his military identity and exaggerating elements of his military career. In a way, Edward's essay is similar to Major's. They both show how military identity could be constructed for political purposes. The Earl belonged to one of the 'Old English' families (English Catholics who had settled in Ireland after the Norman Conquest) and their position was coming under increasing threat from new waves of English settlers. Edwards illustrates how poetry and the arts provided an opportunity for soldiers to manipulate their records and maintain favour with the English court. The method's they chose are also revealing, particularly given James I was known to be a patron of the arts and model 'renaissance king.'

The authors use a range of written sources, including archival material, manuscripts and plays to inform their analysis on identity and representation. However, an examination of portraiture and visual sources may have shed further light on the ways military men presented themselves, particularly given the fact portraiture was an important way to project power in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, the book's analysis of military identity is wide ranging, thorough and raises new questions. For example, what role did women play in formulating military identity? How did British mercenary soldiers, serving on the battlefields of Europe, construct their military identities? And were Scottish military identities different to their English and Irish counterparts?

In conclusion, this collection of essays is suitable for readers who are interested in the literary and cultural aspects of warfare. It is also suitable for those interested in more

conventional military history, mainly because it challenges the idea that military history is solely about weaponry, armaments and mass tactics. By focusing on the individual and using literature, manuscripts and drama, the authors are able to provide a thought-provoking book on military identity that is novel, insightful and well-researched.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1434

Quintin Colville & James Davey (eds.), *A New Naval History*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. Notes. Index, Illustrations. 250pp. ISBN 978-1526113801 (hardback). Price £80.

Quintin Colville and James Davey bring to naval audiences an anthology of essays that can be categorised as cultural and social history of the Royal Navy. As such, this book will be of primary interest to a British audience. However, given the quality of the essays contained herein, one hopes a work of similar scope might be considered for other navies in history, especially the US Navy.

The first five essays deal with "sociocultural analyses of naval communities" stretching from mid-1700s to the 20th century. (8) The final five essays deal with "the public presentation of naval subject matter through a variety of representational forms." (11) These topics tend toward the latest trends in historical investigation and employ the language of scholarship and academia. The introduction by Colville and Davey provides a useful historiographical discussion about the evolution of naval history from battles, leaders, and operational matters to the social and cultural issues examined in this book. It then provides chapter summations.

Evan Wilson's opening essay "Particular skills" examines those often-forgotten members of the wardrooms of the Royal Navy, the warrant officers who dealt with pay, medical, chaplains, and the ship masters. Wilson highlights how these officers came from similar social backgrounds as the executive (or line) officers—the middle classes.(31) Elaine Chalus's essay is among the more interesting reads in the collection because it is essentially a very-well written microhistory based on the letters of a wife to her seafaring husband.

The third entry in the first section jumps ahead several generations to the Edwardian fleet of the early 20 century and looks at the topic of homosexuality (sodomy) in the fleet. Mary Conley finds that although work on her topic is not new ("forty years,"

70) but the approach here is well done and addresses issues of consent and coercion involving in the Edwardian Navy, principally by examining court martial records.

The fourth essay seems somewhat out of place, since it would go better in the final section on "representations," dealing with photography of naval personnel in the late nineteenth century. Cindy McReery's study has a clever twist, in that it looks more at the impact of photography of naval personnel on broader communities "because they mattered" to those same collectives. (90) This chapter is augmented by a fascinating collection of photographs from the period examined. The final entry for the first section, by Daniel Owen Spence, examines the intersection of naval recruitment with themes of race and colonialism in the period 1931-41. The essay hinges on prevailing ideas of race, specifically that "martial races" – including "'seafaring race' theory" – affected recruiting, although they may more have been colonial constructs based on loyalty rather than any particular affinity for naval service. (114)

The second section of the book, entitled "Representations of the Royal Navy" contains five essays that approach the topic of how the Royal Navy was "pitched". The topics range from a memorialisation of an18th century mariner-hero (George Anson) to 20th century themes that border on public affairs examinations. However, it is here that the iconic figure of Admiral Horatio Nelson appears. Cicely Robinson discusses representations of Horatio Nelson in the national gallery via paintings and statues.

The reviewer felt an opportunity was missed in the limited scope of the book by not offering contemporary representations of the Royal Navy today, for example on the bi-centennial of Trafalgar that the entire nation celebrated in 2005. Marc Bloch once wrote, "The good historian …. knows that wherever he catches the scent of human flesh, there his quarry lies." The historians of *A New Naval History* have again proved that aphorism true in their wide-ranging and scholarly hunt captured here. Well done.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1435

Michael Brown, Anna Maria Barry and Joanne Begiato, (eds.), *Martial Masculinities: Experiencing and imagining the military in the long nineteenth century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019. 17 images. 270pp. ISBN 978-1526135629 (hardback). Price £80.

This collection grew from a conference in 2015 marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. The editors compare this with two other moments in the history of military masculine anxieties, each a century apart: first, the failure of the Artois offensive in 1915 as a masculine crisis point in the First World War; then the recent withdrawal from Afghanistan which saw 'the resurgence of an equally politically charged valorisation of British military masculinities'. The eleven contributions to this volume explore understandings of military masculinity lived and constructed in the long nineteenth century. Split into two parts, there are five essays on experiencing, and six on imagining, martial masculinities. As an edited volume that builds on the exchanges of a successful conference, many of them read as fresh exercises for the scholars involved, with some risking abstraction and speculation in their arguments and raising many questions for further debate.

There are some very focused pieces here. In Part 1, Louise Carter's 'Brothers in Arms? Martial Masculinities and family feeling in old soldiers' memoirs, 1793-1815' builds precisely and effectively on Catriona Kennedy's incisive work in this area. Carter traces the 'stubborn endurance of civilian conceptions of masculinity in the psyches of serving soldiers' despite the Army's efforts to erode them. There is substantial overlap between this and the essays from Julia Bannister and Helen Metcalfe, all drawing on soldiers' narratives from the Napoleonic Wars. Their arguments are more tentative than Carter's, but along with the strong essay on sailor-singer Charles Incledon's self-fashioned and publicly shaped persona by Anna Maria Barry, they raise intriguing points of discussion about material and discursive cultures in homosocial military communities.

Domestic and familial influences are discussed further in the final contribution on experience by Michael Brown and Joanne Begiato, 'Visualising the aged veteran in nineteenth century Britain'. It begins with a familiar juxtaposition of generations, discussing examples from 1900 and 1914 to illustrate a fatherly passing on of soldierly principles. They trace this to the 'marked proliferation of veterans in visual and literary culture' through the 1870s, with reverence accompanied by familiar condemnations of the state for failing to adequately support them in old age, while demonstrating the meeting point between experience and imagination effectively.

The next section deals with imagined military masculinities. Barbara Leonardi reads James Hogg's *The Three Perils of Man* as an exercise in deconstructing the 'ideology of self-sacrifice' of the English soldier, playing with the familiar characterisation of the Highland soldiers as a 'Martial Race'. By dissociating this ideal warrior from Romantic soldierly ideals of chivalry, Hogg effectively challenged assumptions of post-Enlightenment progress by critiquing the destructiveness of the Napoleonic Wars. Susan Walton follows this by exploring how, in Charlotte Yonge's novels, characteristics related to an idealised kind of military masculinity were embodied in her own father. The close attention on the Yonge family here raises the question of whether this was a broader phenomenon.

The next three essays highlight a growing literary influence on a preparatory masculine culture that shaped anxieties and ambitions of boys and young men as civilians and aspiring soldiers in militarised terms. Lorenzo Servitje uses Alfred Lord Tennyson's 1842 poem 'Locksley Hall' to demonstrate the centrality of purpose and belonging to a rhetoric of manly readiness. Karen Turner turns to 'Charlotte Brontë's "Warrior Priest"' St John Rivers to illustrate the construction of 'heroic virility, morality and martial adventure' as key tenets of an increasingly militarised national male identity, although this elides the significance of national-imperial masculine expectations that are surely key in a character who meets his end in colonial India. Elly McCausland turns to knightly masculinities in Edwardian children's Arthuriana to make a clear argument about the escapist self-discovery implicit in adventure stories that responded to 'John Tosh's 'flight from domesticity', although again that national-imperial influence is not explored here.

Finally, Helen Goodman argues that H. Rider Haggard and his contemporaries 'blurred the lines between military and leisure pursuits' to encourage a martial masculine identity by glamorising imperial careers. Goodman has succinctly re-appraised Haggard's works as composed disseminators of a national military male culture. She makes a valuable point on Haggard's blurring of divisions between the characteristics of civilian and soldier and pulls together threads from some of the earlier pieces in this section by closing that imperial-domestic feedback loop decisively.

Edited volumes run the risk of being less than the sum of their parts to a cherry-picking readership. With this collection's interdisciplinary range of approaches, these essays when read together bolster the ideas in the more tentative contributions and enhance the debates that reach across the themes the editors laid out. This is an

engaging contribution to the conversations of scholars working across the humanities on British military and domestic masculinities.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1436

Peter Duffell, *Gurkha Odyssey: Campaigning for the Crown*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2019. 290pp. ISBN 978-1526730572 (hardback). Price £25.00.

My first encounter with Gurkha soldiers was back in 1979 when I was at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. One of their battalions supplied the Demonstration Company which turned out every so often to show us embryo officers how various tactical drills and skills should be carried out properly. Needless to say, we were hopelessly outperformed by their example when we tried to replicate them.

My second, and last, engagement with Gurkhas came when I was on the Company Commanders' course at Warminster where, once again, they supplied the Demonstration Company. This time, however, I joined them in the field for a few days of practical training to confirm that I was indeed fit to command my own sub-unit. They were bivouacked up a steep slope with their backs to the hill just as it was getting dark, all cammed up and ready to go. I was given my first mug of hot, sweet Gurkha tea and settled in for the night. What a splendid bunch they were.

In contrast to my somewhat fleeting acquaintance with the hillmen from Nepal, the author, Lieutenant General Sir Peter Duffell, joined his Gurkha regiment in 1960 and was with them in one capacity or another for most of his adult life. He lead his soldiers in Malaya, Borneo, Indonesia (clandestinely) and Hong Kong – winning an MC along the way – before becoming the British Army's Inspector General, so has a wealth of personal experience to draw on in writing his book.

By the author's own admission his account is a "fractured story" offering "few insights" and "told in a selective and personal away". If you are looking for an in-depth examination of the role of Gurkha soldiers in British service with dissection of the many campaigns in which they fought for the Crown, this is not the book for you. It does provide some historical background and follows some sort of chronological order, but Duffell's caveats do apply.

The reader is provided with an entertaining and eminently readable personal account of serving with Gurkhas in various contexts over the period of the author's highly successful military career, with a modicum of historical background thrown in. My interest was drawn to Duffell's account of the covert and ultimately deniable cross border operation into Indonesia during the conflict in the early 1960s. He describes brilliantly the preparations, approach, and eventual controlled chaos of close combat operations in difficult terrain. No plan survives first contact with the enemy, but in the author's case, he had clearly trained his men to perform well in such circumstances.

His chapter on his Gurkhas' ancestor regiment, the Sirmoor Battalion's part in confronting the mutineers of the East India Company's Bengal Army at Delhi – during the 1857 Rebellion – also caught my attention. Here, he notes that the Battalion's stand on the ridge outside the Delhi walls defeated no fewer than 26 separate attacks on their position against severe odds. Delhi seems to have firmly established the Gurkha fighting reputation thereafter.

Peter Duffell writes in an easy, if slightly old-fashioned, style which lends itself well to the task in hand. He appears to be both modest on his own bravery and achievements and somewhat over-effusive in his praise for others. He displays an impressive fondness for his soldiers throughout, although his attitude might be seen as a little avuncular and patronising to younger readers. But this generosity of spirit warmed me to him as I progressed through his book. The book is further enhanced by photographs and watercolours by Ken Howard RA.

I read this book twice, for at first I discovered it was not what I imagined it would be, proof if it is ever needed that one should not judge a book by its cover. But, whilst initially I thought it might be yet another book by an old military duffer reminiscing about times past, I realised gradually that it was much more than that. I also recognised Duffell's deeply felt affection and respect for the soldiers he commanded and can relate directly to that.

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DOI: 0.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1437

Niamh Gallagher, *Ireland and the Great War: A Social and Political History*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Xvii + 258pp. ISBN: 978-1788314626 (hardback). Price £72.00.

The cover of Niamh Gallagher's *Ireland and the Great War: A Social and Political History* features an image which at first glance appears like black and white photos which many will have seen before: a large and obviously interwar crowd gathered around a war memorial. However, picked out in colour is a union flag draped across the top of the memorial as if over a coffin, with the green, white and orange of the Irish tricolour in the foreground on a flagpole (with another union flag apparently peeping out from behind it). The juxtaposition of the two flags is uncommon enough in such photos of interwar Ireland. It becomes even more surprising when one learns that this photo was taken in 'rebel Cork' in 1925. It points to the core argument of the book which is that support for the war effort was strong in Ireland not only throughout the war, but also beyond the Armistice.

A study of society and politics across Ireland in relation to the First World War is long overdue. Plenty of works concerned with the war have addressed aspects of the subject, but they have generally done it as an aside to essentially military studies. A different set of studies have examined Irish society and politics more comprehensively but with the principal viewpoint being that of the Irish Revolution. Niamh Gallagher is the first writer to produce an island-wide study which considers Irish politics and society through the prism of the British (and wider Empire) war effort. The book she has produced is an outstanding analysis, based on extensive research and written in a lively and accessible style. I believe it will come to be seen as a classic in the field and a standard reference point for all scholars working on Irish history in this period – whether they start from interests in the war or the Irish Revolution.

Divided into eight chapters, the first two contextualise the main subject matter with close attention to past historiography, especially how it relates to apparent changes in opinion after the Easter Rising. Gallagher's central argument in these chapters is that the attitudes of Irish Catholics towards the war have been conflated with those of nationalist leaders, with the Irish Parliamentary Party's 'perceived lack of action on the Allies' behalf' after the Rising 'and growing support for Sinn Féin' becoming 'a crucible through which the attitude of the wider Catholic population has been considered.' Consequently 'people were thought to have exhibited the "mental neutrality" towards the war that was displayed by their elected representatives.' Gallagher then uses four thematic chapters to challenge 'The view that Irish Catholic support for the war effort was limited from the outset and that it was tied to the changes within nationalism after Easter 1916'. These examine: women's relief work on the home front; the horrors of the war at sea which brought the war close to home and accentuated Germany's

status as the 'enemy' (as Gallagher points out, this aspects of the war is 'excluded from virtually every scholarly account of the period'); the role of the international Irish diaspora (many of them politically nationalists) in supporting the war effort; and the ways in which support for the wider Allied war effort was expressed throughout the war. On the latter point, Gallagher makes a persuasive case for distinguishing between hostility towards conscription in 1918 and continued support at the same time for voluntary enlistment to support the war effort – indeed, there was a growth in the latter during the summer of 1918. Two short reflective concluding chapters draw together key themes from the four substantive chapters and then move on to consider commemoration in interwar Ireland (and to the present day) pointing to the breadth and depth of public engagement, and challenging historians who have seen hostility/amnesia towards veterans and the cause of the war.

This is a compelling and persuasive study, whose arguments will be central to future scholarship. My plea to the publisher is that they produce a reasonably-priced paperback soon so that it can reach the wider public audience which it deserves.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1438

Don Farr, *A Battle Too Far; Arras 1917*. Warwick: Helion & Company, 2018., 28 photographs. 36 maps. 368pp. ISBN 978-1912174928 (hardback). Price £25.95.

`The Battle of Arras has always sat awkwardly in the historiography of the Great War, chronologically (as well as geographically) between the 1916 Battle of the Somme and the Flanders campaigns of 1917. With a total number of casualties lower than the Somme and Third Ypres campaigns, fewer images of lunar mudscapes and having opened with a day of great success, historians and the wider public have broadly limited their enthusiasm towards the BEF's Spring Offensive to nodding approvingly at the Canadian Corps' achievements on Vimy Ridge. The one book which dealt with the Arras campaign in depth, apart from Cyril Falls' volume of the Official History covering the period, has been Jonathan Nicholls's *Cheerful Sacrifice*. Since the hundredth anniversary of the battle, further works by Jim Smithson and Andrew Rawson join the body of literature which includes considerable interest in the Canadian and Australian actions at Vimy Ridge and Bullecourt respectively. As the Battle of Arras holds the

grim record for the 'most lethal' offensive fought by the BEF in the course of the war, Don Farr's book is a welcome addition to the historiography.

A Battle Too Far is a well-constructed overview of the Battle of Arras, which draws heavily from unit war diaries for its narrative, and has a broad base of secondary literature in its bibliography. The publishing quality is good, and the maps are easy to read and useful. Farr's writing style is clear and methodical, although may be challenging to those without a broad base of reading on the Great War. The value in this work is its breadth; Farr has, ambitiously, addressed not only the Arras campaign, but also elements of the concurrent Nivelle offensive, adding perspective and endeavouring to explain the British efforts from 23 April onwards to jump-start a campaign which had, by the logistical constraints of that point of the war, run its course. Furthermore, Farr carries on the narrative right the way through to late May, including the loss of Fresnoy, and the eventual capture of Rœux and the Chemical Works. There are, in addition, useful appendices with information on the German Army, air operations, artillery, mining, tanks, and Nivelle's instructions to the British and Belgian Armies.

The trade-off in addressing broader themes and actions than anything in the existing literature of the battle of Arras comes in the detail and density. In order to cover the narrative, the language lacks the emotion of Nicholls's *Cheerful Sacrifice*, and casual readers may lament the lack of personal touches and individual testimonies, making this book one for those with a keen, or even professional interest. Indeed, as a reference source, the student or battlefield guide will appreciate the extensive bibliography, including unit war diary WO95 references and the thorough index. Although not as detailed as Smithson's *A Taste of Success* in its description of the lead-up to the battle, the political context and the opening phases of the campaign, *A Battle too Far* is far broader in its scope, a worthy companion to Nicholls's work and a worthwhile research tool and guide to this very much understudied campaign.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1439

David Swift and Oliver Wilkinson (eds.), *Veterans of the First World War: Ex-Servicemen and Ex-Servicewomen in Post-war Britain and Ireland*. Routledge Studies in First World War History. London: Routledge, 2019. Xi + 208pp. ISBN 978-0367174620 (hardback). Price £115.00.

The effects of the First World War are central to much study of inter-war Britain, and of course veterans are highly visible in popular culture emerging from and/or portraying the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, as the introduction to this book rightly points out, the academic study of veterans themselves is often not part of what is being 'centrally assessed' in such studies. Ten chapters in this volume seek to address this problem covering a broad range of subjects: veterans' organisations (both for men and women); politics; the wounded; and two specific studies of Ireland which saw different issues for veterans compared to those faced in Britain.

Veterans' organisations are most prominent in the study. Mike Hally explores how the roots of these groups can be found in campaigns during the war itself. Paul Huddie argues that the British government's approach was heavily informed by a desire to make them the responsibility of the volunteer sector. Krisztina Robert, writing on ex-servicewomen, shows how female veterans found their status provided a way into political activism through their own organisations. Politics, specifically the Labour Party and the wider British Left, is covered in one chapter by Marcus Morris and another by David Swift. Morris outlines how the Labour Party did not appeal to veterans as veterans but rather as workers, but suggests that this did not undermine support for Labour since many veterans did not retain a strong identity connected to their wartime service. Indeed, as Swift argues, the act of being engaged in military service was part of men moving to the left. Chapters by John Borgonovo and Steven O'Connor on Ireland engage with now long-running debates on the question of the alienation and exclusion of ex-servicemen from parts of Irish life after the war. Borgonovo's study of Cork points to extremely varied and complex relationships between veterans and the Irish Free State, while O'Connor builds on his important previous work on later service by veterans in both the Irish Republican Army and the Royal Irish Constabulary. Disability and the wounded are examined by Martin Purdy and Jessica Meyer, with Purdy pointing to significant opportunities for some of the disabled in some areas. Meyer persuasively calls for greater attention to the 'domestic spaces and local communities' in which disabled veterans lived out their lives. Oliver Wilkinson's chapter on former prisoners of war points to how such men, faced with the stigma of capture, often dropped any kind of identity as ex-servicemen, pointing to the need to study ordinary civilian life if one is to understand the post-war lives of veterans.

The book is largely about the immediate few post-war years and some readers might query where is consideration of the later 1920s and 1930s, but the absence of much detail on those years in most chapters might point to the extent to which veterans are less easy to identify as veterans once they settled into civilian life. While the cover price will put off some possible buyers, this book should be a key acquisition for many university libraries since its chapters speak to an extremely broad range of historical fields dealing with inter-war Britain. All the chapters are important enough to find places on many course reading lists dealing with issues such as gender and party politics, which might not immediately concern themselves with First World War veterans, in addition to those more directly concerned with the post-military lives of veterans.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1440

Robert Forczyk, *Case White: The Invasion of Poland, 1939*. Oxford: Osprey, 2019. 416pp. ISBN 978-1472834959 (hardback). Price £25.00.

Roger Moorhouse, *First to Fight: the Polish War, 1939*. London: Vintage, 2019. 342pp. ISBN 978-1784706241 (paperback). Price £9.99.

There are episodes of the Second World War that are well known, there are episodes of the Second World War that could be better known and there are episodes of the Second World War that are barely known at all. Of the latter, one such is the German invasion of Poland in 1939. Short though this struggle was, this was a bitter affair that cost the lives of 250,000 Poles, devastated many towns and cities and resulted in the partition of the country between its two most bitter enemies, and yet details on exactly what occurred are hard to come by. The terrible atrocities committed by the Germans against the hapless Jewish community have been well documented by historians such as Martin Gilbert. However, beyond that there is almost nothing other than a small number of accounts drawn almost entirely from the German point of view. To make matters worse, meanwhile this last does so through the medium of Nazi propaganda: in general history after general history, we hear of little more than Polish cavalry charging German tanks and the Luftwaffe wiping out the entire Polish air force on the ground on the first day of the war, and yet both these claims owe

their existence to Josef Goebbels and his acolytes. Want of Polish, and want of access to the Polish archives contributed very heavily to this situation, but, even so, on show was also much want of enterprise: when the major television documentary, 'The World at War', was screened in the early 1970's, for example, the hundreds of eye-witnesses interviewed for the production included not a single Pole, despite the fact that there was a substantial Polish community in Britain that would have been all too willing to tell its story. All this being the case, it is a matter of enormous delight that the past few months have seen the publication of not one but two scholarly accounts of the campaign.

In so far as the general thrust of the two works referred to, Robert Forczyk's *Case White* and Roger Moorhouse's *First to Fight*, is concerned, it is very similar, indeed, all but identical, and their arguments will in consequence be dealt with under a single heading. However, almost entirely limited to matters of approach and emphasis though they are, such differences as they exhibit are far from unimportant. Thus, on the one hand, Forcyzk's account is essentially an operational narrative, whilst on the other Moorhouse's is wider ranging and includes much more in the way of human interest, containing, as it does, the writings and reminiscences of a much greater number of eye-witnesses. Yet with neither approach is there anything wrong, while the author's differing choices ensure that the two works complement each other very nicely rather than engaging in sterile competition.

Let us proceed, then, to the argument which Forczyk and Moorhouse both advance. This is, of necessity, one that is very sombre. In brief, the creation of the Versailles Treaty, inter-war Poland was gifted from the start with a large, and potentially very hostile, German community, while it arguably made matters infinitely worse for itself by seizing large swathes of White Russia - modern-day Belarus – in the Russo-Polish War of 1918-1920. As if this was not enough, the frontiers of the new state were all but indefensible, Poland being wide open to assault from east and west alike, while Warsaw's only potential allies - Britain, France, Czechoslovakia and Romania - were either unable or unwilling to offer much in the way of assistance. To geographical and strategic weakness, meanwhile, was added poverty: possessed though they were of a substantial industrial base, the Poles simply could not equip their armed forces with enough modern armaments (which is not to say that they did not make considerable progress, especially in the field of anti-tank weapons); whether more could have been done in this respect is a moot point, but it has to be said that, despite the conquest by Warsaw cryptologists of the secrets of the Enigma machine, here was also a failure of intelligence, the Polish high command failing to perceive the extent of the progress which the Germans were making with regard to speeding up the tempo of military operations.

From this last point it follows that at least some of the difficulties which were to confront the Poles were of their own making. We come here, in particular, to the malign influence of the founder of the Polish state, Josef Pilsudski. A Polish officer who during the First World War was allowed by the Austro-Hungarian authorities to form large numbers of the many Poles resident in the Habsburg empire into Polish Legions to fight the Russians and who from the beginning took control of the armed forces of the new state. Pilsudski gravely weakened Poland's chances by forcing the air force to dedicate much of its strength to close support of the army, thereby gravely dissipating its fighting power; emphasising a strategy based on a mobility in which the Poles were all but certain to be out matched; neglecting the creation of a system of permanent army corps; and packing the high command with cronies from his days in the Habsburg service. When war broke out, if it is unfair to criticise the Poles for deploying so many of their troops so far forward - if they were to get the British and French to intervene in the manner required, they could not afford to delay significant combat for fear that this might be interpreted as a want of fighting spirit – it is therefore clear that their resistance was likely to be badly compromised.

As Forczyk and Moorhouse make clear, in the campaign that followed the dubious legacy of the inter-war period was compounded by a series of errors committed by such trusties of Pilsudski as General Rommel (a cousin of the famous German commander) and Dab-Biernacki and the commander of the armed forces, Marshal Rydz-Smigly. Yet, given the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the subsequent Russian invasion of eastern Poland while the battle was still in full swing, in the end these error made little difference: the Poles might have taken that much longer to crush, but they would have been crushed anyway. Equally, if Britain and France did not live up to the promises they had made the Poles prior to the outbreak of war, even an all-out effort on their part, by means, for example, of an intensive bomber campaign against the Ruhr supported by a more vigorous incursion by the French army in the Rhineland, would not have saved Poland. Yet, for all that, the Poles in many instances fought with the utmost heroism and inflicted severe casualties on a German war-machine that was still distinctly lacking in some respects and badly handled in many others. As for the old faithfuls of the traditional version of events, cases of cavalry charging tanks there were none, while, far from being wiped out on the ground, the Polish air force remained in action in considerable strength until the Russian invasion deprived it of its last bases. It is an inspiring story exceptionally well-told, and one which all those interested, not just in the early years of the Second World War, but in the situation in Eastern Europe today, are urged to read.

The war in Poland is also worth looking at from another point of view, however. From the very beginning it was a conquest that was founded on and informed by racial hatred, and in this sense it acted as a pattern for the horrors that were to follow in the course of Operation Barbarossa. Until now, the chief victims of what occurred

are portrayed as having been the Jews, and the latter came in for the most terrible treatment. Setting aside mere robbery, taunting and other acts of humiliation, every day saw appalling acts of murder and massacre, with large numbers of men, women and children shot to death or, still worse, burned alive locked up in blazing barns or synagogues. In Wieruszow, we hear of 21 deaths; in Czestochowa 180; in Bedzin 200; in Mielec 55; and in Pilica, 32. As for the total of those slaughtered in the course of fighting, a sensible estimate might be 3,000. What these works now present, however, is that the Jews were not alone. On the contrary, thanks to racial hatred, the paranoid fear of partisans that dated back to First-World-War Belgium and, before that, the Franco-Prussian War, many hundreds of Christians perished alongside them in the pogroms, the total number of fatalities being estimated by Moorhouse at some 16,000. To state this, of course, is not to minimise the Jewish tragedy, but rather to maximise the German guilt: though German soldiers leaving Berlin might have proclaimed that they were off to 'thrash the Jews', the reality was that they were the agents of a system that set no bounds on its victims, no bounds on its goals, and no bounds on its evils. If the Poles were the first to fight, they were also the first to fall.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1441

Helen Fry, *The Walls Have Ears: the Greatest Intelligence Operation of World War II*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019. 31 plates. 2 illustrations. Xiv + 319pp. ISBN 978-0300238600 (hardback). Price £18.99.

The official history of British intelligence in the Second World War made it clear that the three best sources of information available were signals intelligence, photo reconnaissance and prisoners of war. The first two have spawned a vast literature but the last far less. The official history severely excluded the human dimension from its account with prisoner of war intelligence referred to throughout simply as "POW". Helen Fry has helped to fill both these gaps with her study of one fascinating component of prisoner of war intelligence: how the private conversations of German prisoners of war were recorded secretly in an industrial-scale information gathering operation which ranked along with Bletchley Park in thoroughness and organisation. She has drawn on a huge trove of hitherto unexploited official papers and personal reminiscences of the small army of listeners recruited to man the operation to

produce an extensive record of the administrative side of the work and the unguarded conversations that it was able to feed into the intelligence analysis machine.

High ranking officer prisoners were deservedly a particular target of the bugging and herein lie some of the book's best passages. The material is so strong that it can be left to speak for itself. The reports on the cosmetic skincare efforts of one general are laugh-out-loud funny. The squabbles and tensions amongst the generals provide a microcosm of the flaws in the Third Reich. Some of them were so obsessed with the minutiae of status that they seemed unaware that there was a war on, still less that they were captives. The British were fully aware of the value of these prisoners and came up with an imaginative way of getting the most from them: a fake, Fascist-leaning peer baptized as Lord Aberfeldy, who, astoundingly, won their confidence. Presumably Debrett did not feature in the camp library.

The resources devoted to the whole set-up is testimony on its own to the value placed on its product. The listeners' greatest coup was the early information on the V weapons. The book recognizes that the story is already well-known but paints a fuller picture of the information from other conversations, which provided a bewildering array of often contradictory data from which the British had to assemble a workable assessment. It would have been welcome to learn more detail on the process of sifting worthwhile intelligence from the dross of perfectly honest, but wildly misinformed, discussion between low level prisoners working from garbled hearsay. It must have been someone's job to follow up tales of partially submersible E-boats and an equally imaginary air-towed 5,000kg bomb.

Far more useful to the higher reaches of Naval Intelligence was the crucial background detail on U-boat organisation, technology and methods gleaned from captured crew members. They also alerted the British to the construction of concrete U-boat pens at Lorient and St Nazaire. The statement in the book that these immense structures were undetectable by photo reconnaissance is wrong, although it is unclear whether the text is reporting an erroneous belief on the part of a listener.

When the narrative moves beyond its immediate source material the touch becomes less sure. In the space of a single paragraph the aircraft carrier *HMS Glorious* becomes a battlecruiser, the German invasion of Norway is opposed by "French and Finnish resistance fighters" (no mention of the regular Norwegian army) and the ensuing occupation of Norway lasts six years.

The account of Nazi war crimes is especially revealing of both German and British attitudes. The listeners encountered hard proof that post-war pleas of utter ignorance were self-serving twaddle. The attitudes that emerge from the recorded conversations run the full gamut from wilful blindness, through fear that the speakers will bear blame

themselves – always for someone else's misdeeds - to contrived apologetics. British attitudes can be even more chilling. Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, aristocratic Foreign Office and intelligence grandee, saw in early intimations of the Holocaust useful material to distract from criticism of the murders at Katyn Wood perpetrated by Britain's wartime ally of convenience, the Soviet Union. When the time came to punish war criminals, the obsession with security trumped thoughts of justice. To begin with the authorities had taken care to make recordings of incriminating conversations but when it came to the crunch, the unthinking reflex that intelligence operations should never be disclosed ruled out the use of bugged conversations as evidence at Nuremberg.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1442

Greg Baughen, *RAF on the Offensive: The Rebirth of Tactical Air Power 1940-1941*. Barnsley: Air World, 2018. Vii + 304 pp. ISBN 978-1526735157 (hardback). Price £25.

This is Baughen's fifth publication on early twentieth century British or French air power and as with his previous works there are serious flaws on display in the most recent volume to be published. The work is aimed at a general audience rather than the academic community, and this is one of its major failings. The bibliography is exceptionally limited and from this it appears that the most recent historical works published in the last ten to fifteen years have not been consulted. It is not clear if the author is simply unaware of these works or has deliberately not engaged with them as he is unable to counter the arguments being made in them as they firmly refute his own. This makes Baughen's claim to have written a definitive history of air power in Britain inherently questionable. It is, however, not only the lack of academic rigour which highlights real failings within this book. The author clearly does not (either deliberately or inadvertently) understand basic air power concepts such as air superiority and how fundamentally important these are for the conduct of any aerial operation. This lack of understanding is demonstrated through the following quote:

> The Air Staff … maintained that air support had only worked for Germany in Poland and France because they had air superiority. Once the RAF had air superiority, the Army would get all the support it wanted. This was very dangerous thinking. Clearly providing an army with air support is easier with air

> superiority. However, and army cannot wait days, weeks, months or years until air superiority is achieved before getting support.

This lack of understanding on such a basic, yet important, concept calls into question other aspects of the work which have largely been understudied by British historians. As had been highlighted by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, as early as 1919, a degree of air superiority was vital to allow air forces the freedom of the skies to conduct a variety of missions including support of ground forces. It is not simply a case, as Baughen claims, that air forces had to find different tactics to be able to support ground forces. Baughen's understanding of air superiority reads in a similar vein to that of the War Office in the 1920 and 1930s. Air forces attempting to operate without control of the skies will find missions difficult to conduct, and the vast majority of aircraft will not return to home bases. It will be very difficult for any influence to be had on events on the ground. The work covers the attempts, largely in Britain, to develop a functioning air support system and plays this against the backdrop of the continued strategic air offensive against Germany.

Baughen's argument, that the air offensive was a waste of time, money and resources that could have better been deployed in creating a tactical air force is, on the surface, a compelling one. But this argument is made in such a way and with such little acknowledgment of the available documentary evidence that it quickly falls apart. What coverage there is, is difficult to discern given the referencing style utilised which simply gives the file number and date of the document with no additional information. There are also important pieces of evidence missing that would provide rounded analysis. For example, in his coverage of the aftermath of the Battle of France in 1940, Baughen does not acknowledge the Bartholomew Report, the War Office report into the fighting, and his reading and subsequent analysis of the Wann/Woodall experiments conducted in autumn 1940 are misread and wildly misunderstood. This is particularly the case for how the report deals with the application of close air support for the British Army. Baughen appears to be finding the evidence to support a pre-conceived argument rather than developing an argument from the evidence. This is something that is prevalent in all of Baughen's work.

While the argument being made has a degree of accuracy to it in a general sense, it falls down in several key areas. The first is a lack of understanding of the wider historical context. In Britain, with no real capability to conduct active operations against German forces in north-west Europe, there was time and space to develop a functioning air support system capable of handling the sheer weight of traffic cross-Channel operations would create. Baughen is correct to highlight that any air support in the event of a German invasion in either 1940 or 1941 would have been haphazard in nature, as was freely admitted by the Air Staff. What Baughen fails to acknowledge is the other side of the coin and the difficulties that would have been faced in

maintaining an invasion operation, particularly one launched without control of the air above the Channel and south east England. This, according to Baughen, would not have caused the Germans any real problem, but he fails to explain why such an invasion was not launched. The coverage of early RAF/army operations in north Africa and in Greece and Crete are a welcome addition as these have largely been overlooked in the literature but given the failings in both research and analysis previously highlighted it is difficult to be convinced by the conclusions reached. Overall, this is a poorly researched piece of amateur history, that, due to its price point, could have a significant negative and potentially misleading impact in terms of public understanding of this particular topic.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1443

Ian Mitchell, *The Battle of The Peaks and Long Stop Hill: Tunisia, April-May 1943*. Warwick: Helion & Company, 2019. 26 photographs. 15 maps. 326pp. ISBN 978-1911628934 (hardback). Price £35.00.

Most accounts of the 1943 campaign in North Africa dwell on the achievements of the British 8th Army; Montgomery's victory at the Second Battle of Al Alamein at the end of the previous year was famously referred to by Churchill 'as the end of the beginning' of a war which, until then, had seen British and Commonwealth forces struggling to overcome a seemingly irrepressible foe. The 8th Army's achievement in driving Rommel's Africa Korps back into Tunisia was quite rightly lauded by a public eager for good news. More than this though, Montgomery's penchant for self-publicity ensured that the men who fought under his command would dominate the post war historical narrative. It might come as a surprise to many people, therefore, that much of the fighting in the latter stages of the North African campaign was undertaken not by the 8th Army, but by Lieutenant General Kenneth Anderson's British 1st Army. Indeed, Tunis, the first capital city to be taken by the Western Allies, fell to the latter on the 12 May 1943, heralding the capture and imprisonment of 250,000 German and Italian combatants.

Following the successful execution of Operation Torch, the Anglo-American invasion of French Morocco and Algeria, the British 1st Army struck out into Tunisia. As Tunis itself came under threat from the Allied force German and (to a lesser extent) Italian

resistance stiffened, partly driven by the appointment of a new 5th Panzer Army commander, Hans-Jürgen von Arnim, and partly by the earlier arrival in theatre of the 10 Panzer Division. Interlocking defensive lines were consolidated in the Djebel el Ahmera and Djebel Rhar hills (Long Stop and The Peaks) by the German 334th Infantry Division thus barring access to the main Tunis rail and road route running through the Medjerda river valley. This book is concerned with the battles in this mountainous area and, in particular, the successful part played by the British 78th 'Battle Axe' Division.

The opening chapter provides vital contextual information about Operation Torch, the collapse of Vichy hegemony in North Africa and the Allied drive across Morocco, Algeria and into Tunisia. The book then goes on to explore the 1942/ 43 Winter stalemate and the planning and preparation for Operation Sweep, an attack undertaken by all four divisions of V Corps, with French and American contributions. The 78th Division was tasked with taking Longstop Hill and it is their efforts, along with the associated actions of other formations, that are examined in the main body of the book. In reading the detailed accounts of each attack and the extent of the effort made by the men involved one is struck by the scale of 1st Army's achievement. The German defenders who were made up of experienced grenadier regiments supported by specialist anti-tank, engineering and mountain troops were tenacious, well led, and impressively equipped. The heat, lack of cover and the absence of obvious supply routes created a logistical challenge which added to the difficulties faced by the attacking force.

The penultimate chapter covers the final stages of the struggle for The Peaks culminating in the taking of Djebel Rharb, a feat which was enabled by the use of Churchill tanks – to the surprise of the defenders. Finally, the author summarises the resultant destruction of the Africa Korps in May 1943 and the end of the land war in North Africa before lamenting the way in which the 1st Army was unceremoniously disbanded at the end of the campaign. The 1st Army commander was clearly treated in a rather cavalier fashion and his reputation was not helped by Montgomery's tactless public observation that Anderson was just 'a plain cook' (a metaphor re-used by Gregory Blaxland in a book which Ian Mitchell cites as his major influence, The Plain Cook & The Great Showman). Indeed, in his memoir El Alamein to the River Sangro, Montgomery couldn't even bring himself to credit Anderson with the capture of Tunis without reminding his readership that 8th Army's 7th Armoured Division was the first unit into the liberated city.

To say this work is comprehensive would be an understatement. The author has gone to extreme lengths to uncover the truth about this campaign. His list of sources and bibliography is impressively full and this is reflected in the text where different sources are compared in order to provide a composite picture of events. The author does not

shy away from criticising individual commanders which makes his attempt to rehabilitate the reputation of Lieutenant-General Kenneth Anderson all the more credible. The pages are full of anecdotes and flashes of humour – the latter helped along by the fact that Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe both served as gunners in 1st Army and were not shy in offering up anecdotes in their respective memoirs.

This book, which is imbued with the author's passion for his subject, is written in an engaging and informative style. The chronology is supplemented by fascinating biographical detail and the referencing is meticulous and varied – often citing unpublished primary sources. The accompanying high-quality maps are well cross-referenced and there is a good mix of contemporary photographs and later images captured by the author during a visit to the battlefields. In summary, it goes a long way in filling a gap in the historiography of the Tunisian campaign and promotes an argument for the writing of a full history of the 1st Army. Kenneth Anderson was a man whose death, according to Gregory Blaxland, 'caused little stir. He was one of nature's losers in the contest for fame'. Aside from being an authoritative study of the Battle of The Peaks and Long Stop Hill Ian Mitchell's new book represents the first step in a rehabilitation which is long overdue.

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DOI: 10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v6i3.1444

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES (March 2020)

Articles

The British Journal of Military History (the BJMH or Journal) welcomes the submission of articles on military history in the broadest sense, and without restriction as to period or region. The BJMH particularly welcomes articles on subjects that might not ordinarily receive much attention but which clearly show the topic has been properly researched.

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Following peer review and any necessary revision by the author, articles will be edited for publication in the Journal. The editors may propose further changes in the interest of clarity and economy of expression, although such changes will not be made without consultation with the author. The editors are the final arbiters of usage, grammar, and length.

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academic publishers, general commercial publishers, and specialist military history imprints may all be considered for review in the Journal.

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Book reviews should generally be of about 700 words and must not exceed 1000 words in length.

A review should summarise the main aims and arguments of the work, should evaluate its contribution and value to military history as broadly defined, and should identify to which readership(s) the work is most likely to appeal. The Journal does not encourage personal comment or attacks in the reviews it publishes, and the Editorial Team reserves the right to ask reviewers for revisions to their reviews. The final decision whether or not to publish a review remains with the Editorial Team.

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All submitted reviews should begin with the bibliographic information of the work under review, including the author(s) or editor(s), the title, the place and year of publication, the publisher, the number of pages, the ISBN for the format of the work that has been reviewed, and the price for this format if available. Prices should be given in the original currency, but if the book has been published in several territories including the UK then the price in pounds sterling should be supplied. The number of illustrations and maps should also be noted if present. An example of the heading of a review is as follows:

James Gow, *The Serbian Project and its Adversaries: a Strategy of War Crimes*. London: Hurst, 2003. xii + 322 pp. 1 map. ISBN 978-1850654995 (Paperback). Price £17.50.

The reviewer's name, and an institutional affiliation if relevant, should be appended at the bottom of the review, name in Capitals and Institution in lower case with both to be right aligned.

Reviews of a single work should not contain any footnotes, but if the text refers to any other works then their author, title and year should be apparent in order for readers to be able to identify them. The Editorial Team and Editorial Board may on occasion seek to commission longer Review Articles of a group of works, and these may contain footnotes with the same formatting and standards used for articles in the Journal.

BJMH STYLE GUIDE (July 2019)

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http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

Specific Points to Note

Use Gill Sans MT 10 Point for all article and book review submissions, including footnotes.

Text should be justified.

Paragraphs do not require indenting.

Line spacing should be single and a single carriage return applied between paragraphs.

Spellings should be anglicised: i.e. –ise endings where appropriate, colour etc., 'got' not 'gotten'.

Verb past participles: -ed endings rather than –t endings are preferred for past participles of verbs i.e. learned, spoiled, burned. While is preferred to whilst.

Contractions should not be used i.e. 'did not' rather than 'didn't'.

Upon first reference the full name and title of an individual should be used as it was as the time of reference i.e. On 31 July 1917 Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), launched the Third Battle of Ypres.

All acronyms should be spelled out in full upon first reference with the acronym in brackets, as shown in the example above.

Dates should be written in the form 20 June 2019.

When referring to an historical figure, e.g. King Charles, use that form, when referring to the king later in the text, use king in lower case.

Foreign words or phrases such as *weltanschauung* or *levée en masse* should be italicised.

Footnoting:

- All references should be footnotes not endnotes.
- Footnote numeral should come at the end of the sentence and after the full stop.
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Quotations:

- Short (less than three lines of continuous quotation): placed in single quotation marks unless referring to direct speech and contained within that paragraph. Standard footnote at end of sentence.
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- Ibid., with a full stop before the comma, should be used for consecutive citations.

Examples of Citations:

- Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 21.
- Michael Collins, 'A fear of flying: diagnosing traumatic neurosis among British aviators of the Great War', *First World War Studies*, 6, 2 (2015), pp. 187-202 (p. 190).
- Michael Howard, 'Men against Fire: The Doctrine of the Offensive in 1914', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 510-526.
- The UK National Archives (TNA), CAB 19/33, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Sclater, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917.
- Shilpa Ganatra, 'How Derry Girls Became an Instant Sitcom Classic', *The Guardian*, 13 February 2018 https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/feb/13/derry-girls-instant-sitcom-classic-schoolgirls-northern-ireland. Accessed 1 January 2019.

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