

A HISTORY OF
THE ROYAL NAVY

THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

Martin Robson



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Martin Robson is Lecturer in Strategic Studies at the Strategy and Security Institute, University of Exeter. His research focuses on the formulation and implementation of British policy and grand strategy encompassing numerous aspects of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century naval and military history in a global context including seapower, joint operations and economic warfare. He is the author of *A History of the Royal Navy: The Napoleonic Wars* (I.B.Tauris, 2014); *Britain, Portugal and South America in the Napoleonic Wars: Alliances and Diplomacy in Economic Maritime Conflict* (I.B.Tauris, 2010) and *The Battle of Trafalgar* (Conway, 2005).

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‘An excellent, accessible and highly lucid account of the vital role played by the Royal Navy in British success during the Seven Years War. It situates naval and maritime power firmly at the centre of British grand strategy in this, the first truly global conflict.’ – **Jeremy Black, Professor of History, University of Exeter**

‘The Seven Years War proved a major turning point in the Royal Navy’s rise to the dominant position it secured in the age of Nelson. The naval achievements in this long war are often overlooked because there was no single decisive battle at sea. Martin Robson fills this gap for the general reader by providing a clear picture of the scale and sweep of naval operations and the impact of naval power during the conflict. Drawing on recent work in this field and on his own incisive insights, Robson offers a highly readable and vigorous interpretation of the Royal Navy’s extraordinarily wide-ranging contribution to the war. The hazards of war, the challenges of command, and the effort required to stage joint operations are graphically described. He is very effective in linking naval activity of many different kinds to the larger question of what strategic objectives naval power served. Robson stresses the vital role played by the navy in enabling Britain to defeat the French in North America and India and establish itself as a truly global imperial power. By blending together the overall political purposes of deploying naval forces with vivid accounts of naval actions, Robson succeeds in introducing the reader to a dynamic, successful and probably decisive period of British naval history.’ – **Bruce Collins, Professor of Modern History, Sheffield Hallam University**

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Series Foreword

The Royal Navy has for centuries played a vital if sometimes misunderstood or even at times unsung part in Britain's history. Often it has been the principal – sometimes the only – means of defending British interests around the world. In peacetime the Royal Navy carries out a multitude of tasks as part of government policy – showing the flag, or naval diplomacy as it is now often called. In wartime, as the senior service of Britain's armed forces, the navy has taken the war to the enemy, by battle, by economic blockade or by attacking hostile territory from the sea. Adversaries have changed over the centuries. Old rivals have become today's alliance partners; the types of ship, the weapons within them and the technology – the 'how' of naval combat – have also changed. But fundamentally what the navy does has not changed. It exists to serve Britain's government and its people, to protect them and their interests wherever they might be threatened in the world.

This series, through the numerous individual books within it, throws new light on almost every aspect of Britain's Royal Navy: its ships, its people, the technology, the wars and peacetime operations too, from the birth of the modern navy following the restoration of Charles II to the throne in the late seventeenth century to the war on terror in the early twenty-first century.

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Cold War, or particular aspects of the service: the navy and empire, the Women's Royal Naval Service, the Royal Marines, naval aviation and the submarine service. The books are standalone works in their own right, but when taken as a series present the most comprehensive and readable history of the Royal Navy.

Duncan Redford

National Museum of the Royal Navy

The role in Britain's history of the Royal Navy is all too easily and too often overlooked; this series will go a long way to redressing the balance. Anyone with an interest in British history in general or the Royal Navy in particular will find this series an invaluable and enjoyable resource.

Tim Benbow

**Defence Studies Department,
King's College London at the
Defence Academy of the UK**

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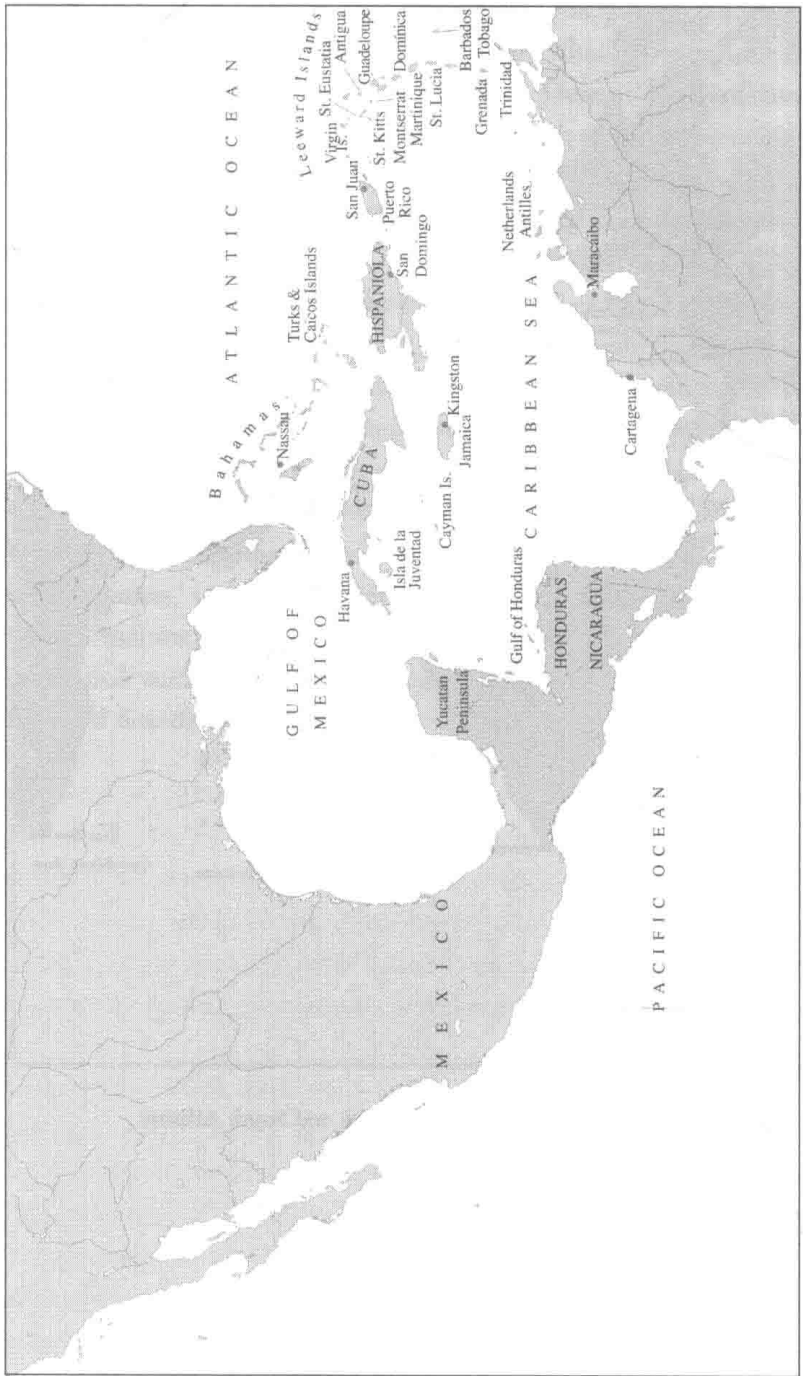
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Today, when so much that the Royal Navy does happens out of sight of the general public, it is a hard task to convince people that navies matter. As a society we forget that states did, and still do, build navies to fight and, as Carl von Clausewitz reminds us, that is about violence, bloodshed and killing. We are, thankfully, a world away from the character of global conflict of two and a half centuries ago. Writing about such events can become all-consuming as one wrestles with problems with sources, interpretation, structure and even missing footnotes. Inevitably at such times Charlotte, Horatio and Lysander provide much welcome support, inspiration and perspective. This book is dedicated to them with much love and heartfelt thanks.



Map 1. North America and the North and South Atlantic



Map 2. The West Indies