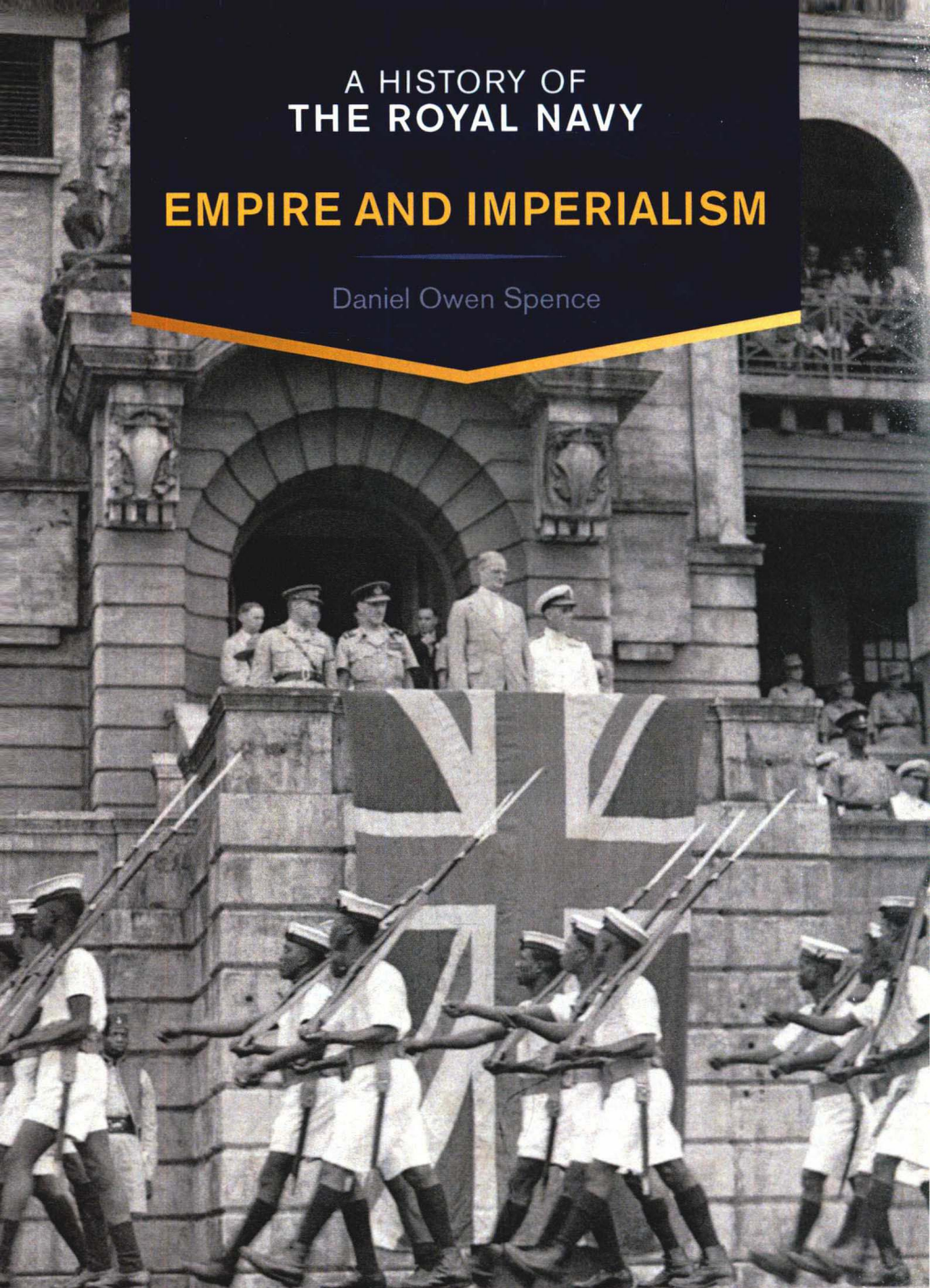


A HISTORY OF
THE ROYAL NAVY

EMPIRE AND IMPERIALISM

Daniel Owen Spence



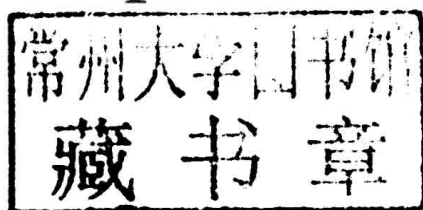
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Empire and Imperialism



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‘The fortunes of the British Empire and the Royal Navy were inextricably linked, the one entirely dependent on the other. But the navy was much more than just a fighting force, designed to defeat rivals and subdue subordinate peoples, for it performed many other functions. Its personnel were key in the pursuit of diplomatic ends, in the conveyance of leading political, administrative and royal travellers, in the protection of trade, in the development of both exploration and scientific research, in developing such policies as the export of convicts, in surveying and hydrographic work, in the development of marine, navigational and armaments technologies, and in simply “flying the flag”. As this concise yet wide-ranging and comprehensive book demonstrates, the navy also performed a vital psychological role, often on a global scale. It was celebrated in all sorts of visual, literary and cultural forms. In the twentieth century, its significance in both warfare and in relationships with indigenous peoples changed dramatically, and the decline of empire and of naval strength occurred in parallel. Few authors have described these connections more successfully than Daniel Owen Spence.’ – **John M. MacKenzie, Emeritus Professor of History, Lancaster University**

‘This jaunty and comprehensive account of the navy’s association with Britain’s maritime empire contributes to a fine tradition of imperial and naval history-writing. A model of compression, sweeping yet with an eye for arresting detail, it captures the spirit of Britain’s engagement with the wider world and the navy’s intimate role in it. Daniel Owen Spence reveals how the Royal Navy was central to the rise of imperial Britain, its history entwined with commerce, culture, religion, science, exploration, and the accretion of knowledge and power to the British state. At every stage of the process, the navy was affecting the lives of people overseas, and recruiting them into its ranks.’ – **Ashley Jackson, Professor of Imperial and Military History, King’s College London**

*For Auntie Lel and Uncle Geoff, who helped fire my fascination with the
Royal Navy and the sea*

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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.

The series consists of three chronologically themed books covering the sailing navy from the 1660s until 1815, the navy in the nineteenth century from the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and the navy since 1900. These are complemented by a number of slightly shorter books which examine the

navy's part in particular wars, such as the Seven Years' War, the American Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, World War I, World War II and the 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
NMRN

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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To try and distil over five centuries of British imperial and naval history into one book has been a mammoth undertaking, and I could not have completed it without the intellectual and emotional support of a number of key people. Undoubtedly the biggest shout out has to go to the NMRN's Duncan Redford, who advocated for the inclusion of this volume following our discussions about the idea, and, as series editor, he has been a galvanising and sympathetic voice keeping my eye on the prize, whose positive and constructive feedback gave me a much-needed boost to reach the finish line. His patience and understanding has been shared by the publishers, I.B.Tauris, and Jo Godfrey in particular. Also at the NMRN, my thanks go to Stephen Courtney for his assistance in identifying suitable images from the museum's collection.

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