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Arthur Tedder's 1916 study of the Royal Navy during the seventeenth century describes the Navy's cautious support for the restoration of the monarchy, its position as protector of commerce in the Mediterranean and its role in the Anglo-Dutch wars. It chronicles the constant struggle to staff, feed and equip the Navy and the challenges of plague, poor discipline and frequent skirmishes with the Dutch. It explores in detail the tactics of individual battles in the Anglo-Dutch wars as well as the practical difficulties that often hampered the English war effort. The author served in the RAF in WWI and became a member of the British high command during WWII; his tactical flair informs his analysis of the Royal Navy's progress during a turbulent period. His account also includes fascinating details of wage disputes, embezzlement of funds and the work of the infamous press gangs.

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*From the Death of Cromwell to the Treaty of
Breda*

Its Work, Growth and Influence

ARTHUR WILLIAM TEDDER



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TO THE TREATY OF BRED A ;
ITS WORK, GROWTH AND INFLUENCE

BY

ARTHUR W. TEDDER, B.A.
MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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INTRODUCTION

“OUR historians,” said Sir J. Knox Laughton at the recent International Historical Congress, “have considered, and therefore people in general have considered, that the navy is merely an engine for fighting battles.” That is an attitude which it is becoming increasingly easy to avoid, because its fallacy is being ever increasingly exposed ; though, until our present standard naval history is superseded, there remains in being a monumental example of that prime fallacy.

It is that fallacy, or rather, that lack of true proportion, which it is particularly necessary to avoid in this study of the Navy of the Restoration. The Restoration period is one of vital interest and importance regarding the development of the Navy as a self-containing, independent service, and as a part of the nation. It is not too much to say that it is during this period that there is the first dawn of a service consciousness—*esprit de corps*. That “very calme and good temper” with which the fleet as a whole took any and every political change that came along was not mere stolid indifference, nor a stupid dull obedience resulting from thick brains ; there was as much live

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interest in questions of the day in the Navy as in the Army, but it scarcely ever became so uncontrolled as to gain the upper hand of discipline ; though once, in February, 1660, it rose perilously near the danger point. The naval captain rarely forgot that he was not a mind himself, but a part of a unit, of a squadron or a fleet. The precision of the English ships when manœuvring drew applause from friend and foe alike, and that at a time when tactical manœuvres were in their infancy : no mere letter-of-the-law discipline could have enabled them on the third day of the great Four Days' Fight, when they were shattered and torn by a three days' losing fight against superior odds, to have retired in the perfect order in which they did, one line covering another like a bulwark, a splendid example of a well-ordered retreat. Nothing but loyalty, loyalty to fellow-captains, to the admiral, loyalty to the service, could have compassed such a feat. It is true the fleet was honeycombed with petty personal spites and quarrels but—a contrast to those in the Dutch fleets—they were not indulged in to the service's detriment. Even in the notorious case of the division of the fleet in June, '66, the crime was committed—supposing the story is true—by one man, to curry favour : and the storm of complaints, of abuse, that arose from all ranks of the fleet, was too unanimous to be but the wailings of Englishmen weeping for their

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country ; it was the deep and bitter resentment of the professional seaman who sees his profession disgraced by a blunder criminal to him—to the true professional it were better to die than blunder.

The attitude of the Navy towards the Restoration is specially interesting, for then the new spirit was already born but not yet conscious, it could be used, not understood.

Thus, in trying to treat of things in their true proportion, I have given a comparatively small space to the actual fighting, and have endeavoured rather to give space to the things that matter now, to treat of things at that time, not as events between 1658 and 1667, but as threads of a pattern that is still being weaved, spans of a bridge that is still being built. There lies one great danger in the way of such an attempt, one great difficulty ; the danger of looking at the past *as* the past, the difficulty of looking forward from the past to the present instead of merely the reverse. In all cases of naval operations it is as essential to appreciate what the various commanders did not know, as it is to know everything : more so. And to carry the point further, to the question of ideas, there seems to be a great danger in the unconscious assumption of the existence and comprehensibility at that time of ideas which are commonplace axioms at the present day. The most striking case in point

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during this period is that of the Mediterranean ‘ policy ’ which, though to the modern eye it was clearly practised then, was, with equal definiteness, to them a meaningless, pointless incident or turn of chances.

I have, where possible, gone to original sources for every point; the exceptions to this rule have full references, the most extensive being to the important Sandwich papers brought out by Mr F. R. Harris in his *Life of Mountagu*; not having had access to the originals I have been compelled to take them second-hand; I have given full reference in each case. I have also been unable to see the Dutch MSS. at the Rijksmuseum. For the rest, my main authorities have been the Pepys MSS. at the Pepysian and Bodleian Libraries, and the Admiralty papers at the Admiralty Library and the Public Record Office. I have been compelled to limit the scope of the essay to naval operations in European waters, and consequently to omit the expeditions of Holmes and Harman in the West. I have also but barely touched on the particular questions of ‘ shipbuilding,’ and ‘ the Flag and the right of Recognition and Salute.’ Lest the size of the Bibliography seem disproportionate with the essay itself, I should explain that I have considered the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography one of the most important parts of my work.

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My thanks are due to Dr J. R. Tanner, of St John's College, to Mr S. Gaselee, Librarian of the Pepysian Library, Magdalene College, who kindly gave me every facility for access to the Pepys MSS., and also to Professor C. H. Firth, and Mr R. G. Perrin, Librarian of the Admiralty Library, for doing me a like service at the Bodleian and Admiralty Libraries respectively. I am greatly indebted to Mr F. R. Salter, my History Tutor at Magdalene, who, during my absence in Fiji, undertook entire charge of the proofs; also to Mr H. R. Tedder, Librarian of the Athenaeum, who has given me invaluable assistance in the correction of proofs of the Bibliography.

A. W. T.

January 1915

P.S. The difficulties attending the correction of proofs under active service conditions, which have greatly delayed publication, will, I trust, at least partially excuse the more palpable faults and omissions which under happier circumstances I should have hoped to correct and repair.

April 1916

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