

Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War

In contrast to the voluminous literature on trench warfare, few scholarly works have been written on how the First World War was experienced at sea. The conditions of war challenged the Royal Navy's position within British national identity and its own service ethos. This challenge took the form of a dialogue, fuelled by fear of civil unrest, between the discourses of paternalism from above and democratism from below. Laura Rowe explores issues of morale and discipline, using the contemporary language of discipline to shed light on key questions of how the service was able to absorb indiscipline with marked success through a subtle web of loyalties, history, ethos, traditions and customs, which were rooted in older notions of service but moulded by the new conditions of total war. In so doing, she provides not only a new methodological framework for understanding morale, but also military discipline and leadership.

Laura Rowe is Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Exeter.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41905-5 — *Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War*
Laura Rowe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare

General Editor

Jay Winter, *Yale University*

Advisory Editors

David Blight, *Yale University*

Richard Bosworth, *University of Western Australia*

Peter Fritzsche, *University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Carol Gluck, *Columbia University*

Benedict Kiernan, *Yale University*

Antoine Prost, *Université de Paris-Sorbonne*

Robert Wohl, *University of California, Los Angeles*

In recent years the field of modern history has been enriched by the exploration of two parallel histories. These are the social and cultural history of armed conflict, and the impact of military events on social and cultural history.

Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare presents the fruits of this growing area of research, reflecting both the colonization of military history by cultural historians and the reciprocal interest of military historians in social and cultural history, to the benefit of both. The series offers the latest scholarship in European and non-European events from the 1850s to the present day.

A full list of titles in the series can be found at:
www.cambridge.org/modernwarfare

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41905-5 — *Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War*
Laura Rowe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War

Laura Rowe
University of Exeter



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41905-5 — *Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War*
Laura Rowe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108419055

DOI: 10.1017/9781108296816

© Laura Rowe 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Rowe, Laura, 1980– author.

Title: *Morale and discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War* / Laura Rowe, University of Exeter.

Description: Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, [2018] |

Series: Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018002416 | ISBN 9781108419055 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: World War, 1914–1918 – Naval operations, British. |

Great Britain. Royal Navy – Discipline – History – 20th century. |

Great Britain. Royal Navy – Sea life. |

Naval discipline – Great Britain – History – 20th century. |

Military morale – Great Britain – History – 20th century.

Classification: LCC D581.R68 2018 | DDC 940.4/5941–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018002416>

ISBN 978-1-108-41905-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41905-5 — Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War
Laura Rowe
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

In memory of John Brown

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41905-5 — Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War

Laura Rowe

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Introduction	1
1 Ethos on the Eve of War: The Foundations of Paternalism and Democratism	20
2 The Structure of Discipline and the Spectre of Indiscipline	53
3 ‘Addressing’ Pay and Conditions	92
4 Lower-Deck Societies, Trade Unions, and Representation	149
5 Counting Unrest	198
Conclusion	226
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	239
<i>Index</i>	261

Figures

0.1 Hospital admission photograph of Able Seaman W. Vicarage. Image from the Gillie British Patient File W. Vicarage – archive reference MS0513/1/1/ID2123	<i>page</i> 10
1.1 ‘His First Command’. University of Leeds Special Collections, Record Foxon, Fred – classmark LIDDLE/WW1/RNMR/106	31
2.1 ‘His First Offence’. <i>The Fleet</i> , June 1916, p. 165	69
3.1 ‘The Widow’s Only Son’. <i>The Bluejacket and the Soldier</i> , November 1916, p. 145	122
4.1 ‘The Two Striking Forces’. National Museum of the Royal Navy, Record No. 1991.4 – ‘Trot Talk’ (magazine of the Harwich Force), October 1918, p. 65	161
5.1 Number of ratings prosecuted at courts martial per year	204
5.2 Number of officers prosecuted at courts martial per year	213
5.3 Number of officers prosecuted at disciplinary courts per year	214

Tables

3.1	Responses to Admiralty request for the fleet's reaction to recent concessions	<i>page</i> 107
3.2	Grievances listed by ship in response to enquiries into lower-deck unrest. Tabulated by the Board from the information supplied in response to Charles Walker's request of 14 November 1917	109
3.3	Grievances as given to the Board in response to Their Lordships' request of 14 November 1917	111
5.1	Charges brought against ratings at courts martial, 1914–1918	202
5.2	Percentage of each category of charge brought against ratings of each service type at courts martial, 1914–1918	203
5.3	Years of service for active service ratings at the time of their trial by courts martial	205
5.4	Years of service for men and NCOs of the Royal Marines at the time of their trial by courts martial	206
5.5	Years of service for reservist ratings at the time of their trial by courts martial	206
5.6	Charges brought against officers at courts martial, 1914–1918	208
5.7	Percentage of each category of charge brought against officers of each service type, 1914–1918	209
5.8	Years of service for active service officers at the time of their trial by courts martial	210
5.9	Years of service for officers of the Royal Marines at the time of their trial by courts martial	210
5.10	Years of service by reservist officers at the time of their trial by courts martial	210
5.11	Charges brought against officers at disciplinary courts, 1914–1918	211

x	List of Tables	
5.12	Percentage of each category of charge brought against officers of each service type, 1914–1918	212
5.13	Types of naval mutinies	217
C.1	Reactions to naval chaplains and compulsory church services	230

Acknowledgements

As with all academic endeavours this manuscript owes much to the thoughts, ideas and care of others; and I am grateful for all the debates, discussions and casual chats which have shaped this project. Many of these have taken place through the work and events of the International Society for First World War Studies. This society, founded by Dr Jenny Macleod and Professor Pierre Purseigle, has provided a forum for researchers across the globe at all stages of their careers, and the mutual support of its membership has been very valuable to me. I wish to extend my thanks to my PhD supervisor, Professor William Philpott, for his unending support and encouragement and for being the best supervisor anyone could wish for. I would also like to thank Professor Adrian Gregory for starting me down this research road and for all his thoughts along the way. Thanks must also go to my colleagues at the University of Exeter: to Dr Mike Duffy who was kind enough to read, re-read and comment on the manuscript, to Professor Martin Thomas for his time and support, and to Dr Bruce Coleman who helped me through my first year of teaching with copious tea and sympathy. This project could not have been completed without the assistance of all the staff at the various libraries and archives used and I'm acutely conscious of the debt I owe them all; however, particular thanks must go to Jenny Wraight from the Naval Historical Branch whose encyclopaedic knowledge of her collections and her many suggestions were invaluable. In addition to their help and guidance, Michael Watson, Lisa Carter and Cassi Roberts from CUP have demonstrated huge patience with me and with this project for which I am much obliged. Finally, my thanks must go to Jennifer Barker for everything she has done. She, more than anyone, will be pleased to see this book finally in print!

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-41905-5 — Morale and Discipline in the Royal Navy during the First World War

Laura Rowe

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)
