

Between Empire and Continent will appeal to those who wish to deemphasize Berlin's role in the currents of diplomacy which preceded the outbreak of the First World War, but it does little to strengthen their case.

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ROBERT K. SUTCLIFFE. *British Expeditionary Warfare and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1793–1815*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016. Pp. 272. \$120.00 (cloth).
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.74

Until its unfortunate rationalization, the Greenwich Maritime Institute, once part of the University of Greenwich, fostered research that dramatically advanced historical knowledge of Britain's maritime history. That research made outstanding contributions to our understanding of Britain's role in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars against France and of her governmental strengths in that period. Anyone who has read Roger Knight's *Britain Against Napoleon: the Organization of Victory* (2013), and now Robert Sutcliffe's *British Expeditionary Warfare and the Defeat of Napoleon* (2016), will no longer be in any doubt about why Britain was able to maintain her position as a major European military power, or about how at the same time Britain was able to maintain control of, indeed enlarge, her global empire. Generally, clarity of explanation for such grand achievements is lost within a multitude of factors, primacy within which remains a matter of debate. With Robert Sutcliffe's penetrating study, that can no longer be the case. For he shows how, despite her peripheral geographical situation, Britain exercised operational military power both within Europe and throughout the world. His explanation, prosaic though it may appear among powerful economic, financial, and diplomatic arguments, is utterly convincing. He has, so to speak, discovered the key element in modern Britain's DNA, without which Britain would not have the history she possesses.

Others before Sutcliffe have made studies of Britain's transport service. Paula Watson examined the first institution of a commission for transports during the War of Spanish Succession ("The Commission for Victualling the Navy, the Commission for Sick and Wounded Seamen and Prisoners of War, the Commission for Transports. 1702–14," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1965). Unfortunately, that organization with its expertise was dissolved at the end of that war, the consequences of which were recorded by David Syrett for the Seven Years' War, and most importantly for the American War of Independence (*Shipping and the American War 1775–83: A Study of British Transport Organisation*, 1979). Meanwhile, Syrett's contemporary, Mary Condon, studied the resurrection of transport commissioners for the French Revolutionary war, collectively then known as the Transport Board. Sutcliffe takes forward the work of that board to demonstrate the critical role it played during the Napoleonic Wars ("The Administration of the Transport Service during the War against Revolutionary France, 1793–1802," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of London, 1968).

Although regarded as one of the naval boards under the Admiralty, from 1794 the Transport Board was managed by the Treasury. Here to a large extent lay the secret of its success. For, along multifarious lines of communication through most departments of government and the armed forces, the demands of the Treasury were imperative. Necessarily, a small proportion of Sutcliffe's book is concerned with the terms upon which shipping was hired, the work that had to be done to make the transports ready to receive troops, ordnance, horses, and stores. But the main thrust of his book is to demonstrate the growth in the Transport Board's

competence and in the scale of its operations. Bureaucratic deficiencies are not played down: the reactive nature of government, the over-ambition of certain expeditions, the failures of consultation and lack of understanding of the logistical implications of plans among statesmen. But more impressive are the operational achievements, demonstrated in statistics of shipping hired and troops shipped. Most expeditions arose from proposals approved by the secretary of state for war; it was therefore highly advantageous that able statesmen, Henry Dundas and Lord Castlereagh, held that office for long periods. Even more important was the tenure as chairman of the Transport Board for over twenty years of Captain (later Sir) Rupert George.

Expeditions of the Revolutionary War are broken into components for analysis of their success or failure. Those of the Napoleonic Wars are examined at greater length. Over fifty expeditions are considered in total. It was remarkable that the gestation period, from point of issue of instruction to the Transport Board to date of sailing of first transports, was no longer than between ten and sixteen weeks. This was a remarkably short time, given that the expeditions of the Napoleonic Wars made huge transport demands. The Walcheren expedition, for instance, required 352 transports and 264 warships. Most memorable is the fast-moving build-up of British military forces in Europe during the period of the Hundred Days between Napoleon's escape from Elba and his defeat at Waterloo. British troops were shipped to Europe at the rate of about 11,000 a month. Some came from North America, where the War of 1812 was coming to an end. But by then such movements were normal. By the end of the 1813, the British regular army numbered nearly 240,000, of which 76 percent was overseas. By comparison with the armies of France or Russia, that size was small. But by naval strength and convoy, by knowledge of the market for shipping, by the calculating hire of that small proportion of British shipping (about 9–10 percent) that was neither unsuitable in size nor committed to trading voyages, the British army was transported wherever necessary around the coast of Europe and around the world. It was the Transport Board, its agents and their experience of shipping troops, which gave Britain her global power and flexibility of military reach at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

With thirty charts and tables, three appendices (the British empire's shipping, ships built in England, and Britain's military forces serving at home and overseas), full footnotes, and bibliography, this book will long serve as a work of reference. Sutcliffe and Boydell Press are to be congratulated on a significant contribution to our knowledge of the military history of the British state.

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MARTIN THOMAS and RICHARD TOYE. *Arguing about Empire: Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France, 1882–1956*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 277. \$55.00 (cloth)
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.75

In many ways, this comparative volume by two self-described political historians is a return to an older way of writing imperial history. While acknowledging the importance of the cultural and postcolonial turns, the authors analyze official French and British justifications of expansion at key moments of competition between the two empires. Rhetorical conflict at the highest echelons had the power either to escalate or defuse Franco-British rivalries, and the results mattered for the colonized. In the end, of course, Britain and France never went to war. Instead, they remained squabbling co-imperialists, alternately threatening and