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James W.E Smith
Kings College London, PhD Student.



www.kcl.ac.uk

'The Admiralty's Final Champion of the Naval Message: Lewin of Greenwich'.

Conference Paper Abstract

Abstract:

Drawing on some of the findings of my 2015 thesis: '*The End of the Admiralty and its Impact on British Defence Policy 1955-1964*' [Plymouth University] this paper explores the development of the mindset of Admiral Terry Lewin [Royal Navy] as he influenced British Naval policy in 1981/82. It explains the roots and rationale behind Lewin's methodology in tackling the challenges to defence policy as Defence Minister John Nott devised a plan that would have resulted in the Royal Navy being significantly reduced and the perception that the UK was no longer a maritime nation. It specifically challenges contemporary accounts that support that Lewin favoured Louis Mountbatten's 'master plan' from the 1960s for a more integrated MoD and gathering more executive power to the role of the Chief of the Defence staff [CDS]. By drawing on the thesis, it also mentions that accounts – manipulated by Mountbatten – of the creation of the Ministry of Defence, are misleading. This research reveals an often-overlooked component of Naval history, this being the Admiralty's ability to train and enforce a culture into Naval personnel to communicate the Navy's requirements and the services role to a range of audiences. The paper demonstrates a critical link between this component, as the Admiralty's policy came to fruition as Lewin timely advocated Seapower and encouraged the First Sea Lord to resist Naval cuts at the precipice of the 1982 Falklands War. This identifies the enduring influence of the Admiralty in Britain's national narrative far beyond its demise in 1964. This research resonates with current Naval debates while furthering historical analysis by further highlighting the vulnerability of Naval policy to select individuals. [5th January 2016].