

Institution: Plymouth University
Unit of Assessment: 30 - History
Title of case study: Military and Naval History: Policy and Heritage
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study, centring on the work of Dr Harry Bennett, Reader in Military History, demonstrates impact generated out of very wide-ranging research on twentieth-century military and naval history and aspects of government policy over a period of about 20 years. The case reports on the impact of research on naval strategy and operations, including that on the role of the German <i>Schnellboote</i> in World War II, achieved in relation to three key areas: the economic gains from naval heritage, public policy concerning naval heritage, and public engagement with and discourse about these matters, extending from think-tanks to very broad exposure in the media.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research has been undertaken over a period of about twenty years. Bennett's work has ranged from studies of modern land, sea and air warfare, the effects of Government policy in defence and foreign relations in the twentieth century, military strategy, and the practical results on the battlefield.</p> <p>Bennett's first book on <i>British Foreign Policy During the Curzon Period 1919-1924</i> (1995) analysed the evolution and execution of policy in the years after the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, exposing the difficulties of reconciling foreign and defence policies at a point of economic overstretch. Over the next two decades, Bennett then broadened the scope of his research thematically and chronologically, in a series of monographs, peer-reviewed articles, and edited collections of documents, assessing the strategic, military and political importance of Britain's armed forces at sea, on land and in the air. In <i>Survivors: British Merchant Seamen in the Second World War</i> (1997) Bennett analysed the strategic importance of the British Merchant Navy and the decisive nature of the winning of the Battle of the Atlantic. His expertise in modern naval history and the Second World War at sea was consolidated by the publication of <i>Hitler's Admirals</i> (2004) which explored the often-conflicting strategic decision-making processes exhibited by members of the German admiralty during the period of the Third Reich's build-up to war.</p> <p>Bennett's analysis of the land aspects of the Second World War is exemplified in <i>Destination Normandy: Three American Regiments on D-Day</i> (2006). Based on exhaustive oral testimonies and new documentary materials from archives in Britain, France and the United States, his study of D-Day challenges the perception that the operation was an exemplary demonstration of strategic planning. More recently Bennett has turned his scholarly attention to the war in the air. In his latest book, <i>The RAF's French Foreign Legion: De Gaulle, the British and the Re-birth of French Airpower 1940-1945</i> (2011) he examines the relationship between the RAF, the Free French Movement and the French fighter pilots in WWII.</p> <p>Finally, Bennett's most recent work (which has appeared in article form in <i>Global War Studies</i>) has concerned the naval history (both technical and strategic) of the S-130 German motor torpedo boat, as part of his work as the project historian on a £5m restoration project.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Bennett's research has been published by leading academic presses and peer-reviewed journals of international standing.</p> <p>Refereed Journal Article: 'Schnellboote, Strategy and the Defence of <i>Festung Europa</i> 1943-44, <i>Global War Studies</i> (2013): [REF 2104]</p> <p>Book: H. Bennett, <i>The RAF's French Foreign Legion: De Gaulle, the British and the Re-Emergence of French Air Power 1940-45</i> (Continuum, 2011) [REF 2014].</p> <p>Book: H. Bennett and G.S. Guinn, <i>British Naval Aviation in World War II</i> (I.B. Tauris, 2007) [RAE 2008].</p> <p>Book: Harry Bennett and R. Bennett, <i>Hitler's Admirals</i> (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institute Press, 2004) [RAE 2008].

Book: H. Bennett and R. Bennett, *Survivors: British Merchant Seamen in the Second World War* (Hambledon, 1999; republished Continuum, 2007) [RAE 2001].

Book: H. Bennett, *British Foreign Policy During the Curzon Period, 1919-24* (Macmillan, 1995) [RAE 1996].

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Bennett's expertise has achieved impact in three key areas:

1. Naval heritage and economic impact

On the basis of his research on naval strategy and the role of German Schnellboats in WWII Bennett has been the project historian on the rebuilding of a sole-surviving S-130 German motor torpedo boat. This £5m multi-partner project involves collaboration between The Wheatcroft Collection of Military History, Roving Commissions Ltd, ThinkPlusInk, the Nordic Marine Service and Quayside Metals. The owner of the collection noted that 'Dr Bennett's research has materially and significantly impacted on the process of rebuilding and has played an important role in maintaining the on-going investment of the Wheatcroft Collection in the project, securing jobs (approximately 6 across the duration of the project) in South East Cornwall (an area of significant economic deprivation)'. Six local craftsmen have been employed and 4 companies contracted from the South East Cornwall region, an area of economic deprivation.

Bennett also engaged documentary-makers with the project and unearthed materials (including test data) facilitating the rebuild, for example, on the order of construction and details on maintenance cycles such as the life-span of pistons in a Mercedes Benz 512 marine diesel engine. He provided visual material for the interiors and information on where spare parts might be located. A supporting letter from Kevin Wheatcroft, the boat's owner acknowledged that these contributions 'helped the shipwrights and metal workers involved in the project to understand the order of construction, difficulties faced and solutions employed'. The knowledge that *Schnellboote* were also being built in Gdansk and that a post war Soviet design was closely modelled on the *Schnellboote*, enabled the restoration team to use contacts in Poland to see if any original materials, plans or tooling remain.

Bennett's findings and work on the S-130 renovation were disseminated by interview on BBC 6 O'Clock News (13 August 2010), enjoying an audience of approximately 6 million viewers, with follow-up reporting on BBC Radio 4 News, BBC Radio 5 Live News, BBC Radio Devon News and BBC Radio Cornwall News (13 August 2010). Details are published in 'The Restoration of S-130: The Last German Motor Torpedo Boat of the Second World War', *The Second World War Military Operations Research Papers*, No. 1 (2012) <http://secondworldwaroperationsresearchgroup.wordpress.com/research-papers/>.

2) Naval Heritage and the Formulation of Public Policy

Bennett's research on twentieth-century military strategy and policy has been contributed to discussion on public policy for naval heritage initially through his involvement with the Phoenix Think Tank, for whom he produced a paper in 2011 entitled, 'UK Armed Forces Future Force Structure: An Outline for 2025' (16 October 2011) (<http://www.phoenixthinktank.org/2011/10/uk-armed-forces-future-force-structure-an-outline-for-2025/>). This argued that the UK Navy has reached a critical position with potentially increased maritime/sea threats in the coming period. He developed these ideas in a paper on 'The Royal Navy and the Second World War: Some Relevant Lessons' delivered at a two-day non-academic conference, an interface with the military and professional maritime sector, organised in September 2012 at Plymouth University. Speakers informed by Bennett's research and involved in these debates about the present state of the Royal Navy included Rear-Admiral Clive Johnstone (Flag Officer Sea Training for the Royal Navy - FOST), Julian Parker (Head of the Maritime Foundation), Nick Childs (BBC correspondent and Author of *Britain's Future Navy*), Commander Gerry Northwood RN (awarded an MBE in January 2012 for anti-piracy work off Somalia) and Andrew St George (author of *The Royal Navy Way of Leadership*).

Because of his research Bennett was invited to become a member of the Britannia Naval Museum Trust and to become trustee of the historical books, manuscripts, and artefacts and guardian of their historic paintings. In this role he has helped raise the Trust's profile and became

general editor of the 'Britannia Naval Histories of World War II' series, the flagship publication on naval history based on archives at the British Royal Naval College). The Duke of Edinburgh, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope GCB OBE ADC, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff and the former head of the Royal Navy Lord West have endorsed the series. Lord West wrote: 'Our Nation seems to be in denial about its reliance on the maritime and a series such as this may in a small way redress the balance'. (See in 5.5 below.) Bennett has written forewords for 3 of the first 7 volumes. As at May 2013 the books generated a net income of £11,013 (excluding internet sales), 10% of which is given to BRNC for preservation of the collections.

3) *Media-news agenda, and public awareness of historical events*

Bennett has communicated to a wide audience outside academia through radio and television, documentaries and mainstream publications. His reassessment of the Free French Squadrons collaborating with the RAF (listed above) was reported in an interview with BBC 6 O'clock news (6 November 2009), with approximately 6 million viewers, and an additional audience from BBC News 24 and BBC World (weekly audience of 82 million). The report was run on BBC I-player 147,000 times in the 24 hours following the initial broadcast, and featured follow-up reporting and public dissemination in the local press. His linked article in *BBC History Magazine* ('Second World War Special', 2010), pp.62-63 circulated to over 70,000 readers, and the related podcast had over 100,000 downloads. Drawing on his expertise developed through research that informed, for example, *The Nazi, the Painter and the Forgotten Story of the SS Road* (2012), Bennett has contributed to a range of media. In April 2011 he was interviewed on BBC 10 O'Clock News as an expert on German Police and the SS in South Russia. Bennett has also acted as an historical consultant to documentary companies, and contributed research to 'The Real Battle of Britain' (first broadcast BBC 2, 22 September 2010), 'Discovery of HMS Ullswater' (BBC Inside Out, 15 November 2010) and 'Wartime Secrets with Harry Harris, programme 5 (D-Day Secrets)' (first Broadcast on Discovery History, 5 December 2010).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 1) Supporting letter from owner of the Wheatcroft Collection in relation to Bennett's role as project historian on the £5 million rebuilding of an S-130.
- 2) The Phoenix Think Tank (<http://www.phoenixthinktank.org/>);
- 3) The WWII Military Operations Research Group:
<http://secondworldwaroperationsresearchgroup.wordpress.com/members/>
- 4) Conference Report on 'Britain and the Sea' in *Warships International Fleet Review* (Nov 2012), 42-43. And List of conference attendees for 'Britain and the Sea: The Maritime Sphere and the Past, Present and Future of the UK' held at Plymouth University, 4-5 September 2012.
- 5) Foreword's for 'Britannia Naval Histories of World War II' (Plymouth University Press):
First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff in *Hunting Tirpitz: Royal Naval Operations against Bismarck's Sister Ship*, Duke of Edinburgh in *Dark Seas: The Battle of Cape Matapan*.
- 6) Interview BBC 6 O'Clock News - 6 November 2009 - Featured Archive Footage discovered as part of Research on Free French Squadrons with the RAF. Follow up reporting and wider public awareness in
<http://www.thisiswesternmorningnews.co.uk/news/French-pilots-boosted-RAF-effort/article-1537621-detail/article.html>,
<http://www.thisisplymouth.co.uk/news/Rare-archive-footage-reveals-heroes/article-1538007-detail/article.html> .
- 7). Interview BBC 10 O'Clock News - 14 April 2011 - Featured research findings on film of German police and SS in South Russia 1943. Follow up reporting and wider public awareness from at least 20 similar syndicated sources:
National Public Radio USA, 19 April 2011.

www.dailymail.co.uk/.../Lost-film-unearthed-Devon-Church-finally-proved-guilt-murderous-Nazi.html

www.nigeriadailynews.com/.../15030-lost-film-unearthed-in-devon-church-has-finally-proved-the-guilt-of-murderous-nazi.txt

www.thisisthewestcountry.co.uk/news/devon_news/8990317.print/

[www.videonewslive.com/.../video film found in church reveals nazi guilt](http://www.videonewslive.com/.../video_film_found_in_church_reveals_nazi_guilt)

Canadian Broadcasting Commission, 'As it happens', 19 April 2011.

(<http://www.cbc.ca/asithappens/episode/2011/04/19/tuesday-april-19-2011/>)