

ABSTRACT

Little England: Barbados and the royal navy in the American revolutionary war

Geoffrey Burton Ward

The study of military history in the Caribbean has been almost exclusively continental in its nature. Campaigns fought within the region have been studied to support a foreign, primarily European narrative. This thesis lays a potential framework for the study of a Caribbean military history, expanding the evergrowing Caribbean historiography, and highlighting the region's military past as an integral part of the formation of modern Caribbean society. Utilizing this new methodology, the thesis focuses on the interactions between the Barbadian populace and British naval personnel in the American Revolutionary War (ARW). In doing so it highlights the importance of understanding the military history of the Caribbean Islands within the wider historical narrative of both the region and 18th century military history. Adopting a Caribbean perspective, this thesis shows that Barbadians were cognizant of the vital role their island played in the Royal Navy's (RN) ability to project British power in the Caribbean. Barbadians sought to exploit this role in an effort to increase the island's autonomy from the metropole.