

1969

Britain and France: The Officers Corps and Civil-Military Relations

James A. Barber Jr

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Barber, James A. Jr (1969) "Britain and France: The Officers Corps and Civil-Military Relations," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 22 : No. 10 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol22/iss10/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

The individual national histories and cultures of Britain and France have produced differing and distinct relationships between the military and the political authority of these states. In recent years the French military, especially the army, has been subjected to a series of strains which have partially alienated it from French Government and society, while the British military has maintained a close cooperation with the British Government and a favorable public image. The examination of these two cases is warranted in the light of recent trends of public opinion relative to the U.S. military establishment.

BRITAIN AND FRANCE: THE OFFICER CORPS AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

An article by

Commander James A. Barber, Jr., U.S. Navy

INTRODUCTION

In a democracy the military services are invariably legally subject to civilian control, and it is generally agreed that this is as it should be. Agreement is not so general on how to make civilian control most effective. In the United States much of the current criticism of the military services alleges that, at least in recent years, they have not been subject to effective control. It is the purpose of this article to examine, in a comparative way, the history of civil-military relations in Great Britain and France, in the hope that the lessons to be learned from that comparison will be useful in understanding the present problems of civil-military relations in the United States.

Great Britain and France are civilized, economically advanced countries with relatively long histories of commitment to democratic institutions. They have fought in many of the same wars,

sometimes as enemies, sometimes as allies. The histories of their armies have, in many ways, been similar, the English often adopting and adapting military innovations originated by the French.¹ In spite of these similarities there has been a noticeable difference in the styles of action which characterize the British and French officer corps in political matters. In Great Britain there is effective governmental control of the military. In France, governmental control has been less effective.

Twice in the last generation elements of the French Army have defied civilian authority. In May 1958 the army was responsible for the fall of the Fourth Republic, which brought De Gaulle to power.² In April 1961, in an even more direct challenge to civilian authority, a portion of the army seized Algeria and threatened the invasion of metropolitan France.³ It is not accidental that these events occurred in France and not in Great Britain. There has developed a

18 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

very considerable difference in the political self-conceptions which characterize officers in the two armies.⁴ The attitude of many French senior officers toward the Government is strikingly illuminated in a statement by a French Chief of Staff, General Demetz, in which he discusses the political mission of the army: "The unity of the Army is also the supreme guaranty of the national unity. Standing above local quarrels and partisan animosities, the soldier is responsible for the safeguard of the national heritage."⁵ It is difficult to imagine a British general making such a statement. An attempt will be made here to analyze the basis of this difference in political style.

In spite of the political upheavals which have shaken France at intervals since 1789, the French Army has, by and large, been obedient and loyal to the existing political regime. As a consequence, it has enjoyed a reputation as *la Grande Muette*.⁶ On those occasions when there has been conflict between the army and the civilian authorities, it has almost always been over a matter which the army considered of internal concern—that is, it has been a matter where the army was resentful of political interference and not an attempt by the army to intervene in politics. The classic instance is the Dreyfus affair. The army's contention was that the determination of the guilt or innocence of an army officer was a matter for determination by the army itself and resisted interference by politicians in its internal affairs. Chapman, in writing of the Dreyfus case, has stated:

As at the beginning of 1898 all the soldiers desired was to be masters in their own house without interference from the politicians, to whip their own dogs, and for that they were ready to go to lengths, but not to extremes, not to revolt. As isolated as monks from the main currents of civilian

society, the generals did not know enough to decline the help of political charlatans who hoped to use them for their own purposes.⁷

Chapman's characterization of the French generals as being "as isolated as monks from the main currents of civilian society," may be contrasted with Robert Blake's description of the civil-military relationship existing in Britain at about the same time: "For the greater part of the nineteenth century that relationship was comparatively harmonious. Soldiers and politicians came from the same rich, libertarian, disputatious, landowning aristocracy which governed the country."⁸ This difference in ties between the senior officers of the army and the governing class is a matter of substantial theoretical relevance to which we will return.

In spite of a long-prevailing difference in the attitude of their armies toward politics and in the closeness of the armies' ties with civil society, in both Great Britain and France there had been little problem of military interference in political matters for more than a century before the Second World War.⁹

The events of World War II and its aftermath, however, affected the French Army differently than it did the British and led to the unfortunate army actions of 1958 and 1961. We propose here to identify some of the factors—the difference in traditions, the difference in events, and the difference in reactions—which underlay the breakdown in the immunity of the French Army to politics.

SUBJECTIVE CONTROL AND OBJECTIVE CONTROL

Our consideration of the political roles of the British and French officer corps takes as a model the formulation set forth by Samuel P. Huntington in his essay "Civilian Control of the Military:

a Theoretical Statement."¹⁰ For Huntington the goal of civilian control is this:

Civilian control of the military is governmental control of the military. Consequently, the criterion of civilian control is the extent to which military leadership groups, and through them, the armed forces as a whole, respond to the direction of the civilian leaders of the government.¹¹

The means by which this control is exercised are divided by Huntington into "subjective control," and "objective control."

Subjective Control. In Huntington's model, subjective civilian control of the military exists when the military forces are an integral part of society, embodying the dominant social forces and political ideologies of that society.¹² Huntington states:

In brief, in subjective civilian control, the military are at one with society. Civilian control, consequently, is the product of the identity of thought and outlook between civilian and military groups. The military officer does not differ from other members of society and shares in its dominant values. The military leadership responds to the direction of the government because it participates in the government.¹³

Where effective subjective civilian control exists, the military elite and the ruling elite of the society will tend to be coextensive.

Objective Control. Objective civilian control of the military, according to Huntington's model, is based upon a sharp line between the military and society. The military elite constitute a

professional corps, with entry possible only at the lower levels of command. The military group as a whole will consist of a relatively small group of professional careerists, augmented by short-service conscripts. The role played by the military elite is one which absorbs the full output of their energies, constituting a complete role in itself, and is inconsistent with any other significant political or social roles. Where objective control exists, the army is expected to be apolitical. Huntington states:

Civilian control is thus achieved not because the military groups share in the social values and political ideologies of society, but because they are indifferent to such values and ideologies. The military leaders obey the government not because they agree with its policies but simply because it is their duty to obey.¹⁴

In these terms, subjective and objective control are diametrically opposed. In subjective control the military, being a part of society, will reflect the values of the particular society, and different societies will produce different armies. Objective control, depending upon professionalization and the divorce of the army from society, will tend to produce similar military institutions in any society where the states of military knowledge are equivalent.

It is, of course, unlikely that any institution in real life will correspond perfectly to Huntington's models. The officer corps of the two armies we wish to study, however, conform closely enough to the models that we may use them as highly useful tools.

THE OFFICER CORPS IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

In the 18th century the officer corps of all major European powers were

20 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

drawn primarily from the nobility. It was assumed that the primary requisites of a military officer were the ability to command, a sense of honor and courage—all of which the nobility were presumed to possess without need for elaborate military training. The art of war in the 18th century was sufficiently primitive—or as seen from the perspective of an era of hydrogen bombs and total war, civilized—that this system of amateur officers functioned satisfactorily. Both Great Britain and France depended upon the aristocracy to provide their officer corps, but their systems were not identical, and they evolved along somewhat different paths.

The French Officer Corps. In France, prior to the French Revolution, position in the officer corps was dependent upon two factors: birth and wealth. Promotion was normally by purchase. The court nobility, because of greater wealth, tended to monopolize the higher ranks, with the poorer country nobles filling the lower ranks. The system of purchase was resented by the country nobles, and in 1776 they prevailed upon the monarch to move toward the elimination of purchase.¹⁵ This did not, however, seriously affect the monopoly which the great nobles maintained on the most important positions within the army. By the latter half of the century, the need for technically trained officers in the engineering, artillery, and supply branches of the army had created an opening for officers from the middle class, though they remained in a substantial minority. The French officer corps in 1789 numbered 9,578, of which 6,333 were nobles, 1,845 commoners, and 1,100 soldiers of fortune.¹⁶ In the higher ranks and in the elite organizations, especially the cavalry, the nobility had an almost complete monopoly.

The British Officer Corps. In Great Britain, following the Cromwell period

and the rule of the major-generals, the purchase system was instituted in a deliberate attempt to insure "identity of interest between army and government and to make another military government impossible in the British Isles."¹⁷ The purchase system in effect created a substantial property qualification for membership in the officer corps and insured that any high-ranking officer would be a man of considerable means. The high price of commissions—which were graduated, the higher the rank, the greater the cost—combined with ridiculously low pay and the lack of any system of pensions made it virtually impossible for a man without private income to serve as an officer. The British officer corps was thus manned by an aristocracy based primarily on wealth rather than birth—although the two were often synonymous.

Abolition of the Purchase System. The end of the purchase system came much earlier in France than in Britain. In France the Revolution removed all aristocratic limitations on entry into the officer corps, both of wealth and birth. In England purchase lingered much longer, being abolished by the Cardwell reforms in 1871.¹⁸ The abolition of purchase created a considerable furor, since it raised what was essentially a class issue. The reforms were strongly supported by the middle class and opposed by the senior army officers and the territorial aristocracy.¹⁹ The Cardwell reforms, together with the Northcote-Trevelyan reform of the civil service in the 1850's and the Reform Act of 1867, evidenced a transition from aristocratic to middle-class rule. The opening of the officer corps to the middle class, however, was both later and less abrupt in England than in France.

Social Composition. In both countries the elimination of formal barriers to middle-class entry into the officer

corps led to a diminution in the proportion of aristocracy. In neither country did the shift from aristocratic to middle-class 'officers take place suddenly, though immediately following the Revolution in France there was a temporary sudden drop in the proportion of aristocrats—but even then they were far from being eliminated.²⁰ Table I illustrates the slow but steady rise of the proportion of middle-class officers to be found in the higher ranks of both armies.

The persistence of substantial numbers of aristocrats in the British Army is not surprising, since even the Cardwell reforms eliminated only the formal barriers to middle-class entry, and for a long time, low pay and the persistence of aristocratic traditions tended to make the army more attractive to the wealthy and aristocratic than to the less well endowed, except perhaps in the case of the colonial armies. The persistence of the aristocracy in the French Army requires somewhat more explanation, since it was in the face of the more radical democratic reforms of the Revolution.

The reforms of the Napoleonic era eliminated the aristocracy's domination of influential military positions. Men who might never have risen beyond the rank of sergeant under Louis XIV became Napoleon's marshals. Nor was this shift toward more democratic opportunity for commissions reversed with the Restoration. In the face of strong pressure, St. Cyr succeeded in establishing the principle that entry into the officer corps be only by means of competition from the military schools or from the ranks.²¹ Why then did aristocratic influence persist in the army long after the Revolution? There seem to be two principal reasons: social and political pressures which made an army career relatively attractive to the aristocracy even under the Republic, as compared with alternative occupations, and the persistence of military tradition.

TABLE I—MILITARY LEADERS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE: ARISTOCRATIC VERSUS MIDDLE-CLASS ORIGINS*

Class	France %	Great Britain %
	1789	
Nobility	68	
Middle-Class	32	
	1898	
Nobility	25	
Middle-Class	75	
	1909	1914
Nobility	13	40
Middle-Class	87	60
		1920
Nobility		25
Middle-Class		75
	1939	1935
Nobility	7	37
Middle-Class	93	63
		1950
Nobility		7
Middle-Class		93

*The figures in this table, being derived from several sources, are not strictly comparable with each other. They do show two facts quite clearly, however. First, that in both Great Britain and France there has been a fairly steady diminution in the proportion of the officer corps drawn from the aristocracy. Second, that this occurred much later in Great Britain than in France. The sources for the table are Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 22; Guy Chapman, "France; the French Army and Politics," Michael Howard, ed., *Soldiers and Governments* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1957), p. 71-72; Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960), p. 94. A few scattered instances of working-class origins are included in the middle-class group.

A career in the army continued to be relatively attractive to aristocrats even after the Napoleonic reforms. It was a respectable role for an aristocrat to take at a time when he would consider many of the other opportunities open to him beneath his dignity. In spite of the equalitarian entry into the officer corps, the persistence of aristocratic tradition within the army often gave him a competitive advantage in promotion.

22 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

Finally, although the Republican governments purged the civil service and the judiciary again and again of elements they believed hostile, the army was relatively free from these purges. While it was virtually impossible for a member of the aristocracy even to sit for examination for the civil service, he was under no such disability in entering the army.²²

The Persistence of Tradition. The persistence of aristocratic tradition in the armies of both Great Britain and France was by no means solely dependent upon the arithmetical proportion of aristocrats in service. At any point of time, with the possible exception of the most fervent days of the French Revolution, the officer corps of both nations were much more thoroughly aristocratic in outlook than in composition. Tradition is a potent force in any military organization. Even in the Soviet Union, after an early attempt to divorce the Red army from the traditions of the Imperial army, it was found necessary to resurrect not only the old Tsarist military heroes and battles, but to re-inaugurate a strong caste distinction between officers and men as well. Tradition has a persistence and importance in military organizations which is probably unequalled in any other organization except, perhaps, the Church.

An aristocratic tradition persisted in the British and French Armies for a complex of reasons. At first, the immediacy of aristocratic legacy exerted considerable influence. Even those officers who were not of aristocratic birth were flattered to feel themselves a part of an aristocratic caste and highly receptive to the accompanying code. The continued gulf between officers and enlisted men helped in maintaining this attitude. Probably most effective of all in maintaining traditional attitudes were the elaborate mechanisms of socialization which operate upon an officer

joining a military organization. The atmosphere to which a young officer joining the army was exposed—the pomp and ceremony, the traditions of the regiment, and the influence of his seniors—all combined to instill in him a respect for tradition and allegiance to a code. With the increasing complexity of military technology, more formal training of military officers became necessary, and military academies were added to the mechanism of socialization. Entry into the academies themselves was at first restricted to the aristocracy but, as outlined above, was later broadened. Even after this broadening, however, the aristocratic traditions of the military academies persisted.²³ As Michael Howard has pointed out, “the young officer is educated in careful isolation, not only from the civilian world, but from the other services. He is trained in an intensive but narrow group-loyalty which he is normally, as an adolescent, particularly ready to accept.”²⁴ For all of these reasons the aristocratic attitudes of the officer corps in both Britain and France persisted long after their membership had been thoroughly diluted by officers originating in the middle class.

Effects of the Aristocratic Tradition. What effect did the persistence of aristocratic tradition have upon the mechanism of civilian control of the military? In spite of the similarity of the two armies insofar as the persistence of aristocratic traditions was concerned, the practical effect on civilian control in the two cases was quite different. In Great Britain, as has been indicated, the effect was to maintain close contact between the army elite and the political elite who ruled the country. In France the opposite was true. There the Revolution and the Republican regimes had the effect of isolating the army from the society. In terms of Huntington's models, civil-military relations in Great

Britain were characterized by subjective control, while in France they were characterized by objective control.

In Great Britain the officer corps was drawn over a long period of time from the same segments of society which provided the political leaders of the country. Nor was the contact limited to similarity of social origin. The upper ranks of the army habitually moved in the same social circles as the other members of the "establishment," and not infrequently retired army officers might be found in high government office—both appointive and elective.²⁵ The British officer corps conformed quite closely to the primary requisites of the subjective control model: The officer corps was an integral part of society; it did not constitute a specialized, isolated group or caste; members typically were able to move between their roles in the army and equivalent roles in the broader society; and, by and large, the interests of the army conformed fairly closely to the interests of the governing group as a whole. In most regards this pattern has persisted to the present day. In 1962 Philip Abrams, writing about the British officer, stated:

In short, while the services, and particularly the Air Force, do to a quite appreciable extent provide an access to the higher levels of social control and influence in general, they serve far more, and particularly the Army, as a path for horizontal movement across the top of British society for members of those traditional 'ruling' groups who start at the top and continue there.²⁶

In France, after the Revolution, subjective control was impractical for several reasons. Because of her more vulnerable geographical location, France needed to maintain much larger armies than did Great Britain, size alone

making intimate contact between the political elite and military elite more difficult. Secondly, the recurrence of crises and the frequent changes of government made it impractical for the army to reflect closely the composition of the governing group at each point of time. In the course of the 19th century the French Army developed a tradition of neutrality, committing itself to obey its legally constituted superior, whoever that might be. Chapman has described this attitude:

The Army has no politics. It looks on itself as the agent of the Government, an instrument for upholding the laws of the country and for the protection of existing institutions. If the Government collapses, the soldier obeys his hierarchical superior, who in turn obeys his until finally the chain of command reaches the Minister of War.²⁷

This is the essence of objective control. The persistence of aristocratic traditions in the army created a gulf between it and the Republican society. The military officer adopted a professional and careerist attitude, only rarely combining other significant social roles with his military role. Most crucial of all, in order for civilian control to be effective, the officer corps adopted an apolitical attitude. The notion that the duty of the military is to obey, whether or not in agreement with their orders, became internalized.²⁸

THE BREAKDOWN OF OBJECTIVE CONTROL

Let us consider the requisites of effective objective control of the military by the government. Without pretending to an exhaustive listing, three things would seem to be necessary to insure the effectiveness of such control. First, there must be a strong and

24 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

respected tradition of obedience by the army. Obedience must be a part of the code of honor of the officer corps. Orders must be followed, if not blindly, at least habitually. To disobey orders must seem dishonorable. Second, society as a whole must afford sufficient respect to the role of the soldier that he may take satisfaction in his position as an apolitical public servant. The gulf between the military and the society must not reach the point of mutual disrespect. Third, there must be effective political direction. If the army tradition of refraining from political action is to remain operative, the army must not be compelled to make political decisions by force of circumstances when effective governmental direction is not forthcoming. The breakdown in objective control of the military in France was occasioned by the violation of each of these three prerequisites of effective control.

The Tradition of Obedience. The tradition of obedience served the French Army well throughout the 19th century and during the first part of the 20th. At the beginning of the century it was taught at St. Cyr that "the army's loyalty and devotion to legal government must be absolute. There is no other formula that would as securely safeguard the soldier's honor."²⁹ The Second World War placed almost impossible strains on this code. In 1940 three governments simultaneously laid claim to the exclusive privilege of legitimacy.³⁰ Even if the legal problems of allegiance could be solved, many officers were faced for the first time with a clear conflict between duty and honor. De Gaulle, in the opinion of many, solved his dilemma in favor of honor—and, what is more, was vindicated in his choice by subsequent events. This could not but seriously strain the army's tradition as "*la Grande Muette*."

In Great Britain the continuity of government prevented raising the

problem of where lay legitimate civilian authority. Not since the Curragh incident of 1914 has the British Army been faced with a crisis in which honor and duty seemed to belong on different sides. This may be attributed in large part to the harmony in goals which characterizes a system of subjective control—the army is not asked to take action which does violence to its moral sense, because to do so would be counter to the moral sense of the Government as well. This is not to say that there has not been disagreement between the army and civilian authorities over the carrying out of particular policies, but that these problems, being "within the family" have been amenable to satisfactory solution.³¹

Respect from Society. Respect for the professional soldier in France, though perhaps not always so high as the soldier might wish, was adequate for the maintenance of army morale throughout the century preceding the Second World War. Beginning in 1940 army morale received a series of serious blows. The army's lightning defeat at the hands of Hitler's panzers was humiliating and only partially redeemed by the later performance of the Free French forces. After the war the army had to swallow a defeat at the hands of ragged guerrillas in Indochina—which rightly or wrongly they attributed in part to failure by the politicians rather than by the military. In the Suez operation the army finally achieved a potential military victory—only to have to relinquish all that had been gained, again for political reasons. The impact of these events on army morale was not primarily due to the military defeats or even to their differences with the Government on political matters. What affected the army most adversely was the unpopularity of the jobs they had been given to do. As the war in Indochina dragged on, the army found itself not only faced with a discouraging and

bloody war in front of them, but with a lack of popular support behind them. The situation is vividly described by Philip Williams:

In Indo-China they find 'a useless squandering of heroism, suffering, weariness, and death, while corruption, rackets, and general staffs were doing well.' At home, military secrets were being leaked to the anti-war press; political parties were raising funds through the currency racket; hospitals in France were promising donors not to use their blood for soldiers wounded in the 'filthy war.' Cut off from their own people, the army reacted bitterly to the humiliation of defeat.³²

The reaction of the army may be seen in General Navarre's rationalization of the defeat: that "our rulers" never knew what they wanted in Indochina or, if they did, lacked the courage to say so; and secondly, they "permitted the Army to be stabbed in the back" by allowing the Communists free reign for their "permanent treason." "The accumulated tergiversations, mistakes and poltrooneries," he continued, "are too numerous and continuous not to be imputable to the men and even to the governments which followed one another in office. They are the fruits of the regime. They proceed from the essential nature of the French political system."³³ This bitterness, increased by the necessity of leaving large numbers of Indochinese who had been faithful to France to the dubious mercies of the triumphant guerrilla forces, seriously undermined the morale of the officer corps.

Effective Political Direction. The lack of the third essential of objective control—effective political direction—was to become most striking in Algeria. In Algeria the almost complete inability

of the Government to formulate a clear and practical program and stick to it led the army to develop its own program. The Algerian experience is far too complex to analyze in any detail here.³⁴ For our purposes it is sufficient to note that the lack of effective political direction led the army, in its attempt to take up the political slack and to apply the lessons of Indochina, to develop a comprehensive ideology of its own. When it appeared that the Government was going to reach political decisions in conflict with this program, the army first caused the fall of the Fourth Republic in May of 1958, then in April of 1961 brought France to the verge of civil war. The breakdown in objective control was virtually complete. Only the commanding presence of De Gaulle and dissension within the army itself caused by remnants of the older code of obedience prevented a war of Frenchmen against Frenchmen.

CONCLUSION

The subjective system of control in Britain has tended to prevent serious issues between the Government and the army from arising, since their interests and aims are similar. While this has not been the case in France, until World War II objective control of the military functioned satisfactorily. The events of the war and its aftermath seriously undermined factors fundamental to objective control—the army's tradition of obedience, the respect of society for the role of the professional, and the effectiveness of political direction. Even this might not have caused a breakdown in control if the problems facing the army and the regime had not been so serious, but the crises in Indochina, Suez, and Algeria aggravated the problem. In particular, the absence of effective political direction in the face of impending crisis places great strain on any military organization. This was one of the primary factors which led the army in Algeria into political action.

26 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

In Great Britain the crises have not been so severe—but this cannot be counted as happenstance. That the liquidation of the British Empire proceeded more smoothly than the parallel process in France was due in large measure to the more effective political resolution achieved by the British. As a result, the British Army has not been subjected to the same sort of strains as have plagued the French Army. Being much more closely linked to the society, the British Army has been relatively free, as well, from the problems of disrespect and disagreement over goals.

There are no certain grounds for thinking that the happy situation of Britain will remain forever unchanged, however. The increasing demands for high technical competence on the part of military officers must necessarily make the profession a more exclusive concern of the men who follow it—and this can seriously interfere with the mechanism of subjective control. This process may already be observed taking place in Britain.³⁵ If the British officer corps' social link with the Government weakens, it must be replaced with the forms of objective control—and as we have seen in the case of France these can be less effective if the requisites of a code of obedience, respect from the society, and effective political direction are not maintained. It seems safe to say, however, that the British are unlikely to have any serious problems on any of these points in the near future.

In France the prognosis is less clear. The Fifth Republic has provided the effective political direction which was lacking under the Fourth Republic, and since the termination of the war in Algeria the army has been afforded a respite in which to heal its wounded morale. Whether political direction will be as effective, now that De Gaulle has left the political scene, remains an open question. Further, tradition is almost as slow in establishing itself as it is in dying, and many more years must pass

before the tradition of obedience is again as firmly rooted in the code of honor of the French officer corps as it once was.

Finally, what lessons can be drawn from this analysis which are applicable to civil-military relations in the United States? Traditionally, U.S. civil-military relations, like those of Great Britain, have much more closely approximated the subjective model. At the present moment, however, the war in Vietnam has resulted in stresses similar to those undergone by France, though so far they appear to be less serious. At the same time, and largely for the same cause, there is substantial support for measures which would serve to isolate the military services from the community. There are pressures to remove ROTC units from civilian campuses, pressures to end the draft and rely upon an all volunteer army, and pressures to place further restrictions upon the employment of retired officers. To so isolate the military would be a mistake. The lesson to be drawn from a comparison of British and French civil-military relations is that the British way—subjective control of the military—seems to work better than the objec-

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Comdr. James A. Barber, Jr., U.S. Navy, did his undergraduate work in economics at the University of Southern California. He holds an M.A. in economics from Vanderbilt and an M.A. in international relations and a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University. His primary operational experience has been in destroyers, most recently as Executive Officer of the U.S.S. *Henry W. Tucker* (DD 875) and as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. *Hissem* (DER 400). Commander Barber is currently serving as Plans Officer on the staff of the Naval War College.

tive control that has been characteristic of France. It is admittedly dangerous to generalize from a sample of two—but it does seem clear that serious strains are likely in a system of subjective control, where the values and goals of the military services are similar to those

of the society at large, than in a system of objective control where the military services are an isolated caste. If this is so, it would be tragic if popular reaction against the war in Vietnam led to the segregation and isolation of the military services.

FOOTNOTES

1. Among other examples may be listed the ranks of the officer corps, the system of military schools, including the staff college, and the institution of universal conscription.

2. A fairly extensive literature has been published on this incident. Useful accounts may be found in Bernard E. Brown, "The Army and Politics in France," *The Journal of Politics*, May 1961, p. 262-278; Jean-Marie Domenach, "The French Army in Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1961, p. 185-195; Raoul Girardet, "Civil and Military Power in the Fourth Republic," Samuel P. Huntington, ed., *Changing Patterns of Military Politics* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 121-149; Philip Williams, "The French Army," *Encounter*, December 1961, p. 30-37; Philip Williams, "How the Fourth Republic Died: Sources for the Revolution of May 1958," *French Historical Studies*, Spring 1963, p. 1-40.

3. For a good, brief account, see Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback* (New York: Praeger, 1962), p. 95-99.

4. In the interest of economy of expression and readability, a gross oversimplification will be maintained throughout this paper—we will speak of armies and officer corps as if they were homogeneous, or as if personified. "Armies" do not feel certain ways—only individual members of armies do. When we write that an attitude characterizes an officer corps, this is obviously equally applicable to all members of that corps. However, to be continually explicit on this point would be cumbersome in the extreme and would weaken what is to be said. That seeming the graver point, we will go ahead and oversimplify.

5. General André Demetz editorial in *L'Armée*, February 1960, p. 7-8, quoted in Brown, p. 275-276.

6. Williams, "The French Army," p. 30.

7. Guy Chapman, *The Dreyfus Case* (London: Clarke, 1955), p. 200, quoted in Finer, p. 54.

8. Robert Blake, "Great Britain," Michael Howard, ed., *Soldiers and Governments* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), p. 27.

9. There have, of course, been some instances, and particularly in France the recurrent crises, raising the problem of exactly what constitutes legitimate political direction, which have sometimes put the army in an ambiguous position. By and large, however, both in Britain and in France the armies have had a marked disinclination to attempt to wield political power by military means. For a good, brief discussion of the behavior of the French Army in recurrent political crises, see Guy Chapman, "France; the French Army and Politics," Michael Howard, ed., *Soldiers and Governments*, p. 51-70. A recounting of the only similar incident to occur in the British Army in modern times—the Curragh incident—may be found in Blake, p. 36-38.

10. Samuel P. Huntington, "Civilian Control of the Military: a Theoretical Statement," Heinz Eulau, et al., eds., *Political Behavior: a Reader in Theory and Research* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), p. 380-385.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, p. 381.

15. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 23.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

17. *Ibid.*

18. An extremely thorough treatment of the Cardwell reforms and their aftermath may be found in Albert V. Tucker, "Army and Society in England 1870-1900: a Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms," *The Journal of British Studies*, May 1963, p. 110-141.

19. Blake, p. 30.

28 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

20. Chapman, "France; the French Army and Politics," p. 54.
21. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 42.
22. Chapman, "France; the French Army and Politics," p. 60.
23. For the history of military education in Great Britain, see Hugh Thomas, *The Story of Sandhurst* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), and Edward A. Hughes, *The Royal Naval College, Dartmouth* (London: Winchester Publications, 1950).
24. Michael Howard, "Civil-Military Relations in Great Britain and the United States, 1954-1958," *Political Science Quarterly*, March 1960, p. 35-46.
25. For data on the numbers of retired officers in Parliament, see Donald R. Matthews, *The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954).
26. Philip Abrams, "Democracy, Technology, and the Retired British Officer," Huntington, ed., *Changing Patterns of Military Politics*, p. 121.
27. Chapman, "France; the French Army and Politics," p. 60.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Girardet, p. 121.
30. *Ibid.*
31. An excellent description of a problem of this type may be found in John Masters, *Bugles and a Tiger* (New York: Viking Press, 1956), p. 196.
32. Williams, "The French Army," p. 30.
33. Quoted in Finer, p. 66.
34. Probably the best treatment to date of the politics of the army in Algeria is to be found in Girardet.
35. For documentation on this point see Abrams.

— ψ —

Without a Respectable Navy--alas, America!

*John Paul Jones: Letter to Robert Morris,
17 October 1776*