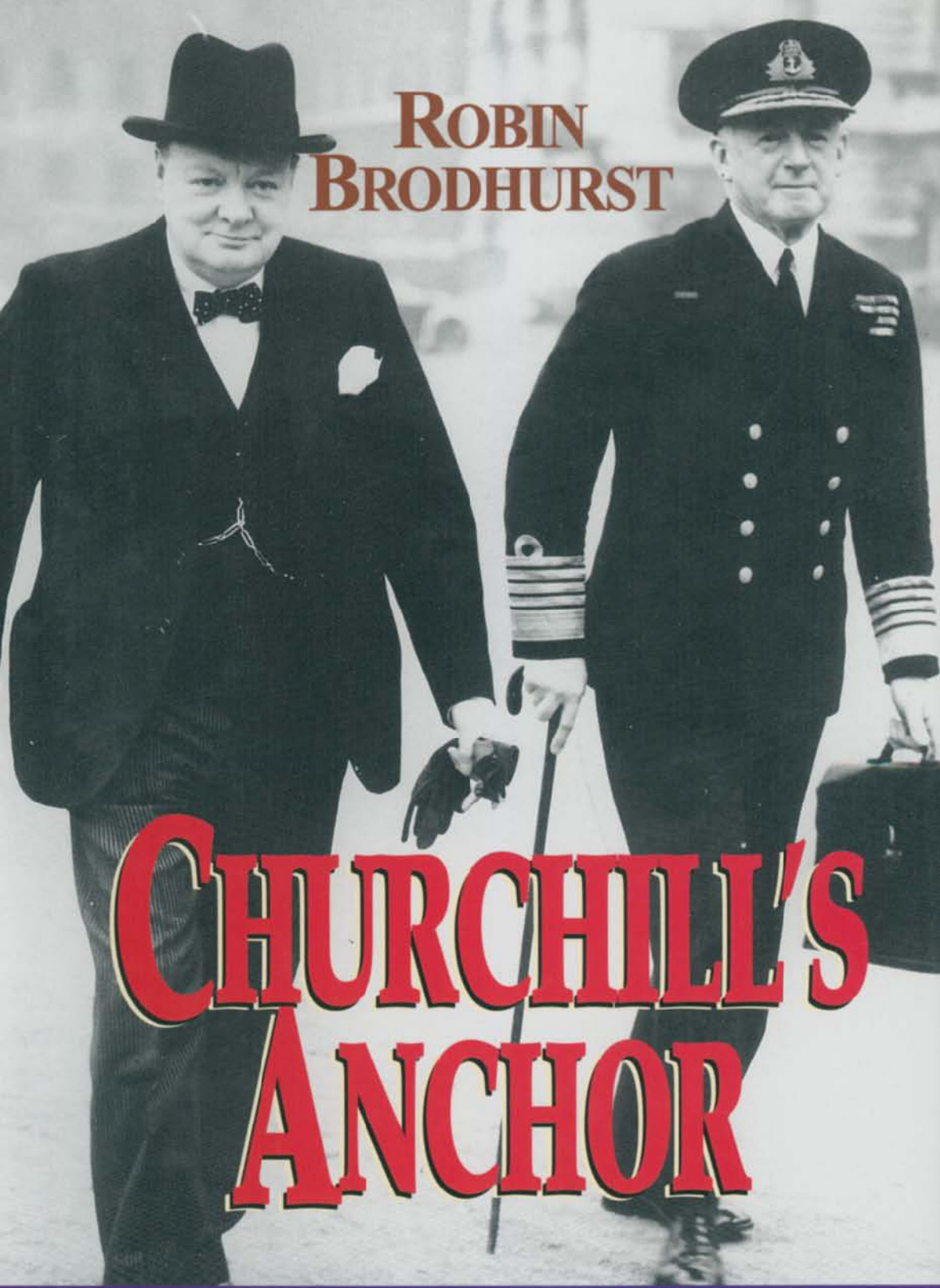

ROBIN BRODHURST

CHURCHILL'S ANCHOR

The Biography of

Admiral of the Fleet SIR DUDLEY POUND OM, GCB, GCVO

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ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR DUDLEY POUND

OM, GCB, GCVO

BY

ROBIN BRODHURST

LEO COOPER

First published in Great Britain in 2000 by
LEO COOPER
an imprint of Pen & Sword Books
47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS

ISBN 0 85052 765 1

A CIP record for this book is available from
the British Library

Typeset by Phoenix Typesetting, Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

Printed in England by
Redwood Books Ltd, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

DEDICATION

CTB

1954–1972

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INTRODUCTION

In the course of writing this biography I have incurred countless debts. Principal amongst these is one to the Pound family. All three of Dudley Pound's children have been remarkably helpful: the late George Pound, Martin Pound and the late Barbara Duff. All three answered endless questions and were generous to a fault in their hospitality. Barbara's husband, Dan Duff, too, answered many questions about his father-in-law, to whom he had been Flag Lieutenant in the Mediterranean. William Nesbitt, the editor of the quarterly Pound Family Newsletter, was indefatigable in producing the results of his research into the American ancestors on Dudley Pound's mother's side, as well as the English roots back as far as the 16th century, at the last count. The family was kind enough to ask me to a family reunion held at the Cabinet War Rooms, which allowed me to draw my own family tree and put faces to names. I hope that they feel I have done justice to their distinguished forebear.

I was fortunate to be awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship for 1998, which allowed me to travel to the USA and carry out research in both Washington and Newport, which I would not have been able to do otherwise. The Trust is an unsung marvel, and I am enormously grateful to the Director General, Sir Henry Beverley.

Many institutions hold relevant manuscript collections, and I have tried to avail myself of all that is useful. There is no collection of Pound papers. Admirals Cunningham and Blake destroyed the majority of his papers after his death, much to the fury of subsequent historians. What is left is scattered across a large number of centres. Principal amongst these is the Public Record Office at Kew, and I am grateful, as is everybody who researches there, to the hard working and patient staff of the Reading Rooms. Churchill College, Cambridge, holds an unrivalled collection of papers of naval officers, as well as the notes and writings of a number

of biographies, projected and finished. I am grateful to the Master, Fellows and Scholars of the College, and to Dr Piers Brendan, the Keeper of the Archives at the Churchill Archives Centre, and his various predecessors, for allowing me to work there. I am grateful to the Librarian of the National Maritime Museum for the help given while working there, and to the Manuscripts Division of the British Library. The Imperial War Museum holds a limited number of naval papers, and I am very grateful to Rod Suddaby, the Keeper of the Archives at the Museum, for his help and encouragement.

In the USA I received enormous help and hospitality wherever I went. In Washington I must first thank Bernard Cavalcante at the Operational Archives Branch in the Naval Historical Centre for helping me so much while, at the same time, coping with a declassification visit. Secondly Michael J. Klein of the Manuscript Reference Division of the Library of Congress and thirdly, Barry Zerby and Rick Rayburn at National Archives II at College Park. The National Archives are a challenging place to find one's way round, and both of these two were remarkably helpful to a visiting Limey. At the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, the Librarian, Evelyn M. Cherpak, gave me great assistance. I also received help and guidance from the office of the Defence Attache at the British Embassy. Throughout my time in the USA the mere mention of the Churchill Fellowship opened doors, which might well otherwise have remained closed.

I received great help and guidance from a large number of people. Chief amongst those must be a number of officers and individuals who served with Dudley Pound. The late Captain John Litchfield was kind enough to give me a copy of his projected biography of Dudley Pound, and I have shamelessly used it for much of the evidence of their time together in the Mediterranean. The late Vice Admiral Sir Ronald Brockman was extremely kind in answering many questions. Captains Geoffrey Stanning, John Henley and A. R. Bishop all helped, enlightened and encouraged me. Joan Bright Astley encouraged me with her memories and her enthusiasm. Others have helped in one way or another: Admiral Sir Michael Layard, Vice Admirals Michael Gretton and Sir John Webster with their encouragement and help. The latter read much of the book and corrected me on many naval terms that I had got wrong. James Levy gave me the chance to read his unfinished PhD thesis on Admiral Forbes and the Home Fleet. Eric Grove and Jock Gardner gave their enthusiastic

encouragement at various moments. John Lee, Chris McCarthy, Gary Sheffield and other members of the British Commission of Military History have continually exhorted me to finish the book. Ned Willmott first introduced me to naval history when I was a cadet at RMA Sandhurst, and took me to Greenwich to listen to Stephen Roskill. Captain James Goldrick of the Royal Australian Navy was kind enough to turn over to me his initial research papers, which he put together when he was working on Pound. I must also thank three people who have kept me going when the light at the end of the tunnel seemed a very long way off: Field Marshal Lord Bramall, Professor Brian Bond of King's College, London, and Michael Simpson of Swansea University. All have been helpful in the extreme, and only I know quite how much I owe to all three.

There are four groups of people without whose special support I would never have finished this book: firstly, Leo Cooper, Henry Wilson and my editor Tom Hartman. They rescued the book when it may well have disappeared, and Tom in particular corrected many gross errors in my English. Secondly, my colleagues at Ampleforth and Pangbourne Colleges have had to suffer my continual witterings about 'my admiral' for more years than I care to remember. They have been remarkably tolerant, and I thank them for their support and encouragement. Thirdly, my pupils who have always evinced an interest, partly I suspect because they knew that with luck I would go off on a long red herring. They would be surprised to learn quite how helpful they have been. Finally, my family, who have always helped and supported me: my father, who proofread the entire book, and particularly improved my grammar, my mother and sister who always said the right things, my three step-children who have been quite remarkably tolerant, despite always asking how 'Douglas' Pound was, but above all my wife, Pea, who has literally kept me sane, cooked, cleaned and generally coped while my mind has been at sea or in the Admiralty, and has provided the inspiration without which this book could not have been written. Despite all of this help I alone am responsible for the mistakes and errors contained.

Robin Brodhurst.

Stanford Dingley.

Summer 2000.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For permission to quote I am very grateful to a number of people.

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Sutton Publishing for extracts from *Invergordon Scapegoat* by Alan Coles.
Orion Publishing Group for extracts from *Men of War*, edited by Stephen Howarth, and from *The Churchillians*, by Jock Colville. Both were published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
Times Newspapers Limited for three extracts from *The Times*.
Mary Tute for extracts from *The Deadly Stroke*, by Warren Tute, published by Collins.
Lady Mary Pawle for extracts from *The War and Colonel Warden*, by Gerald Pawle, published by Harrap.
Lt Col Martin Pound for extracts from the papers of his father, the late Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound.
John Somerville for extracts from the papers of his father, the late Admiral of the Fleet Sir James Somerville.
Nicholas Roskill for extracts from the papers of his father, the late Captain Stephen Roskill.
Peggy Melville for extracts from the papers of her husband, the late Lt Col A.D. Melville.
Joan Macdonald and Mary Davey for extracts from the papers of their father, the late Admiral of the Fleet Sir Algernon Willis.
William Ehrman for extracts from the papers of his grandfather, the late Vice Admiral Sir Geoffrey Blake.
Lady Beatrix Evison for extracts from the papers of her father, the late Lord Alexander of Hillsborough.
Mark Litchfield for extracts from the papers of his father, the late Captain

John Litchfield, and particularly his manuscript biography of Pound.
Lord Chatfield for extracts from the papers of his father, the late Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield.
Lord Keyes for extracts from the papers of his father, the late Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes, and for quotations from his book *The Naval Memoirs of Lord Keyes, 1916–18*, published by Thornton Butterworth, 1935.

In America:
Columbia University for extracts from their interview with Admiral Alan G. Kirk.
The Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Centre, Washington Naval Yard, for extracts from the papers of Admiral Harold Stark.
The Naval War College, Rhode Island, for permission to quote from the B. Mitchell Simpson papers.

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1

DEATH OF A SAILOR

The QUADRANT meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt and their staffs was held at Quebec between 17 and 24 August 1943. At the end of the conference the British Chiefs of Staff were due to go fishing. All four, General Sir Alan Brooke, Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Portal, Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, were keen fishermen, and had long been looking forward to the chance to fish in some of the lakes to the north of Quebec. They had already had one day's fishing before the conference on 12 August. After the war Brooke commented:

> This was the first day on which we noticed signs of failing on the part of Dudley Pound. On the way out he had lost his balance and nearly fallen into a small ravine, only just caught in time by Dickie Mountbatten. On the way back we had great difficulty in getting him back to the car. He seemed completely exhausted.[1]

On the 25th Dudley Pound declined to go fishing, saying 'he did not feel well enough to accompany them'. He took to his bed and the Admiralty Surgeon, Commander Miller, flew over from London, discovering that Pound had had a stroke on the last day of the conference. Pound wrote to his eldest son, George, serving on a destroyer in the Mediterranean Fleet, on the 26th:

> Good hunting, Old Man, I hope that the gun will go off soon.

It was to be the last letter that George was to receive from his father. Brooke and Portal left Quebec to fly back to London on the 28th and said goodbye to Pound. Brooke recorded after the war:

> Little did I realise on saying goodbye to old Dudley Pound that I should never see him again. He was sitting up in an armchair with his feet up and looking far from well. It was shortly after this that he had his first stroke [Brooke was mistaken] on arrival at Washington. He travelled back a sick man, was met by an ambulance on arrival at London, and died shortly afterwards. A very gallant man who literally went on working until he dropped. . . . He was a grand colleague to work with, and now that I realise how sick a man he was lately I withdraw any unkind criticism I may have made in my diary concerning his slowness and lack of drive.[2]

Summoning up his will-power, Pound travelled to Washington where Churchill and Roosevelt were still conferring. On 7 September he attended a meeting of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff with Churchill, Dill and Ismay, and late that evening met the Prime Minister and President again. Both political leaders were convinced that he was very ill. The next morning Churchill recorded:

> Pound came to see me in my big bed-sitting room and said abruptly, "Prime Minister I have come to resign. I have had a stroke and my right side is largely paralysed. I thought it would pass off, but it gets worse every day and I am no longer fit for duty." I at once accepted the First Sea Lord's resignation, and expressed my profound sympathy for his breakdown in health. I told him that he was relieved at that moment from all responsibility, and urged him to rest for a few days and then to come home with me in the *Renown*. He was complete master of himself, and his whole manner instinct with dignity.[3]

Pound returned to Britain on *Renown*, remaining in his bed all the way and attended constantly by Commander Miller. When *Renown* arrived at Greenock one of those meeting Churchill, with the task of presenting him with a batch of the daily papers, was Commander David Joel, who had served with Pound on *Colossus* at Jutland. With Commander Miller he helped Pound ashore.

> It was an infinitely sad occasion, as, heavily supporting him, we got him into his Drawing Room Car in the special VIP train waiting at the Prince's Pier Station for the Prime Minister and his party to return to London. I was alone with Pound in that small Drawing

> Room Car for at least 20 minutes while the luggage was being loaded. I suddenly realised that though his mind was broken on current affairs he seemed perfectly lucid in speaking of the old Grand Fleet days. Somehow he took it for granted that I should be there. . . . The intervening years were forgotten.[4]

On arrival in London he rallied and was able to meet the Board of Admiralty. There he confirmed his resignation, which he drafted with his oldest surviving naval friend, Vice Admiral Geoffrey Blake, and his secretary Ronald Brockman. They were both amazed to find that he could hardly write, and that they had to guide his hand when he wrote his signature. To look at he was perfectly normal, but the fact was that he had become semi-paralysed. He was taken to the Royal Masonic Hospital where very few people were allowed to see him.

Throughout early September Pound was continually receiving letters, congratulating him on the award of the O.M. (He had declined a peerage on his resignation.) They ranged from Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield: "You have earned it by long, arduous and immensely responsible work, not only during this war, but throughout your service life," to ordinary seamen who had served with him in earlier times, such as his Action Stations Messenger on *Colossus* in 1916, and another who had served as a rating on *Repulse* in 1921–22. They also included one from the son of Lord Fisher, one of the first naval officers to recognize the promise of the young Pound, and under whom he had worked at the Admiralty in 1915.

During September Pound grew steadily weaker and weaker. His formal retirement from the post of First Sea Lord was announced at the beginning of October and occasioned another flood of letters. The faithful Brockman and Blake, one of whom visited him almost every day, read these to him. They ranged from politicians on both sides of the House of Commons such as Eden and Attlee, members of the Board of Admiralty and the Chiefs of Staff committee, to retired sailors who had served with him before 1914. Four deserve special mention. One is a brief note from Vice Admiral Wilfrid Tomkinson wishing him well and hoping that "the day may come when we again stand together at the bottom of Apple Cake and endeavour to shop some of those old cock pheasants". This, according to a note attached to it by George Pound, was particularly pleasing to his father, as they had fallen out after the Invergordon Mutiny.

Secondly, Mountbatten, on the eve of his departure to become Supreme Allied Commander in South East Asia, wrote:

> May I take this opportunity of thanking you from the bottom of my heart for your truly amazing kindness, consideration and help during my time as CCO? I shall never forget the way that an Admiral of the Fleet treated a very young Captain and made him welcome on the COS Committee. The whole Navy owes you a debt of gratitude, but none more than your very loyal and devoted Dickie Mountbatten.

The third is from Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, then the AOC-in-C Coastal Command, but previously a member of the Joint Planning Staff, who, after commiserating, wrote:

> I personally have been in a special position to know what a tremendous burden you have borne over the last 4 years; it has been a privilege and an education to have been associated with you for so long as a planner in the bad old days, and this year under your command in Coastal.

This has fixed to it a reply from Brockman who tells Slessor that the doctors are "not optimistic about his recovery". Finally the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Portal, wrote saying how sad it was not to be able to address him as First Sea Lord. He went on to say:

> I can't tell you how much I shall miss you from our meetings, or how much I admired, during our three years together the helpfulness, frankness, patience and good humour which you invariably brought to bear on our problems. Besides, I shall never forget your personal kindness to me or your constant appreciation of the work done by the Air Force for the Navy.

All of these letters[5], and there are many from total strangers, show the regard he was held in both by those at the top and those at the bottom.

Geoffrey Blake arranged for the insignia of the Order of Merit to be presented to Pound by the King's Secretary. Although Pound could hardly speak, he communicated, as did both his sons, that he would like to see Churchill, in effect to say goodbye. Blake agreed to try to arrange this, knowing how difficult it might be 'as the PM is extraordinarily sen-

sitive to any such occasion'. With a little persuasion Blake managed to get him to agree.

> The next day, on the way to Chequers, he called in and gave Dudley, I assume, a good deal of pleasure a few days before he died. The PM was, as I knew he would be, greatly affected, and came out of his sick room weeping. They were great friends.[6]

Pound, by that stage was unable to speak, but as Commander Thompson recalled, "He recognised the Prime Minister, and grasped his hand."[7] Jock Colville, one of Churchill's private secretaries, records that Pound was not able to see visitors in hospital, and there is no doubt that he sank fast, despite having, as both his sons remember, periods of lucidity. Brockman dealt with the correspondence and his replies varied from the simple formal acknowledgement to less formal ones explaining that Pound could not receive visitors. Certain people were allowed in to see him and say farewell. Colville records:

> Brendan Bracken, who was no less fond of him than Churchill, called to see him and found A.V. Alexander [The First Lord of the Admiralty] already at his bedside. Alexander told the dying man that without him he would have had difficulty in achieving all that he had. According to Brendan, Pound turned his face to the wall and made no reply.[8]

Tact and modesty were not always among Alexander's qualities.

Pound eventually died on Trafalgar Day 1943 and Churchill decreed that it should be a full-dress funeral in Westminster Abbey, and it certainly had all the trappings of a state funeral. Since the whole of the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff were attending, as well as many notables, and the first warnings of the V weapons were coming through, the Admiralty asked the Air Ministry to provide fighter cover over central London for the service. The coffin had lain overnight in the Admiralty and the procession moved from Horse Guards Parade into Whitehall and then through Parliament Square to Westminster Abbey. The arrangements for the funeral were very detailed, and, as Admiral Stark wrote to Admiral King in Washington, "The big square [Horse Guards Parade] outside the Admiralty was lined with officers and men, and the line of march [via Whitehall] was literally jammed with people."[9] The pallbearers were a highly impressive body of senior officers:

Admiral Sir William Goodenough	Admiral Sir Sydney Fremantle
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Charles Forbes	Admiral Sir Charles Little
Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield	Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of Cork and Orrery
Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes	Admiral of the Fleet Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt
Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal	Admiral Harold R. Stark USN
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham	General Sir Alan Brooke

Churchill took part in the procession, following behind the Duke of Gloucester, representing the King. Sir Paul Sinker, serving at the Admiralty as Head of War Registry had had much to do with the organization of the funeral, and had a strong recollection of 'waiting for a long time on the parade for two huge figures who arrived late: the Russian representatives'.[10]

The BBC declared that the most moving part of the service was the singing of Parry's setting of 'Crossing the Bar'. One observer, Lt Colonel A.D. Melville, a TA officer at the War Office, recorded in his diary:

> As I walked back [from lunch] a vast crowd had collected around the Abbey and down Whitehall for the First Sea Lord's funeral. The funeral procession was nearly a quarter of a mile long, with two bands, an impressive sight in the gloom and fog as it turned out of Horse Guards into Whitehall. Brookie was one of the pallbearers, so was CAS [Portal] and the rest were senior admirals . . . The PM walked alone in top hat (almost the only one), a striking figure stumping the slow march.[11]

That evening Admiral Stark broadcast on the BBC Home Service and paid his own tribute to Pound:

> A great naval officer has lived here for the past five years working day and night, quietly, effectively, undaunted and determined. He has faced naval problems perhaps more difficult and complex than any First Sea Lord before him ever faced. By clear and straight thinking,

> and by tireless devotion to duty he successfully met the multitude of tasks which confronted him. Truly it may be said of Admiral [of the Fleet] Sir Dudley Pound he typified Nelson's comment 'Duty is the great business of an office. All private considerations must give way to it, however painful it is.'[12]

The body was cremated at Golders Green and, along with the ashes of Lady Pound, rested on board HMS *Victory* at Portsmouth overnight.

The next day, 26 October 1943, the ashes were taken on board HMS *Glasgow*, commanded by Captain (later Vice Admiral Sir) Edward Evans-Lombe. She went to sea in total silence, without a word of command being uttered, and in the Solent their ashes were scattered by his successor as First Sea Lord, Sir Andrew Cunningham.

Who, however, was this man? His name rarely, if ever, features in the popular histories of the war. He did not have the personal appeal of a Beatty, nor had he commanded at a successful battle as both Jellicoe or Cunningham had done. Yet for over four years this was the man who had held the reins of power in the Admiralty and had been responsible for the supreme direction of the Battle of the Atlantic, possibly the most crucial battle in which Britain was involved through the whole of the Second World War.

2

EARLY LIFE

It is an unlikely thought, but the two men who most closely controlled Britain's naval destinies in World War II both had American connections. Churchill's close American links are well known. Indeed, in 1941 he was to tell the U.S. Congress, "If my father had been American, and my mother British, instead of the other way round, I might have got here on my own . . ." Less well known are the American forbears of Dudley Pound.

On his father's side the Pounds were an old family with a respectable country-gentleman pedigree. They claimed to have come over with the Conqueror and several had been High Sheriff of Hampshire. Dudley Pound's father, Alfred John Pound, had been a King's Scholar at Eton and read Law and History at Exeter College, Oxford, before being called to the Bar in 1871. He served for 12 months as a stipendiary magistrate in British Guiana in 1875 and returned via North America. He took little further part in public life except for standing as a Tory candidate at West Ham in December 1885, when he was beaten by a Radical. He was a countryman by inclinations, and it has been speculated that it was his young American wife who pushed him into this political episode.

Elizabeth Pickman Rogers met Alfred Pound when he was on his American journey. She belonged to a distinguished American family. Bessie, as she was known to her family, came from original New England colonial stock on both sides. On her father's side the Rogers family first arrived in Ipswich, Massachusetts, 16 years after the *Mayflower*, in 1636. The family, after providing the 5th President of Harvard in 1682, became linked to the shipowning Pickman family. Dudley's grandfather married, as his second wife, Elizabeth Pickman, and the marriage brought him very useful commercial connections. With his two elder brothers he founded the firm of N.L. Rogers and Brothers of Salem. They traded with the East Indies, Zanzibar and the South Pacific. By the 1830s they were established

as leading members of the Salem mercantile community. The other side of Bessie's family, the Pickmans, went back almost as far. They arrived in New England in 1639 and were all seafarers based at Salem. In the American War of Independence, one of the family, William Pickman, was made Naval Officer of the Port of Salem in 1779[1]. It was his granddaughter, Elizabeth Leavitt Pickman, who married Richard Saltonstall Rogers. Dudley Pound's mother was thus the product of the union of two families who were among the leading members of the Salem mercantile aristocracy. It is quite likely that the family wealth stemmed from the slave trade, but it is difficult to prove. However, it is unlikely that they would have become quite so prosperous without being involved in the triangular trade. The Marine Society of Salem, founded at the turn of the eighteenth century, was originally limited to "persons who have actually navigated the seas beyond the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn", and both the Rogers and Pickman families were members. In 1942 they made Dudley Pound an honorary member in recognition of both his forbears and of his naval position.

If it is possible to see in Winston Churchill a trace of his buccaneering Jerome ancestry in his character, so is it possible to see in Dudley Pound more than a trace of his hardy New England maternal forbears. Their resolution and seagoing abilities had prospered in a competitive and demanding society, driving them to the top. If Dudley Pound was in most ways a most unAmerican half-American, it is still possible to see those traits of hard work, devotion to duty and earnest competition driving him to the top of his profession.

Bessie Rogers was a strong-willed woman of eccentric habits, who was reputed to rule the Pound family roost. As a girl she had developed a habit of "collecting things", other people's things. Her father had decreed that she should always be accompanied when she went shopping. Her accompanist's job was to return or to pay for those items "borrowed". She was extravagant, and there was little left of her share of the Rogers inheritance when she died in 1913. Dudley Pound certainly owed much of his character to his masterful mother, but he did not inherit any financial benefit. Throughout his life he was wholly dependent upon his naval pay. Bessie was not an easy woman to live with and the marriage proved incompatible. There was a parting of the ways after the children had grown up and Dudley rarely spoke of his mother. His own wife, who rarely disguised her feelings, was often heard to complain of "that Rogers woman".

Dudley Pound was born on 29 August 1877 at Wraxall, the family home near Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. After his parents' separation he grew up at his father's house near Buckfastleigh in Devon, where his father encouraged his interests in country pursuits. Here began his lifelong passion for shooting which was to dominate his life outside the Navy. He also rode and fished, and became a knowledgeable ornithologist. Pound told his Naval secretary when he was First Sea Lord that he had toyed with the idea of a military career in the cavalry, but that the sight of a cutter, in the charge of a midshipman, coming alongside a jetty at Stokes Bay, decided him on a career in the Royal Navy. There had also been a tempting offer from an American uncle of a place in Pierpont Morgan's bank in New York[2].

After a term at a crammer he passed the naval entrance examination top of the order of merit out of fifty-eight candidates. He obtained 1846 marks out of a possible 2000, 169 more than the second candidate[3], and joined the Naval Cadet harbour training ship H.M.S. *Britannia* at Dartmouth on 15 January 1891. He was to remain on the active list of the Royal Navy until his death 52 years later, having moved from Cadet to Admiral of the Fleet.

*

The Naval Cadets who joined *Britannia* in January 1891 were all selected boys, the majority coming from private schools. Until the end of the Second World War they were nearly all scions of the officer class, sons of naval families or the professions, few of them wealthy, who would have gone to public schools if they had not entered the Royal Navy. The transition from preparatory school to public school is often a painful one, and it was a similar transition to *Britannia* at the age of 13. The Admiralty was aware that it was no place for weaker souls and was prepared to say so. In a frankly informative guide published in 1914, Entry and Training of Naval Cadets, it probably understated it.

> The boy of sensitive, poetic spirit, the ruminating philosopher, the scholar whose whole heart is in his books, are types that have a real use in the world, but their proper place is not in the Navy[4].

Britannia was a floating hulk, and remained the Navy's cradle for officer-training until 1905. She was a 3-decker of 6,200 tons, built in

1860, and one of the last of the "wooden walls". Nelson and his men would have felt thoroughly at home on board. Moored fore and aft in the River Dart with her guns and all her top hamper removed, except for one mast, *Britannia* looked like a giant houseboat. She was connected to a second hull, *Hindustan*, to provide accommodation for 260 Cadets, and attendant instructors, officers, and ratings. Life was certainly spartan, with a minimum of unoccupied time, and a total lack of privacy. Discipline was strict and taut, rather than inhumane. The unofficial and largely uncontrolled penalties exacted by senior Cadets upon juniors were harsher and more severe than the official punishments. Bullying was probably no more rife in *Britannia* than in any public school in the 1890s. It existed, and became the matter of public speculation when it was raised in a parliamentary debate and a leader in *The Times* on 30 September 1891.

The majority of *Britannia* Cadets were happy enough and soon learned to take life in their stride, and it may be assumed that Cadet Pound did. There were certainly compensations. While brothers and cousins were learning Latin and Greek at public school, they were "mucking about in boats" and learning their trade. Food was perfectly adequate, and their neighbouring Devon villages provided opportunities for cream teas on Sunday afternoons. Prowess in games was less sought after than in later years. Dudley Pound was able to go out shooting and recorded in his Game Book:

26 7 92 My first day's shooting at Dartmouth. 1 Rabbit[5].

The old *Britannia* system of training Naval Cadets, which changed little until 1939, may fairly be criticized for its narrow and unimaginative content, for the suppression of individuality and the discouragement of originality, for its excessive inculcation of veneration for senior rank, which produced a sense of inferiority in the presence of more gold braid, and for its emphasis on unthinking blind obedience. The cadets were strained physically, but not mentally, and it may be said that education, as opposed to professional training, ended for many at 13. Yet it must also be said that the system was geared for transforming 13 year old schoolboys into embryo naval officers with an elementary knowledge of their job sufficient to enable them to take their place on a sea-going ship. In that the system bred the regular naval officers of the First World War, and most of the Admirals of the Second, it cannot be said to have failed. The

products were highly professional and dedicated to the Royal Navy in a way that cannot be found in other professions.

Dudley Pound exemplified the qualities of the pre-1914 Royal Navy and also some of the limitations that a narrow, professional training in his formative years had imposed. The Royal Navy of his time was an intensely professional sea service, with a pride and loyalty which the Army did not feel towards its service outside the regimental system. Largely removed from the main stream of contemporary life ashore, and thus inward looking, the pre-1914 Royal Navy thought of little but a second Trafalgar, and hardly at all about the wider issues of defence. Although their natural abilities might vary, men are creatures of their time and experience. The high qualities which made naval officers "the finest body of men in the world" according to Lord Esher in 1903 were not necessarily enough when it came to running a war at the top in concert with politicians, the other services and international allies. In studying Dudley Pound it is not possible to separate him from the naval world in which he grew up from the age of 13, and outside of which he had few interests.

In his passing out examinations in December 1892 Pound obtained First Class Certificates in Seamanship, Mathematics and External Subjects. He later obtained Firsts in all of his Sub-Lieutenant's courses except gunnery. Out of a maximum possible 2000 marks at *Britannia* he obtained 1819 and was top by eighteen marks. The third on the examination list obtained 1706 and the fourth 1673. By comparison Andrew Cunningham, five years later, gained only two Firsts. Chatfield, four years earlier, had obtained only a Second because of an inability to master French, and Keyes had emerged near the bottom of his term. Winston Churchill, five years senior to Pound, was still struggling to pass the Sandhurst entrance examination when Pound went to sea.

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Pound joined his first seagoing ship, *Royal Sovereign*, a battleship, on New Year's Day 1893. The gunroom that he joined provided little comfort, and no privacy. Midshipmen held a curious place in a ship: they were, as Churchill remarked of that worthy MP, Mr Bossom, "neither one thing nor the other". They held a halfway station, not holding a commission and being still under training, but having it drummed into them that they were young officers and gentlemen. Seasoned petty officers and seamen

readily accepted orders from these 16 year olds, saluted them and called them "Sir". The latter, if they were sensible, lent on the experience and advice of their subordinate elders. Pound came to view the time as a midshipman as a key stage in a naval officer's training, when he had a chance to learn not only the craft of a seaman, but the art of handling and leading men. Many years later Pound, recalling his own time as a midshipman, referred to this, when as Second Sea Lord, he took the salute at Dartmouth in 1934:

> From the day you go to sea you have to accept responsibility. You may find yourself, within a few hours of going to sea, in a picket boat in bad weather. Do not be afraid to ask the coxswain's advice. If you do not think that advice is right, then do not take it. Act on your own responsibility, for you are the one responsible[6].

Royal Sovereign was a modern battleship, completed only eight months before Pound joined her. After the series of grotesque experimental hybrids and floating forts of extraordinary appearances which had marked the transition from sail to steam and from wood to iron, the *Royal Sovereign* class looked like real ships again. These were the first really modern battleships; indeed it was after Pound joined her that a British battleship made sail for the last time. The Victorian Navy was thus in a flux of change and reform. The Pax Britannica still prevailed and, though there was a growing competition from France and Russia, the more serious challenge from Germany had not yet materialized.

Pound spent three and a half years as a midshipman. After an uneventful year in *Royal Sovereign*, flagship of the Channel Squadron, he joined the first class cruiser *Undaunted*, which was commissioned for foreign service and sailed for the China station in May 1894. This was an appointment which would have delighted any midshipman, and was likely to be far more exciting than service on a flagship. The Royal Navy had been involved in two wars in China in the previous fifty years, and another, the Boxer Rebellion, was only six years away. The Sino-Japanese war was about to break out and did so at about the time that *Undaunted* was at Nagasaki.

Pound's journal records little other than that which a large number of midshipmens' journals record: the state of the weather, the ship's course and speed, and her position at midday. He watched the Japanese army landing at Talienwhan Bay in March 1894, but little else of interest was recorded. After a year on station he was posted back to England to *Calypso*

in the Training Squadron. He took passage in the cruiser *Leander*, a full-rigged ship with auxiliary steam propulsion. This was his first experience of cruising under sail, and the voyage home can have been little different from Nelson's time. The Training Squadron was a similar experience and was the last home of sail in the Royal Navy. It was based in home waters, ranging from Spanish ports, Gibraltar and the Canary Islands, to Scandinavia and Iceland, depending on the seasons of the year.

Dudley Pound did not keep a diary and his midshipman's journal is, on the whole, uninteresting. However, from 1892 to 1938 he kept a meticulous record of his rural activities. Whether as a midshipman or an Admiral he was never too tired to enter his day's sport. During his three years and eight months as a midshipman, including periods of leave, he recorded 112 days' shooting and fishing, sometimes a full day, more often a half-day, or an early morning, or evening expedition before or after work. In June 1893, for example, he recorded that he had "arrived back on board dog tired 2 a.m. (from fishing); my morning watch: not properly roused and went to sleep again; result a week's watch and watch". The Game Book is thus more than simply a record of what he caught or shot. They reveal a man who from his youth neglected no detail in planning or analysing, and who pursued his objectives with great persistence and determination.

Pound's time as a midshipman concluded with his seamanship examination on his nineteenth birthday in August 1896. He gained a First Class certificate, and thus shipped his first stripe as an acting Sub-Lieutenant before leaving for his Sub-Lieutenant's course.

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Pound's career up to the rank of Captain followed a strictly conventional course, distinguished by early promotion and a steadily growing reputation in a succession of good appointments. As a torpedo specialist he was at the forefront of the technical progress which transformed the old Victorian Navy into the Grand Fleet of 1914. He did not benefit from the short cuts available to such as Beatty and Keyes of active service and connections. He owed nothing to private means or influence, everything to hard work and professional competence.

The course on which Pound embarked in August 1896 comprised a general refresher course at Greenwich and specialized courses at

Portsmouth. During the year ashore he spent almost every day of his leave, and most weekends, shooting or fishing, according to season, nearly always accompanied by his father when he was at home in the West Country. He collected a First at Greenwich and another in the Torpedo course at Portsmouth. However, he broke his record with a Second in Gunnery, possibly due to an interruption to the Gunnery course when he went afloat for the Diamond Jubilee Review in 1897.

He was posted in October 1897 to the TBD *Opossum*, a three-funnelled vessel with a turtle deck and a top speed of 27 knots. It was the only destroyer in which he served, and it was an important posting as it brought him into contact for the first time with Roger Keyes, the Lieutenant in command. This chance association between the two future Admirals of the Fleet was the beginning of a periodic professional partnership. Keyes was soon to make a name for himself in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, and they did not serve long together in *Opossum*.

In January 1898 Pound was appointed as Sub-Lieutenant to the battleship *Magnificent*, Flagship of the Second in Command of the Channel Squadron, and there on his 21st birthday he was promoted Lieutenant, well ahead of most of his term as a result of the seniority he had gained in examinations. As a young watchkeeper Pound had attracted the attention of his admiral, Rear Admiral John Fellowes, who took him on as Flag Lieutenant in October. The duties of Flag Lieutenant were more than purely social, although these were still important. There was no signals officer, and so Pound became responsible for the squadron's communications, and for translating the admiral's tactical instructions into flag signals. Pound obviously did this well and Fellowes reported on him that he conducted himself "with the greatest zeal and ability in his important signals duties and entirely to my satisfaction. He is a most promising officer.[7]" Fellowes had a predeliction for putting officers under arrest. On one occasion Pound was put under arrest and released no less than twelve times while the ship was proceeding from the Hamoaze to Plymouth Sound, a distance of less than three miles![8] Admiral Fellowes also had a passion for quadrilles on bicycles. He had in fact written a book on the subject. One of Pound's tasks was to train up the midshipmen to carry out this bizarre exercise. It was one of his few failures.

Pound was anxious to specialize in torpedoes, and although reform was not yet happening at the Admiralty, Fisher was already making himself heard in the Mediterranean, and Percy Scott was also making noises about

gunnery practice. Opportunities for progressive specialists were promising. In the autumn of 1899 Pound was selected for the Long Torpedo Course at HMS *Vernon*, at the early age of 22. The torpedo branch was responsible for all electrics, including the experimental development of wireless telegraphy in ships, as well as for torpedoes, mining and diving. Pound would thus be in the vanguard of applied scientific progress. The course lasted from September 1899 to the end of 1901, and he emerged with his customary First. As a newly qualified Torpedo Officer (and he was entered on the Navy List as Lt(T)) Pound was appointed to the cruiser *Grafton*, flagship of the Pacific Squadron. She was an old ship, more suited to showing the flag than fighting a battle. The Pacific station covered the west coasts of both North and South America, from Alaska to Cape Horn. *Grafton*'s captain was Henry Keppel who was an example of the sailor-courtier officer. He had served on the Royal Yacht and was a friend of the royal family, but he was a fine sea officer. He remained a friend to Pound in later life, and his own career did not finish until 1935. He even outlived Pound.

The *Grafton* commission was the longest of any in Pound's career. He remained on station for three years. It was chiefly memorable for the sport he enjoyed. He fished and shot in Canada, California, Mexico, Chile, Tierra del Fuego and Alaska. He had a week's expedition in the Rockies. Motor cars were unknown and he usually walked, but also used ponies, bicycle and canoes, as well as *Grafton*'s skiff. These three years were the only quiet post ever enjoyed by Dudley Pound. Afterwards he was to serve exclusively in the main fleets or in Whitehall, never far from the centre of affairs, usually at it.

No sooner was he home from the Pacific backwater than he was wanted for the new battleship *King Edward VII*, flagship designate of the Atlantic Fleet. This was an excellent appointment and a sign that he had not been forgotten. Pound was happy to sacrifice most of his foreign service leave and joined his new ship on 5 January 1905. *King Edward VII* was one of the first ships to have any considerable amount of electrical gear and, as Torpedo Lieutenant, Pound was responsible for it, performing the difficult task excellently.

Pound was fortunate to be Torpedo Officer in *King Edward VII* as his new Admiral was Sir William May, one of the brightest stars of the Edwardian Navy and a most likeable senior officer. 'Handsome Willie May', also known as 'Christmas May' for claiming Christmas Island for

Britain, went on to be Second Sea Lord and Commander in Chief of the Home Fleet before running foul of Fisher and not being appointed First Sea Lord in 1911. However, in 1905 he was still firmly in Fisher's good books and his recommendation of Pound counted strongly. There was another important contact for Pound on board. This was the Gunnery Officer, William Wordsworth Fisher, whose career was to match and touch Pound's frequently. As Gunnery and Torpedo officers (G and T) their job was to work closely, and this they did, forming a close professional relationship which endured until WW's death 32 years later when both were Commanders in Chief. Fisher was promoted after their first year together, and Pound was appointed to succeed him as No. 1 (the senior Lieutenant, the rank of Lieutenant Commander had not yet been introduced) with less than eight years seniority as a Lieutenant.

As "First and T" of a fleet flagship Pound was well placed for early promotion to Commander, but he could hardly expect it at his seniority when his two years in *King Edward VII* ended. His captain, Arthur Leveson, later to command the Second Division of the Second Battle Squadron at Jutland, said of Pound "Very zealous and of very good judgement. Very high professional qualification, and in every way to my entire satisfaction"[9]. A month later Pound went to the old battleship *Queen*, the flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet. Here began his long association with the Mediterranean Fleet. His Commander-in-Chief was Sir Charles Drury, and his Captain Ernest Troubridge. His promotion was now assured as soon as he had a little more seniority. However, disappointingly, he left Malta after two years in *Queen* in November 1908 without a Commander's brass hat; instead he had happily acquired a wife.

Dudley Pound and Betty Whitehead, the daughter of Dr John Livesey Whitehead of Ventnor, were married in Malta on 14 October 1908, a few weeks before his relief and return to England. The engagement took place when Betty was staying with friends in Malta, although they had known each other at home on the Isle of Wight. The families had been acquainted since Pound's grandfather had moved his school from Malton in North Yorkshire to Appledurcombe. The wedding was a traditional one with Dudley and his fellow officers in full dress uniform, an arch of swords, and his torpedomen to draw the carriage from the cathedral. Betty was given away by the Commander-in-Chief himself. She was to prove the ideal naval wife, devoted to her husband's career and their children, always ready to make a new home and move at a moment's notice. The newly

married couple went to Gozo for their honeymoon, taken there in the Commander-in-Chief's despatch vessel.

The new couple returned to England to Pound's first appointment at the Admiralty. They found a house a few miles outside London, at Walton-on-Thames, where in due course their family grew up, two sons and a daughter. Pound took a gun in a shoot near Betty's home on the Isle of Wight. On 30 June 1909 he was promoted Commander, achieved his brass hat, and was now one of the youngest Commanders in the Royal Navy. There had been earlier promotions for war service, Beatty and Keyes for example, but few if any in peacetime. Promotion below Commander is by seniority; to Commander and Captain it is by selection, after attaining a certain seniority.

Pound's arrival at the Admiralty in 1909 was the beginning of a regular cycle of alternating appointments at sea and in the Admiralty which was to mark the rest of his life. His two years in the Ordnance Department were quiet and need not detain us long, except to note two things. Firstly, this was his only experience in a material branch. Secondly, he came into contact with two crucial influences. The Controller of the Navy, under whom the Ordnance Department directly came, was Rear Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, and the First Sea Lord was Admiral Sir Jackie Fisher. Neither of them was to forget the young Commander Pound. Five years later Fisher, back in his second spell as First Sea Lord, selected Pound as his additional Naval Assistant, and when, after Fisher's fall, Pound was available for service with the Grand Fleet Jellicoe readily agreed to his appointment to a battleship, even though he had less than one year's seniority as a Captain and had never commanded a ship before.

It was during Pound's time at the Admiralty that the infamous *Dreadnought* hoax took place. Some young men in London decided to tweak the nose of the Royal Navy and succeeded in tricking their way onto *Dreadnought*, the Flagship of the Home Fleet, as eastern potentates, where they were received with due ceremony and shown round the ship by the Flag Commander, William Fisher. When the hoax was publicized in London society, and eventually in the newspapers, Fisher decided that he must wipe out the insult to the Royal Navy. Together with Pound he tracked down all of the instigators, and in a series of raids they gave them each a dozen strokes with a cane in such varied places as Hampstead Heath, Pound's office in the Admiralty and a mews. The honour of the Royal Navy was avenged!

Pound was too junior to have had any influence upon the reforms which Fisher was imposing so strongly upon the Royal Navy. In the light of what we know of him it is safe to say that, while he probably approved of the reforms, he probably disapproved of the way they were carried out. While he could be ruthless as a senior officer in disposing of other senior officers if he thought them not up to the mark, he never permitted dirty linen to be washed in public. Still less would he allow his personal opinions of brother officers to become known. Fisher's methods were inimical to him, but he probably appreciated that without those methods there would not have been either the reforms or the man. It is instructive to compare Fisher's very public feuds with other naval officers, to the Dudley North affair of 1940 (examined in Chapter 10) which only really became public property in the 1950s, long after Pound's death.

He returned to sea in May 1911 as Commander (i.e. Executive Officer and Second in Command) of the battleship *Superb* in the First Battle Squadron in the Home Fleet. In the era of the big ship a Commander's seatime was spent either commanding a small ship or as second in command of battleships or cruisers. Whereas commanding one's own ship, large or small, has always been the greatest attraction which the Royal Navy has to offer, the job of the executive officer of a large ship was probably the more testing. The Commander was responsible to the Captain for just about everything that happened on board, with the exception of the technical departments: for discipline, welfare and morale, for the ship's cleanliness, smartness and efficiency, and for her overall efficiency as a fighting unit. Most wise Captains left the show to their Commanders, if they had confidence in him, insisting on knowing what was going on, but leaving the detail alone.

Still on the right side of 34 when he joined *Superb*, younger than many of his departmental heads, Pound put everything he had into the job. It is the Commander's job to create from the 1000 or so individuals in the community of a major ship a single focused aim, animated by a common spirit and organized as a fighting unit. On his leadership, personality and human understanding and judgement the ship's character and contentment largely depend. *Superb* excelled in every field. In the pre-1914 fleet coaling was the biggest evolution of all, and *Superb* established a record which was never equalled by embarking (by purely manual labour) 1,300 tons of coal in four hours. In general drill exercises where the Admiral could introduce surprise evolutions ranging from "Let go bower anchor,

and weigh by hand" to "Send two fried eggs to flagship", *Superb* was usually the first ship to break the pennant signifying completion of the evolution. The fleet pulling regatta was the greatest sporting event of the year and *Superb* was runner up in 1911, a few months after commissioning, and winner in 1912. In the 1912 gunlayers' tests *Superb* came first in the whole Royal Navy, a success which caused Pound the rare distinction of a formal expression of Their Lordships' appreciation[10].

Throughout the commission Pound kept a record of every competition which *Superb* entered, along with every coaling she undertook, which was seen as a competitive activity in the Royal Navy of the time. The book, in the possession of the Pound family, has a detailed description of every possible shipboard manoeuvre, hand-drawn by Pound himself, and then records of every coaling, regatta, race or other competitive event of the commission. He was to keep a similar record when he was again Executive Officer of *St Vincent.*

From the start of the commission Pound showed himself to be a man of authority who knew his job, and he soon had the opportunity to demo strate his courage as well. On 30 June 1911, a few days after the Coronation Review at Spithead, two seamen were overcome with foul air in the ship's potato hold. A seaman who went to their help was also overcome. Pound, appearing on the scene, had himself at once lowered into the hold with two volunteers, one of whom also passed out. Pound and the other survivor managed to get ropes round the three unconscious men and send them up before they too collapsed. Three of the men concerned died and Pound was awarded the Royal Humane Society's Medal, with its plain blue ribbon worn on the right breast[11]. What the episode says about the Royal Navy's catering arrangements is a different matter.

It was a notable commission and Pound established a reputation as the outstanding Commander in the Home Fleet. His Captain, Ernest Gaunt, was not in his class professionally, and Pound was recognized as the mainspring of *Superb.* Gaunt reported on Pound in his annual report that he had acted "with complete sobriety and to my entire satisfaction. Combines very good organising powers with great executive ability and is thoroughly recommended for early promotion"[12]. Pound always looked back on the *Superb* commission with special satisfaction, and there were frequent letters from "old shipmates on the Super B". It was there that he and G.F.B. Edward-Collins, the navigator, were shipmates for the first time, and this was the start of one of his closest friendships, and of a long

professional association. Edward-Collins joined Pound in many later appointments and undoubtedly owed much to Pound's patronage. Another fellow officer was the Gunnery Officer Charles Forbes, later the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet when Pound was in the Mediterranean and then First Sea Lord.

Pound was thus 35 when he came ashore from *Superb* with an established reputation as an executive officer and as a torpedo officer. Outside his two years in the Naval Ordnance Department he had had no naval staff experience. This was not surprising in a navy where the Naval Staff consisted of little more than the Naval Intelligence Division, and few admirals considered they needed a staff to help them in their job. Against the opposition of most senior officers the First Lord, Winston Churchill, had just succeeded in setting up the first Royal Naval Staff College at the Naval War College, Portsmouth, in 1912. On leaving *Superb* Pound was appointed to the War College directing staff.

He was only there for a short time and we have no knowledge of whether he liked it or not. The only episode of note was the birth of his first son, George, on 12 April 1913. In the spring of 1914, after only a year at the War College, the opportunity came for him to go to sea again. W.W. Fisher, by then Captain of the battleship *St Vincent*, asked him to come and serve under him as Commander. It was unusual to serve two terms as the Executive Officer of a battleship, and Pound was advised by the Commandant of the Naval College, Rear Admiral Sir Alexander Bethell, to decline. Pound was determined to go, however, and the outbreak of war in August 1914 found him at sea with the Grand Fleet.

3

WAR SERVICE

Dudley Pound's eight months in *St Vincent* were relatively uneventful. The Grand Fleet's expectations of a second Trafalgar were disappointed and, though Beatty's battle cruisers were in action at Heligoland Bight and Dogger Bank, the Grand Fleet's vigil in northern waters brought no encounter with the High Seas Fleet until May 1916. Despite this, Pound's horizons clearly extended further than his own ship. Both he and W.W. Fisher had excellent brains, among the best in the Grand Fleet, and together they directed their thoughts and ideas to ways and means of taking the naval war into enemy waters. One of these was a plan to destroy the Heligoland dockyard and draw out heavy ships from the German bases and engage them with a part of the Grand Fleet. This was killed by Burney, the Second in Command, Grand Fleet, and a further idea from Fisher and Pound, a month later, was only knocked down by Jellicoe himself.[1]

During his time as Executive Officer in *St Vincent* Pound, most unusually for him, kept a diary. This volume, now at the Imperial War Museum, started as similar to the book he had kept in *Superb*, in that one end of it contains diagrams of every possible shipboard manoeuvre. The other end, instead of holding the records of coalings and regattas, as the previous one had done, is a diary, starting on Sunday 26 July 1914, which records "Walking with Dreyer. Orders to proceed to Portland." Much of the diary is simply taken up with factual detail, thus:

> 30 July: Preparing for war. Fuzing lyddite. Proceeding to Scapa.
> 31 July: 6:30 pm Anchored at Scapa.

However, there is also a certain amount of comment as well, such as:

> 4 August: About 3 am received a signal to prepare for sea and raise steam, and later the astounding news of the supersession of Sir

George Callaghan, and the appointment of Sir John Jellicoe in his place was received. What a position for Admiral Callaghan, but if it is best for the country then of course personal considerations must be put on one side, but it does seem a pity and unusual when a man commanding in peacetime is not to be allowed to do so in war.

There are considerable indications of quite advanced thinking in the diary. The R.N.A.S. had not yet been founded and the R.F.C. was only minuscule, and yet on 6 August Pound was writing about finding the German fleet:

What we really want for searching the Norwegian coast is an aeroplane-carrying ship with half a dozen seaplanes.

Similarly, a recurrent theme is the need for aeroplanes to help in the hunt for U-boats, not so much to help in their destruction, but in their location so as to enable destroyers to sink them. On 10 August he recorded:

Personally I believe that if we used a combination of aeroplanes and TBD's we shall render the vicinity of Scapa absolutely untenable for submarines, even if we don't manage to destroy them . . . An organised method of searching for and destroying submarines should be practised in peacetime.

He was also alive to the necessity for aircraft to spot for battleships. He took part in long-range squadron firing by divisions on 10 December at a range of 13,000 yards. Most of their shots were short and he wrote:

We ought to have aircraft to spot for these very long ranges at the commencement of an action. They might be a very great help and certainly will do no harm. There ought to be aeroplanes for giving spotting corrections and others for scouting to report on the number of ships and formations, and whether they are accompanied by torpedo craft, and on which wing they are stationed. They should be able to report the presence of submarines and see whether mines are being dropped. They will be of little value unless practised with the fleet.

By the middle of August Pound was aware of the whole strategy of the remainder of the naval war and the consequent problem of bringing the inferior High Seas Fleet to battle. They were, after all, unlikely to fight