

All at Sea

Prisoner of War Mobilities and the British Imperial World, 1793–1815

Anna McKay

When British forces seized control of Ceylon in 1796, capitulating Dutch servicemen found themselves being sent halfway across the world; Peter Andreas was sent to Chatham, Frederick Aabels to Plymouth, and C. Andriese to Leith.¹ Six years later, in May 1802, Transport Board officials sent word to the Admiralty in London asking for advice. They stated that they were keen to discharge 1,684 Black prisoners of war who had been made prisoner at St. Lucia and onboard privateer ships and were currently being held at Martinique and Barbados.² The status of these prisoners was unclear. While privateer ships were typically commissioned by governments to raid an enemy's military and merchant shipping during warfare, the Transport Board did not confirm whether this group consisted of privateer sailors or individuals who had themselves been captured at sea by privateers. The prisoners from St. Lucia may well have been soldiers who had fought in French military units against the British during the French Revolutionary Wars (April 1792–March 1802), but it was possible that they were also civilians who had arrived on the island as refugees or were deported by French authorities in their struggle against Black insurgents.³ Whether civilians, soldiers, or sailors,

¹ The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), ADM 103/484, *Register of Prisoners of War: Dutch prisoners released by particular orders, 1796*. Dates processed: Peter Andreas, February 16, 1796, 10; Frederick Aabels, March 16, 1796, 24; C. Andriese, March 16, 1796, 25.

² TNA, ADM 1/3742, Letters from the Transport Board, November 1801–December 1892, Transport Board Commissioners Rupert George, Ambrose Serle, and William Albany to Evan Nepean, May 24, 1802, 172.

³ See Ada Ferrer, "Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic," *The American Historical Review* 117 (2012): 40–66.

these prisoners were draining the resources of the Transport Board, as the cost of renting prison space in Barbados amounted to £1,000 per year. Transport Board officials were therefore instructed by the Admiralty to sell the prisoners into slavery to recoup the expense of keeping them.⁴ Status and race could determine the mobilities and fate of a prisoner of war; while Dutch captives were sent to parole towns across Britain, prisoners of color were sold into bondage.

My chapter focuses on the multiple mobilities of prisoners of war captured by the British between 1793 and 1815, during the French Revolutionary Wars, Napoleonic Wars, and the War of 1812.⁵ It refers to prisoners being held at contested British imperial sites across this vast panorama of warfare, from the Cape of Good Hope to Jamaica, Ceylon, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, alongside detention centers, including prisons, prison ships, and parole towns in Britain. A combined analysis of these sites begins to make visible the scope and scale of war captivity and prisoner movements across the British imperial world. By the mid-eighteenth century, Britain's procedure for housing, clothing, and feeding combatant prisoners had been formalized, as administrative change was prompted by high prisoner numbers, negotiations, and exchanges during the Seven Years War with France.⁶ However, between 1793 and 1815, as war with multiple nations across land and sea dragged on, tensions escalated. Noncombatant prisoners and civilians were captured alongside naval and military servicemen, leading to ever-increasing prisoner numbers and the eventual breakdown of the British system of management. Far higher numbers of prisoners of war were detained at holding stations across the world, and ruling powers sought to cope by moving them.

The conflicts of 1793–1815 were undeniably global. These wars transformed empires and cultures, but of course had varying political, economic, social, and ideological contexts. This chapter chooses to view them as a whole. By grouping them together, we may lose the minutiae of certain battles, laws, and customs, but we gain an understanding of the immense geographical scale at which they played out

⁴ TNA, ADM 1/3742, Ambrose Serle and William Albany to Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, June 5, 1802, 184.

⁵ The “French Revolutionary Wars” refers to the wider conflict from the time of British involvement, 1793–1802, while “Napoleonic Wars” as a standalone term is used to refer to the date range 1803–15. On punitive relocation in the contemporary Spanish Empire, see Christian G. De Vito's chapter in this volume.

⁶ See Erica Charters, “The Administration of War,” in Erica Charters, Eve Rosenhaft, and Hannah Smith, eds., *Civilians and War in Europe, 1618–1815* (Liverpool, 2014), 87–99.

across land and oceans, from the Caribbean and South America to South Africa and Southeast Asia. These wars not only took place in multiple locations throughout the world but also involved the vast deployment of naval and military forces, disrupting the lives of civilians and societies at large. When we combine our analysis, we see that an enormous number of people – many millions, in fact – were caught up in voluntary and nonvoluntary movement over two decades, with lasting repercussions. War became what Catriona Kennedy has called “an arena for heightened human mobility.”⁷ Historical analyses of spaces of confinement have provided a lens through which to glimpse the repercussions of international conflict at the local level. These are currently found in sociocultural studies of prisoners of war detained across Britain and France.⁸ Few works, however, assess these spaces, circulations, and interactions on a global scale.⁹ Prisoners of war were, in fact, caught up in multiple zones of imperial contest, at the mercy of shifting political exigencies. The examples in this chapter allow us to understand war captivity on both a global and local scale. The first section, for example, examines how British administrators coped with the influx of prisoners, and how that experience differed according to place of capture, detention, and the various networks supporting them. New histories of conflict have introduced themes of identity, citizenship, and nationhood across the Atlantic, but much of this existing work centers on military and naval captives.¹⁰ The second section argues for the importance of using these existing frameworks and analyses to look outward, so that we can consider the experiences of

⁷ Catriona Kennedy, *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Military and Civilian Experience in Britain and Ireland* (London, 2013), 7.

⁸ Renaud Morieux, *The Society of Prisoners: Anglo–French Wars and Incarceration in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2019); Charters et al., eds., *Civilians and War in Europe, 1618–1815*; Patricia Crimin, “French Prisoners of War on Parole, 1793–1815: The Welsh Border Towns,” in *Guerres et Paix 1660–1815* (Vincennes, France, 1987); Gavin Daly, “Napoleon’s Lost Legions: French Prisoners of War in Britain, 1803–1814,” *History* 89 (2004): 361–80.

⁹ Renaud Morieux’s chapter on geographies of war captivity during the Anglo–French Wars and Elodie Duché’s work on British prisoners of war in Mauritius are notable exceptions. See Morieux, *The Society of Prisoners*, 131–82; Duché, “Captives in Plantations: British Prisoners of War and Visions of Slavery in Napoleonic France and Mauritius,” *French History and Civilization* 7 (2017): 108–24; Marina Carter, *Companions of Misfortune: Flinders and Friends at the Isle of France, 1803–1810* (London, 2003).

¹⁰ Paul A. Gilje, *Free Trade and Sailors’ Rights in the War of 1812* (Cambridge, 2013); Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 2015).

noncombatants and civilians within theaters of war – groups ranging from whalers and free and enslaved people of color, to lascar seamen, independent travelers, religious missionaries, women, and children. Their inclusion within this history adds depth to our understanding of the combatant experience, while also shedding light on wider questions around the legal status of captives, and around subjecthood and liberty during this revolutionary period.

This chapter shows that the experiences and movement of prisoners of war deserve to be integrated more fully into existing histories of forced migration. The numbers for the period are staggering: Between 1793 and 1815, approximately 250,000 prisoners of war were held in Britain alone.¹¹ This figure does not represent the total number of prisoners, as we need to locate and include combatant and noncombatant prisoners who were captured and held globally, in colonial outposts, including Canada, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. To place the number of prisoners of war in context, approximately 83,000 convicts were transported from Britain and Ireland to New South Wales in the period 1788–1850 – a far longer time period with far lower numbers.¹² Previous studies, such as those on the movements of convicts, enslaved people, sailors, and indentured servants, have provided global contexts for local experiences, leading in turn to a greater understanding of the labor, resistance, and cultural creativity of displacement.¹³ Prisoners of war constitute an underrepresented group within this category; soldiers, seamen, noncombatants, and civilians moved across imperial spaces, subject to administrative pressures and local and regional policies, as well as larger state stratagems. Furthermore, while carceral geographers have begun to explore links between incarceration and mobility, more work is needed to forge connections with histories of

¹¹ See Patricia K. Crimmin, “Prisoners of War and British Port Communities, 1793–1815,” *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du Nord* 6 (1996): 17–27.

¹² Clare Anderson and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, “Convict Labour and the Western Empires, 1415–1954,” in Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie, eds., *The Routledge History of Western Empires* (London, 2014), Table 3: “Estimates of British Convict Transportation Flows, 1615–1940,” 229.

¹³ Clare Anderson, ed., *A Global History of Convicts and Penal Colonies* (London, 2018); Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, “Convict Transportation from Britain and Ireland 1615–1870,” *History Compass* 8 (2010): 1221–42; Christian G. De Vito and Alex Lichtenstein, eds., *Global Convict Labour* (Leiden, 2015); Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London, 2000); Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker, eds., *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley, CA, 2007).

imperial circulations and control.¹⁴ By exploring the multiple mobilities of prisoners of war, we will gain greater knowledge and understanding of the political, economic, social, and cultural impact they had in a world of global movement.

This chapter examines select Admiralty prisoner of war registers, and draws further qualitative insight from official correspondence, contemporary news media, memoirs, and parliamentary reports. Before we proceed, however, it is important to acknowledge that many of the sources examined in this chapter derive from the state and are therefore loaded with institutional and metropolitan biases.¹⁵ This begs the question: How can we locate individuals and groups who moved through the colonies when they left little written record behind? By reading between the lines of official reports, it becomes possible not only to track the movements of captives but also to begin to understand their diverse experiences as they moved across British imperial spaces. Letters petitioning for better treatment, publicly printed complaints, memoirs, and colonial enquiries can provide insight here. The second part of this chapter focuses on the importance of classification: During this period, we see extreme porosity in the vocabulary, categories, and practices used in relation to prisoners of war.¹⁶ This essay uses the term “prisoner of war” interchangeably with “captive” when referring to anyone that the Admiralty recorded in their registers, irrespective of their race, status, and gender. Sailors and soldiers were easier to label, but at a time when practices and even vocabulary was emerging and changing, what of whalers, enslaved people, and refugees; what were their rights, how much power did they have, and were captors obliged to maintain them, or even authorized to move them? As the featured examples show, administrators struggled to cope with the volume of

¹⁴ Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham, 2015); Dominique Moran, Nick Gill, and Deirdre Conlon, eds., *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention* (London, 2016); Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge and New York, 2010); Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law, 1800–1850* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge and New York, 2009).

¹⁵ Marcus Rediker, Peter Linebaugh, and Isaac Land have highlighted the difficulties surrounding the value of administrative sources. See Rediker and Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra*; Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750–1850* (London, 2009).

¹⁶ See Morieux, *The Society of Prisoners*, 6. For more on porous and inconsistent classifications of mobile individuals, see Jan C. Jansen’s essay in this volume.

prisoners under their care, and overlaps between that group and other coerced migrants ultimately led to a system lacking in consistency, whereby questions around legal categorization were worked out on the peripheries of imperial spaces according to circumstance.

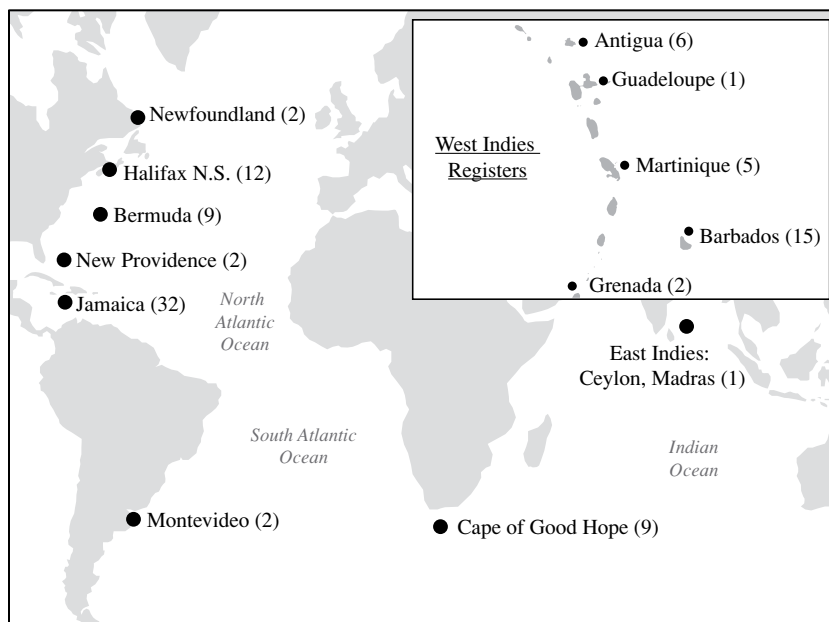
ADMINISTRATION UNDER PRESSURE

Prisoners of war hailed from a variety of nations directly involved in warfare, in addition to those bound by political treaties and alliances. From 1793 to 1815, these included France, North America, Denmark, Prussia, Spain, and Holland. The primary reason that these prisoners were moved across imperial locations was that the British Admiralty did not have the resources to feed, clothe, and house them at their place of capture. The Admiralty's Sick and Hurt Board was responsible for the maintenance of prisoners of war – anything from housing, feeding, and clothing, to repatriation – until a transfer of power to the Transport Board, another Admiralty department, in 1806. These boards managed depots and prison ships across Britain and its overseas outposts. The Admiralty's rich archival collections offer an exceptional opportunity to examine global war captivity. Of the 597 holding places listed within prisoner of war registers at The National Archives, Kew, ninety-nine relate to imperial locations, as represented in Map 5.1.¹⁷

The registers span a number of contested sites, from Antigua, Martinique, and Grenada in the Caribbean, to Montevideo (Uruguay), Newfoundland, Bermuda, and New Providence (the Bahamas). By examining these sites together rather than viewing them singly, and considering them irrespective of their size and geographies, we can begin to lay the foundations for a macro-historical narrative of captivity in war.¹⁸ Admiralty registers offer outstanding levels of detail; they reveal the names of captured ships, where they were seized, and their classification (e.g., naval, privateer, merchant). Captives recorded within these registers include combatants but also noncombatants and civilians who were caught up in the process, including ships' surgeons, pursers, schoolmasters, women, children, passengers, and free and

¹⁷ TNA, ADM 103, *Prisoner of War Registers, 1793–1815*. Number of registers per location: Prison ships: 139; Europe: 31; England: 290; Various: 7; Imperial: 99.

¹⁸ Clare Anderson employs the term “macro-historical narrative” to refer to the connected historical framework of interpretation used to position penal transportation within a range of historiographical and methodological concerns and debates. See Anderson, *A Global History of Convicts*, 5.



MAP 5.1 Map of prisoner-of-war holding locations, listing the number of registers belonging to each, 1793–1815.

Source: TNA, ADM 103. Note that there are also two registers pertaining to British prisoners of war held in North America (ADM103/466 and ADM 103/629).

enslaved people of color. Combatant prisoners were broadly defined as a mix of sailors and soldiers, while merchantmen (transporting cargo or passengers) and privateers (privately owned armed ships) fell into an indistinct category, as they could operate under neutral flags or work under the commission of combatants.

In the registers, we find prisoner names, see how they were categorized by officials and, crucially, where they were sent. The registers show us, on the one hand, how far-reaching state control over prisoner mobilities could be. On the other hand, they also suggest that the volume of captives led to problems at local levels. Nations traditionally disposed of captives via exchange cartels, whereby hired ships transported prisoners back home.¹⁹ These exchanges ensured relatively

¹⁹ Paul Chamberlain, “The Release of Prisoners of War from Britain in 1813 and 1814,” *Napoleonica. La Revue* 21 (2014): 118–29.

stable prisoner numbers and reduced costs.²⁰ Those sent from the colonies were not expected to be exchanged in this way, and were instead supposed to be returned to the places they had come from.²¹ In the colonies, localized exchanges often took place, a policy that avoided transporting prisoners long distances across the Atlantic to be processed by officials in Europe. During the Napoleonic Wars, however, specific negotiations for cartel exchanges between Britain and France broke down, the result of new French state policy to forgo the traditional custom of exchanging prisoners. The move forced the British state to bear the financial and administrative burden of caring for thousands of prisoners of war.²² Britain appealed to France to resume exchanges, threatening to significantly reduce prisoners' rations, and some cartel ships sailed, but in 1806 only three British prisoners were returned, compared to 672 French officers and 1,062 men of lower rank.²³ In 1810, the number of French prisoners in Britain was 44,585, an almost twofold increase from the 23,699 that had been estimated in 1807.²⁴ By 1814, these numbers reached as high as 70,000.²⁵ The action strained state resources and depots at home and overseas.

When a ship was captured, it was the captor's responsibility to take any prisoners to port and to release those with papers confirming their status as noncombatants to exchange stations. In 1782, in the aftermath of the Battle of the Saintes off Guadeloupe, the British fleet under Sir George Rodney captured the French ship *Ville de Paris*, among others. The first British entry in the *Ville de Paris*'s logbook took place one day after the battle, on April 13, 1782. It detailed how the ship had been badly damaged, with its hull shattered and its mast yards, sails, and rigging pierced with shot. The entry also noted that the decks of the ship were littered with bodies, and that "a number of the prisoners on board [were] wounded mortally."²⁶ The *Ville de Paris*'s captors set about

²⁰ See Crimmin, "Prisoners of War," 18.

²¹ *Report on Treatment of Prisoners of War*, British Parliamentary Papers (hereafter BPP), House of Commons Papers, 1798, vol. 118, Appendix no. 21, 76.

²² See Crimmin, "Prisoners of War," 18.

²³ Francis Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756–1815: A Record of Their Lives, Their Romance and Their Sufferings* (London, 1914), 33–34.

²⁴ Robert K. Sutcliffe, "Bringing Forward Shipping for Government Service: The Indispensable Role of the Transport Service, 1793 to 1815," PhD diss., University of Greenwich, 2013, 13.

²⁵ James Davey, *In Nelson's Wake: The Navy and the Napoleonic Wars* (New Haven, CT, 2015), 170.

²⁶ TNA, ADM 51/520, *Captain's Log of the Ville de Paris* (April 13, 1782–July 12, 1782), entry dated April 13, 1782.

navigating the battered vessel to port and “disposing of the French prisoners among the ships in the fleet.”²⁷ These prisoners were then handed over to Admiralty officials, who entered their names and other details into registers. From there, they were sorted according to rank and status, and were then either exchanged, released on parole, or sent to depots and prison ships. The bodies of those killed in action were buried in mass unmarked graves on shore, close to local graveyards or depots, a process overseen by officials and medical attendants.²⁸

Ship crews and army militias comprised soldiers and sailors of all ages. Any prisoner under the age of twelve was typically ordered to be sent home; for example, the Transport Board ordered a number of French boy prisoners to be sent home in 1796, because their “age and size [could not] be of any real use” to the enemy for some years.²⁹ It was not uncommon for fathers, sons, and brothers to serve as seamen on the same ship, but when captured, categorized, and managed by Admiralty clerks and officials, these families risked separation. One instance, from May 1809, spoke of a family’s concerns of being separated in Plymouth. Surgeon Thomas Eshelby wrote to Captain Hawkins, the superintendent of prison ships, about the case of one French boy, Mateui Danil, who was on board the captured ship *Généreux*, moored in the estuary.³⁰ The boy was due to be sent to HM Prison Dartmoor, further inland by around twenty miles, and his father, then serving as a washer on board the hospital ship *Le Caton*, requested that the boy be transferred to him. Eshelby appealed on behalf of Danil’s father, giving his permission for the boy to go and assist his father on board. He went as far as to discharge another man from the *Généreux* to go to Dartmoor in the boy’s place.³¹ Surgeon Eshelby’s intervention led to the reunion of father and

²⁷ *Ibid.*, entry dated April 14, 1782.

²⁸ Local inhabitants and captured prisoners could be hired to dig mass graves for burials, supervised by medical staff and officials. For example, in a letter to his mother on May 8, 1811, Lieutenant John Mills of the Coldstream Guards described how shortly after the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro in Portugal he had been charged with burying the dead from the battlefields. In Ian Fletcher, ed., *For King and Country: The Letters and Diaries of John Mills, Coldstream Guards, 1811–1814* (Staplehurst, 1995), 34–35. Prisoners of war who died in depots were often buried in adjoining cemeteries or burial grounds, such as “Deadman’s Island” in Halifax, Nova Scotia. See John Boileau, *Half-Hearted Enemies: Nova Scotia, New England and the War of 1812* (Halifax, 2005), 94.

²⁹ National Maritime Museum, Caird Library, London (hereafter NMM), ADM MT/415, Lord High Admiralty Commissioners to the Transport Board, May 30, 1796, 591–92.

³⁰ Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, Plymouth (hereafter PWDRO), 413/172, Surgeon Thomas Eshelby to Captain Edward Hawkins, May 1809.

³¹ *Ibid.*

son. It is likely that Danil feared for his son's safety in the Dartmoor prison, as he was at risk of abuse by older prisoners. Additionally, news passing between the decks may have alerted him to Dartmoor's unsanitary conditions, as the mortality rate was one of the highest across all prisoner depots.³² The transfer of Mateui Danil reveals that Admiralty officials could be sensitive to individual entreaties, albeit those expressed via a mediator in a position of authority. Allowing parents and children to stay together was common policy with respect to higher-ranking paroled prisoners; one letter from the Admiralty in 1803 stated, "we agreed to allow women and children to remain with their husbands and parents in this country."³³ If noncombatant prisoners, such as passengers or members of higher orders, had families with them, it was simpler for the Admiralty to grant them permission to stay together rather than deal with hundreds of letters of entreaty.

Prisoners were able to receive sums of money that supported them, even when sent from far-flung places of capture. This was especially the case with higher-ranking prisoners, such as officers and lieutenants, who were typically released on parole. Parole offered prisoners the opportunity to become what Renaud Morieux has called "captives with privileges."³⁴ They were financially supported by the Admiralty, as governments generally struck agreements with their counterparts enabling allowances to be passed on, with the understanding that fees would be settled at the end of the war.³⁵ Prisoners were given subsistence money proportional to their rank, and some paroled officers with connections were even able to draw money via banks, including Coutts and Company.³⁶ Ordinary prisoners on board prison ships could also receive small allowances, or, in the case of Danish prisoners in Plymouth in 1810, charitable donations of one shilling and five pence,

³² Davey, *In Nelson's Wake*, 172.

³³ TNA, ADM 98/212, Admiralty Commissioners to Captain Isaac Cotgrave, Plymouth, June 30, 1803, 48–49.

³⁴ Renaud Morieux, "French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour, and Social Inversions in England, 1744–1783," *Historical Journal* 56 (2013): 55–88.

³⁵ Morieux, "French Prisoners of War," 63 n. 38.

³⁶ PWDRO, 413/267, Captain Edward Hawkins, Plymouth, to Coutts and Company Bankers, January 24, 1810. Note that Elodie Duché has examined British captives' financial connections between confinement in Verdun and London's Royal Exchange during the Napoleonic Wars, revealing blurred lines between private and public prisoner of war relief. See "Charitable Connections: Transnational Financial Networks and Relief for British Prisoners of War in Napoleonic France, 1803–1814," *Napoleonica La Revue* 21 (2014): 74–117.

orchestrated by pastors of congregations in London.³⁷ Allowances also differed according to occupation; for example, at Callington, in East Cornwall, nine Dutch officers and their servants brought from the Cape of Good Hope were given greater monetary allowances, as they were in the employ of the East India Company.³⁸ The officers were paid seven shillings a week, something which agent Ambrose Searle remarked made “their condition particularly easy and comfortable.”³⁹

The Admiralty’s ability to send prisoners from their places of capture back to Britain shows that it was supported by a maritime network – of administrators and overseers, naval ships, and transport ships working on commission – strong enough to facilitate the mass movement of captives across long distances. For example, at Barbados, the crew of the American privateer vessel *Fox*, captured on January 11, 1815, were discharged via various ships manned by British marines, including the *Swiftsure* and *Niemen*.⁴⁰ Although these two vessels were warships, not all ships transporting prisoners were necessarily naval; instead, they could be ships acting on private commissions. The logistics of moving prisoners across these imperial sites therefore became a profitable sideline for merchant vessels making return voyages, a war economy stemming from the Admiralty’s inability to cope with prisoner numbers. Irrespective of their place of capture, prisoners of war were sent to sites across England, Scotland, and Wales, including those at Plymouth and Dartmoor in Devon, Stapleton near Bristol, and Norman Cross near Peterborough. The Admiralty’s decision to move its captives highlights the importance of its local and global networks but also shows that imperial outposts were not viewed as developed enough to support the needs of the state.

To build suitable prisons and advance colonial infrastructure, investment – in the form of time and money, but also in skills such as sourcing labor and materials – was urgently needed. Expenditure in the colonies was high; Table 5.1 comprises a list of projected expenditures for establishments relating to prisoners of war for the year 1815. We see that

³⁷ PWDRO, 413/329, Wolff and Dorvill, London, to Captain Edward Hawkins at Plymouth regarding payments to Danish Prisoners, April 4, 1810.

³⁸ See *Abstract of General Orders & Regulations in Force in the Honourable East-India Company’s Army on the Bengal Establishment, Completed to the 1st of February, 1812* (Calcutta, 1812), Let. C.D., February 16, 1810, 137.

³⁹ *Report on Treatment of Prisoners of War*, BPP, 1798, Agent Kinsman to Ambrose Searle, 44.

⁴⁰ TNA, ADM 103/13, Prisoner of War Registers: Barbados, American prisoners of war, 1812–1815, 50–53.

TABLE 5.1 *Estimate of Establishment of Departments of Transport Office, 1815: Prisoners of War.*

Location	Total Cost
Dartmoor	£3,643 19s. 8d.
Dover	£80
Valleyfield	£91 5s.
<i>Ganges</i> prison ship at Plymouth	£54 15s.
Barbados	£1,281 19s. 4d.
Bermuda	£719 15s.
Cape of Good Hope	£705
Gibraltar	£629 15s.
Halifax, Nova Scotia	£2,240 9s. 6d.
Jamaica	£1,552 13s. 6d.
Malta	£742 10s.
New Providence	£1,004 16s. 6d.
Quebec	£416 7s. 6d.
TOTAL	£13,163 6s.

Source: British Parliamentary Papers, May 12, 1815, Sessional Papers, vol. 9, 12–14.

Dartmoor, a purpose-built depot in Devon, had the highest expenditures, followed by Halifax, Nova Scotia; Jamaica; Barbados; and New Providence. The *Ganges* prison ship at Plymouth was the cheapest depot; these ships, which were also used in imperial locations, were generally captured or decommissioned naval warships and were thus economical and mobile. They could be towed from site to site, according to need. The high financial costs associated with the imperial locations included in Table 5.1 are attributable to American activity during the War of 1812, as these sites functioned as exchange stations for American prisoners. This followed negotiations in 1813 to replace a prior provisional agreement which dealt solely with naval prisoners.⁴¹

Depots and detention centers were at the heart of the Admiralty’s wide-reaching networks of local contacts. Prison ships, for example, were moored in harbors at home and overseas and were naturally close to Admiralty operations, and thus became part of local supply chains. At Plymouth, ships moored in the Hamoaze Estuary were neighbors to the Royal Naval Dockyard, the army barracks at Devonport, and to

⁴¹ *Cartel for the Exchange of Prisoners of War between Great Britain and the United States of America*, May 12, 1813, in *International Law Studies*, vol. 60, ed. Howard S. Levie (Newport, RI, 1979), v–viii.

highly important naval victualling yards. Captain Edward Hawkins was in charge of the *Brave* and also the *San Ysidro* prison ships during the French wars. The nineteen prison ships based in Plymouth during the period held a combination of French, Dutch, American, and Danish prisoners of war.⁴² Captain Hawkins's letters to Admiralty officials reveal how managerial problems could vary according to location. In one letter complaining to Admiralty commissioners, Hawkins wrote that his contractor was having difficulty delivering foodstuffs due to bad weather, and that the supply boat was "much later than it ought to be."⁴³ Hawkins compared his situation with that of other prison ships and nearby Mill Prison, writing that all of those depots were receiving substitutes, such as barley in place of herring, as a result of supply issues.⁴⁴ Mill Prison was to the west of Plymouth Hoe and part of a large naval base that also housed prisoners of war.⁴⁵

During the War of 1812, Bermuda was one of many imperial locations that, like Plymouth, relied on prison ships to house captives and was dependent on the smooth operation of local supply chains. Bermuda lacked a prison on land to house its captives, who, during this period, were primarily American servicemen. The islands were not self-sufficient, and foodstuffs were imported from America, either directly by license or sent via Halifax, Nova Scotia.⁴⁶ On August 22, 1812, an advertisement issued by Edmund Bacon, the agent for transports, was printed on the front page of the *Bermuda Gazette*. Agent Bacon appealed for suppliers of ships' biscuits or soft bread, beef, pork, pease (dried peas), or rice, and salt.⁴⁷ Later that week, Bacon clarified that any person who intended to apply for the contract was required to call at his office to give testimonials.⁴⁸ Communication between prisoners and the Admiralty was facilitated by agents who acted as intermediaries, and bilingual assistants were often employed to communicate more efficiently and to ensure that grievances were attended to. Public advertisements for supplies reveal the importance of agents and official networks, but they also serve as a

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ PWDRO, 413/15, Letter from Captain Hawkins, sent from prison ship *Brave*, July 15, 1808, 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Paul Chamberlain, *Hell upon Water: Prisoners of War in Britain, 1793–1815* (Cheltenham, 2008), 85–86.

⁴⁶ Ross Hassig, "The Prison Ships of Bermuda, 1812–15," *Bermuda Journal of Archaeology and Maritime History* 21 (2018): 152.

⁴⁷ *Bermuda Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, August 22, 1812.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, August 29, 1812.

further reminder of the impact that warfare had upon local economies. While large numbers of prisoners burdened the Admiralty by placing it under severe economic and logistical strain, the prisoners' movement nevertheless prompted new opportunities for entrepreneurs, suppliers, and civilians, and closed the gap between warfare, the state, and society.⁴⁹

LEGAL STATUS AND CATEGORIZATION

The experiences of noncombatant captives provide us with the opportunity to examine overlaps between prisoner of war mobilities and those of other types of unfree (and free) migrants. The state's management of these captives differed from its treatment of combatants; instead of set regulations and codes of conduct, there was inconsistency and improvisation. Official approaches suggest that the state was perhaps unprepared for managing the broader range of captives it encountered, a diversity stemming from the wider geographical reach of warfare. Many prisoners were captured simply as the result of sailing in contested waters or crossing borders on land. Even the process of capturing prisoners became more wide ranging, involving privately owned ships who supplemented state power by assigning the label of a captive on the spot.⁵⁰ For example, in 1798, a Spanish merchant vessel called *L'Union* (*La Union*) was captured off the Cape of Good Hope by a privateer ship acting in British interests, the *Indispensable*.⁵¹ The *Indispensable* had itself been captured from the French in 1793, and was originally built to serve as a merchant ship sailing to the West Indies. In the registers, however, it was classified as a whaler. Whaling ships occupied an interesting position: While their crews did not engage in warfare as combatants, the trade diminished during wartime as many investors sought more reliable returns by chartering their vessels to the government, meaning that many of the ships themselves began to transport cargo and passengers.⁵²

⁴⁹ On war capitalism, see also Brad Manera and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart's chapter in this volume.

⁵⁰ Morieux, *The Society of Prisoners*, 6.

⁵¹ TNA, ADM 103/48, Prisoner of War Registers: Cape of Good Hope, Various nationalities, July 7, 1796–December 28, 1802, 31–32. See also TNA, HCA 49/11-2, Prize Papers of the ship *La Union*, Juan Ramos, Master. Spanish property, captured by the *Indispensable*, 1798. The capture of the *Indispensable* is recorded in High Court of Admiralty Papers at TNA, see HCA 32/686/13, 1793.

⁵² Kate Jordan, "The Captains and Crews of Liverpool's Northern Whaling Trade," *International Journal of Maritime History* 22 (2010): 192 [citing Jackson, *The British Whaling Trade* (Liverpool, 2004), 60].

During this period, the *Indispensable* also transported male and female convicts to New South Wales under its captain, William Wilkinson.⁵³ What we see, therefore, are examples of ships that might be whalers or convict ships one month, and merchant ships the next, and upon which contractors acting on behalf of the state were granted the authority to accost enemy ships and take captives. The crews of whaling ships were largely exempt from impressment laws and enlistment, as they were seen to be serving the nation's economy, but during the blockade of the French and Dutch coastlines in the 1790s, many small vessels, including whalers, were captured, since fleets that operated in the North Sea, around Greenland, became legitimate targets.⁵⁴ Once the crews had been captured, their practical, valuable knowledge of certain areas may have compromised them; for example, it was common for neutral Danish and Norwegian privateer sailors during the Napoleonic Wars to choose to enlist when captured, something that allowed them to maintain a degree of freedom, or at least saved them from detainment on board a prison hulk.⁵⁵ Interestingly, during the War of 1812, David Porter, captain of the American ship *Essex*, noted in his journal the sight of a Spanish ship of war disguised as a whaler close to the Galapagos Islands, suggesting that whaling ships, with their lucrative cargoes, could either act as lures to prospective captors or be viewed as unthreatening enough to act as decoys.⁵⁶

When the *Indispensable* captured *L'Union's* crew – including Captain Juan Ramos, surgeon Marcus Barber, four passengers, and five enslaved men – the ship was on its return from Rio de Janeiro, thirty-five leagues from Cape Horn.⁵⁷ On the day of its capture, April 8, 1798, it sailed with its prize to the Cape of Good Hope, and the captives were entered into Admiralty registers on May 10. All prisoners were then transferred to the ship *Heroine*, bound for England, by order

⁵³ Rhys Richards touches upon merchant ships' involvement in convict transportation and Captain William Wilkinson's voyages in "The Easternmost Route to China 1787–1792: Part II," *The Great Circle* 8 (1986): 104–16.

⁵⁴ Chamberlain, *Hell upon Water*, 12.

⁵⁵ See the British enlistment of Danish and Norwegian privateers, as discussed by Tim Leunig, Jelle van Lottum, and Bo Poulsen, "Surprisingly Gentle Confinement: British Treatment of Danish and Norwegian Prisoners of War during the Napoleonic Wars," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 66 (2018): 282–97.

⁵⁶ Captain David Porter, *Journal of a cruise made to the Pacific Ocean: by Captain David Porter, in the United States frigate Essex, in the years 1812, 1813, and 1814* (Philadelphia, PA, 1815), 117.

⁵⁷ TNA, ADM 103/48, Prisoner of War Registers: Cape of Good Hope, 31–32.

of Rear Admiral Hugh Cloberry Christian, second-in-command at the Cape of Good Hope station.⁵⁸ On November 24, 1798, the *Britannia* (another merchant ship that also operated as a whaling and convict ship), captured a Spanish merchant vessel, *St Michael*, off the Cape of Good Hope. Unlike *L'Union's* captives, Captain J. de Sigura, his first mate, A. V. Lephilley, and passenger Don P. G. Anchorez, were released on parole within two days of capture. The ship's boatswain, J. Bicyra, signed up to work for the British, and was marked down as being "on board the *Rose of the Sea* for Río de la Plata."⁵⁹ A fellow captive, seaman F. Gonzales, chose to enter the service of *Britannia*, the ship that originally captured him, by order of Rear Admiral Christian's successor, Captain George Losack.⁶⁰ As these men were sailing under a merchant vessel, they were considered noncombatants and as such were able to avoid detention by enlisting.

The Admiralty's lack of consistency regarding enslaved people captured at sea shows us that questions of legal status, subjecthood, and liberty were worked out on the peripheries of empire rather than in the metropole. On board *L'Union*, eight of the prisoners were enslaved people sailing under the Spanish crew. With one exception, these men were given no surnames in the Admiralty's register; their Spanish names were recorded as Martin, Antonio, Luciano, Mariano, and Estevan, Jose Maxia, Joaquim (sic.), and Antonio.⁶¹ The register stated that all men were "turned over to the captors of the Spanish prize," the *Indispensable*.⁶² Like F. Gonzales, who chose to enlist on the *Britannia*, it appears that these enslaved men began to work for the British, but likely without the option to contest. What we see in the case of enslaved sailors was a form of captivity-within-captivity, in which further constraints were placed upon individuals already rendered powerless by the empires actively involved in the slave trade.⁶³ After the Abolition Act in 1807, prize courts, which were authorized to consider whether ships had

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ TNA, ADM 103/48, Prisoner of War Registers: Cape of Good Hope, entry dated March 3, 1799.

⁶⁰ Ibid., entry dated February 2, 1799, 31–32.

⁶¹ TNA, ADM 103/48, Prisoner of War Registers: Cape of Good Hope, entries dated May 10, 1798, 31–32.

⁶² Ibid., 31.

⁶³ See Lauren Benton, "Abolition and Imperial Law, 1790–1820," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39 (2011): 355–74; Patrick Harries, "Negotiating Abolition: Cape Town and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," *Slavery & Abolition* 34 (2013): 579–97.

been lawfully captured, adjudicated slave ship captures; enslaved people were not released unconditionally, but as “prizes” who were apprenticed in the colonies for periods of fourteen years.⁶⁴ Although Britain had already tightened restrictions on the slave trade, vessels still passed by the Cape and were targeted by ships who sought to claim bounties for their successful detention and prosecution. The enslaved men on board *L’Union* were part of a small crew, rather than forming the ships’ cargo, but they were still transferred from Spanish to British control, demonstrating the enforcement of prize law no matter how large or small the scale. From this, we also see that warfare did not restrict the implementation of imperial legal order.

Unlike enslaved captives, naval and military captives were able to demand their rights, and they frequently used language evocative of coercion to gain sympathy and highlight injustice when petitioning for better treatment. It was not uncommon, for example, for prisoners to liken their captivity to something akin to or even worse than slavery.⁶⁵ During the War of 1812, American prisoners of war held on Melville Island, around four miles from Halifax, Nova Scotia, frequently demanded their rights, often in the public sphere. On December 17, 1812, the *National Intelligencer* printed details of American Captain William Davidson’s treatment as a prisoner there. Discussing the “scandalous usage of which the British are systematically guilty towards the unfortunate Americans,” the article stated that the American prisoners at Halifax were treated in a shameful manner by the agents, and that they were brought to port under a strong guard and marched to the prison at Melville Island as if they were criminals.⁶⁶ Once in the depot, he remarked that jailors examined the prisoners and stole whatever they pleased, from books and money to quadrants. Benjamin Waterhouse, captured by the British and also held at Melville Island, described the site in his 1816 memoir, stating that some prisoners lamented their fate “at being shut up like negro slaves in a Guinea ship, or like fowls in a hen coop, for no crime but for fighting the battles of their country.”⁶⁷ The condemnatory rhetoric, in which American prisoners were likened

⁶⁴ Robert Burroughs, “Eyes on the Prize: Journeys in Slave Ships Taken as Prizes by the Royal Navy,” *Slavery & Abolition* 31 (2010): 101.

⁶⁵ Elodie Duché has explored the significance of the appeals by British prisoners based in Longwy to William Wilberforce in 1811, wherein they asked him to consider their captivity in France as a form of distress “worse than slavery”; see “Captives in Plantations,” 108–24.

⁶⁶ “Disgraceful Treatment of American Captains,” *National Intelligencer*, December 17, 1812.

⁶⁷ Benjamin Waterhouse, *Journal of a Young Man of Massachusetts* (New York, 1911), 19.

to slaves and criminals, was highly emotive, but did not recognize the plight of many who were entirely denied of rights due to their legal status, uncertain as that might have been.

While some prisoners of war, such as those on *L'Union*, were legally defined as enslaved at their time of capture, many sailors in all fleets were free people of color. Racial intermixing was commonplace at sea, particularly among American sailors after the Revolutionary War. For example, by 1803, Black men (mostly free) filled about 18 percent of American seamen's jobs, until mid-century changes in waterfront hiring practices began to squeeze them out of the maritime labor force.⁶⁸ If a Black prisoner of war was recognized as a military captive, then their legal status, and therefore their rights, should have been secure. However, a lack of administrative clarity could result in mishandling or abuse at lower levels. This chapter's opening example – of Black prisoners of war being sold into slavery in Martinique and Barbados in 1802 to recoup the costs of keeping them – shows that the Admiralty responded to captives in different ways, depending on locales and laws.⁶⁹ Yet without knowing the finer details – whether these prisoners were legally free refugees from the French Caribbean, or combatants who had fought in French military units – it is impossible to judge under what circumstances their liberties were being stripped. This administrative oversight could be interpreted as an institutionalized presumption of Black people's status as enslaved, but it could also mask the flagrant practice of re-enslavement, whereby administrators relied on state bureaucracy to conceal involvement in the prohibited transatlantic trade.⁷⁰

Inconsistencies in the way the Admiralty confirmed and recorded prisoners' legal status, and differences in how free and unfree Black prisoners were processed, indicate that the state, or at least its colonial representatives, may have seen international law as less rigidly defined or more malleable during the revolutionary period. When British officers and their men were taken prisoner after the capitulation of their camp at Berville

⁶⁸ Jeffrey Bolser, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 6.

⁶⁹ TNA, ADM 1/3742, Transport Board Commissioners (Rupert George, Ambrose Serle, and William Albany) to Evan Nepean, May 24, 1802, 172.

⁷⁰ See Joseph la Hausse de Lalouvière, "Enslavement and Empire in the French Caribbean, 1793–1851," PhD diss., Harvard University, 2020. Also, Graham T. Nessler, "‘They always knew her to be free’: Emancipation and Re-Enslavement in French Santo Domingo, 1804–1809," *Slavery & Abolition* 33 (2012): 87–103; Rebecca Scott, "Paper Thin: Freedom and Re-enslavement in the Diaspora of the Haitian Revolution," *Law and History Review* 26 (2011): 1061–87.

in Guadeloupe by the French in early 1796, it was expected that they would be conveyed home to England, according to the man-for-man exchange system.⁷¹ However, this was refused, and when the matter was investigated by French Agent Jean Charretié, he conveyed the news to the Commissioners of the Transport Board that, among other causes, “[British] Generals, in contempt of the Law of Nations, and of the respect due to humanity, have sold men of color, armed for the defense of the French Colonies, and of their private property, and even set a price on their heads.”⁷² It was on these grounds that the French were “under the necessity of retaining hostages, who could be no other than the English prisoners.”⁷³ The French viewed the sale of Black prisoners as a violation of international law, but they did not clarify whether they were legally free according to French revolutionary law. Their being armed indicates that some were in military service. Between 1793 and 1803, slavery was abolished throughout the French Empire, and so those Black prisoners who were connected to private property were also likely to have been free, and thus entitled to prisoner-of-war status. Although slavery was, at this time, justified through international law, it did not sanction the enslavement of a free person. So, if the British had indeed re-enslaved formerly free prisoners, then the French authorities were justified in their backlash.⁷⁴ It is clear that local factors, such as the legitimacy of slavery in the Caribbean, could shape the Admiralty’s response to certain categories of prisoner, but not all Black captives in Guadeloupe risked being sold into slavery. In fact, by May 1796, when the French garrison holding Fort Charlotte on St. Lucia surrendered again to the British forces, a fleet of ships carrying mostly Black and mixed-race prisoners, more than 2,500 men, women, and children, was sent to England to be held at Portchester Castle in Portsmouth.⁷⁵ The terms of the garrison’s surrender was that they would all be treated as prisoners of war, rather than as enslaved.⁷⁶

⁷¹ *Report on Treatment of Prisoners of War*, BPP, 1798, BPP, Appendix no. 13, Extract of a letter from the Commissioners for the Transport Service, &c. to M. Charretié, February 9, 1796, 61.

⁷² *Ibid.*, extract of a letter from M. Charretié to the Commissioners for the Transport Service &c. [Translation], April 4, 1796, 64.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Jean Allain, *Slavery in International Law: Of Human Exploitation and Trafficking* (Leiden, 2013), 29.

⁷⁵ Abigail Coppins, “Black Prisoners of War at Portchester Castle,” *English Heritage*, www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/portchester-castle/history-and-stories/black-prisoners-at-portchester.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

The Admiralty's difficulty in categorizing prisoners of war in the colonies is further evidenced by a case relating to parole payments at Port Royal, Jamaica. Here we have an example of refugees taking advantage of this confusion to manipulate the system to their advantage. In 1795, the commander-in-chief at Port Royal, Rear Admiral William Parker, wrote a letter to the Admiralty stating that the majority of prisoners released on parole there received four and a half dollars per week, "a few of the blacks and mulattoes excepted."⁷⁷ Still, Parker had cause for concern; he stated that payments made at the station were indiscriminate, and that this had become so well-known that "people who never had an idea of coming to Jamaica, came for the sake of it," so that they could be processed as prisoners of war and receive payments.⁷⁸ Parker complained that people of color, in particular, wrote "to their friends at St Domingo to come and avail themselves of it."⁷⁹ This interesting example shows that prisoner-of-war classification questions interfaced with alien laws and the desire to prevent people of color from going from San Domingo to Jamaica.⁸⁰ Parker felt it was time to intervene in what appeared to be a colonial version of benefits fraud. Thus, he requested that all prisoners who were marked as discharged in Admiralty registers should no longer be entitled to payments, although he was keen that individuals whose plantations and estates had been burned or destroyed should receive special dispensation. Zoë Laidlaw's work on colonial governance reminds us that imperial networks relied on their administrators, and that maintaining links to the metropole was critical.⁸¹ Parker's appeal to the Admiralty was separated by a distance of more than 4,500 miles, with letters taking perhaps a month to arrive, and then another month for the response. Separation from the state meant that officials placed in the colonies were left powerless, waiting for authorization as costs mounted. Good relations with colonial governors was key, but Parker noted that there were tensions between him and the current governor of Jamaica, whom he blamed for the "improper expense" of the parole payments.⁸²

⁷⁷ NMM, ADM MT/415, Rear Admiral William Parker to the Commissioners of the Transport Office, *Raisonable* at Port Royal, Jamaica, October 26, 1795, 17.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ NMM, ADM MT/415, Parker to the Transport Office, October 26, 1795, 17.

⁸⁰ See David P. Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, SC, 2001).

⁸¹ Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815–45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester, 2005), 17.

⁸² NMM, ADM MT/415, Parker to the Transport Office, October 26, 1795, 18.

Parker's problem shows that news traveled not only between colony and metropole but also from island to island. Claimants were many and varied: landowners, apprentices, servants and surgeons, women, and children. Parker gave a list of some of the prisoners receiving payments, including Madam Specit, whose property had been burned by brigands at Donna Maria; Jean Marie, a seven-year-old orphan boy who came from Lelit after it had been burned to the ground; Leila, a Black woman with six children seized en route to America and brought to the island, where she had remained since her capture; and Monsieur Marzella, a merchant who left the Cape before arriving in Jamaica.⁸³ In the face of the hardship and danger brought by warfare, inhabitants from across the Caribbean risked their lives for financial support. Labeled as emigrants, they were, in fact, refugees who actively sought to be recognized and recorded in Admiralty registers under a different legal category. They were able to fulfill this thanks to the porosity of classification. By changing their status from emigrant to prisoner of war, these individuals were able to manipulate their circumstances "from below" and regain a small sense of independence, or balance, in an unstable and changing environment.

CONCLUSION: ALL AT SEA

The mobilities and experiences of prisoners of war across the British imperial world varied according to place of capture, legal status, and circumstance. But captives and the state were linked by their connection to and dependence on the ocean, the space in which international tensions played out. While some captives worked and fought at sea, others were simply captured there. They could be held in prison ships and detention centers at ports reliant on the strength of local supply systems or moved across the ocean as part of exchanges facilitated by the Admiralty's larger maritime networks. Elodie Duché has written that the sea could act as a space of "negotiated coercion"; the imperial processes of capturing and transporting captives, but also of deciding their fate, was one that forged a link between enslaved people, convicts, indentured migrants, and coerced seamen, all of whom were bound up in various webs of power relations mediated across the ocean.⁸⁴ When we view the conflicts of 1793–1815 together, rather than singly, we gain a greater sense of

⁸³ NMM, ADM MT/415, entries dated February 3, 1795, June 13, 1794, August 26, 1793, and August 1, 1795, 38–41.

⁸⁴ Duché, "Captives in Plantations," 114.

the scope and global scale of coercion and its relation to war captivity. In doing so, we can understand more about the legal status of captives, subjecthood, and liberty during this revolutionary period.

This chapter shows that sites of detainment were clearly interconnected, and that prisoners moved across British imperial spaces as a series of linked sites. Moving them while avoiding mass escapes, violence, or loss of life depended upon the strength of communication and cooperation among officials and the mass deployment of ships to facilitate ease of movement. One key aim of this chapter was to bring the understudied colonial ties between war captivity and mobility into fuller view, forging tighter connections between the study of prisoners of war and larger histories of imperialism, conflict, and forced migration across the maritime world. Reading between the lines of the archival record, we see how prisoner experiences differed from site to site; we can also better understand the reach of the state in controlling movement and discern overlaps with other types of free and unfree migrants. By shifting the focus away from the naval and military experiences that have previously dominated the field, we can increase our knowledge of the experiences of previously overlooked captives, including enslaved and free people of color, and women and children. This research, however, represents only the tip of the iceberg; future work, including quantitative analyses of Admiralty registers, has the potential to dig deeper, examining captives' relationships with each other, and to state and society, to ultimately reveal more about their global circulations and connections with other nations.