

<b>Institution:</b> University of Warwick		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D28 - History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Not just victims: Teaching Black history beyond slavery		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> October 2014 – March 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
David Lambert	Professor	01/09/2011-Present
Tim Lockley	Professor	01/09/1996-Present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Calls to increase teaching about colonialism in schools have intensified in recent years. Black history forms only a small part of the national curriculum and what is taught often centres on histories of enslavement, erasing the agency of black individuals and potentially alienating non-white school pupils. Based on their research into the West India Regiments, Lambert and Lockley created an Online Learning Resource that enables schoolteachers to explore the broader history of the Empire in an accessible and sensitive way. The learning resource has been accessed 42,393 times, with a spike in uptake in June 2020, coinciding with increased attention on the Black Lives Matter movement (5.1). An exhibition at Museum of London Docklands, underpinned by their research, has also increased public understanding of African-Caribbean men's contribution to British military history while opening up a conversation about the British Empire.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>The Africa's Sons Under Arms (ASUA) project, funded by the AHRC, had four strands:</p> <p><b>A) Military Medicine and the Making of Race (led by Lockley)</b> used the West India Regiments (WIRs) to analyse changing racial attitudes in the Anglophone Atlantic. Britain's black soldiers were used as a benchmark by those who believed 'blackness' could be defined, measured or quantified as something tangible and in opposition to 'whiteness'. Britain's military physicians advanced the idea that white and black bodies were medically different and this came to have a significant international impact, particularly in the support of polygenesis arguments that different 'races' did not share the same origin. Without the WIRs those writing about race would have had neither literature nor data to support their theories about black bodies. While polygenic arguments were ultimately discredited, the perception that black bodies were medically inferior to white bodies persisted far longer (3.2; 3.3).</p> <p><b>B) Slaves to Soldiers: The Image of the West India Regiments in Britain and the Empire, 1795-1914 (led by Lambert)</b> examined the contested image of black soldiers during the 'long' nineteenth century. The WIRs held an ambiguous place within British imperial discourses around race, masculinity, martial prowess and heroism. Competing representations, particularly by the WIRs' commanding officers and West Indian colonists, was part of a broader struggle over the representation of the African subject that was a significant element of the 'war of representation' during the Age of Abolition (3.1; 3.2).</p> <p><b>C) Slavery in Print: Slaveholding ideology and anxiety in Antebellum Southern Newspapers, 1830-1860 (led by Lockley and included PhD studentship for Rosalyn</b></p>		

**Narayan**) examined the role of the antebellum southern press in propagating the racist stereotypes, including those of black soldiers. Narayan highlighted the importance of newspapers in both creating and perpetuating anxieties amongst the slaveholding elite, whilst also bolstering slaveholders' moral justification for their exploitation of fellow human beings (3.2).

**D) Picturing the West India Regiments: Race, Empire, and Photography, c.1850-1914 (led by Lambert and included PhD studentship for Melissa Bennett)** showed that visual representations of the WIR rank-and-file reflected their ambivalent position within the British Empire's racial hierarchies. Photographs and other visual sources demonstrate that imperial ideas about race were flexible when necessary, and both shaped and were shaped by the ideology, economics, and logistics of imperial expansion (3.2).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Lambert and Lockley have published a peer-reviewed journal article and a monograph, and they have edited a special issue of *Slavery and Abolition* based on a 2017 conference at the University of Warwick:

1. **Lambert, David** (2018) '[A] mere cloak for their proud contempt and antipathy towards the African race': *imagining Britain's West India Regiments in the Caribbean, 1795-1838*. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 46(4). pp. 627-650. doi:10.1080/03086534.2018.1463612
2. **Lambert, David** and **Lockley, Tim** (2018) *Introduction*. *Slavery & Abolition*, 39(3). pp. 451-458. doi:10.1080/0144039X.2018.1489764
3. **Lockley, Tim** (2020) *Military medicine and the making of race: Life and death in the West India Regiments, 1795-1874*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9781108495622

AHRC Funding: **Lambert, David** (PI), Hatfield, Philip John, Cooper, Elizabeth and **Lockley, Tim**. *Africa's Sons Under Arms: Race, Military Bodies and the British West India Regiment in the Atlantic world, 1795-1914*. Ref: AH/L013452/1. October 2014 - November 2018. **(GBP431,553)**

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

'The histories of BME communities in Britain are...often absent from school and university curricula. Even when those histories are present, a seemingly relentless focus on enslavement, abolition and exploitation is viewed by students as intellectually limiting and, at times, alienating. In diversifying the curriculum, it is especially important to go beyond these limited vantage points.'

Royal Historical Society: 'Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: A report and resource for change' (2018, available at: <https://royalhistsoc.org/racereport/> [Accessed 05.08.2020])

#### Online Learning Resource for Schools

Increasingly, campaigners are pushing to decolonise the curriculum by ensuring that colonial history is taught in schools. Where they appear at all, non-white people largely feature in the British history curriculum as subjects of exploitation. By using their research on the history of the WIRs to produce a free Online Learning Resource (OLR), ASUA has created an alternative narrative for students in which people of African descent can be recognised as the significant and complex historical agents they are.

Launched in November 2017, The OLR was developed for pupils aged 11-14 and is hosted by the British Library (<https://www.bl.uk/west-india-regiment>). It contains digitised images, captions, a timeline and essays, plus a Teachers' Pack with lesson plans and activities

(<https://www.bl.uk/teaching-resources/west-india-regiment>). Between 16 November 2017 and 30 June 2020, the OLR received 42,393 unique visits; there was particular uptake in June 2020, coinciding with the increased attention on the Black Lives Matter movement (5.1). A February 2018 workshop for approximately 50 teachers showcased the OLR as a new way of presenting Black history and the OLR was publicised through *Modern History Review* (vol. 21:2), distributed to approximately 800 schools.

The resource enables teachers to engage their pupils with this important topic while meeting the requirements of the national curriculum. Black History (including slavery) features in the Year 8 history curriculum and 'Empire' is part of the syllabus for many GCSE exam boards. The OLR is an accessible, historically accurate resource to enhance how this part of the curriculum can be taught. It includes an introduction to Caribbean history; explanation of why the British Army created the WIRs and opposition to them; the day-to-day experiences and treatment of black soldiers; the 1802 mutiny of the 8<sup>th</sup> WIR in Dominica; and how the WIRs maintained and expanded the British Empire in the Caribbean and Africa.

Teachers who trialled the OLR commented that it enabled them to teach this material: 'working with the site empowered me with the subject knowledge to teach the WIRs in a deep and meaningful way which wasn't time demanding'. They felt that the material was engaging for pupils, who 'loved the topic, even created an exhibition to share it with the school'. Another said that the resource was 'a great way of interacting with well-founded academic history research' and that students had found it 'user friendly when compared to other forms of "academic history"' (5.2).

Participants at the workshop showcasing the OLR agreed: 'I learned a lot that I can use in my teaching and some good approaches to identity which will cut across different elements of empire' (5.3).

The OLR was also helpful in enabling the British Library to present Black history in new ways. Curator Beth Cooper, who worked with the Warwick research team, stated that 'I have been able to take the skills and subject expertise that I gained through the ASUA project and apply them to my current work as a historical consultant on Caribbean focused public history projects at English Heritage and the Garden Museum' (5.4).

### **Museum Exhibition**

Wider understanding of these histories was further advanced by a museum exhibition. Lambert and Lockley curated 'Fighting for Empire' at the Museum of London Docklands (MLD) between November 2017 and September 2018. An exhibition-related event for community organizations and the public was also held on 14 July 2018 with the Windrush Foundation, which works with academics to increase public knowledge of Caribbean peoples' contributions to British (military) history, something that the Foundation felt 'has not always been acknowledged or commemorated' (5.5).

The exhibition highlighted the long-term role of people of African descent in the British army by focusing on Samuel Hodge, the first African-Caribbean soldier to win the Victoria Cross in 1866. The exhibition featured a 19<sup>th</sup>-century painting of Hodge that was unique in featuring a black military hero. The owners, Penlee House Gallery and Museum (Cornwall), had never previously been asked to loan this painting but were keen to do so. They commented that the loan to MLD raised their profile: 'as a small regional gallery, we are always keen on opportunities to promote our organisation and its collections'. The Gallery is using research on the painting undertaken for the exhibition in its 'Citizen Curators' scheme, through which the Gallery is reinterpreting its collections to explore Black history (5.6).

Both the exhibition and event were successful in raising public awareness of this history. Feedback from the community event showed that it successfully raised awareness about the long-term role of African-Caribbean men in British war efforts, with one attendee commenting

that they had had no idea that 'so many Black people were fighting for the empire' (5.7). The MLD exit survey at the exhibition showed that 82% of visitors felt the exhibition had enriched their understanding of the WIRs. Interviews showed that most were unaware that men and boys of African descent had served in the British Army before the First World War. As a result of the display, almost all (94%) understood more about the WIRs (5.8). Interviews also showed that some visitors had never thought about the imperial role of the British Army and its connection to slavery. This led to reflection on national identity, patriotism, racism, power structures and school curricula: 'It makes you question the Empire, it makes you think differently. We're taught more about the UK as "heroes" around the world, about all the civilisation we've given people but it's not always the truth' (5.8).

Bennett, one of the PhD students on the AHRC project, contributed to the exhibition and went on to become Higher Education Programme Manager at the Museum of London. Reflecting on her involvement, she stated that it 'gave me invaluable experience and knowledge that led to me being given the opportunity to curate my own display in the space 2 years later (this time as a Museum of London employee). My knowledge of the museum's Caribbean and West African collections, gained from my time on the ASUA project, meant that ... I was even able to include an object directly connected to the WIRs in my own exhibition' (5.9).

Through their work with community groups, museums and galleries, schoolteachers and the public, ASUA has improved public knowledge of WIRs, contributed to the teaching of colonialism in schools and influenced the perception of Black history in Britain prior to the First World War.

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

1. Online Learning Resource website data
2. Statement from Online Learning Resource early adopters
3. Feedback forms gathered at the British Library workshop about the Online Learning Resource in February 2018
4. Statement from former Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Collections and researcher on the ASUA project
5. Fighting for Empire webpage – Windrush Foundation
6. Statement from Curator/Deputy Director at the Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance, Cornwall
7. Feedback gathered from attendee at a community-based event 'Fighting for Empire?' on Saturday 14 July 2018 at Museum of London Docklands
8. Exhibition Feedback: Museum of London Docklands exit survey data; data from commissioned interviews with visitors to the 'Fighting for Empire' (2018)
9. Statement from former PhD Student and Museum of London Higher Education Programme Manager; now part of the Community Engagement team at the Greater London Authority