

# British Naval Swords and Swordsmanship

Swords have been an integral part of British naval warfare for centuries. From the cutlasses wielded by sailors in the age of sail to the ceremonial swords carried by officers today, these weapons have played a significant role in both combat and tradition.

This article will provide a comprehensive overview of British naval swords and swordsmanship, covering their history, design, and usage. We will also explore the role of swordsmanship in the Royal Navy today.



## British Naval Swords and Swordsmanship by Mark Barton

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## History of British Naval Swords

The earliest swords used by British sailors were simple cutlasses, which were short, single-edged swords with a broad blade. These swords were ideal for close combat in the cramped quarters of a ship.

In the 17th century, the Royal Navy began to issue a new type of sword, known as the hanger. Hangers were longer and thinner than cutlasses, with a curved blade that was better suited for thrusting.

The hanger remained the standard naval sword for over two centuries. However, in the late 19th century, the Royal Navy began to adopt a new type of sword, known as the cutlass. Cutlasses were shorter and lighter than hangers, with a straight blade that was better suited for slashing.

Today, the cutlass is still the standard naval sword in the Royal Navy. However, officers also carry ceremonial swords, which are typically based on the designs of earlier swords.

## **Design of British Naval Swords**

British naval swords are typically made of steel, with a blade that is between 24 and 30 inches long. The blade is usually straight, but it may also be curved. The hilt of the sword is typically made of wood or metal, and it may be decorated with carvings or engravings.

The scabbard of the sword is typically made of leather or metal. It is usually fitted with a belt loop or frog, which allows it to be worn on the hip.

## **Usage of British Naval Swords**

British naval swords were primarily used for close combat. They were used to board enemy ships, defend against boarding parties, and engage in hand-to-hand combat on the deck of a ship.

Swords were also used for ceremonial purposes. Officers would carry swords when they were on duty, and they would also be used in parades

and other ceremonies.

Today, swords are still used for ceremonial purposes in the Royal Navy. However, they are no longer used in combat.

## **Swordsmanship in the Royal Navy Today**

Swordsmanship is still an important part of the Royal Navy today. All new officers are required to learn the basics of swordsmanship, and they may also choose to specialize in the art.

The Royal Navy Swordsmanship Team represents the United Kingdom in international swordsmanship competitions. The team has a long and distinguished history, and it has won numerous medals at the World Championships and other competitions.

Swordsmanship is a demanding and challenging discipline, but it is also a rewarding one. It teaches students the importance of discipline, precision, and self-control. It also helps them to develop their physical fitness and coordination.

British naval swords and swordsmanship have a long and storied history. These weapons have played a significant role in both combat and tradition, and they continue to be an important part of the Royal Navy today.

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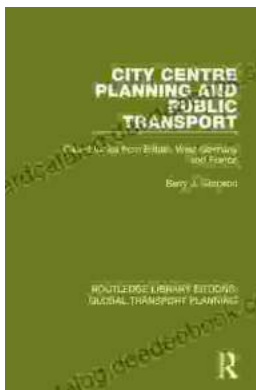
If you are interested in learning more about British naval swords and swordsmanship, there are several resources available. You can visit the website of the Royal Navy Swordsmanship Team, or you can read one of the many books that have been written on the subject.



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