

The rise and fall of the British Army, 1975-2025

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Résumé ou extrait : A new study of a critical period in the history of the British Army. The last half century has seen society, technology, the character of conflict and the British Army itself all change greatly. From a low point in the 1970s, the Army's war fighting capability increased in the 1980s in the face of a prospective war with the Soviet Union. This capability was then tested on operations from Kuwait in 1991 through to Afghanistan in 2001 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. There followed two decades of descent from this high plateau of military achievement. Mistakes made in Iraq and Afghanistan led to a decline in support for military deployments. Cuts to defence funding and botched equipment procurements also meant the British Army of 2021 was only half the size of that of 1970, and with much key fighting equipment either obsolete or approaching obsolescence. Ben Barry served in the Army from 1975 to 2010, often in key staff appointments, and has worked closely with the Army in the following decade. This new study draws not only on his personal experience, but also on a very wide range of written sources complemented by interviews to provide a new interpretation of this period that challenges the existing narratives.

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