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Cover picture: Detail from ‘Colour party carrying the colours of the Irish regiments marching past the statue of Queen Victoria, Castle Hill, Windsor, on the occasion of their disbandment, 12 June 1922’. Photograph courtesy of the National Army Museum, NAM. 1959-05-112-59.

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The Irish Soldier in the British Army, c.1680-1922

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Editorial*

We are delighted to present this special issue, which emerged out of a conference held to mark the centenary of the disbanding of the 'southern' Irish regiments of the British army. The papers in this issue reflect on social, cultural and religious histories, focusing on service between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. As our guest editors point out, this issue develops this rich, but understudied historiography and suggests new directions for the field.

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Introduction: The Irish soldier in the British army, c. 1680-1922

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ABSTRACT
The papers in this volume are a selection of those delivered at a conference at the National Army Museum in London in July 2022, held to mark the centenary of the disbandment of the 'southern' Irish regiments on the creation of the Irish Free State. This introduction summarizes each paper, situating them in analysis of past historiography on the Irish soldier in the British Army. It argues that while the First World War still looms large in that historiography, researchers are now more often moving beyond it, while also analyzing matters such as class, gender and global contexts.

On 5 July 2022, a conference was hosted by the National Army Museum (NAM) in London on 'The Irish Soldier in the British Army, c. 1680-1922'. It was organised by the NAM and the editors of this special issue of the BJMH, marking the centenary of the disbandment of the 'southern' Irish regiments of the British army on the creation of the Irish Free State. The NAM is an important repository of material relating to those regiments, holding, for example, their enlistment records for 1920-22, and a wealth of other papers of individuals who served in those regiments.[1] Notable examples include Henry Jourdain of the Connaught Rangers and Noël Drury of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.[2] The conference emerged from conversations between the NAM and the editors over the need for a UK institution to mark the centenary of the disbandment, and to discuss the significance of these regiments – and the Irish soldier

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[1] www.nam.ac.uk/soldiers-records/persons. Accessed 13 June 2023.

[2] Jourdain, https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1963-12-307-50 Accessed 13 June 2023; https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1976-07-69-1. Accessed 13 June 2023.

more widely – from the integration of Irish army units into a wider 'British' army in the 1680s until 1922.

The terminal date of this issue is therefore easily explained, linked to the disbandment of the five Southern Irish infantry regiments (the Royal Irish Regiment, Connaught Rangers, Leinster Regiment, Royal Munster Fusiliers and Royal Dublin Fusiliers) in 1922. The opening date of c. 1680 and, indeed, the terms 'Irish soldier' and 'British army' require some further explanation, along with a review of the existing historiography on this topic as a whole and a brief outline of the articles included in this special issue. While writing on the Irish soldier in the British army has greatly expanded in the past twenty to thirty years, much of it has been focused on the First World War with such work flourishing during Ireland's 'Decade of Centenaries'. Works covering a longer chronology are still relatively rare, and part of the aim of the conference was to bring together a group of scholars working on Britain's Irish soldiers across centuries to explore broad themes outside those we often focus on through our concerns with relatively limited chronologies.[3]

In defining exactly what is meant by the 'Irish soldier' in the 'British army' it must be understood that there was, of course, no entity that could be properly termed the 'British Army' until 1707 when Scotland was united with England and Wales. However, regiments recruited in England, Ireland and Scotland served together in the forces raised by the Duke of Buckingham at Cadiz, Ile d'Rhé and La Rochelle in 1625-28 and Irish regiments had served as part of the Royalist armies during the Civil Wars of the 1640s.[4] The restoration of Charles II in 1661 saw the establishment of regular military forces in separate English (incorporating Welsh), Irish and Scottish armies. In Ireland these forces were originally formed as independent infantry companies or cavalry troops and were dispersed throughout the country on garrison duty. Only in April 1684 was a full regiment, the 18th Regiment of Foot, formed in Ireland under Arthur, Earl of Granard, and in July 1685 this regiment was in action on English soil at the Battle of Sedgemoor. This regiment earned its first battle honour, 'Namur' in 1695,

[3]Notable exceptions are: Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Desmond & Jean Bowen, *Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2005); William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army, 1854-1992,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); and Peter Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?', *Journal of Social History*, 17, 1 (1983), pp. 31-64.

[4]Ian Beckett, *The British Army: A new short history,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), p.6, R. B. Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms: The Origins of the British Army 1585-1702,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 231-60 and Laurence Spring, *The First British Army, 1624-28: The Army of the Duke of Buckingham,* (Solihull: Helion, 2016).

when it was renamed the Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland, demonstrating the changing role of the Irish soldier from a garrison guard to a member of a foreign expeditionary force.[5]

The Irish establishment existed from 1699 until the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland in 1801 though, for most of its existence this was a mechanism by which regiments raised in Great Britain were stationed in Ireland and paid for by the Irish taxpayer. Indeed, Patrick Walsh has noted the importance of the Irish establishment in the creation of the British fiscal-military state. The 1699 legislation meant that the Irish parliament would pay for the maintenance of 12,000 soldiers, augmentation in the late 1760s raised this figure to 15,325. Initially, this meant that the Irish establishment was considerably larger than the number of soldiers in Great Britain where parliamentary concerns about the political risks of a large peace-time army meant that a force of only 7,000 soldiers was maintained in England. However, with the growth of the army in the eighteenth century and the development of overseas commitments, the Irish establishment declined in its relative importance. Nevertheless, through the eighteenth century the Irish establishment was important both in providing a large and reliable constabulary force and in providing an 'imperial reserve' of regiments available for overseas service in the event of war.[6]

Recruitment of Irish soldiers into the British army was shaped by religion in much of the eighteenth century and, indeed, for much of this period the Irish soldier was, at

[5]John Childs, *The Army of Charles II*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), pp. 203-9 and G. Le M. Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment from 1684 to 1902,* (London: William Blackwood, 1911), pp. 1-24.

[6]Thomas Bartlett, 'The Augmentation of the Army in Ireland 1767-1769', *English Historical Review*, 96, 380 (1981), pp. 540-559; Andrew Dorman, ' "Fit for immediate service": Reassessing the Irish Military Establishment of the Eighteenth Century through the 1770 Townshend Augmentation', *British Journal of Military History*, 7, 2 (2021), pp. 42-63; K. P. Ferguson, 'The Army in Ireland from the Restoration to the Act of Union', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1981), pp. 60-68; C. I. McGrath, 'Waging War: The Irish Military Establishment and the British Empire, 1688-1763' in William Mulligan and Brendan Simms (eds.), *The Primacy of Foreign Policy in British History, 1660-2000: How Strategic Concerns Shaped Modern Britain,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 102-118; C. I. McGrath, *Ireland and Empire, 1692-1770;* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), pp. 107-166; J. L. Pimlott, 'The Administration of the British Army, 1783-1793', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 1975), pp. 56-75; and Patrick Walsh, 'Enforcing the Fiscal State: The Army, the Revenue and the Irish Experience of the Fiscal-Military State, 1690-1769' in Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh (eds), *The British Fiscal-Military States, 1660- c. 1783,* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 113-130.

least officially, excluded from the British army. The Penal Laws had a definite effect on army recruitment and the considerable body of work on them suggests that a rather confusing collection of different pieces of legislation, passed at different times and with different motivations, was being applied inconsistently in decisions not to enlist Irish Catholics.[7] The Disarming Act of 1695 made it illegal for Catholics to possess weapons and this could be read as forbidding their recruitment to the British Army, out of concerns over their possible Jacobite sympathies. For much of the eighteenth century, Irish Protestants were also not actively recruited partly as it was impossible to differentiate Protestant from Catholic recruits in many areas, and partly as there were concerns that enlisting Protestant Irishmen for overseas service would weaken the indigenous Protestant 'garrison' in Ireland. Such concerns were set aside in time of war when the army's manpower demands became critical, notably in 1716-17, 1745-47 and 1757-63. The legal prohibition against Catholics serving in the ranks was removed by the Relief Acts of 1778, and the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 allowed Irish Catholics to take up commissions in the British army and militia. However, in peacetime, it is clear that a number of regimental officers tried to resolve their recruiting difficulties by enlisting Irishmen. Indeed, it seems that a number of Irish recruits were shipped to Scotland, dressed in bonnets and enlisted there as, supposedly, Scottish recruits before being brought back to provide manpower for regiments in Ireland. Flagrant abuses of this sort were found in the Earl of Orkney's Regiment in 1728 when eight officers were dismissed for conniving in this recruiting scandal.[8] Despite such sanctions, it is clear that relatively large numbers of Irishmen were enlisted during the era of the penal laws. At the Battle of Culloden in April 1746 a sample of 3,213 soldiers carried out by Jonathan Oates showed 7% (246) to be Irish,

[7]Thomas Bartlett, "'a weapon of war yet untried": Irish Catholics and the Armed Forces of the Crown, 1760-1830' in T. G. Fraser and Keith Jeffery (eds), *Men, Women and War: Historical Studies XVIII,* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1993), pp. 66-85; Louis Cullen, 'Catholics under the Penal Laws', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultűr* , 1 (1986), pp. 23-36; V. J. L. Fontana, 'Some aspects of Roman Catholic service in the Land Forces of the British Crown, c. 1750 to c. 1820', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Portsmouth, 2002); and C. I. McGrath 'Securing the Protestant Interest: The Origins and Purpose of the Penal Laws of 1695', *Irish Historical Studies*, 30, 117 (1996), pp. 25-46.

[8]Dorman, 'The Experience of Soldiering in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century', pp. 90-143; Ferguson, 'The Army in Ireland ', pp. 71-72; A. J. Guy, 'The Irish military establishment, 1660-1776' in Bartlett and Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland*, pp. 211-230 at pp. 217-219; and A. J. Guy, *Economy and Discipline: Officership and administration in the British army 1714-63,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 124.

while Stephen Brumwell's work on the British army in North America in 1757 shows it to be 27.5% Irish with 3,856 Irishmen serving.[9]

The Penal Laws reinforced the Wild Geese tradition of Irish Catholics serving in continental European armies, particularly the French and Spanish armies, each of which had an Irish Brigade. However, the numbers involved can be exaggerated. Louis Cullen believed that after the initial outflow of 20,000 soldiers who left Ireland in 1691, following the Treaty of Limerick, for service in the French army, only 1,000 to 1,500 recruits per year can have followed them, with recruitment falling off almost entirely in the 1750s. Catholic Irish gentry, forbidden until 1793 from taking commissions in the British army, saw service in the French, Spanish and Austrian armies throughout most of the Eighteenth Century in relatively large numbers. The attempt to re-establish the Wild Geese tradition within the British army, after the fall of the French Monarchy, in Pitt's Irish Brigade was not successful. Partly this was due to the fact that the Irish Brigade in French service was reliant on mercenaries from Germany and the Netherlands for the bulk of its manpower by 1789, though the officer corps remained largely Irish (albeit often second or third generation Irish). The attempt to recruit for the Irish Brigade in Ireland at the same time as recruiting was being carried out for new line regiments and the Irish militia, also guaranteed a poor response. Finally, the decision to post the Irish Brigade to the West Indies and Nova Scotia, with the high mortality rates caused by disease and poor climate in these garrisons, meant that the scheme collapsed.[10]

An Irish Protestant volunteering tradition was incorporated into the British army during the Williamite Wars and forces raised in Enniskillen were formed as the 5th and 6th Dragoons and 27th Regiment of Foot.[11] However, the larger and largely Protestant

[9]Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 73-74; and 319 and Jonathan Oates, 'The Rank and File of the British Army at Culloden' in Andrew Bamford (ed.), *Life in the Red Coat: The British Soldier 1721-1815,* (Warwick: Helion, 2020) pp. 31-53 at p. 35.

[10]Cullen, 'Catholics under the Penal Laws', pp. 28-29; Ciarán McDonnell, 'A "Fair Chance"? The Catholic Irish Brigade in the British Service, 1793-1798', *War in History*, 23, 2 (2016), pp. 150-168; Sam Scott, 'The French Revolution and the Irish regiments in France' in Hugh Gough and David Dickson (eds.), *Ireland and the French Revolution,* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990), pp. 14-27; and P. J. C. Elliot-Wright, 'The Officers of the Irish Brigade and the British Army 1789-98', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1997).

[11]E. S. Jackson, *The Inniskilling Dragoons: The records of an old heavy cavalry regiment,* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1909), pp. 1-11; Regimental Historical Records Committee, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers: Being the history of the regiment from December*

volunteer force raised in the late 1770s remained independent from the British army. Originally formed as a Home Defence force this quickly became politicised advocating legislative independence of the Irish Parliament from London control. By mid-1782 government ministers and military leaders in Dublin wanted to form six fencible regiments from the Volunteers. These regiments would have been part of the British army but utilised for home service only and, it was hoped, they would attract the most effective officers from the Volunteers, with the lure of a King's commission, creating a depoliticised force. The end of the American War of Independence and reductions in the size of the army put paid to this scheme. Memories of this heavily politicised force shaped views about the place of the citizen-soldier in Irish society and meant that neither the Rifle Volunteer movement, formed in Great Britain in 1859 or the Territorial Force formed in 1908 were extended to Ireland.[12] Similarly, the Yeomanry forces raised in Ireland in 1796 and disbanded in 1834 were never properly incorporated as part of the British army. They were also highly politicised, closely linked to the Orange Order and, indeed, were disbanded out of Whig concerns that they were more likely to exacerbate sectarian riots than quell them.[13] The Ulster Volunteer Force was raised in 1913 in opposition to the Third Home Rule Bill and, at its height was about 100,000 strong. This formed the basis of the 36 (Ulster) Division, formed in September, though it should be noted that a minority of Ulster Volunteers, possibly 32,000, enlisted in the British army during the First World War and UVF recruitment was relatively poor in rural areas.[14]

The place of the Irish soldier in the British Empire remains an under-researched one and there is no equivalent to Edward Spiers's monograph concerning the Scottish

1688 to July 1914, (London: Constable, 1928), pp. 1-4; and W. T. Willcox, *The Historical Records of the Fifth (Royal Irish) Lancers from their foundation as Wynne's Dragoons (in 1689) to the present day,* (London: Doubleday, 1908), pp. 1-8.

[12]Neal Garnham, *The militia in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: In defence of the Protestant interest,* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), pp. 123-142; Padhraig Higgins, *A Nation of Politicians: Gender, Patriotism, and Political Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), pp. 128-177; and P. D. H. Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster: background and development, 1745-85', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1974).

Allan Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry, 1796-1834,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).

[14]Timothy Bowman, *Carson's Army: The Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-22,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 163-89; and Timothy Bowman, William Butler and Michael Wheatley, *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish recruitment to the British Armed Forces, 1914-1918,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), pp. 90-107.

soldier in the Empire.[15] This is somewhat surprising as the Leinster Regiment, Royal Munster Fusiliers and Royal Dublin Fusiliers could all claim to be legacy regiments formed from the European Regiments of the East India Company following the mutiny / rebellion of 1857-59 and 'white mutiny' of 1859-61.[16] It should be noted though that Irish soldiers, despite Kipling's best efforts, never quite entered the public consciousness in a way that Scottish Highlanders did; even if many Irishmen served in Scottish regiments. This was possibly as, while Scottish Highland Brigades were deployed in many of the 'small wars' of the Victorian period, Irish soldiers appeared indistinguishable from other types of British soldier. The kilt also proved irresistible to many famous war artists. Certainly, the Irish were not considered a 'martial race' in the way that Scottish Highlanders or Gurkhas were.[17] Newspaper coverage of the role of the Irish soldier in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was more expansive than might be assumed with local and provincial nationalist as well as unionist newspapers giving considerable coverage to the 'small wars' of Empire and reproducing a number of soldiers' letters.[18]

While the Irish proportion of the British army fell throughout the nineteenth century from a high point of 42.2% in 1830 to 13.2% in 1899 this was still an over-representation. It was not until 1911 that the Irish proportion of the British army roughly equated with the Irish proportion of the UK population.[19] This, of course, was

[15]E. M. Spiers, *The Scottish Soldier and the Empire, 1854-1902,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006). For a brief overview of the Irish experience see, Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish military tradition and the British Empire' in Keith Jeffery (ed.), *'An Irish Empire'? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

[16]Stephen McCance, *The History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, Volume 1: from 1652 to 1860,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1927); A. E. Mainwaring, *Crown and Company: The Records of the Second Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers,* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1911); Peter Stanley, *White Mutiny: British Military Culture in India, 1825-75,* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); F. E. Whitton, *The History of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians): Part 1 The Old Army,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1924); H. C. Wylly, *Neill's "Blue Caps"*, volumes 1 and 2, (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1923 and 1925).

[17]Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The military, race and masculinity in British imperial culture, 1857-1914,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[18]Michael de Nie, 'The Irish Press and Imperial Soldiering, 1882-85' in T. G. McMahon, Michael de Nie and Paul Townend (eds.), *Ireland in an Imperial World: Citizenship, Opportunism, and Subversion,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 133-54

[19]H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army' in M. R. D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society: Historical essays in honour and memory of J R Western 1928-1971,* (London: Paul Elek, 1973), pp. 176-178.

at a time when the Fenian and Home Rule movements were questioning the place of Ireland within the British Empire.[20]

Perhaps surprisingly, there is still considerable interest in the controversial figure of John Nicholson who, as an officer in the East India Company Army was killed in September 1857 leading the attack on Delhi and inspired the cult of Nikal Seyn. In an era when statues have been tottering, if not always falling, it is notable that Lisburn and Castlereagh Council decided that the centenary of the unveiling of Nicholson's statue in Lisburn Market Square was an occasion to allow for the repositioning of the statue, its cleaning and raising on a yet higher plinth. Nicholson's case suggests that the East India Company Army provided officer commissions to those from Irish middle class backgrounds, in contrast to the British Army proper, which still relied on those from Anglo-Irish gentry backgrounds.[21] Important articles by Joel Mokyr and Cormac Ó Gráda on the rank and file of the European Regiments of the East India Company are largely focused on issues of height, health and nutrition but they do also have important points to make about the relatively large numbers of Catholic recruits in the late eighteenth century and the social class of recruits, many, particularly in the early nineteenth century being skilled workers whose skills had been made redundant by advancing industrialisation.[22]

The experience of the Irish soldier in India under the Raj is the focus of some important work, with Alexander Bubb considering, directly, the position of the

[20]Eva Ó Cathaoir, *Soldiers of liberty: A study of Fenianism 1858-1908,* (Dublin, 2018), pp. 118-38; A. J. Semple, 'The Fenian infiltration of the British army', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 52, 211 (1974), pp. 133-60; and Terence Denman, 'The Red Livery of Shame': The Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914', *Irish Historical Studies*, 29, 114 (1994), pp. 208-33.

[21]Stuart Flinders, *Cult of a Dark Hero: Nicholson of Delhi,* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); P. K. Nayar, 'Afghanistan, the Indian "Mutiny", and the Bicultural stereotype of John Nicholson' in D. S. Roberts and J. J. Wright (eds.), *Ireland's Imperial Connections, 1775-1947,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 191-212; D. P. McCracken, *Nicholson: How an angry Irishman became the hero of Delhi,* (Stroud: History Press, 2018); Michael Silvestri, *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 76-138; and https://www.lisburnmuseum.com/events/the-nicholson-statue-1922-2022/. Accessed 20 June 2023.

[22]Joel Mokyr and Cormac Ó Gráda, 'The Height of Irishmen and Englishmen in the 1770s: Some Evidence from the East India Company Records', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultűr*, 4 (1989), pp. 83-92; and 'Height and Health in the United Kingdom 1815-1860: Evidence from the East India Company Army', *Explorations in Economic History*, 33 (1996), pp. 141-168.

colonised coloniser and the regimental cultures witnessed on colonial service. Mario Draper's important recent work on the Connaught Rangers mutiny of 1920 suggests that the mutineers were protesting more about material grievances due to service in India, and poor officer-man relations, than about the political situation in Ireland.[23]

In an effort to develop this existing historiography, fifteen papers were presented at the conference, of which nine are published here. The articles range from the beginning and end of our period. The NAM's Research Curator, Justin Saddington, writes on the journal of Major General Robert Stearne, held at the National Library of Ireland. Stearne served with the Royal Regiment of Ireland from 1678 to 1717, and Saddington reflects on controversies about the diary's authenticity, which also showing its value in illuminating various, perhaps unexpected, aspects of warfare such as subterranean mines. At the end of the section of articles, in his piece on the 1922 disbandment, Timothy Bowman is one of the contributors who reflects on the close connection between the politics of Ireland and service in the British army. He explains how the decision to disband the southern regiments attracted little public concern, not least because those serving with them were offered transfer to other regiments. In contrast, those regiments linked to Northern Ireland attracted significant political support for their continuation.

Questions of who served and why are considered by Nicholas Perry and William Butler. Perry examines the role of the Irish landed class as a source of officers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, considering comparisons which have been made to the Prussian Junker class. He finds that in the nineteenth century, across Irish and Prussian landed estates, most career officers were from families he describes as having 'adequate to comfortable' levels of prosperity. His work is part of a growing pattern for placing what were once thought to be specifically Irish concerns into a more global and comparative framework.[24] The 'Irishness' of the Anglo-Irish officer corps is also worthy of further consideration. The Duke of Wellington's denial of his Irish heritage, 'just because a man is born in a stable, it doesn't make him a horse' is well-known, though apocryphal, while Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson seemed to rejoice in playing the part of the 'stage Irishman' at times. Field Marshal Sir George White, famous for

[23]Alexander Bubb, 'The Life of the Irish Soldier in India: Representations and Self-Representations, 1857-1922', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46, 4 (2012), pp. 769-813; and Mario Draper, 'Mutiny under the Sun: The Connaught Rangers, India, 1920', *War in History*, 27, 2 (2020), pp. 202-223.

[24]See, for example, Patrick Mannion and Fearghal McGarry (eds), *The Irish Revolution: A Global History,* (New York: New York University Press, 2022); Loughlin Sweeney, *Irish Military Elites, Nation and Empire, 1870-1925,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); and a special issue (45, 168 (2021) of the journal *Irish Historical Studies* on 'Decolonising Irish history?'.

the defence of Ladysmith during the South African War (1899-1902), does not even rate an entry in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, despite having been born in Portstewart, Co. Londonderry and buried in Broughshane, Co. Antrim.[25]

William Butler then points to a tradition which has not been so well articulated in the popular mind - an Irish Catholic Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army - through his examination of the Irish Militia in 1793 to 1908. During this time, Catholic Irish soldiers maintained a strong sense of Irish identity, while also contributing to perceptions in Britain that they made 'good' soldiers but were also 'prone to rebellion'. Tellingly, the decision was made not to call out militiamen for training in Ireland between 1865 and 1870, due to fears of Fenian infiltration, nor in 1879-1882 during the Land War. Nevertheless, Irish militia units performed well in action during the 1798 Rebellion and in the South African War (1899-1902).

James Deery's Research Note and David Murphy's article are located within the first half of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the British Army at the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars saw the creation of many new regiments, with much recruiting for rank. The regiments which were to be the basis of the Royal Irish Rifles (83rd and 86th), Royal Irish Fusiliers (87th and 89th) and Connaught Rangers (88th) were all raised in this period.[26] This was in sharp contrast to the American War of Independence when only one new Irish regiment, the Loyal Irish Emigrants was raised and that in North America; then Irish recruits were largely formed into independent companies which were then drafted into regiments formed in Great Britain. Deery points to Irish service far beyond Irish regiments during the Napoleonic Wars, examining service by Irish officers across all units of the regular army, arguing that such service was critical. Existing work stresses that the 1790s saw the first mass mobilisation of Irish manpower, following the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 and considers how the British army accommodated this large Irish Catholic presence.[27]

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[25]Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A political soldier,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and S. M. Miller, *George White and the Victorian Army in India and Africa: Serving the Empire,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

[26]D. A. Chart, 'The Irish Levies during the Great French War', *English Historical Review*, 32, 128 (1917), pp. 497-516; Marcus Cunliffe, *The Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1793-1968,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 1-5; H. F. N. Jourdain and Edward Fraser, *History of the Connaught Rangers,* (London: Royal United Services Institution, 1924), vol. I, pp. 1-3; and G. B. Laurie, *The History of the Royal Irish Rifles,* (London: Gale & Polden, 1914), pp. 1-8.

[27]J. E. Cookson, *The British armed nation 1793-1815,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 153-181; and Catriona Kennedy, "'True Britons and Real Irish": Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars' in Catriona Kennedy

David Murphy explores strong Irish involvement in the Crimean War, discussing how public interest in the war encouraged volunteering among civilians as doctors, nurses and engineers. Such connections between Ireland and its soldiers are discussed in different ways in three further pieces in this special issue. Catherine Wynne, writing on the stories told by and about Irish soldiers, shows them to be socially and political mobile, as seen in the label 'London Irish'. Her rich source material ranges from the famous 'Listed for the Connaught Rangers' painting by Lady Elizabeth Butler to the poetry of Francis Ledwidge. Fionnuala Walsh focuses on those left at home – soldiers' wives – during the First World War. Initially lauded for their husbands' service these women were a powerful symbol of anger in response to the Easter Rising, and their fortunes changed over 1917-18 not least during the parliamentary by-elections which saw support for Sinn Féin grow. As a group, they came to be seen as irresponsible in their use of separation allowances, and have been a central part of the 'myth and memory' of the First World war which Niamh Gallagher addresses. She shows how both have been just as important as history in how Irish people have been understood over the past century, for example in debates over recruitment, and on polarities of Unionism and Nationalism. Gallagher also argues for linking analyses of the First World War and the Irish Revolution more closely.

Taken together, the pieces in this special issue point to a thriving field of research on the Irish soldier in the British Army. While the amount of work published on the First World War suggests that there is still a focus on that conflict, researchers are now more often moving beyond it, and they are innovating more in the matters they analyse. Questions considered here on gender, class and Ireland's place in global histories, and connections between soldiers and their home environments, are likely to be central to future work on the subject.

and Matthew McCormack (eds) *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Men of arms,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 37-56.

The Journal of Major General Robert Stearne of the Royal Regiment of Ireland

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ABSTRACT
This article contains an analysis of Major General Robert Stearne's journal of his service with the Royal Regiment of Ireland between 1678 and 1717. The article examines the provenance of the manuscript and addresses a major problem regarding its authenticity and relationship to the published accounts written by his regimental comrades. In so doing, it attempts to bring greater clarity to the question of its originality and to the sources that may have been used in its production. It then addresses the place of the journal within the historiography of the period and explores some of the new information that it contains.

The journal of Major General Robert Stearne, kept at the National Library of Ireland (NLI), is an important and little-known memoir which documents Stearne's remarkable forty-year career as a regimental officer from 1678 to 1717.[1] The journal is amongst a comparatively small number of memoirs written by soldiers of this period and this fact alone is a testament to its value. However, Stearne's work is also notable for being one of a quartet written by members of the Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland, a number unequalled by any other regiment of this era.[2] Yet, unlike those of his comrades, Brigadier General Richard Kane (1662-1736), Sergeant John Millner (fl.1701-36), and Captain Robert Parker (c.1665-c.1745), whose long availability in print has enabled them to become deeply embedded in the historiography of this period, Stearne's journal has suffered the misfortune of being unpublished and so has

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[1]The National Library of Ireland (hereinafter NLI) MS 4166, Account by Brigadier Stearne of his career with the Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland and of the various campaigns and engagements in which he was involved in Britain, Ireland and on the continent including those of the Boyne, Aughrim, Limerick, Blenheim and Ramillies, 1678-1717 (subsequently Stearne, Journal).

[2]Richard Cannon, *Historical Record of the Eighteenth, or The Royal Irish Regiment of Foot,* (London: Parker, Furnival & Parker, 1848), p. 2.

remained in comparative obscurity. Given the great time span of his service, and that he participated in many of the great events of his age, this represents a significant loss for historians.

This article provides an outline of Stearne's life and military career. It then examines the provenance of his journal and addresses an important question regarding its authenticity resulting from its similarities to the memoirs of his regimental colleagues. It reaches the tentative conclusion that, in its production, Stearne drew upon a journal kept by Parker during his military service. The article then assesses the place of the journal within the historiography of the period revealing that, despite its extensive use by two regimental historians, it has made little impact upon more recent scholarship. Finally, the article explores the potential of the journal to enrich or clarify our understanding of the historical narrative of the period and suggests how it could be utilised in wider historical analysis.

Stearne was born before 1658, most likely on his father's estate at Tullynally, County Westmeath, Ireland.[3] His father, also called Robert (d. 1658?), was a substantial land holder and a military man who saw service as a Captain in Lord Charles Fleetwood's Regiment of Foot. The Stearne family was wealthy and well-connected and produced several noteworthy figures, including John Stearne (1624-69), the founder of the Irish College of Physicians and John Stearne (1660-1745), Bishop of Clogher. Stearne also seems to have been a distant relative of the novelist, Laurence Sterne (1713-68). The two became acquainted in 1722 when Laurence's family came to stay with Robert at Mullingar and it seems probable that Robert provided the inspiration for the character 'Uncle Toby', a gentle old soldier obsessed with recounting his military anecdotes, in 'Tristram Shandy', Laurence's most famous work.[4]

Stearne joined the Army in 1678, becoming an ensign in John St Leger's company, one of the many independent companies of foot that comprised the Army in Ireland at that time. The following year he was promoted to Lieutenant and married Elizabeth Tuckey (1657-1739). The couple enjoyed a long marriage, but she bore him no children. In 1684 the independent companies were amalgamated into regiments and Stearne's joined the Earl of Granard's Regiment, a unit destined to enjoy a long and illustrious

[3]For details of Stearne's background see Richard Caulfield (ed.) *The Journal of the Very Rev. Rowland Davies, LL.D.: (and Afterwards Dean of Cork) from March 8, 1688-9 to September 29, 1690,* (London: Camden Society, 1857), p. 116. His family tree can be found in the *Dublin Quarterly of Medical Science*, XXXIX, February and May 1865, p. 448.

[4]Ian Campbell Ross, *Laurence Sterne: A Life,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 28.

history as the Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland, the 18th Regiment of Foot and, finally, the Royal Irish Regiment.

Early in his career Stearne bore witness to the religious and political turmoil of the reign of King James II. His regiment was present in England during the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 but took no part in the Sedgemoor campaign. On its return to Ireland, it was embroiled in the purge of Protestants from the Army in Ireland carried out by Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell, during 1686-1687. Largely through the efforts of Lord Forbes, Granard's son and successor, the regiment, alone, managed to retain many Protestants. It returned to England in 1688 during the 'Glorious Revolution' and its Protestant core enabled it to become the only Irish regiment to survive the ensuing regime change.

Thereafter, Stearne saw extensive service in Ireland and continental Europe under King William III and the Duke of Marlborough. He was present in many of the most famous battles and sieges of the age including the Boyne (1690), Limerick (1690 & 91), Athlone (1691), Aughrim (1691), Namur (1695), Schellenburg (1704), Blenheim (1704), Ramillies (1706), Menin (1706), Oudenarde (1708), Lille (1708), Tournai (1709), and Bouchain (1711). However, as we shall see, a question mark hangs over his presence at Malplaquet (1709). Stearne enjoyed a steady, if unspectacular, career, becoming a Captain in 1689, Major in 1691, Lieutenant Colonel in 1695, Colonel in 1706 and Brigadier General in 1711. He was appointed Colonel of his regiment in 1712. While often referred to as a Brigadier General, he achieved the rank of Major General in 1730.[5] Stearne left his regiment in 1717 and, thereafter, served as Governor of Duncannon Fort (dates unknown) and as Governor of the Royal Military Hospital, Kilmainham, in Dublin, a post he held from 1728 until his death in November 1732.[6]

As to Stearne's character, alas little can be said. The art of the military memoir had not yet come of age in this period. In a similar vein to those written by his regimental colleagues, Stearne's journal has very much the feel of a general history of the age and contains comparatively little by way of personal anecdote or insights into his thoughts, feelings, and personality.[7] At most, his journal conveys the somewhat simplistic impression of an honest and down-to-earth soldier, who, like his comrades, held his commander, Marlborough, in the highest esteem. It would be tempting to build upon

[5]Caulfield, *Journal of Very Rev Rowland Davies*, p. 116 and NLI Ms. 11E, Copy of Confirmation of arms to Capt. Harman Richard Tighe, 5 July 1934.
[6]E S E Childers and Robert Stewart, *The Story of The Royal Hospital, Kilmainham,* (London: Hutchinson and Co, 1921), p. 84.
[7]For a discussion of this see Harari, Yuval Noah, 'Military Memoirs: A Historical Overview of the Genre from the Middle Ages to the Late Modern Era', *War in History*, 14, 3 (2007), pp. 289-309.

this by drawing upon the literary portrait of 'Uncle Toby'. Certainly, the connection is there. The most obvious being that the two served at Namur in 1695. However, it seems certain that Lawrence also drew upon others, most notably a Colonel Thomas Palliser, in developing this character.[8] Therefore the degree of correlation between Toby and Stearne is currently a matter of speculation, although further research may prove fruitful here. A sketch of Stearne's character can be enlivened a little by evidence of his apparent interest in astrology and astronomy, found within one of his manuscripts, which must now be presumed to be lost.[9] To this we can only add the insights of his long-term comrade, Robert Parker, who commented on Stearne's courage, gallantry, and good fortune.[10] The latter quality is certainly worthy of emphasis. Unlike Parker (and indeed Toby), Stearne came through his long career entirely unscathed. Just how remarkable this career was is best summed up by Stearne himself:

> In the month of May, 1717… His Majesty was pleased to give me leave to resign my regiment to Colonel William Cosby. After having served six crowned heads of England, had been forty years to one company without being ever re-moved from it, having made 21 campaigns; having been in 7 field battles, 15 sieges, 7 grand attacks on counterscarps and breaches, 2 remarkable retreats, at passing 4 of the enemy's lines besides several other petty actions on parties; and through God's providence, never had one drop of blood drawn from me in all those actions.[11]

Before we can turn our attention to the content of the journal, we must first address some problems associated with its production and history. To begin with it is helpful to clear up a minor problem relating to the different versions that are in circulation. Alongside the original there are three known transcripts. One of these is also held at the National Library of Ireland and the other two are held by the UK's National Army Museum (NAM).[12] One of the NAM's is itself a transcript of the NLI's transcript, and

[8]Arthur H Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years*, (London: Methuen & Co, 1975), p. 2, p. 9, p. 18 & p. 190.
[9]Caulfield, *Journal of Very Rev Rowland Davies*, p. 116.
[10]Robert Parker, *Memoirs of the most Remarkable Military Transactions from the Year 1683, to 1718,* (London: S. Austen, 1747), p. 202.
[11]Stearne, Journal, p. 177-178.
[12]NLI MS 1583, A History of the 18th (The Royal Irish) Regiment of Foot [renamed and from 1881 to 1922 as The Royal Irish Regiment], by Brigadier-General Robert Stearne. The National Army Museum (hereinafter NAM) 1970-09-13, Journal of Brigadier General Robert Stearne of the Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland 1684-1717. NAM 1968-07-392, (a copy of NLI 1583), The Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland: Journal of Robert Stearne 1685-1717.

it is this pair which provide the most scope for confusion. This version is entitled 'The Royal Regiment of Foot of Ireland' and so has often been classified as a regimental history rather than as a journal or memoir. It is unsigned and undated, but it contains introductory passages in which the author mentions that they were in possession of Stearne's journal and provides strong hints that it was produced during the nineteenth century and possibly after 1836.[13] The main body of the transcript strongly correlates with the 1726 original. However, it has been significantly altered, not only for style and legibility but also by the occasional alteration of factual details.[14]

These differences raise the question of whether this transcript was based upon the 1726 original or some other, now lost, version. This notion receives some support from a hint contained within Richard Cannon's history of the 18th Foot that an alternative version of Stearne's journal existed, and also by the broader question of why a later author would wish to make such alterations and thereby compromise the integrity of a historic text.[15] However, the provenance of both manuscripts strongly indicates that the NLI's transcript was indeed based upon the 1726 original, with the two being kept together for long periods. Therefore, it seems likely that embellishments and alterations in the transcript are entirely the later author's own.

Richard Caulfield mentions that a sale of Stearne's books was held in Cork in around 1830 and it is possible that the 1726 original was part of the sale, and that the purchaser was the author of the transcript. This is highly speculative but fits with the post-1836 production date. In any case, both were kept together in the collection of Sir William Betham and, following his death in 1853, were acquired by Sir Thomas Phillipps.[16] On the break-up of Phillipps's collection the transcript found its way into

[13]The transcript mentions the requirement for regiments to supply headquarters with an account of their service, which is possibly a reference to the official order of 1836 which underpinned the *Historical Records of the British Army* series produced by Richard Cannon.

[14]A notable example relates to the regiment's role at Ramillies in which Stearne's original comment that 'our regiment was greatly mauled during the attack on Ramillies village', has been changed to 'one brigade was greatly mauled…' in the later transcript.

[15]Cannon, *Historical Record of the Eighteenth Foot*, p2. Cannon describes the version of Stearne's manuscript that he used as covering the years up to 1719, rather than 1717, and as having been extended until 1759 by another officer of the regiment.

[16]A N L Munby, *The Formation of the Phillips Library from 1841 to 1871,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 74. Munby notes that both manuscripts were purchased by Sir Thomas Phillipps during the Betham sale in 1854. Both are inscribed with Phillipps MSS Nos: 13285 (1726 original) 13234 (first transcript). The first transcript also bears a Betham bookplate. Caulfield also discusses the provenance of the manuscripts, although the picture he presents is not clear and only partially tallies

the collection of Sam H Brooks of Slade House, Manchester. In 1895 Brooks copied it verbatim, creating the version that was acquired by the NAM in the 1960s via the Royal United Services Institution. The 1726 original was acquired by the Royal Irish Regiment. It was used extensively by the regimental historian, Lieutenant Colonel George Le Mesurier Gretton, who described it as being one of the regiment's most 'valued possessions'.[17] The NAM's other transcript was made at this time, by a Lieutenant Colonel A R Savile in 1911, as a gift to the men of the 2nd Battalion. It presumably came to the Museum as part of the regimental legacy it inherited from the Royal Irish following their disbandment in 1922. Saville also took the liberty of making minor edits and revisions for style and legibility although refrained from altering factual details. It is unclear when the 1726 original and the first transcript came into the collection of the NLI, but it is likely that they were acquired at different times as they have been catalogued on different systems.[18]

Beyond the problems surrounding the different versions of Stearne's journal and their provenance, there is another, more serious, difficulty concerning its authenticity that must be addressed. In the introduction to his edited volume of the memoirs of Robert Parker and the Comte de Mérode-Westerloo, David Chandler discussed a problem that was first identified by Christopher Atkinson and then touched on by Winston Churchill regarding the marked resemblance between the memoirs of Richard Kane and Robert Parker.[19] Both contain similar passages and phrases that are far too numerous to be coincidental and this raises the question of which of the two should be regarded as truly authentic.

In his analysis, Chandler dismissed the possibility that either man can be accused of plagiarism for the sake of literary fame. Both books were written for private use and were only published posthumously. He then outlined the case that could be put forward in support of the originality of each. In Kane's favour are his seniority in rank and the fact that his book appeared slightly before Parker's (1745 as opposed to 1746), which could leave open the possibility that Parker's son, who oversaw the publication

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with what is known from Munby; see Caulfield, *Journal of Very Rev Rowland Davies*, p. 29.

[17]George Le Mesurier Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment, From 1684 to 1902,* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons), p. 425.

[18]An enquiry submitted by this author to NLI 29 March 2021 received the reply that the NLI was unlikely to hold any provenance information about the manuscripts.

[19]Christopher Thomas Atkinson, *Marlborough and the Rise of the British Army*, (London: G P Putnam's Sons, 1921), p. ix; Winston Churchill, *Marlborough His Life and Times,* (London: George Harrap, 1947), book one, p. 489; David Chandler, ed, *Military Memoirs: Robert Parker and Comte de Mérode-Westerloo: The Marlborough Wars,* (London: Longmans, 1968), pp. xv-xviii.

of his father's book, plagiarised Kane's book as soon as it appeared to augment his father's account. In support of Parker's claim, it can be asserted that his book contains far more original material than Kane's and that his alone contains an account of how it came to be written, with Parker describing how it was based upon a journal that he kept from 1689.[20]

Chandler's primary conclusion is that it is impossible to get to the bottom of what has happened. Nonetheless, he quite rightly gives the idea that Kane's seniority makes his claim the stronger short shrift. Rank or social status can have no bearing upon the question of who is the original author. He is also surely correct in dismissing the argument that the earlier publication of Kane's book also lends weight to its claim to originality, on the basis that the style of Parker's book provides no evidence of it being a hotchpotch of two works hastily brought together by Parker's son. Indeed, the curious proximity of the publication dates could be better explained by Parker's son reacting to what he saw as an act of plagiarism on the part of Kane or his publishers and realising that he needed to move fast to establish his father's work in the public sphere. This is perhaps supported by the curiously defensive line on the title page of the second edition of Kane's work (published 1747), which reads 'the book was copied from a manuscript in General Kane's possession which can easily be made to appear when required', does this provide a hint that the book had been subject to a challenge by Parker's son?[21]

Where Chandler's analysis begins to go awry is in his failure to give due weight to the evidence in support of Parker's claim to originality. The whole tenor of his argument in fact leads this way and, to it, we can add the broader point that Parker's work has the greater feeling of integrity with a down-to-earth first-person style that would make the revelation that it was a fraud far more disconcerting than that of Kane's. Instead, Chandler lends his tentative support to a theory postulated by Winston Churchill, which is that both men had access to a common source, a kind of regimental diary, and that this best accounts for their similarities.

Chandler's reluctance to reach a firm decision and attendant adoption of this somewhat charitable theory seems to have been influenced by an unwillingness to impugn the reputations of either man. Yet this is a dilemma that cannot be avoided. While Parker must have used additional sources to fill gaps, such as the history of his regiment prior to his joining it, he makes no mention of using such a shared diary.

[20]Parker *Memoirs* p. 1-2.

[21]Chandler suggests that Parker's son held back publication until the 1745 death of the Duke of Ormonde, of whom Parker had been critical, this seems plausible, but the proximity of publication dates between Parker's and Kane's books also suggests a connection of some sort. Chandler, *Military Memoirs*, p. 10.

Given the extensive use that he would have to had made of such a document to account for the similarity between his and Kane's works, any suggestion that he did constitutes a serious attack upon the claim that his book was based upon his own journal.

This mystery is given another layer when Stearne's journal is added to the equation. Atkinson also appreciated that Millner, Stearne, Parker and Kane tended to report the same things.[22] However, he did not discuss this further, nor did he give a reference for the source that he used for Stearne. Seemingly unaware of Atkinson's observation, Chandler absolved both Stearne and Millner of being embroiled in this difficulty. While in Millner's case this assertion may stand up to scrutiny, it was a somewhat rash judgment regarding Stearne because, as Chandler admitted, he had not succeeded in identifying the whereabouts of Stearne's manuscript and was basing his conclusion solely upon the extracts that he had found in Cannon's regimental history.

In fact, a close comparison does reveal that Stearne's memoir has significant similarities with both Parker's and Kane's. This, combined with the shortcomings identified in Chandler's analysis, compels us to re-open this question afresh. A first conclusion we can draw is that this similarity quashes any lingering doubts as to whether Parker's son plagiarised Kane in 1745 – clearly the problem goes back further than this. We should also disregard any judgment in favour of Stearne on the basis that his journal exists in the original and can be dated to 1726. Just because the original works of the other two have not survived does not mean that one or both do not predate Stearne's. Moreover, another question mark hangs over Stearne's journal. Much of his account of the battle of Malplaquet looks to have been copied from Millner's journal.[23] Perhaps this makes Stearne's the least likely of the three to be the original but, in his defence, it can be asserted that the similarities between his and Parker's and Kane's are far less pronounced. Indeed, if Stearne is guilty of plagiarism it would certainly seem that he made a considerable effort to rework the text and insert original material. Nonetheless, his journal remains peppered with tell-tale phrases and often follows the same broad narrative structure as the other two.

Alternatively, the similarities between the three could be said to support the regimental diary theory. It would surely make more sense that they all had access to

[22]Christopher Thomas Atkinson, 'Marlborough's Sieges', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 52, (1934), p. 201.

[23]John Millner, *A compendious journal of all the marches, famous battles, sieges, and other ... begun A.D. 1701, and ended in 1712*, (London: William Bower, 1733), p. 274-275, compare with Stearne, *Journal* p. 135. To have copied Millner, Stearne must have seen his book before it was published. The possibility that Millner copied Stearne cannot be entirely ruled out, but this would be a variance the overall integrity of Millner's work.

a common document than to suggest that they copied each other in turn. However, we have already seen that the idea that this was a regimental diary seems improbable. In addition to the attack that this theory makes upon Parker's own specific claim to originality, we may also question the plausibility of the existence of such a document on the basis that, as noted earlier, all their works possess rather more the character of general histories. Indeed, they are often frustratingly lacking in regimental details, particularly those relating to the regiment's role in major battles. More broadly, there is nothing in any of the three works to indicate the existence of such a diary and so it must remain pure speculation. One thing we can say is that the common source is likely to be a document written during the wars themselves. Stearne, as we have seen, returned to Ireland and remained there until his death. Parker's later life is something of a mystery, but it also seems likely that he too returned to Ireland and settled in Cork. However, in 1710 Kane left the regiment, first taking command of a regiment of his own and then, in 1712, being posted to Minorca, where he served as Lieutenant Governor, and then Governor until his death in 1736. His biographer makes no mention of his ever returning to Ireland in this period. Considering this, the document which formed the basis of his book must, in all probability, have been created before the period 1710-12 for it to have been shared between the three.[24]

The only document that fits the bill as a common source is Parker's journal. This is the only record that we know of which was created at the time. Parker also indicates that he shared it with his friends, and we should certainly include both Stearne and Kane, his long-standing comrades in arms, amongst them.[25] This speaks to a wider point, that it is also reasonable to suggest that all three men often reminisced together and may even have deliberately picked each other's brains on occasion. While any answer to this question must remain tentative and speculative, a natural process of oral cross-fertilisation underpinned by Parker's journal as a core shared narrative document seems the most plausible and satisfactory explanation. However, as a final note on this problem, emphasis must also be placed upon the differences between them. The most obvious examples include details such as the size of armies and sub-units and the casualties incurred in various battles, where they often diverge. This indicates that whatever collaboration took place between them was informal, that they each used additional sources, and that they ultimately worked alone.

It remains for us to clarify how Stearne's journal has been used by historians and then to ask what, if any, new information does it contain? Through its extensive use in the

[24]Bruce Laurie, *The Life of Richard Kane: Britain's First Lieutenant-Governor of Minorca,* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), p. 111.
[25]Parker, *Memoirs*, p. 2. See also The British Library (hereinafter BL) Add MS 23642, Miscellaneous papers and correspondence of Lord Trawly; 1679-1759; No. 5. [Captain] Rob[ert] Parker to Colonel; Dublin, 13 Sept. 1708, f. 35.

works of Cannon and Gretton, Stearne's journal certainly has a foothold in the historiography. This facilitated its limited exploitation by Chandler and possibly also by Atkinson. Beyond this, Stearne has been entirely missing from all other mainstream histories. His absence is particularly glaring in Winston Churchill's multi-volume history of his ancestor, Marlborough, particularly as Churchill lauded Stearne's three Royal Irish comrades, commenting that, without them, 'it would be difficult to paint a lively picture of these memorable campaigns'.[26] Perhaps even more striking is the fact that no trace of Stearne's journal can be found in the much more recent works of James Falkner, who would have been far better placed to encounter or track it down than Churchill.[27] A few mentions of Stearne can be found in Brigadier A E C Bredin's 'A History of the Irish Soldier' although, as a broad overview of the subject, this work adds little if anything to the scholarship of this period. [28] It seems that the only major historians of recent years to have made use of Stearne are John Childs and David Blackmore. Childs' use is negligible and constitutes only a couple of brief references, one in relation to the purges of Tyrconnell and the other regarding the Williamite War in Ireland. [29] Blackmore lists Stearne amongst the sources used for his book 'Destructive and Formidable', which charts the development of British Army musketry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here Blackmore posits the highly plausible theory that the Royal Regiment of Ireland played a crucial role in the development of the cutting-edge 'platoon fire' tactics employed by Marlborough's' army. But while Blackmore credits Parker, Kane and General Ingoldsby (the Regimental Colonel) for this accomplishment, Stearne is, again, conspicuous by his absence. This can be explained by Stearne having little to say on this subject but, as the regiment's commanding officer, he must have also played a prominent role.[30]

If not virgin territory, Stearne's journal certainly constitutes an underused source. Considering this, we should now turn to our final question and enquire what, if anything, it can add to our understanding of this period? Given that the narrative of these wars is a well-trodden historical path, and that the journal, as we have seen, is neither wholly original nor wholly unknown, we should not expect the information that it contains to be of a revelatory character. An analysis of Stearne's work will thereby be more a question of panning for nuggets of information which in small and

[26]Churchill, *Marlborough*, 1947 edition, book 1, p. 490.
[27]Stearne's absence is particularly notable in Falkner's, *Marlborough's Wars: Eyewitness Accounts,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2005).
[28]A E C Bredin, A History of the Irish Soldier, (Belfast: Century Books, 1987).
[29]John Childs, *The Army, James II and the Glorious Revolution*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 61 and *General Percy Kirke and the later Stuart Army,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) p. 184.
[30]David Blackmore, *Destructive and Formidable: British Infantry Firepower 1642-1765,* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2014), pp. 103-104.

subtle ways may deepen and enrich our understanding. Space here allows for the citing of only a few examples, but these should help to lay the groundwork for further research.

The Siege of Athlone in June 1691, during the Irish War of 1689-91, provides a good starting point. Athlone formed a key anchor point in the Jacobites' defensive line along the River Shannon, to which they had fallen back following their defeat on the Boyne. The early phase of the siege went badly for the Williamites. They had been repeatedly checked in their attempts to storm the fortified town on the western bank and found themselves facing a crisis when a major assault planned for the 29 June had to be aborted when it became clear it could not be attempted without the element of surprise. The two most detailed histories of the siege describe how the Williamite's sought to capitalised on the false sense of security to which the Jacobite's succumbed in the wake of their success in having seen off this Williamite attack through a mere show of force.[31] To do so, the Williamites immediately prepared a fresh attack under the cover of a deception plan. They first sought to give the impression that they were about to draw off their army and attempt a crossing elsewhere. At the same time, they kept their assault force in readiness for an attack to be mounted the following day during the changing of the Jacobite guard. To ensure secrecy, guards were posted to the hills nearby to ensure that local people would not be able to view what was really happening and so report it to the Jacobites. The Williamite ruse was a complete success, enabling them to cross the river and storm the town with minimal opposition.

Stearne contributes to this story by describing how a Williamite soldier had gone over to the enemy and reported to their commander, the Marquess St Ruth, that the Williamites were indeed about to withdraw, thereby further confirming them in their sense of security.[32] Stearne was unable to say whether the man was a deserter, perhaps hoping to glean a reward from the Jacobites, or a spy deliberately despatched to plant false information. Both are plausible. The first correlates with the wider deception that the Williamites were weaving and the second with a pattern of deserters from both sides bringing news across the river to their erstwhile enemies. Stearne's information certainly should not be accepted without question. It is uncorroborated by any other source, and this must place a question mark over its veracity. Indeed, as this is one of several stories about the role of spies and deserters relating to the siege, one possibility is that Stearne was either misinformed or has misremembered. That said, Stearne would have no motive to invent it and his uncertainty over the soldier's

[31]Diarmuid Murtagh, 'The Siege of Athlone', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 83, 1, (1953), pp. 58-81 and Harman Murtagh, *The Sieges of Athlone 1690 and 1691,* (Athlone: Old Athlone Society, 1973).

[32]Stearne, Journal, p. 15.

motives gives the story an added ring of truth.[33] If accurate, he has provided us with a key piece of information that helps us to better understand the outcome of this important siege, which, in unlocking the Jacobite's position on the Shannon, proved to be the real turning point of the war. In any case, this information certainly needs to be incorporated into any fresh appraisal of the siege.

A second example concerns the opening moves of the War of the Spanish Succession undertaken to the south of Nijmegen in the Low Countries in June 1702. Here an Allied force commanded by the Earl of Athlone, which included a small British contingent, nearly fell victim to a double envelopment by a French force. It only escaped after a frantic march, punctuated by desperate rear-guard fighting. Stearne, again, adds a crucial detail to this story, recording that, had the French force on the allied right not stopped to pillage the Allied baggage train, they would certainly have been able to complete the encirclement.[34] This time a deeper dive into the primary sources does yield up a corroboration of this information, in an account by Marlborough's Secretary, Adam de Cardonnel.[35] While useful, this should not be taken as the end of the debate. In particular, further corroboration should be sought from French sources.[36] The importance of unpicking this story lies in the fact that Stearne and other contemporary chroniclers are vocal in proclaiming its profound significance.[37] The capture or destruction of Athlone's force would have left the Netherlands exposed to invasion, severely compromising the strategic position of the Allies. Moreover, the loss of the small British contingent would have proved a heavy blow to Marlborough's fledgling army. While more work remains to be done, once again, it seems that we have Stearne to thank for enriching our understanding of an important event, a remarkable escape from the jaws of a defeat that could have seriously altered the course of the war at its very outset.

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[33]Stearne's story is particularly notable for its absence in George Story's, *An Impartial History of the Wars in Ireland...*', (London: Richard Chiswell, 1693), pp 105-107.

[34]Stearne, Journal, p. 46.

[35]BL Add MS 28918, Vol II. 14 March, 1701/2 -13 June, 1705. Netherlands, United Provinces: Letters from A Cardonnel to J Ellis, from the seat of war in…, letter by Adam de Cardonnel, from Nijmegen, June 1702, ff. 13.

[36]For example, no mention of the baggage is found within one of the most detailed French histories, which instead suggests that difficult terrain accounts for the French delay see J J G Pelet and F E de Le Vault, *Mémoires Militaires Relatifs a la Guerre de la Succession D'Espagne Sous Louis XIV,* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1836), tome 2, pp. 46-47.

[37]Millner, *Journal*, p 17 and Parker, *Memoirs*, p 76 (although this is one of the many phrases that he shares with Stearne) and Adam de Cardonnel, in letter referenced above.

In addition to helping to deepen our understanding of some significant points of campaign narrative, Stearne's journal can also be used to illuminate some contentious points of regimental history. By far the most well-known problem of this type concerns the role of the Royal Irish at Malplaquet. This battle is notorious for being Marlborough's bloodiest. Here his army came up against a determined French force in a well-entrenched position between two patches of woodland. In one of their many shared phrases, Parker, Kane and Stearne, all describe this battle as being the most desperate and bloody in living memory. This engagement also holds a special status as the most celebrated story found in Parker's book and is the only detailed account of the regiment in battle to be found in any of the works of the four Royal Irish chroniclers.

Parker begins by indicating that the regiment formed part of Lieutenant General Withers' force. This was the last to depart from the recently concluded siege of Tournai, and so was late to arrive in the battle area. Due to their late arrival Parker relates that they had to draw up by themselves on the right of the whole army opposite the wood of Sart (or Taisnières). He then describes how they advanced into the wood until they came across a small clearing. Here, in a bizarre twist of fate, they encountered their Jacobite counterpart, a regiment loyal to the exiled King James, which was likewise styled the 'Royal Regiment of Ireland'. Also known as Colonel Dorington's Regiment, this unit was one component of the Irish Brigade – the famous Irish soldiers in exile, known as the 'Wild Geese', who were then in the service of France. In a memorable passage Parker describes how his regiment bested its Jacobite sister unit using their superior 'platoon fire' system; tactics which they seem to have played a key role in perfecting.[38]

This account is widely acknowledged to be of considerable historical significance. Not only does it relate a remarkable and unique all-Ireland clash, but it also provides a key piece of evidence for the tactical superiority that underpinned the success of Marlborough's army in this period. However, while oft quoted, this account is highly problematic. A serious challenge to its veracity was made by John O'Callaghan, a nineteenth century historian of the Irish Brigade.[39] O'Callaghan questioned it on the basis that other evidence revealed Dorington's men to have been engaged on the opposite edge of the Wood of Sart, the centre-left of the French line, where they suffered severe losses engaging Allied forces commanded by Schullenberg and

[38]Parker, *Memoirs,* pp. 163-165.
[39]John O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France*…, (Glasgow: R & T Washbourne, 1869), pp. 267-268

Lottum.[40] O'Callaghan backed up his argument by pointing out that Parker's account was uncorroborated by either Kane or Millner. To this we can add that the story is further undermined by the fact that Parker may not have been present at Malplaquet. Earlier in his book he described how he had been posted to Ireland in a training role in the summer of 1708 and that he held this position for two years. If so, he would only have returned sometime in the middle of 1710 and his account of Malplaquet must be second hand.[41]

However, this question has been considered afresh by several historians and there is also some additional evidence that can be brought to bear upon it, including, of course, that of Stearne. A first problem to be addressed is the failure of his two colleagues to mention this incident and the credibility of Parker as a witness. Both Padraig Lenihan and David Chandler give credence to Parker's account and speculate on why Kane and Millner would choose to leave this incident out of their books.[42] Lenihan's contention that such details do not fit with their works, because they were written as general histories, reads convincingly. However, Chandler's contention that Parker alone had a special interest in tactics is suspect regarding Kane, who wrote a well-known book on the subject.[43] Beyond this, an argument can be put forward that Parker was in fact present at Malplaquet. Not only does his account have the feel of a first-person narrative but we also know from a letter he wrote to Stearne that he was lobbying to return to the regiment as early as the autumn of 1708 and may have been successful in doing so in time for the battle.[44] Moreover, Parker does not provide a specific mention of when he returned to the field army from Ireland and this leaves open the possibility that he simply made an error when writing his memoir. Finally, and of most significance, is the fact that Parker is listed on Charles Dalton's 'Malplaquet Roll'.[45] If Parker was present at Malplaquet the accuracy of his account is greatly enhanced. Even if he wasn't, it would be difficult to explain why he would invent such a story although, if he did receive it second hand, this may help to explain why it fits poorly with what else we know.

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[40]For an example of primary source that corroborates this see Daniel Penant, 'A French Account of the Battle of Malplaquet', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research,* 97, 390 (2019), pp. 222-228.

[41]Parker, *Memoirs*, p. 148

[42]Padraig Lenihan, 'The 'Irish Brigade' 1690-1715', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland/Iris an dá chultúr*, 31 (2016). p 70; David Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount, 1989), p. 262.

[43]Richard Kane, *A New System of Military Discipline*… published in the same volume as *Campaigns of King William and Queen Anne.*

[44]BL Add MS 23642, Parker's letter to Stearne, September 1708.

[45]Charles Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714, vol VI 1707-1714,* (London: Francis Edward, 1960 reprint), p. 355.

Here we can bring in Stearne, for his account of the battle clearly backs Parker up.[46] While he provides less detail than his comrade, he embellishes the tale with the derisive comment that following their defeat 'our brother harpers scowered [sic] off as fast as their heels could carry them.'[47] However, while a useful corroboration, it is not quite as emphatic as it would first seem. As mentioned earlier, it is by no means certain that Stearne was himself present at Malplaquet. Unlike both Parker and Kane, he is not listed on Dalton's roll, and this is corroborated by Parker who states that Kane commanded the regiment that day. Moreover, as also noted, Stearne seemingly lifted much of his account of this battle from Millner's journal and may well have used Parker as a source for other elements, including the encounter with Dorington's unit. He also makes a curious error regarding the timing of the opening of the battle, giving it as 10 instead of 8 in the morning. All of this adds weight to an argument that he was not there. Against this it can be asserted that he includes details not found in his colleagues' books and that both Cannon and Gretton both credit Stearne as being present, although they provide no source reference.[48] In addition, Stearne makes no explicit statement to the effect that he was not present, and, in the closing passage of his journal, he mentions that took part in 'seven field battles'. Mathematically speaking, this strongly suggests that he was present at Malplaquet, or at least that he claimed to be. Once more we must concede that the jury is out on this question but, again, Stearne would have no reason to concoct or repeat this story without believing it to be true and so, in either case, his substantiation of Parker carries significant weight.

Despite the continuing grounds for doubt, it is reasonable to conclude that we should have confidence in the essence of Parker's story, although some of the details may still be open to question. This brings us to the second, and more intractable, problem which concerns the discrepancy in the position of the two units involved. Winston Churchill, David Chandler and Padraig Lenihan have all posited different theories to explain it.[49] Churchill suggests that the British regiment simply got lost and wandered through the forest towards the noise of the fighting and thereby blundered into their namesake enemy. A minor problem with this theory is the great distance – several miles - that the British unit had to travel to reach this point. More seriously, it doesn't overcome the problem of Parker's depiction of an isolated skirmish seemingly being

[46]Both Cannon and Gretton mention Steane's corroboration of Parker but only briefly and unsatisfactorily, and this has not been picked up by later historians. See Cannon, *Historical Record of the 18th Foot,* p. 37, and Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment,* p. 59.

[47]Stearne, Journal p. 136.

[48]Cannon, *Historical Record of the 18th Foot,* p. 86, and Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment*, p. 425.

[49]Lenihan, 'The Irish Brigade 1690-1715', p. 70; Churchill, *Marlborough His Life and Times*, (London: The Folio Society, 1991), vol 4, p. 118; Chandler, *Marlborough,* p. 262.

fought out in the bloody epicentre of the battlefield. Lenihan, by contrast, suggests that it was Dorington's which moved later in the battle. While this would solve both problems, in making this assertion Lenihan must have been unaware of the earlier analysis undertaken by Churchill and Chandler. Both contend that the account of General St Hilaire makes it near-certain that the Irish Brigade did not move from its position on the French centre-left, having moved to this position from the centre at some point between 11 and 12 o'clock.

It is Chandler who offers up the most detailed analysis and the most intriguing theory to resolve matters. He suggests that the British regiment was detached from Withers' force and joined that of Lieutenant General Lottum and so was directly employed in the area in which Dorington's was posted. However, this theory presents some serious problems. To begin with, Chandler reads Parker's statement that the regiment drew up on the right of the entire army to mean the right of the British contingent only. This is far from satisfactory. In addition, the problem of the discrepancy in the nature of the fighting is made far worse if we accept Chandler's theory. Churchill's theory at least tallies with Parker's depiction of their isolated advance into the woods, even if the encounter at the end feels somewhat incongruous. However, if part of Lottum's force, the Royal Irish would have been in the thick of the fighting – advancing as part of a thick wedge of troops into the most desperate and hotly contested area of the battlefield, and this clearly jars badly with Parker's account. Much more serious, however, is that Chandler seems to have committed a grievous error in presenting his evidence. He contends that Corporal Matthew Bishop, an eye-witness who fought with Lottum's force, states that the 18th Regiment of Foot were present in his brigade. However, Bishop makes no such statement.[50] How Chandler has made such an error is difficult to understand, especially as this is the linchpin of his argument. The other three sources that he also cites in support are far flimsier. The first of these, Lieutenant General Wackerbarth's eye-witness statement concerning the position of Withers' force is problematic and was also used by Churchill to uphold his theory. The other two, John Fortescue's regimental list in his 'History of the British Army', and Kenneth Moir's 'Corporal Bishop S'En Va-T-En Guerre with my Lord Marlborough' are only unreferenced secondary sources.

Stearne can, once again, be brought to bear upon this matter. Here his evidence delivers a further critical blow to Chandler's theory. To begin with he provides a precious piece of information which enables us to build upon Parker's statement that they arrived late for the battle. Unlike the other units of Withers' force, who had come up from Tournai the evening before the battle, Stearne mentions that the Royal

[50]Chandler references Bishop's *The Life and Adventures of Matthew Bishop*, (London: J Brindley, 1744), p. 207. However, no such reference to the Royal Irish (18th Regiment of Foot) can be found here or elsewhere in this book.

Irish did not arrive until the morning of the battle. This alone makes it highly unlikely that it had time to march the additional distance required to join Lottum's force.[51] He then gives two separate snippets of information on the regiment's location in the battle line. The first of these states that they drew up 'on the right of our Dragoons close by the wood of Sart'. He then corroborates Parker by stating that the regiment was posted on 'the right of the whole army behind the wood of Sart'. The Dragoons mentioned can only be the 10 squadrons from Withers' force under the command of General Miklau. These were posted on extreme right of the Allied line and were tasked with advancing through the wood of Sart to mount a special flanking attack on the French left. The Royal Irish being deployed to the right of this force would correspond with both Parker and Stearne's assertion that they were indeed on the right of the entire army.

Stearne's evidence may be compromised by the question mark over his presence at Malplaquet. Moreover, it does not help us to overcome the problem of the distance his regiment had to travel to engage Dorington's, nor the dissonance resulting from the depiction of an isolated battle seemingly taking place in an area where the fighting was fiercest. However, it provides a strong corroboration that this action did indeed take place and serves to uphold the theory posited by Churchill that the Royal Irish advanced in isolation right through the forest and by chance came across their Jacobite equivalent, making this by far the most satisfactory explanation that we have of this famous action.

Despite the question mark over its authenticity, Stearne's journal must certainly be ranked amongst the most important soldier memoirs of this period. It contains a wealth of detail and can shed light on many of the great events to which he bore witness. As we have seen, it can be used to deepen our understanding of the narrative of events and settle points of long-running dispute. There is also the intriguing literary connection to the character 'Uncle Toby', which may justify further exploration. To these we can add two other areas of potential utility. Although it has a rather dry character the journal can, on occasion, be used to help us paint a more vivid picture of the warfare of the time. A notable example is Stearne's account of the grim subterranean warfare of mine and counter-mine that characterised the bitter and protracted Siege of Tournai in 1709. Secondly, and by contrast, it can be brought to bear on many matters of factual detail. It should certainly be consulted on questions concerning the times and dates of events, the size and composition of armies and the extent of battle casualties. A notable example regarding the latter is the figure of 2,000 that Stearne gives for the Williamite losses in killed and wounded at the Boyne, which

[51]See Chandler's comments on Withers' late deployment, *Marlborough*, p. 257

is more than double the best current estimate.[52] While this, and other examples, should be treated with caution, it seems certain that Stearne's journal can be mined to fill gaps or contribute to debates on many such problems. For these reasons, the journal will surely prove to be an invaluable resource for historians for many years to come and its full integration into the mainstream historiography is long overdue.

[52]See, Padraig Lenihan, *1690, The Battle of the Boyne,* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003), pp. 234-238.

Irish Junkers? The Irish Landed Class and the British Army in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

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ABSTRACT
The Irish landed class from the eighteenth century onwards was one of the British Army's main sources of officers; and as a national/regional elite with military service central to their sense of identity they have been compared to the Prussian Junker class. Their political relationship with the British government was, however, complex and occasionally confrontational. This article examines the extent of their military involvement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, compares this with their counterparts in Britain, and suggests some parallels between their experience and that of regional landed elites in the Prussian Army in the late eighteenth century.

2022 was not only the centenary of the disbandment of the southern Irish regiments of the British Army, it also marked 52 years since Correlli Barnett, in his still valuable book, *Britain and her Army*, famously described the Anglo-Irish gentry as 'the closest thing Britain ever possessed to the Prussian Junker class'.[1] That view struck some scholars, at the time and subsequently, as arresting, thought-provoking and wrong, or

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[1]Correlli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army, 1509–1970: A Military, Political and Social Survey,* (London: Allen Lane, 1970), pp. 314–315.

at the least a significant exaggeration.[2] Certainly, Irish landed officers never dominated the British officer corps numerically in the way the Brandenburg and east-Elbian gentry did the pre-1871 Prussian Army.[3] But here, of course, Barnett was not talking about absolute numbers: he was discussing a distinctive national/regional elite, over-represented in the army's officer corps and for whom military service was a central part of their collective identity. In that sense the comparison does have validity, and had he included the Scottish gentry alongside the Irish the parallels would be even closer. Furthermore, in his reference to the Junkers, he reminded us that the Irish landed class, as a regional military elite, were not simply a British but were also a European phenomenon. This article offers, therefore, both a high-level overview of the Irish gentry's military involvement from the mid-eighteenth century to the start of the twentieth, and some preliminary statistical comparisons with their counterparts in Great Britain and Prussia.

The statistics deployed here come from a set of databases created by tracking the military involvement (or, in some cases, non-involvement) of 200 randomly-selected Irish landed families – the 'Database Families' – drawn from all 32 Irish counties.[4] In terms of definitions, 'Irish' means families who owned Irish estates in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose Irish property was the largest element of their landholdings and who were permanently resident in Ireland for at least part of this

[2]Ian Beckett, ed., *The Army and the Curragh Incident, 1914*, (London: Bodley Head, 1986), p. 3; Elizabeth A Muenger, *The British Military Dilemma in Ireland: Occupation Politics, 1886-1914,* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1991), pp. 18-19.

[3]Carmen Winkel, "'Getreue wie goldt" oder "malicious wie der deuffel"?', in Lorenz Friedrich Beck & Frank Göse, *Brandenburg und seine Landschaften: Zentrum und Region vom Spätmittelalter bis 1800,* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2009), pp. 199-219; Christopher Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great*, 2nd edn., (Chicago: Emperor's Press, 1996), pp. 39-47 & pp. 51-53; Daniel J Hughes, *The King's Finest: A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussia's General Officers, 1871-1914,* (New York: Praeger, 1987), pp. 3-4 & pp. 24-38.

[4]Randomly selected, in that families were not chosen because they had military connections. A practical factor, however, was the availability of sufficiently detailed genealogical information in standard sources, for example, *Burke's Peerage/Landed Gentry*, *Cokayne's Complete Peerage* etc., to allow a reliable reconstruction of a family's structure over successive generations through the male line. The families include 174 who owned Irish estates in 1775, 14 who acquired them between 1775-1799, & 12 who obtained estates in 1800-15: the changing composition allows for the replacement of families dying out/relocating and the inclusion of 17 Catholic families (9%) who became eligible to hold regular British commissions, albeit with constraints, from 1793.

period.[5] 'Landed' means estates of at least 1,000 acres.[6] And 'families' means the landowners themselves at any given point and their immediate male relatives: fathers, uncles, brothers and sons.[7] For convenience the terms 'landed class' and 'gentry' are used interchangeably, so gentry here includes titled as well as untitled families. Finally, military commissions refer to those in regular regiments and wartime units raised for general service; auxiliary formations like the militia and the yeomanry, which were also an important component of the Irish gentry's military identity, are not covered.[8]

In the 200 Database Families, 3,026 males have so far been identified who were born between January 1700 and December 1899 and who survived to adulthood. Of these, 1,141, or 38%, received regular or wartime commissions in the army (including the East India Company's service) and navy between, roughly, the 1720s and the 1920s. Table 1 shows the percentage of those born in each quartile who secured commissions. As can be seen, their participation levels start rising from the mid-eighteenth century and continue upwards, other than a dip early in the nineteenth century connected to army downsizing and the post-1815 economic depression; in the final quartile there is a sharp rise due largely, but not solely, to the pull factor of the Great War. These are minimum figures. The further back one goes, inevitably, the sketchier the available information becomes. Experience suggests that genealogical sources like *Burkes Peerage/Landed Gentry* are largely accurate for the nineteenth century but under-record military service by about 10% for the second half of the

[5]So, under this definition the Dukes of Devonshire, despite their large Irish estates, do not qualify as Irish but the earls of Midleton, for a period in the eighteenth century resident in England, do.

[6]Estate sizes as in U.H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland: an alphabetical list of the owners of estates of 500 acres or £500 valuation and upwards in Ireland, with the acreage and valuation in each county,* (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1878). No such list exists for the later-eighteenth century, but for the Database Families it can be assumed with reasonable confidence their landholdings were then of broadly comparable size. The nature of the sources means there is an inevitable bias towards wealthier families (that is, those in the 1870s with estates of over 3,000 acres/£3,000 pa valuation), but a particular effort has been made to ensure that one-third of the Database Families fall into the 1,000-3,000 acre range.

[7]Termed the 'core' family group; the research project also covers landowners' nephews and cousins, the 'extended' family group, not included here.

[8]For the Irish yeomanry and militia see Allan Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry 1796-1834,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998); Sir Henry McAnally, *The Irish Militia 1793-1816: A Social and Military Study,* (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1949); Ivan F. Nelson, *The Irish Militia 1793-1802: Ireland's Forgotten Army,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army, 1854-1992,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

eighteenth century, not least for eldest sons (probably for reasons of space). Since, however, all 3,026 individuals have as far as possible been checked against army lists and other sources, the figures are, it is hoped, sufficiently accurate to establish reliable trajectories of military service over time.[9] Had commissions in auxiliary forces been included, the percentages would be markedly higher.

Birth quartile	Adult males	Regular/war-time commis-sions (% of all males)	Army (% of commis-sions)	HEIC/Indian Army (% of commis-sions)	Royal Navy (% of commis-sions)
1700-24	**326**	**45 (14%)**	39 (87%)	1 (2%)	5 (11%)
1725-49	**347**	**100 (29%)**	91 (91%)	1 (1%)	8 (8%)
1750-74	**466**	**170 (36%)**	146 (86%)	6 (4%)	18 (11%)
1775-99	**519**	**209 (40%)**	154 (74%)	12 (6%)	43 (21%)
1800-24	**471**	**163 (35%)**	136 (83%)	7 (4%)	20 (13%)
1825-49	**388**	**170 (44%)**	141 (83%)	7 (4%)	22 (13%)
1850-74	**336**	**157 (46%)**	140 (89%)	3 (2%)	14 (9%)
1875-99	**173**	**127 (73%)**	112 (88%)	3 (2%)	12 (10%)
Total	**3026**	**1141 (38%)**	959 (84%)	40 (4%)	142 (13%)

200 landed families, geographical distribution Leinster 63, Ulster 61, Munster 48, Connacht 28. Estate size/value (1870s): ≥ 3,000 acres/£3,000 pa valuation, 135 families (68%); 1000-3000 acres, £1000-2999 pa valuation, 65 families (32%). Denominational breakdown (early 1800s): Catholic 17 (9%), remainder Protestant. Source: Families Database, compiled from genealogical reference works (for example, *Burkes Peerage/Landed Gentry, Dictionary of National Biography, Dictionary of Irish Biography*), military reference works (annual Army Lists, Hart's Army Lists, Navy Lists, *Royal Military Calendar*), & archival sources.

Table 1: Military Participation Levels amongst Irish Landed Families (adult males born 1 Jan 1700-31 Dec 1899).

The trend shown in Table 1 reflects the Irish gentry's evolution: from a national/regional elite within the Hanoverian composite state in the later eighteenth century seeking access to state service; to one that, as a result of global war, insurrection and political change, had by 1815 become integrated, albeit precariously, into a broader 'British' ruling class; to be followed, as their domestic political and economic position declined, by an increased focus on military and imperial service that by the start of the twentieth century had given them some characteristics of a

[9]Checking individuals, while still laborious, becomes easier with the introduction of indexes in the army lists from 1765 onwards.

professional military-imperial service class.[10] In particular, their position as landlords had eroded rapidly in the last third of the nineteenth century in the face of popular resistance and government action, and the 1903 Wyndham Land Act is here taken as marking the beginning of the end of Irish landlordism, though the process took some years more to work through.[11]

The breakdown of the 1,141 commissions by service demonstrates that the army (84%) was always the dominant choice. The 13% who joined the Royal Navy are, however, a reminder that there was also a strong naval tradition amongst the Irish landed class, prominent officers including Henry Blackwood, Richard Meade, Charles Beresford and David Beattie. A shift towards naval service in the early 1800s reflected not only the navy's expansion and growing prestige but also, it seems, some disruption to army patronage networks following the Union.[12] The figure of just 4% going to the East India Company/Indian Armies indicates that, despite significant Irish involvement in India, a career in the sub-continent was less popular amongst core members of these relatively wealthy landed families; their cousins and nephews, for example, were twice as likely to go into the Indian service.[13] Around 100 of these officers became brigadiers or higher, seven becoming field-marshals; more than 170 others reached the rank of colonel or lieutenant-colonel and there were nearly 30 rear-admirals and above, which indicates that for many families military service was a career, not a short-term rite of passage. 137 officers (12%) from these families died on operations; and numbers of others died on garrison duty around the world.

By way of comparison, 219 family members, or 7%, became clergymen of various denominations, although mostly Anglican. The church, therefore, was five times less popular than the armed forces. There was, however, a distinct change over time: of males born into these families in the second half of the eighteenth century, one in nine

[10]For example, of 116 males born into these (core) families between 1870-1879, 55 received regular military commissions (52 army, 3 navy); 15 obtained wartime commissions in the Boer &/or Great Wars, 3 doing so from positions in the colonial bureaucracy; and at least 11 of the remaining 46 were either UK/colonial officials or had emigrated to the dominions. So, 81 (70%) had a military-imperial connection and there may have been others.

[11]On the decline of landlordism, see Paul Bew, *Land and the National Question in Ireland 1858*-82, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1978); Philip Bull, *Land, Politics and Nationalism: A Study of the Irish Land Question,* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996); Terence Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland,* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 2001).

[12]The legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, which came into effect in January 1801.

[13]The percentage of nephews and cousins joining the Honourable East India Company's Service (HEICS) or Indian Army was just under 8% (Families Database)..

went into the church, while in the second half of the nineteenth century that figure plummeted to one in a hundred. This suggests either that the Holy Spirit was now moving less energetically amongst them or, more likely, that the fall reflected the availability of a wider range of careers, especially in imperial service, and the ending of private ownership of church livings.

So, this was a heavily militarised group. We tend to take that for granted. But perhaps we should not, because the Irish gentry's military service needs to be seen in the context of their changing political circumstances and their complex, and sometimes difficult, relationship with the British state. Two particular aspects are examined here: the origins of their military tradition in the eighteenth century, and some of the friction points that developed between them and the British government over the ensuing 150 years, and the impact, if any, this had on their desire for military service.

As Table 1 shows, the proportion of males from the Database Families entering the armed forces during the eighteenth century more than doubled between the first and third birth quartiles. For most Irish landed 'military' families, therefore, their continuous connection with the British Army dates to the second half of the eighteenth century. There were three main drivers for this. The first was greater opportunity. The British state was at war for 52 of the 77 years between 1739 and 1815, usually with France, and the size of the army's officer corps steadily increased in the course of the century.[14] In addition, from the late 1760s, following the Townshend viceroyalty, until 1800 military patronage played a key part in Dublin Castle's management of the Irish parliament, and the Irish landed elite took full advantage of the increased access to military service this offered.[15] The second reason was their

[14]The number of regular officers rose from 2,100 in the early 1750s to nearly 4,600 during the Seven Years War, fell to 2,600 in 1770 & grew again to almost 4,100 in the American War of Independence: J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 99. For the impact of the eighteenth-century wars on Ireland and Britain, see Charles Ivar McGrath, *Ireland and Empire, 1692-1770,* (London: Routledge, 2012); Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); idem., *The British Isles and the War of American Independence,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation 1793-1815,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Thomas Bartlett, 'Ireland during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1791-1815', in James Kelly, ed., *The Cambridge History of Ireland, Vol III, 1730-1880,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Anthony Page, *Britain and the Seventy Years War, 1744-1815,* (London: Palgrave, 2015).

[15]Thomas Bartlett, 'The Augmentation of the Army in Ireland 1767-1769', *English Historical Review*, 96, 380 (July 1981), pp. 540-559; A.P.W Malcomson, *John Foster: The*

growing prosperity from mid-century onwards, as the traumas of the seventeenth century receded. That period of sustained economic growth, from roughly the 1740s to 1815 (despite the upheavals of the 1790s), helped fund military careers.[16] And the third factor was changing social attitudes as to what constituted appropriate occupations for gentlemen. In that regard, they had fewer alternative career options than their English counterparts, in terms of commercial and professional opportunities and the numbers of posts available in government and the church.[17]

In this process of militarisation they were part of a European-wide trend. Christopher Storrs and Hamish Scott have pointed out how, between 1600 and 1800, landed elites across Europe, whose traditional roles had seemed threatened by military modernisation, re-invented themselves as a military service class. As Storrs and Scott observed,

> [t]he two worlds of army officer and nobility were becoming ever more closely identified by the final decades of the eighteenth century…. their fusion may even have been becoming a defining feature of state and society at the end of the *ancien regime*.[18]

Politics of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 235-280.

[16]David Dickson, 'Society and Economy in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Kelly, *Cambridge History of Ireland, Vol. III*, pp. 153-165; L.M. Cullen, 'Economic development, 1750-1800', in T.W. Moody & W.E. Vaughan, eds, *A New History of Ireland, Vol. IV: Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691-1800,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 171-180.

[17]On shifting attitudes to career choices see Rory Muir, *Gentlemen of Uncertain Fortune: How Younger Sons Made Their Way in Jane Austen's England*, (London: Yale, 2019), pp. 1-21 & pp. 194-282; Alan J Guy, *Oeconomy and Discipline: Officership and administration in the British army 1714-63,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp165-168; Stana Nenadic, 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families, c.1730 – 1830', *Scottish Historical Review*, 85, 219, Pt. 1 (Apr 2006), pp. 75-99; Toby Barnard, ''Almoners of Providence': the clergy, 1647 to c.1780', in T.C. Barnard & W.G. Neely, eds, *The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 78-105.

[18]Christopher Storrs & H.M. Scott, 'The Military Revolution and the European Nobility, c1600-1800', *War in History*, 3, 1 (1996), pp. 1-41, quotation at p. 39. See also Scott and Storrs, 'Introduction: The Consolidation of Noble Power in Europe, c1600-1800', in H.M. Scott, ed., *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Volume One, Western Europe,* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 1-52; Bernhard R Kroener, '"Des Königs Rock": Das Offizierkorps in Frankreich, Österreich und Preussen im 18. Jahrhundert – Werkzeug sozialer Militarisierung oder Symbol gesellschaftlicher Integration?', in Peter Baumgart, Bernhard R. Kroener & Heinz Stübig, *Die Preussische*

But while the experience of the Irish landed class broadly aligns with these European-wide developments, they are not an exact fit for the Storrs/Scott model. Most Protestant landowners of eighteenth-century Ireland (Catholics being unable to hold regular British commissions until 1793) were not a centuries-old elite seeking new roles but were either the descendants of a kind of 'conquistador' class who had acquired lands through service in the Elizabethan, Cromwellian and Williamite forces, or were families whose success in other spheres enabled them subsequently to acquire estates.

The question arises of the extent to which their military involvement in the later eighteenth century was a direct continuation of a martial tradition dating back to the 1600s or earlier. In fact, quite a few did have such a tradition. About 40% of the Database Families who sent members into the army between 1750 and 1790 were descended in the male line directly from ancestors who had fought in Ireland with the English armies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Brookes and Coles in Ulster, and the Binghams and Blakeneys in Connacht being examples.[19] That is a sizeable proportion, enough to perpetuate what might be called a frontier settler mentality and tradition within the officer corps. But it also means that a majority of these families, 60%, had no direct tradition of military service before the eighteenth century. It has often been remarked, for example, that Wellington's own immediate family background was not an especially military one. He was commissioned in 1787, and his older brother William served briefly in the navy. But his father, Garret Wesley (Lord Mornington), was professor of music at Trinity College Dublin, and neither his uncles nor either grandfather had been soldiers.[20] The Wellesley military tradition in the early nineteenth century was as recent as the new spelling of their surname. But even amongst those families with seventeenth century military antecedents, many took a break from military service for a generation or two in the eighteenth century. One reason was the small size of the army after the War of the Spanish Succession, which meant that opportunities were limited, but equally important was their pressing need to rebuild their estates and political fortunes after the upheavals of the 1690s. In Fermanagh, for example, the Coles, prominent in the seventeenth century wars, spent the first half of the eighteenth restoring their finances, and with considerable success, as evidenced by the building of their great mansion, Florence Court, and their elevation

Armee zwischen Ancien Regime und Reichsgründung, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), pp. 72-95.

[19]There were 58 such families, out of 145 with members in the army in the later eighteenth century (Families Database).

[20]Rory Muir, *Wellington: The Path to Victory 1769-1814* (London: Yale, 2013), pp. 5-11.

to the Earldom of Enniskillen.[21] They returned to military service in the 1780s, with Lowry Cole going on to a distinguished career. Overall, only one in ten of the Database Families could trace an unbroken run of military service back to the wars of the 1690s, which is why the Irish gentry's military tradition, in the sense of a multi-generational connection to the British Army as an institution, is best seen as a product of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Sitting alongside their enthusiasm for military service, however, was their sometimes fraught relationship with the British government, towards which their collective attitude for much of the period was a blend of dependence, conditional loyalty and occasional resentment. They were fully aware that their privileged position rested ultimately on British military power, demonstrated again in 1798, and they themselves contributed to that military capability by serving as officers in large numbers; but this was coupled with insecurity and, frequently, suspicion of government motives. For its part, the British government did sustain their position in Ireland for decades, was happy to avail of their services and opened up significant opportunities for them. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the army acted as an instrument of integration, with Irish officers serving in almost every regiment and often using military careers as a springboard. Wellington's rise from younger son of a middling landed family in County Meath to commander-in-chief and subsequently Prime Minister is the most spectacular example.

Yet, in the final analysis, the government was prepared to sacrifice their interests in the face of wider political considerations and often had no option but to do so. Edward Spiers, writing of the officer corps as a whole in the nineteenth century, has noted, in the context of officers still needing private incomes, that though the state might not adequately reward them financially for their services, it 'guarded their privileges and possessions and, if only for this reason, they owed it loyalty".[22] But while that was true for the Irish landed class until the middle of the nineteenth century, it was not the case thereafter. From that point the state, far from guarding 'their privileges and possessions', systematically dismantled them, through parliamentary and local government reform, land reform and, under Liberal governments, support for Home Rule. The Irish gentry were the only major 'feeder-group' to the British officer corps whose political and economic power was substantially dismantled so quickly and comprehensively as a matter of government policy. And while they formed a part, post-Union, of a wider British imperial ruling class and saw themselves as such, and while their mass attendance at British public schools and, increasingly, Sandhurst and

[21]A.P.W. Malcomson, 'The Enniskillen Family, Estate and Archive', *Clogher Record*, 16, 2 (1998), pp. 81-122.

[22]Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914,* (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 1-2. Spiers is here quoting another historian, W. L. Burns.

Woolwich gave them a commonality of accent, appearance and outlook with their English and Scottish counterparts, their domestic political situation meant they were not in the same position as the landed families of Hampshire or Perthshire.[23]

Tensions between the Irish gentry and the British government flared up periodically. It is no coincidence that they often did so in wartime or as hostilities threatened, when circumstances forced governments to take difficult decisions but, paradoxically, also when large numbers from Irish landed families were either already in military service or seeking access to it. During the American War of Independence, for example, the Volunteer movement, originally a defensive force against the threat of invasion in which the Irish gentry were heavily involved, became politicised in large part because of British wartime economic and other policies. At the start of the French Revolutionary War Pitt's Catholic relief measures, designed to secure Catholic support and manpower for the war effort, alarmed and alienated significant sections of the Protestant ruling class. The Act of Union, itself a wartime measure, and the accompanying debate over Catholic emancipation divided Irish ascendancy opinion and caused a conservative backlash at a time when thousands of Catholic Irish soldiers were on active service under the command of Irish landed officers. And though the Third Home Rule crisis of 1911-14 did not originate in an external conflict, the involvement in the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) of many former and some serving landed officers had obvious implications, as the Great War loomed, for both the cohesion of the then-serving officer corps, and the future reliability of one the army's key sources of officers.[24]

[23]Nicholas Perry, 'The Irish Landed Class and the British Army, 1850-1950', *War in History*, 18, 3 (2011), pp. 304-332. For the officer corps in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, see Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 89-117; Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 7-40.

[24]P.D.H. Smyth, 'The Volunteers and Parliament, 1779-84', in Thomas Bartlett and D.W. Hayton (eds), *Penal Era and Golden Age: Essays in Irish History, 1690-1800,* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1979), pp. 113-136; James Kelly, 'The politics of Volunteering 1778-93', *Irish Sword*, 22, 88 (2000), pp. 139-157; Ian McBride, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves,* (Dublin: Gill Books, 2009), pp. 377-381; Thomas Bartlett, *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: The Catholic Question 1690-1830,* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1992), pp. 121-145 & pp. 244-267; Patrick M. Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union: A Study in High Politics 1798-1801,* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999), pp. 130-155; Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 8-18, & pp. 111-117.

One might have expected these controversies to have had some impact on the Irish gentry's willingness to serve, or indeed on the British state's willingness to employ them, but in fact it did not. The proportion of young men from the Database Families of military age, for example, serving in the army or navy in successive conflicts continued to rise steadily.[25] During the American War of Independence, despite the Volunteer movement and the clamour for legislative independence, the figure was 36%. In the French Revolutionary/Napoleonic Wars, notwithstanding controversies over Catholic relief and the traumas of the 1798 Rising and the Union, the proportion rose to 40%. In the 1850s, during the conflicts in the Crimea and India, the percentage was 45%, even though gentry self-confidence had been undermined politically and economically by Catholic emancipation and the Famine. In the Second Boer War it was 51%, the introduction of wide-ranging political and land reforms and two attempts to pass Home Rule legislation notwithstanding. And in the Great War, with a Home Rule act on the statue book and civil war in Ireland only narrowly (and temporarily) averted, military participation levels in these families, amongst this age group, soared to 79%.

Obviously, the wars against France from 1793-1815 and Germany from 1914-18 represented existential threats that the other conflicts did not. Even so, the fact that these families over a period of 150 years continued, despite their political insecurities, to come forward in their hundreds to fight the Americans, the French, the Russians, indigenous colonial opponents, the Boers and the Germans, demonstrates two things. First, the gentry's ability to compartmentalise their loyalties and see loyalty to King, country and empire as ideals standing above the policies of particular governments enabled them to reconcile these tensions most of the time. It would be unrealistic to expect officers to be immune to the socio-political concerns of their parent communities, but the vast majority of landed Irish officers, motivated by a mix of patriotism, idealism and self-interest, performed their duties professionally and loyally, irrespective of their personal views. The 1914 Home Rule crisis is the partial exception here, when some used an appeal to these 'higher' loyalties of monarchy and empire to justify refusal to implement government policy.[26] Secondly, the Irish gentry were not a political monolith. Officers like John Hely-Hutchinson and John Doyle were strong supporters of Catholic relief in the 1790s. In 1914, while landed officers inside the army, like Hubert Gough and Henry Wilson, worked to undermine Home Rule, others, like William Hickie, a Catholic officer, supported it; one conflicted serving officer, Oliver Nugent, commanding the UVF in Cavan, took steps to ensure that in

[25]'Military age' for this purpose means those aged 25 or under at the outbreak of a war or who turned 16 (pre-1815) or 18 (post-1815) during it, serving in a regular or 'general service' wartime unit (though not necessarily seeing action).

[26]Strachan, *Politics of the British Army*, pp. 111-117; Beckett, *Army and the Curragh Incident 1914*, pp. 1-29.

his area at least there would be no confrontation with the police and army, and in so doing damaged his relationship with the wider Ulster Unionist leadership.[27]

This outcome of pragmatic accommodation with the state, rooted though it was in the Irish gentry's fundamental reliance on British power, was not inevitable. The militant opposition of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, for example, son of the Duke of Leinster, a former officer and one of the leaders of the 1798 Rising, is suggestive of a road not taken. As with a handful of other Irish ex-officers, like Richard Montgomery, killed commanding the American forces outside Quebec in 1775, or Thomas Russell, executed for his part in the Emmet rebellion of 1803, or Robert Barton, a leading figure in Sinn Fein during the Irish War of Independence, it is possible through Fitzgerald's radicalism to glimpse what another future for the gentry's relationship with the British state might have looked like.[28] But in the end, however disenchanted by particular government policies, the overwhelming majority of Irish landed officers acquiesced in them. Partly this was because of deep-seated loyalties and personal attachments, but it was also because, by the time government reforms really began to bite on their interests from the 1830s onwards, the political alternatives facing them were so unappealing that continued military service represented not just an honourable source of employment but also an indispensable one, practically and psychologically. The writer George A Bermingham castigated the Irish gentry in the nineteenth century for losing touch with the bulk of their fellow-countrymen through their obsession with military and colonial service: they had become, he said, 'dazzled with England's greatness and the prospect of Imperial power'.[29] But any prospect of a political dispensation in Ireland in which they might have played a leading role had arguably already passed with the failure to introduce Catholic emancipation at the time of the Union.

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[27]Peter Jupp, 'Hutchinson, John Hely-, second earl of Donoughmore (1757–1832)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Vol. 29, pp. 18-20; Alistair Massie, 'Doyle, Sir John, baronet (1756–1834)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 16, pp. 836-8; Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 120-125; David Murphy, 'Hickie, Sir William Bernard (1865-1950)', *Dictionary of Irish Biography,* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009), Vol. 4, pp. 675-676; Nicholas Perry, *Major-General Oliver Nugent: The Irishman who led the Ulster Division in the Great War,* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2020), pp. 42-49.

[28]Stella Tillyard, *Citizen Lord: Edward Fitzgerald 1763-1798,* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997).

[29]Quoted in Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy,* (London: Constable, 1987), p. 154.

Birth quartile	Adult males	Regular/war-time commis-sions (% of all males)	Army (% of commis-sions)	HEIC/Indian Army (% of commis-sions)	Royal Navy (% of commis-sions)
Ireland (134 families)					
1725-49	**196**	**43 (22%)**	37 (86%)	1 (2%)	5 (12%)
1750-74	**311**	**109 (35%)**	94 (86%)	3 (3%)	12 (11%)
1775-99	**307**	**127 (41%)**	98 (77%)	5 (4%)	24 (19%)
1800-24	**291**	**109 (37%)**	93 (85%)	3 (3%)	13 (12%)
1825-49	**247**	**117 (47%)**	94 (80%)	4 (4%)	19 (16%)
Total	**1352**	**505 (37%)**	416 (82%)	16 (3%)	73 (15%)
Scotland (55 families)					
1725-49	**91**	**29 (32%)**	22 (76%)	0	7 (24%0
1750-74	**107**	**41 (38%)**	36 (88%)	1 (3%)	4 (10%)
1775-99	**113**	**37 (33%)**	26 (70%)	2 (5%)	9 (24%)
1800-24	**129**	**51 (40%)**	28 (55%)	11 (22%)	12 (23%)
1825-49	**109**	**50 (46%)**	44 (88%)	1 (1%)	5 (10%)
Total	**549**	**208 (38%)**	156 (75%)	15 (7%)	37 (18%)
England & Wales (100 families)					
1725-49	**123**	**17 (14%)**	10 (59%)	0	7 (41%)
1750-74	**171**	**28 (16%)**	21 (75%)	0	7 (25%)
1775-99	**220**	**53 (24%)**	38 (72%)	1 (2%)	14 (26%)
1800-24	**261**	**70 (27%)**	51 (73%)	4 (6%)	15 (21%)
1825-49	**231**	**83 (36%)**	68 (82%)	1 (1%)	14 (17%)
Total	**1006**	**251 (25%)**	188 (75%)	6 (2%)	57 (23%)

Number/distribution of families, by country: Ireland 134 (from all 32 counties); Scotland 55 (Highlands 16, Central/North-East 18, Lowlands/Borders 21); England & Wales 100 (Wales 10, North 22, Midlands 24, E Anglia 13, South-East 16, South-West 15). Families those with estates of ≥3,000 acres/£3,000 annual valuation in Bateman. Core families: landowners, sons, brothers, fathers/uncles.
Sources: John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (Leicester University Press 1971, reprint of 1883 edn of 1871 original: New York, 1971); *Burke's Peerage/Landed Gentry*; army lists.

Table 2: Military Participation Rates in Landed Families of Britain and Ireland, males born 1725-1849, core families.

How, then, does the Irish gentry's military involvement compare with their counterparts in Britain? Table 2 looks at the military participation rates of Irish, Scots and English landed families, for males born between 1725 and 1849. (The focus, for practical reasons, is on wealthier families, those with estates of over 3,000

acres/£3,000pa valuation in the 1870s who had owned estates in the eighteenth century.) As can be seen, the most striking feature is the similarity of the overall Irish and Scottish figures, at 37% and 38% respectively. The Scots were more likely to join the navy and the Indian Army, and so the number of Irish going into the British army was proportionately greater. The proportion for England and Wales, by contrast, was significantly lower, at around a quarter, and while for the eighteenth century the figures may be somewhat underestimated – again, perhaps by around 10% – this does not change the overall picture.[30] The Irish and the Scots gentry were consistently readier to pursue military careers than their English and Welsh counterparts.

John Cookson has described the British gentry in the 1790s as amongst the least militarised elites in Europe, which he ascribes to the greater opportunities provided by civilian society in Britain, limited military patronage, and the army's lower social importance.[31] That, it seems, was true of the English gentry but not their Irish and Scots counterparts. Andrew Mackillop's work on the Scottish Highland gentry's engagement with the army in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has looked at both the mechanics, including the importance of raising men for military service, and also the political and economic consequences for the region, not least of over-recruitment. In so doing he identifies parallels with the Irish experience but also demonstrates that the political and social context within which the Scots pursued military service was unique. This underscores the point that, while regional elites across the British Isles shared the same objective of accessing military service, their routes to achieving it and the political circumstances in which they did so were different.[32]

Regional differences in the make-up of its officer corps were not, of course, confined to the British Army: similar variations were also apparent, to take one example, in the Prussian Army of the late eighteenth century. In recent decades there has been increased interest in this and related topics amongst scholars in Germany, reflecting

[30]This pattern is consistent with a separate study of landed families looking at males born 1830-1929 who received regular army commissions; there the national breakdowns were Ireland 39%, Scotland 40% and England and Wales 30% (Perry, 'Irish Landed Class', pp. 313-5 & Table 2). The English still, however, represented the largest national grouping within the officer corps throughout the period.

[31]Cookson, *Armed Nation*, p. 22.

[32]Andrew MacKillop, *'More Fruitful than the Soil': Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands 1715-1815,* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000. Also, Matthew P. Dziennik, 'Hierarchy, authority and jurisdiction in the mid eighteenth- century recruitment of the highland regiments', *Historical Research,* 85, 227 (2012), pp. 89-104; Victoria Henshaw, *Scotland and the British Army, 1700-1750: Defending the Union,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 53-118.

both growing academic engagement with 'war and society' studies and the practical impact of reunification in opening up archives in eastern Germany.[33] An example is Carmen Winkel's examination of the operation of patronage in the eighteenth-century Prussian Army, *Im Netz des Königs*, and her other work on routes into the officer corps for the Brandenburg-Prussian nobility.[34] Under Frederick the Great and his father the landed class were put under huge pressure to serve as officers, but Dr Winkel demonstrates that the process was more complex, and involved a greater degree of negotiation, than traditional pictures of Prussian absolutism might suggest. As part of that research she, like other German scholars, has done detailed work on an aspect previously noted by Christopher Duffy, the large variations in levels of officer service in different parts of the Prussian kingdom, the so-called 'regionalism of service'.[35]

Winkel has made particular use of the vassal tables, lists drawn up, by order of the king, of Prussian landowners, the value of their estates and whether they and their sons had served or were serving in the army. Table 3 summarizes her findings regarding the percentage of landowners and their sons with military service in the different regions, not just the eastern provinces traditionally regarded as Junker territory, but the western districts also, at the end of the eighteenth century.[36] Also included in the table, as a point of comparison, is a snapshot of participation levels in 1800 amongst Irish Database Family landowners and their sons in the army, navy and

[33]See, for example, Ralf Pröve, *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* [1763-1890], (Munich: R Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006); Bernhard R. Kroener, 'Militär in der Gesellschaft. Aspekte einer neuen Militärgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit', in Ralf Pröve & Bruno Thoss, eds, *Bernard R Kroener. Kriegerische Gewalt und militärische Präsenz in der Neuzeit,* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), pp. 65-82.

[34]Carmen Winkel, *Im Netz des Königs: Netzwerke und Patronage in der preussischen Armee 1713-1786,* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013); idem., '"Getreue wie goldt""; idem., 'The King and His Army: A New Perspective on the Military in 18th Century Brandenburg-Prussia', *International Journal of Military History and Historiography*, 39 (2019), pp. 34-62; idem., 'Eighteenth-Century Military and Princely Rule. Brandenburg-Prussia as a Prime Example?', in Markus Meumann & Andrea Pühringer, eds, *The Military in the Early Modern World: A Comparative Approach,* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2020), pp. 67-88.

[35]Duffy, *Army of Frederick the Great*, p. 39 & p. 52. Also Frank Göse, 'Zwishen Garnison und Rittergut: Aspekte der Verknüpfung von Adelsforschung und Militärgeschichte am Beispiel Brandenburg-Preussens', in Ralf Pröve, ed., *Klio in Uniform: Probleme und Perspektiven einer modernen Militärgeshichte der Fruhen Neuzeit*, (Bohlau Verlag: Köln, 1997), pp. 109-142; Frank Behr, Adel und Militär in Ost- und Westpreußen zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, PhD thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2021).

[36]The patchy survival of vassal tables precludes comparisons across all Prussian provinces over lengthy periods.

HEIC. And, while not comparing precisely like with like in terms of either the statistics or the very different societies and armies under discussion, there are parallels worth exploring.

Region	% of Estate Owners with military service (a)	% of Estate Owners' Sons with military service (a)
Kurmark	59%	82%
Pomerania	44%	60%
East Prussia	58%	56%
Magdeburg	40%	41%
Upper Silesia	20%	40%
Kleve	5%	19%
Ireland (b)	20%	40%

a. For Prussian regions, military service refers to service in the regular army, percentages derived from vassal tables drawn up between 1791-1804, as follows: Kleve 1791, Magdeburg 1796, Upper Silesia 1798/9, Kurmark 1800, East Prussia 1802, Pomerania 1804.
b. For Ireland, military service includes the navy & HEIC, from 174 Database Families: breakdown – estate owners 174, military service 35, 20% (all army); sons 509, military service 202, 40% (incl 29 RN (6%) & HEIC 9 (2%)). [The figures for owners' brothers, not included in the table, are: total 349, military service 145, 42% (incl RN 22 (15%) & HEIC 5 (3%)).]
Sources: Winkel, 'Getreue wie goldt', pp202-13; Families Database.

Table 3: Percentage of Prussian and Irish Landed Estate Owners and Sons with military service, c1800

Winkel identifies various reasons, political, religious and economic, for the differences in enthusiasm for military service, including looking at the connection between estate size/wealth and military service. Kleve, for example, the region with the lowest levels of military service and strongest resistance to royal pressure, was markedly more prosperous than the other provinces; it also had a high proportion of Catholic nobility and close connections to the Netherlands. In Silesia, relatively recently incorporated into the kingdom, links to the Habsburg empire and Catholic church remained strong. By contrast, in the Kurmark, the prosperous area around Potsdam and Berlin, service levels were high, and proximity to royal authority was clearly a factor there with effectively the conscription of landed officers. But Pomerania and East Prussia from an Irish perspective are of particular interest. Their landowners were Protestant and royalist in outlook, somewhat removed geographically from the metropolitan centre, and relatively less wealthy than some other regional elites, with smaller estates and

fewer alternative career opportunities, yet not so impoverished that military careers were unaffordable.[37]

There are features in common here with their Irish counterparts. In the nineteenth century the pattern amongst the Irish gentry too was that poorer landed families often could not afford military careers, rich families could but their members frequently did not stay in the army for long, and so most landed career officers came from families whose prosperity ranged from adequate to comfortable.[38] A detailed comparison for the second half of the eighteenth century is difficult because no comprehensive lists of estates/incomes exist, but the evidence of the Database Families suggests that the same general picture holds true. Two further aspects of Prussian military service discussed by Winkel are also relevant to the Irish experience. The first is the importance of 'self-recruitment', with regional military traditions becoming self-reinforcing as family connections and existing patronage networks made military careers often the easiest path for younger sons to follow.[39] This was evidenced in Ireland, as in Britain, by the existence of famously military families, such as the Brookes, Brownlows, Goughs, Pakenhams and Vandeleurs.[40] The second aspect is the human cost of military service. Winkel points out the heavy officer losses the Prussians suffered during the Seven Years War, with around 1,500 being killed from an officer corps 5,500 strong at the start of the war; it is estimated that 23% of Prussian officers who disappeared from the army lists between 1756 and 1763 died on active service.[41] The same is true of the Irish landed class during the Napoleonic and First World Wars. In the Great War, 75% of young men aged 15 to 30 in 1914 from Irish landed families served in the armed forces, one in four being killed. In the Napoleonic wars, amongst

[37]Winkel, 'Getreue wie goldt', pp. 202-213.

[38]Perry, 'Irish Landed Class', pp. 318-320 & Table 4.

[39]Winkel, 'Getreue wie goldt', pp. 206-208. Self-recruitment in Ireland (and Britain) was a particular feature of landed families' cadet branches. In 1875, for example, the 178 Database landowners had 353 sons, 170 (48%) of whom obtained regular army/navy commissions; of these 48, or 28%, had a father with regular service. Of the landowners' 375 nephews (on the male side) – that is, the sons of their younger brothers - 146 (39%) were commissioned, of whom 77 (53%) were following a father who was a regular officer.

[40]Of 55 male Vandeleurs of Kilrush, County Clare, born between 1750-1950, 39 (71%) became army officers, 19 reaching lieutenant-colonel or higher and seven dying on operations; 53 Brookes of Colebrooke, County Fermanagh, and their cadet branches served in the two world wars, 12 being killed (Perry, 'Irish Landed Class', pp. 310, & pp. 328-329).

[41]Winkel, 'Getreue wie goldt', p. 203, fn. 26; idem., 'Ziele und Grenzen der königlichen Personalpolitik im Militär', in Frank Gröse, ed., *Friedrich der Grosse und die Mark Brandenburg: Herrschaftspraxis in der Provinz,* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2012), p. 148.

the Database Families, participation levels were lower at about 40% but the casualty rates amongst those who served in the army were comparable, with a fatality rate of 23%; amongst those who deployed outside the British Isles it was even higher (c.27%), with the Caribbean and the Peninsula being the most lethal theatres.[42] There are grounds, therefore, for suggesting, and exploring further, that the Irish gentry as a militarised regional landed elite were, if not quite Bill Barnett's Irish Junkers, the British Army's equivalent of the Pomeranians.

With 2022 being the centenary of the disbandment of the southern Irish regiments, it is appropriate to conclude by looking briefly at the gentry's relationship with the Irish infantry regiments. Many landed families had close connections with them, including the Earls of Granard with the Royal Irish Regiment (18th Regiment of Foot), the Blakeneys and the Coles with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (27th Regiment of Foot) and the Goughs and Doyles with the Royal Irish Fusiliers (87th Regiment of Foot). But for the most part, and certainly before the territorialization of the infantry in the 1880s, Irish landed families pursued careers in the most senior or prestigious regiments they could afford, something they had in common with Prussian families, regardless of national/regional affiliation. Of 959 regular and wartime army Database officers, 85 (under 9%) served in one of the eight Irish line infantry regiments or their predecessor regiments. The formation of the Irish Guards in 1901 provided a significant new focus for wealthier families, but often the gentry's immediate connection with the Irish line regiments was through their militia and special reserve battalions, in which county families were frequently represented. Probably the gentry's closest relationship with the southern Irish regiments came during the First World War, with the raising of service battalions and the incessant demand for officers.[43] The Great War, with Irish independence just round the corner, represented the swansong, not just of the southern regiments, but also the southern Irish gentry, at least in the form they had existed for over two centuries. Yet the military traditions of both in a sense survive, with the descendants of many of these families, albeit some no longer resident in Ireland, continuing to serve in the British Army, and with the Irish infantry tradition maintained through the Irish Guards and the Royal Irish Regiment.

[42]Perry, 'Irish Landed Class', p. 328; Families Database.
[43]Perry, 'Irish Landed Class', pp. 328-30.

An Irish Catholic Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army? The Irish Militia, 1793-1908

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ABSTRACT
Both an Irish military tradition and an amateur military tradition have been explored in the historiography involving the study of British Army as they relate to forces recruited and serving in Ireland over two centuries. This article will take this exploration further by arguing that it is possible to demonstrate that an Irish Catholic amateur military tradition existed in the Irish Militia, as established in 1793, and existing until the turn of the twentieth century. This Irish Catholic tradition fed into these two broader traditions, becoming integral parts of them, while also exerting Irish identity in its own ways.

Introduction

In his seminal work on the amateur military tradition in the British Army, I F W Beckett outlined that this tradition was essentially the framework in which auxiliary forces existed alongside their regular army counterparts, and dictated how they interacted with society.[1] To take this notion further, there were parallel and often competing traditions which existed within these forces, most notably so for those formations in Ireland from the seventeenth century onwards.[2] These took many forms, sometimes also acting outside the official British military framework, particularly in paramilitary organisations during the twentieth century. Crucially, these were often divided on political and religious grounds.

Much is often made of the Protestant military and volunteering tradition in Ireland, particularly in Ulster, but not of a Catholic tradition, and even less so of a Catholic

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[1]Ian Beckett, *The amateur military tradition, 1558-1945,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 2.

[2]For more on an Irish amateur tradition from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards see William Butler, *The Irish amateur military tradition in the British Army, 1854-1992,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

amateur military tradition in the British Army prior to the First World War. From the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Protestant tradition was to form an important part of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, most notably in the amateur yeomanry of the late eighteenth century onwards, which was used largely to defend the newly established order.[3] This organisation sought to attract all social and most political elements of Irish Protestantism, at the exclusion of Catholic participation.

However, it was not only this Protestant contribution that made an impact on the amateur forces of Ireland during that period. Coinciding with the raising of a yeomanry force in the late eighteenth century was the creation of an Irish militia which was to have a significant proportion of Catholics in its ranks. This occurred, in some part, because it was raised with the use of the Militia Ballot, utilised to fill the majority of the force by compulsory means. If we are to see the yeomanry as an expression of the Protestant nation, then, as Thomas Bartlett has argued, so too can the Irish militia be seen as an equal expression of the Catholic nation.[4] By the 1850s, after a long period of disembodiment, the force came to be raised on a voluntary basis and, though its expression as the Catholic nation might have diminished, it clearly demonstrated a continuation of a Catholic amateur tradition.

At any one time, the militia in Ireland during the latter half of the nineteenth century had between 30,000 and 40,000 men serving in its ranks, and consistently over a fifty-four-year period. Though this did drop to a little over 23,000 during the Fenian infiltrations into the British armed forces during the 1860s, when the militia's annual training was periodically cancelled. Notwithstanding, it is clear that Catholic service in the militia might be deemed as a separate amateur military tradition in its own right; one which existed within a British framework and not the sole preserve of foreign service in European armies.

Catholics in the British Army; the historical context

Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery have argued that 'there has been a persistent military flavour to Irish life, from medieval through to more modern times, that has

[3]For a history of the Irish Yeomanry see Allan Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army; The Irish Yeomanry, 1796-1834,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998). For more on the context of defending the Protestant Ascendancy see Neal Garnham, *The Militia in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: In Defence of the Protestant Interest,* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012).

[4]Thomas Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion: Ireland, 1793-1803', in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, eds, *A Military History of Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 247-293.

undoubtedly made a military career seem 'normal".[5] Much of the literature which covers Catholic participation in the British Army tends to focus on its regular forces, and it is much more challenging to apply many of the conclusions made by historians to that of service in the militia, especially as it relates to the forging of identities and traditions. As Thomas Bartlett has highlighted, it was not until the Seven Years' War (1756-63) which saw the lifting of the bar on Irish participation in the British armed forces, as the recruitment of the Catholic Irish for service abroad was permitted. At first this took place in the marines or the East India Company army, but then led to their recruitment during the American War of Independence (1776-83).[6] This move has been viewed as playing a significant role in shaping the problematic relationship between the British government, the ruling Protestant Ascendancy, and the Catholic community in Ireland.[7] As Ciaran McDonnell has observed, 'the creation of an Irish identity within the British military was key to the integration of Irishmen in the armed forces'.[8]

During the Napoleonic Wars, the army was not 'a crucible of Britishness' but, according to Catriona Kennedy, it also did not seek to impose a single identity on Irish recruits. What it did do though, was to cultivate a specific military identity and, in turn, a distinctive form of regimental Irishness. Furthermore, it provided a relatively tolerant environment for Catholic soldiers, giving a refuge to sectarian tensions at home.[9] While these issues may be applied to the Irish militia to some extent, what is clear is that, as a force which predominantly saw service on British and Irish shores, this argument can only go so far.

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[5]Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, 'An Irish Military Tradition?' in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, eds, *A Military History of Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-25; see also Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish military tradition and the British Empire', in Keith Jeffery, ed., *'An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 94-122.

[6]Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion', p. 248. See also V. Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution, 1760-1783,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 137.

[7]Catriona Kennedy, "'True Brittons and Real Irish": Irish Catholics in the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in Catriona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack, *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 37-56.

[8]Ciarán McDonnell, 'Loyalty and Rebellion: Irish soldiers in the British military during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', *British Journal for Military History*, 8, 3 (2022), pp. 57-78.

[9]Kennedy, "True Brittons and Real Irish', p. 51.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Irish military identity only strengthened, even as the proportion of Irishmen in the regular armed forces declined.[10] Keith Jeffery, Thomas Bartlett, and Timothy Bowman, among others, have characterised this as an Irish military tradition, which operated within the framework of an official military culture, and Irish Catholics in the regular armed forces were an integral part of that tradition.[11] By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as Loughlin Sweeney has recently contended, the army was not simply a foreign imposition on Ireland, but rather a longstanding institution within it.[12] By extension, the Irish militia, as a force entirely drawn from the local population, wherever that was in Ireland, was a clear expression of that too.

As the likelihood of a French invasion of Ireland increased towards the end of the eighteenth century, the British authorities were forced to reassess its policy of only entrusting Protestants with the defence of Ireland. The establishment of the largely Catholic Irish Militia in 1793 clearly marked a new departure in its way of thinking.[13] This arming of a large body of Catholic Irishmen proved to be controversial, not only because it was done by compulsion, but also because of fears that it might provoke armed revolt. As Padraig Higgins has argued, arms also possessed a symbolic power:

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[10]See H. J. Hanham, 'Religion and nationality in the mid-Victorian Army', in M. R. D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society. Historical Essays in Honour of J. R. Western,* (London: Harper Collins, 1973), pp. 159-182; Peter Karsten, 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?', *Journal of Social History*, 17, 1 (1983), pp. 31-64.

[11]Bartlett and Jeffery, 'An Irish Military Tradition?', pp. 7-8; Jeffery, 'The Irish military tradition and the British Empire'; Timothy Bowman, 'Irish Military Cultures in the British Army, c.1775-1992' in Kevin Linch and Matthew Lord, eds, *Redcoats to Tommies: The Experience of the British Soldier from the Eighteenth Century*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2021), pp. 192-209. Similar arguments might also be applied to Scotland, see Hew Strachan, 'Scotland's Military Identity', *Scottish Historical Review*, 85, 2 (2006), pp. 315-322.

[12]0Loughlin Sweeney, *Irish Military Elites, Nation and Empire, 1870-1925: Identity and Authority,* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 28-37.

[13]Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion', pp. 247-8. It was not established without widespread rioting either, see T0 Bartlett, 'An End to Moral Economy; The Irish Militia Disturbances of 1793', *Past and Present*, 99 (1983), pp. 41-64; Ivan F. Nelson, 'The First Chapter of 1798'? Restoring a Military Perspective to the Irish Militia Riots of 1793', *Irish Historical Studies*, 33, 132 (2003), pp. 369-386; Ivan F. Nelson, *The Irish Militia 1793-1802; Ireland's Forgotten Army* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp.55-60.

they served to assert membership of the polity by the simple act of possessing and being trained in their use.[14] In that respect this was a departure from previous policy.

When the militia was first embodied, it was done so on the condition that it would only serve to protect Ireland itself, a policy which was to remain in place until the introduction of the Militia Ballot in 1807, which allowed for its use in other parts of the United Kingdom.[15] Continued distrust of leaving Catholic Irishmen to defend Irish shores was certainly a consideration in making this decision.[16] Notwithstanding, in so doing, it increased its utility as a force vital for home defence, whilst also keeping its role in providing recruits for the regular army.

Though auxiliary forces in Ireland essentially disappeared after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Irish Catholics continued to be a crucial source of manpower for the regular armed forces. By 1830, 42.2% of members of the army were from Ireland, the majority of them Catholic. While this declined throughout the century, by 1878, twenty-five battalions had a non-English majority.[17] By this time, the Irish militia had been re-established and, though a large percentage of those who joined the militia went on to join the regular army, it also acted in competition for manpower. Once more, as we shall see, a significant proportion of these individuals were Catholic. By the turn of the twentieth century, as the Irish militia faced disbandment and with little additional outlet for participation in auxiliary forces in Ireland, Irish Catholics continued to act as an important source of manpower.[18] While it is clear that this was by no means as crucial as it had been in the previous century, the legacy of Catholic Irish participation was the forging of a strong identity and, by extension, tradition which would persist into the First World War and beyond.

[14]Though this did not only apply to Catholics, but also poor Protestants and Presbyterians. See Padhraig Higgins, "Let Us Play the Men': Masculinity and the Citizen-Soldier in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland', in Kennedy and McCormack, eds, *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850*, pp. 179-199.

[15]Henry McAnally, *The Irish Militia, 1793-1816; A Social and Military Study,* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949), pp. 244-6.

[16]J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 201.

[17]Hanham, 'Religion and nationality in the mid-Victorian Army', p. 161.

[18]For more on military recruitment in Ireland prior to 1914 see Timothy Bowman, William Butler, and Michael Wheatley, *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish Recruitment to the British Armed Forces, 1914-1918,* (Liverpool; Liverpool University Press, 2020), pp. 16-42.

'The merest ragtag and bobtail of landlordism': officers in the Irish militia

In 1890, in the House of Commons, officers in the Irish militia were described by the MP for Kerry West, Edward Harrington, as 'puppies and cads' and 'the merest ragtag and bobtail of landlordism' whose fathers did not know what to do with them and so in their attempts to occupy them they found their place within the Irish militia.[19] This assessment, though somewhat of a caricature, typifies the makeup of the officer corps for much of the period. This, naturally, might be a characterisation which goes against the notion of an Irish Catholic amateur military tradition in the militia, primarily because the majority of these men also came from Protestant backgrounds.

However, with this in mind, it actually came to reinforce this Catholic tradition. As has been argued, during the late eighteenth century, the British and Irish governments had to constantly try and strike a balance between securing the support of the Protestant Ascendancy, and the loyalty of the Catholic majority. Thus, the militia became a place to unite what might be understood as previously competing Irish identities, both on religious, but also on class grounds, creating a distinctive Irish version of patriotism.[20] In this way, it also reinforced the social order, strengthening Irish Catholic identity in the other ranks of the militia, but also the Anglo-Irish Protestant identity in the officer corps.

Though Catholics were not prevented from serving as officers when the Irish militia was established in 1793, it was reported that, initially at least, none were awarded commissions. However, very quickly it was deemed necessary to appoint *some* Catholic officers to the corps.[21] It was stated that in the Louth Militia, for example, both Catholics and Protestants had been appointed to the regiment 'indiscriminately…as they appeared best qualified for it by character and situation'.[22] What is clear though, as Henry McAnally has observed, the majority of senior officers were Protestant and, in turn, especially if they were Colonels responsible for regimental appointments, this partly lead to the commissioning of their Protestant neighbours.[23]

Very quickly, and whether justified or not, the quality of these officers came into question. In 1797, Colonel John Moore, a future General, creator of the Light Division, and known for his ability to train his men, arrived in Ireland and made his feelings clear,

[19]Parl. Debs. (HC), vol. 348, cols. 367-425, 9 August 1890.
[20]Ciarán McDonnell, ''Zeal and Patriotism': Forging Identity in the Irish Militia, 1793-1802', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42, 2 (2019), pp. 211-228.
[21]F. Plowden, *Historical Review of the State of Ireland, vol.2,* (London, 1803), p. 435; McAnally, *The Irish Militia*, pp. 58-59.
[22]*Dublin Evening Post*, 5 September 1793.
[23]McAnally, *The Irish Militia*, p. 59.

stating that 'had pains been taken to select proper officers…they might…have been respectable troops', but that because the regiments were used by colonels as instruments of influence 'they made their appointments to suit electioneering purposes'.[24] Ivan Nelson, in defence of those involved, has stated that these kinds of criticisms could equally have been levelled at officers in the regular army, at least up to 1802.[25] Any inadequacies had also been highlighted to a greater degree once the Irish militia began to serve alongside its regular counterparts, while those with military aspirations soon found their way out of the militia and into the British Army.

Little had changed in the composition of the officer corps by the time that the Irish militia had been re-established in the 1850s. Having been disembodied and left as a force which only existed on paper with no legal framework in which to re-form it between 1816 and 1851, officers had to be provided for from scratch and from those who had been left on the regimental strength at the time of disembodiment nearly four decades previously. Those officers who were already on the *Army Lists* were given an opportunity to continue to serve, even though a number were now upwards of seventy years of age.[26] A report on officers in the Kilkenny Militia stated that,

gentlemen whose ages vary from 50 to 65 years are not calculated to commence the active duties of a military life, and more particularly so, when it appears that they have performed no military duties for 40 years, it must also be borne in mind that newly raised regiments composed entirely of recruits require active energetic officers to bring them into an efficient state.[27]

This situation led to a rapid turnover across the militia officer corps. By 1857, for example, the North Cork Rifles had replaced five of its original twelve officers of the rank of Captain or above.[28]

Perhaps expectedly, Protestant landowners continued to dominate its officer corps. In units such as the Londonderry Artillery (Militia) and Fermanagh Militia, two regiments based in Ulster, its officer corps was almost entirely Protestant in its

[24]Sir J.F. Maurice, ed., *Diary of Sir John Moore* (London, 1904), p. 11.
[25]Nelson, *The Irish Militia*, p. 121.
[26]National Library of Ireland (hereinafter NLI) Ms.1055 Letter from the Military Secretary regarding the inspection of officers of the Monaghan Militia, 27 January 1855.
[27]NLI Ms. 1074, f.623, 25 January 1855, quoted in Timothy Bowman and William Butler, 'Ireland', in I. Beckett, *Citizen Soldiers and the British Empire, 1837-1902,* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), pp. 41-56.
[28]J.D. Mercer, *Record of the North Cork Regiment of Militia, with sketches extracted from history of the time in which its services were required from 1793-1880,* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryer and Walker, 1886), p. 114.

composition across the period 1854-1908. In those regiments outside Ulster, though Catholic officers were present, they were still clearly the exception – in both the North Cork Rifles and Wexford Militia, for example, approximately 15% of the officers were Catholic across the latter half of the nineteenth century.[29] These figures also do not tell the whole picture, as the majority of these Catholic officers were commissioned during the first embodiment period at the time of the Crimean War, and their presence steadily diminished as the century progressed.

Though it is no coincidence that Unionist leaders Edward Saunderson and James Craig were officers in the militia, the fact that prominent nationalists such as William Redmond, John's brother, and Charles Stewart Parnell were also officers in Irish regiments, tells us something important about its broader non-military function.[30] The force also served a social function for those of a certain status, it was a chance to be seen in uniform, and provided a networking opportunity. This appears to be a function which was fulfilled, to varying degrees, across the period under consideration.

As the economic pressures of land ownership became a reality though, this function did soon diminish as the militia came increasingly to rely on officers from England, and to a lesser extent Scotland and Wales. These men joined Irish regiments in order to take advantage of the 'militia back door' as an easier route for a commission in the regular army. Up until 1881, regiments such as the North Cork Rifles, the Roscommon Militia, and the South Tipperary Artillery (Militia), had drawn at least three-quarters of their officers from Ireland, and as many as half from their respective counties.[31] Between 1881 and 1908, some of the same regiments only obtained two-thirds of their officers from Ireland, and even fewer from their own counties. The South Tipperary Artillery (Militia), for example, now only obtaining a fifth of its officers from

[29]Religious information was compiled from a number of sources, including Irish Census records, Burke's Peerage listings, and the following officer service records: The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA) WO 68/308-310, North Cork Rifles, 1854-1907; WO 68/173-174, Wexford Militia, 1849-1907; WO 68/382, Fermanagh Militia, 1854-1907; WO 68/475, Roscommon Militia, 1854-1860; WO 68/88-95, South Tipperary Artillery (Militia), 1854-1907; WO 68/31-32, Dublin City Artillery (Militia), 1871-1906; and WO 68/64-65, Londonderry Artillery (Militia), 1855-1908. See also Butler, *Irish Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 62.

[30]Alvin Jackson, *Colonel Edward Saunderson: Land and Loyalty in Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 42; Patrick Buckland, *James Craig: Lord* Craigavon (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), pp. 7-8; Terence Denman, *A Lonely Grave; The Life and Death of William Redmond* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995), pp. 19-20; R.F. Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell: The Man and his Family* (London: The Harvester Press Ltd, 1976), pp. 116-7.

[31]Butler, *Irish Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 53.

County Tipperary.[32] The majority of these officers continued to come from Protestant backgrounds, and only the Wexford Militia continued to attract Catholic officers in any significant numbers. What this meant was a strengthening of an Anglo-Irish Protestant identity, also present in the officer corps of the regular army, in contrast to the Irish Catholic identity found in the other ranks.[33]

'Catholic recruits who now swell the muster rolls of the Irish Militia': the other ranks of the militia

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Catriona Kennedy has observed, autobiographical evidence suggests that Irish Catholics joining the regular armed forces did so for much the same reasons as their English and Scottish counterparts. These motivations ranged from a lack of alternative employment to a desire for foreign travel and adventure.[34] For the militia as a whole, similar motivations existed – a desire to escape the monotony of daily life; a chance to earn extra money; and an opportunity to raise one's own physical standard in order to meet the requirements of the regular army being principal among them.[35]

The same motivations did not, of course, apply in the same way to those who joined the Irish militia, especially from 1854 onwards. As the militia in Ireland came to rely more heavily on skilled labour, in stark contrast to its counterparts in the rest of the United Kingdom, it is clear that other motivations existed when men made the decision to join their local regiment.[36] Principally, service in the Irish militia gave individuals the opportunity to participate in county life, with a view to social progression. While units elsewhere tended to rely on the 'underemployed' in society, many of those in Ireland held what might be classed as steady and relatively secure

[32]Ibid.

[33]For more on the role of the Anglo-Irish gentry in the regular army see Nicholas Perry, 'The Irish Landed Class and the British Army, 1850-1950', *War in History*, 18, 3 (2011), pp. 304-332.

[34]Kennedy, ''True Brittons and Real Irish', p. 40.

[35]David French, *Military Identities; The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, c.1870-2000,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 210.

[36]Butler, *The Irish amateur military tradition in the British Army*, pp. 84-6. For more on the composition of the militia in other areas of the United Kingdom see Parliamentary Paper (C.1654). Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War to enquire into certain questions that have arisen with respect to the militia and the present brigade depot system; together with minutes of evidence, appendix, and index, 1877, where it is stated that 'the classes from which recruits are generally obtained appear to be those of agricultural labourers, carters, colliers, dock labourers, mill operatives, miners, a lower class of mechanic, and the migratory portion of the labouring class'.

jobs, and so there was clearly a desire to contribute to some kind of bigger identity. Ciaran McDonnell's has observed, applying it to the broader armed forces in the 1790s, that while many Catholics, and some Protestants, in Ireland sought to break away from Great Britain, there were also many 'who embraced the British link with Ireland, or at least tolerated British control of Ireland, and military service was an avenue open to them'.[37] This continued to hold some resonance throughout the nineteenth century, and also applied to the Irish militia.

After its initial establishment in 1793, approximately three quarters of the Irish militia rank and file were Catholic and, as Henry McAnally observed, as a result a high degree of religious tolerance existed.[38] Though initially envisioned as a Protestant force, as noted, most officer positions had been filled up by this denomination, Irish Catholics came to dominate, while the other ranks also included a smaller proportion of Presbyterians.[39] The Clare Militia, for example, which in September 1793, consisted of 250 privates, were all Catholics except for five individuals.[40] That being said, proportionately, there were still more Protestants than Catholics present in the ranks in most counties during the first years of the force's existence, hardly surprising given the relatively recent change permitting Catholic enlistment.[41] The Militia Ballot, however, soon begun to swing the balance the other way as more Catholics were compulsorily enlisted, especially after the repercussions of the 1793 riots had dissipated after 1808.

In 1796, the Army Medical Board in Ireland reported that the Irish militia was composed 'of stout men in the prime of life drawn almost entirely from the Irish peasantry, inured by labour in the fields to every vicissitude of climate and of season'.[42] By 1801, a later report stated that 'a majority of the soldiers has certainly been drawn from the peasantry who are acknowledged to be as stout and as hardy as a race of men as any in Europe'.[43]

Fulfilling a vital role, the militia across the United Kingdom provided significant numbers of recruits to the British Army during this period. For those who joined the regular army from the Irish militia during this time, there is only limited evidence to suggest that there was a strength of Irish identity in the regiments they chose to join. This is partly down to the fact that, more often than not, recruits were 'drummed up'

[37]McDonnell, 'Loyalty and Rebellion', p. 75.
[38]McAnally, *The Irish Militia*, pp. 57-8.
[39]McDonnell, "Zeal and Patriotism', p. 213.
[40]*Dublin Evening Post*, 26 September 1793.
[41]Nelson, *The Irish Militia, 1793-1802*, p. 124.
[42]Source please – same as below???
[43]Quoted in McAnally, *The Irish Militia*, pp. 56-7.

by regular army recruiting parties visiting the militia regiments which were stationed nearby. That being said, it was recorded that in 1808 alone, the 88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot had received 511 men from the Irish militia. In 1809, this number stood at 278, and in 1810 at 299 – not insignificant figures.[44] Though this is only a small proportion of the total number it is suspected who joined the regular army from the Irish militia, it is clear that some form of Irish identity did exist during this period, and one which would continue to grow when the militia was re-established in the 1850s.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Catholics were still over-represented in the Irish militia as the other ranks came to be filled with a disproportionately high percentage of that denomination. In a study of nine militia regiments in the 1880s, only one, the 3rd Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers, had a disproportionate percentage of Protestants compared to the county in which it was recruited. In this case, the battalion recruited in County Armagh, while others which recruited in Dublin, Sligo, Londonderry, Fermanagh, and even the greater Belfast area, had more Catholics in their respective battalions, compared to the number who lived in the county.[45] The Commanding officers of both the 4th and 5th Battalions, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (recruited in Counties Tyrone and Donegal), even went as far to say in 1890 that while they previously obtained many Protestant recruits, they were now almost exclusively reliant on Catholics.[46] In many ways, it is not surprising that this was the case, as the militia drew most of its recruits from the labouring class, and Catholics made up the majority of labourers. This meant that, to a large extent, it became a reflection of Irish society. It also continues to demonstrate quite clearly the Catholic amateur military tradition in the militia.

Irish militiamen who opted to join the regular army after having experienced a taste of military life also continued to express a strong identity in respect of their 'Irishness'.

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[44]D.A. Chart, 'The Irish Levies during the Great French War', *English Historical Review*, 32, 128 (1917), pp. 497-516.

[45]Figures are derived from a detailed study of c.20,000 militia attestation forms filled out by enlistees in the militia where addresses and religion are listed, found in TNA WO 68, and quoted in Butler, *The Irish amateur military tradition in the British Army,* pp. 86-7. The 3 Royal Irish Fusiliers, for example was 68% Protestant, having been drawn from a county with a 50.6% Protestant population. In comparison, the 4 Royal Dublin Fusiliers was 96.7% Catholic, and was drawn from an area which was 79.5% Catholic, and the Londonderry Artillery (Militia) was 57.4% Catholic, drawn from a 44.4% Catholic population.

[46]Parliamentary Paper (C.5922). Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into certain questions that have arisen with respect to the Militia, together with Minutes of evidence and appendices, 1890.

Throughout the nineteenth century, militia regiments were 'linked' to a regular regiment of the British Army. After the Cardwell-Childers reforms of the 1870s and 1880s, and their attempts at 'localisation' these links only strengthened, especially when militia units across the United Kingdom lost their county titles in favour of regimental ones.[47] For example, the North Down Militia, Antrim Militia, Royal South Down Light Infantry, and Louth Rifles became the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th battalions of the Royal Irish Rifles, while the Wexford Militia, North Tipperary Light Infantry, and Kilkenny Fusiliers became the 3rd, 4th, and 5th battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment. These changes were partly designed to strengthen the local ties a regular regiment had to a particular area, which would in turn aid in recruitment.

By the late 1870s, on average, a third of recruits in the Irish militia had joined their linked regiment, and the same could be said in England, Wales, and Scotland.[48] As many as 45% of recruits from the Antrim Militia joined its linked regiment, the Royal Irish Rifles, but 80% joined an Irish regiment. Furthermore, while 56% of those joining the regular army from the Dublin City Militia went into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 92% joined an Irish regiment.[49] This demonstrates the strength of both a local, but also a national identity, inculcated partly during an individual's time in the Irish militia, and one which contributed to a specifically Catholic tradition.

There was certainly a high degree of religious toleration present in the Irish militia, and the army more widely, across the period. For example, the army actively sought to solve sectarian tensions, such as attempting to stop the spread of Orange Lodges in regiments.[50] To an extent, this extended to the militia, but was much harder to control. When first established, many militia Colonels recognised that an entirely Protestant force would not be prudent and would present many of the problems already seen in the Volunteers and the contemporary Yeomanry, but they were also very reluctant to permit a predominantly Catholic force either. However, there does appear to be strong evidence of Orangeism in the officer corps of the Irish Militia in

[47]For more on the Cardwell-Childers Reforms see E. Spiers, *The late Victorian Army, 1868-1902,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 1-29.
[48]Parliamentary Paper (C.1874). Return of the number of volunteers from each regiment of the militia to the line in the year 1878, stating in each case how many volunteered to the linked line regiment, and how many to other corps; of number of commissions in the line given to officers in the militia, stating in like manner whether the commission so given was in the linked corps or another; of number of officers of the line transferred to militia, and whether linked or other corps, 1878.
[49]Butler, *The Irish amateur military tradition in the British Army*, pp. 89-90.
[50]McDonnell, 'Loyalty and Rebellion', p.74; Kevin Linch, *Britain and Wellington's Army; Recruitment, Society and Tradition, 1807-15,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 146.

the early part of the nineteenth century.[51] Technically though, free exercise of both religions was permitted in the militia, though Catholic commentators objected to soldiers being required to attend Protestant services on a Sunday, before being permitted to attend mass.[52]

Occasionally too, the authorities struggled to adapt to the needs of Catholic militiamen, despite their strong presence in the force. This sometimes resulted in strong feelings of discontent, especially if the actions by senior officers were seen to impinge on their identities. In 1855, the majority of the Kerry Militia, stationed in Limerick, mutinied when members of the regiment were informed that they could not march to chapel, as was usual, accompanied by their band.[53] Strong punishment was promised to those involved, despite the fact that public opinion seemed to be on the participant's side. *The Freeman's Journal*, keen to stress that such actions were not acceptable, were prompted to highlight the importance of removing the causes of such disaffection, while also focussing on the Catholic identity of the regiment involved. In a lengthy article it went on to say that

> The falling of the cat-o-nine tails on the backs of the Catholic soldiers for such an offence…would be the signal for a total change in the whole aspect of the war. Recruiting in Ireland would end, the fall of the first drummer's lash would sound its death knell, and discretion tells the authorities that the raw Catholic recruits who now swell the muster rolls of the Irish Militia could not be relied upon to stand by with fixed bayonets, loaded muskets, and cap on nipple, to see the sentence of a court-martial executed for such an offence on the bare backs of a whole Catholic regiment.[54]

As will be demonstrated below, suspicion was often levelled at the militia simply *because of* its Catholic composition, but unsympathetic actions by the authorities did little to convince militiamen that they were trusted or, indeed, respected. In 1875, it was claimed in Parliament by Charles Stewart Parnell that men of the Royal Meath Militia had been prevented by their Commanding Officer from attending a Catholic Church service arguing that 'militia regiments consisting of Irish Catholics ought to be allowed…to fulfil their religious duties as their conscience dictated'.[55] A year later it

[51]Nelson, *The Irish Militia, 1793-1802*, pp.117-120. For Orangeism more broadly in the armed forces see David Fitzpatrick, 'Orangeism and Irish military history' in David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant Histories since 1795,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 21-40.
[52]McAnally, *The Irish Militia*, pp. 57-60.
[53]*The Times*, 10 October 1855; 12 October 1855.
[54]*The Freeman's Journal*, 12 October 1855.
[55]Parl. Debs. (HC), vol.227, cols.929-89, 26 February 1876.

was alleged, again in Parliament, that no religious provision had been made for men of the Louth, Longford, and Monaghan militia regiments whilst on annual training. Furthermore, that a man of the Louth Rifles had died of sunstroke and that no clergyman was present to administer the last sacraments of the Catholic Church.[56] In addition, in 1883, whilst on annual training, the Monaghan Militia was once more in the spotlight as it was claimed that the men of the regiment were presented with meat, rather than fish, on a Friday.[57] The fact that many members of the Irish militia, both officers and other ranks, were often permitted to attend events in Orange Halls, occasionally in uniform, did little to counter feelings that Irish Catholics were not fully integrated into the armed forces.[58]

With the continued predominance of Catholics in the Irish militia, a distinctive identity clearly emerged, often strengthened by perceived injustices committed by its own officers and the authorities more broadly. However, beyond these injustices, accusations of disloyalty, whether justified or not, were never far away either.

'Eager aspirants for enlistment in the militia': Nationalist 'subversion' and loyalty in the Irish militia

As has already been touched upon, suspicion about arming Catholic Irishmen, especially on Irish shores, was a dominant feature of the Irish militia's existence. In many ways, this distrust by the authorities in London, as well as from the general public, had the effect of strengthening Catholic identity within the militia. There is no doubting, however, that nationalist groups, such as the Defenders and United Irishmen of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and the Fenian movement from the 1860s onwards, actively looked to recruit members from the militia or encouraged their members to join it.

Before its establishment, members of the Defenders, the agrarian secret society, had largely been against the raising of the militia in Ireland, mainly because it was felt that members of the force would be sent abroad. It is also widely believed, however, that, once it did exist, the Society had also infiltrated the Irish militia.[59] The militia, nonetheless, came to be relied on to, quite literally, fight against the rise of this organisation. In December 1794, in Newry, the Dublin Militia fought off attacks from the Defenders and pursued them throughout the night.[60] Furthermore, in May 1795, the Londonderry Militia, stationed in Roscommon, fought a body of, it was claimed,

[56]Parl. Debs. (HC), vol.230, cols.1628-9, 20 July 1876.
[57]Ibid., vol.279, col.777, 24 May 1883.
[58]For examples see *The Freeman's Journal*, 21 August 1856; Parl. Debs. (HC), vol.225, cols.998-9, 6 July 1875; *The Nation*, 27 July 1872 and 3 August 1872.
[59]Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion0', pp. 263-4.
[60]McAnally, *The Irish Militia*, p. 83.

3,000 Defenders, killing 50, and taking many prisoners. It was stated that 'the militia on their march were fired at first by the insurgents and in turn completely emptied their cartridges, boxes of seventeen rounds per man, against their assailants' and, eventually, they were 'completely routed'.[61] There is little evidence to suggest that any militiamen refused service as a result of this, or, indeed, switched sides.

In addition, the United Irishmen who had long targeted soldiers, induced militiamen to their cause with no exception. Wolfe Tone argued that in a crisis 'the militia, the great bulk of whom are Catholic, would to a moral certainty abandon their leaders'.[62] By July 1796, 15,000 Irish militiamen were claimed to be members of the United Irishmen. As Thomas Bartlett has highlighted, the denial of Catholic Emancipation in 1800 left the Irish militia as an anomaly, at best an embarrassment, and at worst a standing threat.[63] As such, in questioning its loyalty, the authorities could not feel comfortable leaving the protection of the state in the hands of a Catholic force. Increasingly, it came to rely on other forces, and sought to ensure that as much of the militia as possible was serving elsewhere in the United Kingdom. This policy was to continue until its disbandment.

Once re-established, the Irish militia played a key strategic role, largely in providing men for the regular army, but also on garrison duties, during the Crimean War.[64] There had been various disciplinary issues associated with this service though, and questions had been asked about the loyalty of the men involved. There was also still a lingering concern about permitting Irish units to serve within Ireland and many regiments found themselves serving in other parts of the United Kingdom, a clear demonstration that there were limits to any perceived loyalty.

Questions of disloyalty only increased from the 1860s, when the threat of Fenian infiltration into the armed forces as whole began to emerge.[65] The result was that the development of the militia was severely hindered by the authorities. Training was sporadically, and for long periods of time, suspended, leading to poor recruitment and damage to its reputation. In 1865, the *Irish Times* was reporting that Fenian agents had

[61] *The Morning Post*, 23 May 1795.
[62] TNA HO 100/62/333 Report on United Irishmen, October 1796, quoted in Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion0', p. 264.
[63] Bartlett, 'Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion0', p. 292.
[64] Butler, *The Irish amateur military tradition in the British Army*, pp. 141-144; Paul Huddie, *The Crimean War and Irish Society,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 138-149; David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).
[65] A. J. Semple, 'The Fenian Infiltration of the British Army', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 52, 211)1964), pp. 133-160

taken advantage of the militia's annual training, achieving 'great success' in their attempts to infiltrate the force. Furthermore, that the Fenians were 'eager aspirants for enlistment in the militia' for when the militia was called out for its training, the drill of many members was already perfect and that individuals were performing their duties nearly as skilfully as soldiers in the regular army. [66]

By 1866, when announcing that annual training was to be cancelled, Chichester Fortescue, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, stated that,

> it would be unfair to the militia to call them together in large masses at a time when all the barracks in Ireland which usually received them were filled by detachments of troops, and to expose them to the attempts and to the machinations of Fenian agents, who, the Government knew, from information they had received, had directed their endeavours especially…to the corruption of the Irish Militia.[67]

Despite the cancellation of training, sporadic arrests of militiamen were made throughout the decade, and continued into the 1870s. This included arrest for offences such as: the illegal drilling of men, especially in the middle of the night; but also, the theft of arms from barracks, with serving militiamen sometimes implicated in both instances.[68]

The Land War did little to help any prospect of trust being afforded to the militia, and also continued to disrupt annual training into the 1880s. It was noted, for example, that nearly all members of the Kerry Militia were members of the Land League and that it was not wise for the regiment to meet together.[69] As has been mentioned, annual training was a crucial method used to recruit members of the militia. Without this, numbers dwindled, and so did the militia's strategic importance. With fewer members, fewer recruits were found for the regular army by this method too.

As the century wore on, questions around loyalty also filtered into plans for mobilisation in the event of a conflict. By 1886, it was stated that only six militia regiments 'known to be loyal' would remain in Ireland in the event of war.[70] Undoubtedly, 'loyal' in this context meant those units which had the highest

[66]*Irish Times*, 5 September 1865.
[67]Parl. Debs. (House of Commons (HC)), vol. 183, cols. 177-80, 30 April 1866.
[68]For examples see *Morning* Post, 3 March 1866; *The Times*, 17 May 1867; *Freeman's Journal*, 28 June 1877.
[69]NLI Ms.1304 Letter from the Adjutant of the Kerry Militia, to the Under-Secretary at Dublin Castle, 8 January 1881.
[70]TNA WO 147/33 Reports of a Committee on Army Mobilisation, December 1886.

percentage of Protestants within their ranks. By the 1890s, only three militia regiments were deemed to be loyal enough to be entrusted to serve in Ireland.[71] The outbreak of war in South Africa at the turn of the twentieth century led to a reassessment in strategic planning, and regiments of the Irish militia served as whole units or as detachments in South Africa itself, or carried out garrison duties in St Helena, Malta, Gozo, and the United Kingdom.[72] They did so with the question of loyalty constantly hanging over them, especially when some regiments refused to serve abroad when given the option to do so. Though, given the pro-Boer feelings of many Irish nationalists, and the campaigns against army recruitment, it is testament to the apolitical nature of the Irish militia that any service was rendered at all.[73]

Conclusion

The South African War led to a dramatic evaluation of British forces and their capabilities. One outcome of this was the disbandment of the militia as a whole, and the creation of the Territorial Force in 1908. It was decided that the latter force would not be extended to Ireland, with the members of the Irish militia being given the option to join the Special Reserve or discontinue their service. Various, smaller, amateur forces did come into existence in Ireland thereafter, some of which included Irish Catholics in their ranks. Most notably, small numbers of Irish Catholics were seen in the Volunteer Training Corps during the First World War and, for a limited time, in the Ulster Defence Regiment during the Northern Ireland Troubles. In such small numbers, it is not possible to view this in the same way as service in the militia.

That being said, it is possible to find an Irish Catholic amateur military tradition in the Irish militia, and this was found throughout its existence. It was both an extension of the amateur military tradition, either within the British military framework or working outside it, as well as the Catholic military tradition, usually found in the regular British Army. The Protestant domination of the officer corps naturally contradicts this notion, however, this dominance actually acted as a means to strengthen Catholic identity within the other ranks of the militia. Perceived injustices and the occasional poor treatment of Catholic soldiers by their officers, but also the authorities more broadly, united the press and the public and acted to strengthen their own identities as Irish Catholic militiamen. Continued accusations of disloyalty and possible nationalist

[71]0000000000TNA WO 32/7081 'Irish Militia Battalions allotted to Defended Ports in Ireland', 1887-1908.

[72]Butler, *Irish Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 145; Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish Soldier in the Boer War' in John Gooch, ed., *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image,* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 141-151 (p.142).

[73]Terence Denman, '"The Red Livery of Shame": The Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914', *Irish Historical Studies*, 29, 114 (1994), pp. 208-233; Bowman, 'Irish Military Cultures in the British Army', p. 206.

subversion, present throughout the militia's existence, also acted to strengthen these feelings. The tens of thousands of Irish militiamen opting to join the regular army in particular, took this identity with them, especially when joining traditionally 'Irish' regiments of the British Army. The fact that these regular regiments also tended to include visual manifestations of Irish identity in regimental colours and badges, as well as battle honours, only helped to solidify this identity.[74]

It was only during times of emergency, threat of invasion, or war, that the authorities permitted the Irish militia to demonstrate its loyalty. During the Napoleonic Wars, this certainly had its limits and incidents of rioting, or subversion meant that an arm's length approach was adopted, i.e., it was better to mobilise the Irish militia and send it away from Ireland at the earliest possible moment, than allow it to serve in Ireland. This attitude was maintained when the militia was re-established in 1854, and during the South African War, when Irish regiments were sent to other areas of the United Kingdom to carry out their service or, in the latter case, were sent overseas. Exposing Irish militiamen to locations across the United Kingdom meant a strengthening of identity, as the British public and the press interacted with it on a regular basis. This often re-enforced perceptions that Irish soldiers possessed those qualities which made 'good' soldiers, while also reminding interested observers that they might lack discipline or be prone to rebellion.

It is clear then, that an Irish Catholic amateur military tradition existed in the Irish militia. The preponderance of Catholics in the ranks ensured it. This tradition and, indeed, identity, made a significant contribution to the broader Irish military tradition in the British Army and highlighted the enduring importance of Irish Catholic soldiers in Britain's armed forces, both at home and abroad.

[74]McDonnell, 'Loyalty and Rebellion', p. 64.

Irish Regiments and Soldiers in the Crimean War – their contribution and legacy

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ABSTRACT
During the Crimean War (1853-6), five Irish regiments served with the British expeditionary force, while thousands of Irish soldiers served across the British Army in non-Irish regiments. These Irish troops made a significant contribution, and the war was followed with considerable interest in Ireland, encouraging civilians to volunteer to serve as doctors, nurses, and engineers. This article will outline the context of this Irish involvement in the Crimean War and the level of public interest, while also referring to the survival of an awareness of that war in Irish folk memory until well into the twentieth century.

Introduction

In the 1930s, a Mr O'Doherty, aged 50, of Ballyhursty, Co. Tipperary, gave testimony to the Irish Folklore Commission. This was recorded by Tessie O'Doherty, a local schoolteacher and probably a relation. Under the title of Local Heroes, Mr O'Doherty gave a brief account of the career of General William Dunham Massy (d.1906) of Grantstown, Co. Tipperary, outlining Massy's service in the Crimea, how he came to be known as Redan Massy and describing him as 'one of the greatest soldiers of the last century'. Mr O'Doherty was referring to events that had taken place around eighty years previously and, indeed, before he had even been born. But, by some means, the key facts pertaining to Redan Massy had been communicated to him during his lifetime. This is one of several references to the Crimean War in the files of the Irish Folklore Commission, illustrating that the war still had some measure of cultural legacy in post-Independence Ireland.[1]

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[1] 'The Schools' Collection, Volume 0579, Page 142', Image and data © National Folklore Collection, UCD by Dúchas © National Folklore Collection, UCD is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. Accessed 18 April 2023.

On approaching this research subject in the context of a PhD thesis in the mid-1990s, the initial survey indicated that there was a viable topic to be explored here and the early phase of the project focused on the contribution of the Irish regiments in the Crimea. Newspapers of the period indicated that there was a high level of Irish involvement in the war and also a level of support in Ireland. But, apart from occasional articles in *The Irish Sword*, there was simply no literature on the subject. This was a lacuna that the author's PhD research and subsequent book endeavoured to fill and since then there has been further scholarly discussion of the Ireland and the Crimean War.[2] In the context of the current war in Ukraine and frequent mentions of the Crimea, there has also been some journalistic comment on Ireland's historic connections.[3]

At the time of Britain's declaration of war on Russia in 1854, there were eight regiments in the British army that were designated as being Irish. In the army list of the period, they were officially designated as:

4th (Royal Irish) Regiment of Dragoon Guards
6th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Dragoon Guards
8th (King's Royal Irish) Regiment of Light Dragoons (Hussars)
18th (Royal Irish) Regiment of Foot
27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot
86th (Royal County Down) Regiment of Foot
87th (Royal Irish Fusiliers) Regiment of Foot
88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot[4]

Of these, the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards, the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, the 18th Royal Irish and the 88th Connaught Rangers served in the Crimea. These Irish regiments formed a part of the initial expeditionary force of

[2]For a more comprehensive account of this subject, see David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002, republished 2014). See also work by Paul Huddie in particular his monograph Huddie, Paul. *The Crimean War and Irish Society*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

[3]See Ray Burke, 'Spoils of war: Crimean cannons in Irish towns' in *The Irish Times*, 28 November 2022. Also, David Murphy, 'Ireland and the Crimean War: 30,000 soldiers, 22 trophy guns and a banquet', RTE Brainstorm, 26 May 2023. (See: The Irish connections to the Crimean War (rte.ie)). Accessed 20 June 2023.

[4]It is also worth considering other regiments of the time that were Irish but which did not have an Irish designation in their title. For example, the 83rd Regiment of Foot was raised in Dublin in 1793 and, throughout its history had a connection to the city and county of Dublin. In 1881 it became the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles under the terms of the Childers Reforms.

around 27,000 soldiers. By the end of the war in 1856, further drafts of reinforcements meant that just over 111,300 British troops served in the Crimea.

It should be pointed out that not all of the Irish regiments were predominantly Irish in composition; that depended on where they had been stationed before the war. At the same time, some regiments, which were not designated as Irish, had a significant number of Irish soldiers. Surviving muster records indicate there was a cohort of Irish across all the regiments that served in the Crimea but these muster rolls are numerous, are not digitised, and have only been sampled by scholars thus far.[5] In some regiments, such as the 11th Hussars, which had been stationed in Ireland before the war, the Irish cohort was just 5.6%.[6] In the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, the Irish contingent was 22.75%.[7] In keeping with new research on the Irish regiments in the earlier Peninsular War, the cavalry regiments seem to have had smaller contingents of Irish. The Scots Greys for example, sent 24 officers and 580 troopers to the Crimea. Of these just three officers and 40 troopers were Irish.[8] It was in the infantry regiments, however, that the Irish were more numerous. The 50th (Queen's Own) Regiment of Foot, for example, was stationed in Ireland before the war and had an Irish contingent of around 30%.

Returns of recruits from the 1840s are also indicative. In 1846, of a total number of 23,878 new recruits for the British army, 5,532 were recorded as having been born in Ireland, which is just over 23% of all recruits. In 1847, the Irish numbered 8,188 of a total of 18,632 new recruits to the British army, which is almost 44%. It is no coincidence that these high numbers of Irish recruits coincided with the worst years of the Irish Famine. In the 1850s, it was not uncommon to find long-serving Irish soldiers listed who had joined during these years. The late Professor David Fitzpatrick suggested a total of around 50,000 Irish soldiers in the British army of the mid-1850s.[9] An article in *The Irish Sword* in 1962 offered some very precise figures; 35,516 Irish soldiers serving in the British army in 1854 with 11,997 new Irish recruits in 1855 and a further 12,222 Irish recruits in 1856. Sadly, no source for these figures was indicated

[5]The most focused collection of muster rolls for this period are contained in a grouping in The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA); WO 14, refers to the "Scutari Depot Muster Books and Pay Lists" which record details of all of the regiment on route to the Crimea. There are 130 volumes in this series.
[6]TNA WO 12/1012-17.
[7]TNA WO 12/844-848.
[8]Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum, Edinburgh, MS GB46 G176-9, 'Nominal roll of the officers and men who sailed with the Scots Greys for the Crimea'.
[9]David Fitzpatrick, 'A peculiar tramping people' in W.E. Vaughan, ed., *A new history of Ireland*, vol. v, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 623-61.

in that article.[10] Arriving at an exact number of the Irish who served in the Crimea is difficult, and would require a comprehensive survey of the surviving muster rolls to be conclusive. But a figure of around 30% would seem a supportable estimate and would indicate that more than 30,000 Irish soldiers served in the Crimea.

They were represented at every major engagement of the war; the Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman and the long-running siege of Sevastopol. Due to increasing levels of literacy in Ireland, they have left behind some excellent first-hand accounts of their experiences of the war, including letters, memoirs, and later newspaper interviews. It would be an impossible task to discuss many of these in the context of this article, but a good example is the memoir of James O'Malley of the 17th Foot. Describing the fighting in the siege of Sevastopol, O'Malley later recalled:

> They poured into our trenches but as they came on we gave them the bayonet after discharging the contents of our barrels in their faces. This was one of the bloodiest encounters ever since the earth was cursed by war and, as the enemy again and again charged us, we got so jammed up as to be quite unable to shorten arms and, as we pulled the bayonet out of one man, we dashed the brains out of another with the butt end and, when we could not reach their heads, we struck them on the shins. Some of the men got clinched with the Russians and fists were frequently in use. The Russians must have had frightful loss when we ultimately drove them back, as seventy-eight lay dead right in the trenches to say nothing of those who dropped outside or crawled away to die of their wounds elsewhere.[11]

To the modern ear, such recollections sound brutal in the extreme, but life conditions at that time were harsh for many, and especially so for soldiers on campaign. O'Malley was also writing at the end of his life, so no doubt his account was written with some added drama in the hope of boosting book sales. Yet this general tone can be seen in surviving contemporary letters and it is also evident that some were probably written with hopes of later publication; and during the course of the war we see the increased publication of "letters from the front" in the newspapers. The war was the main news story of the period, and this created huge public interest. The Irish-born journalist, William Howard Russell of *The Times*, more than catered for this need with his colourful dispatches from the Crimea, which were reprinted in Irish newspapers and later in book form. In terms of visual imagery, publications such as *The Illustrated London News* covered the war closely and, due to its dramatic images, this publication saw

[10] J J W. Murphy, 'An Irish Sister of Mercy in the Crimean War' in *The Irish Sword*, v, 21 (1962), p. 251.

[11] James O'Malley, *The life of James O'Malley, late corporal of the 17th Leicestershire Regiment, 'Royal Bengal Tigers',* (Montreal: Desaulnier, 1893), pp. 84-5.

increased circulation in Great Britain and Ireland during this period. For both the musically inclined and the less literate, the war was also the subject of many broadsheet ballads. There are about fifty Crimean ballads preserved in the White Ballad Collection held at Trinity College, Dublin, and covering a range of themes including 'The Russians are Coming', 'War song of the Tipperary Light Infantry' and 'The Battle of Alma'.[12]

As was the case in previous wars, a number of Irish wives accompanied their husbands' regiments to the Crimea. The voices of these army wives have largely been lost to us, and few accounts remain of the experiences of these women. Margaret Kirwan, the wife of a soldier in the 19th Foot, recounted her experiences for a regimental magazine in 1895. Her account of the war, especially the early phase in modern-day Bulgaria, vividly describes the harsh conditions and hard labour endured by these women on campaign:

> We marched on up to Devna and remained for a fortnight. There I bought a little wash tub, and carried my cooking things in it. This was the whole of my baggage which I carried on my head during the march. I also had a water bottle and a haversack to carry biscuits in. The priest and the minister had to carry their own bottles and sacks, like soldiers. On the march the men kept falling out from the heat and they kept me busy giving them drinks. When we got to Monastne, the washing duty of No. 5 Company fell to me; there were 101 men in it and the clothes were brought by its transport horse. I stood in the midst of the stream from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. washing. The Colour-Sergeant would not keep account and some men paid and some did not, so that I was left with very little for my trouble. The men were dying fast of cholera and black fever and were buried in their blankets. No sooner had we moved up country than the Turks opened the graves and took the blankets.[13]

When one thinks of women serving in the context of the Crimean War, it is usually in the context of prominent figures such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole and Fanny Duberley; but there was a further contingent of soldiers' wives that have largely been lost in the record and overlooked. The experiences of the wives who were left

[12]Trinity College, Dublin, White Ballad Collection, OLS/X/1/530-532. The Schools Collection of the Irish Folklore Commission includes other musical references to the Crimean War; 'The Kerry Recruit' appears at least twice in Cork 'The Schools' Collection, Volume 0304, Page 054' and Limerick 'The Schools' Collection, Volume 0502, Page 213'. © National Folklore Collection, UCD by Dúchas © National Folklore Collection, UCD is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. Accessed 18 April 2023.

[13]Mark Marsay, 'One woman's story: with the 19th Foot by Margaret Kirwan' in *Newsletter of the Friends of the Green Howards Regimental Museum*, no. 3, (September 1997), pp 14-15.

behind when the regiments left for the Crimea have only received scholarly attention recently. Paul Huddie has identified the difficulties faced by army wives during this period, with many women reliant on poor relief or charitable handouts from organizations such as the Patriotic Fund (PF) and the Central Association for the Aid of Soldiers' Wives on Active Service.[14] What became of women who found themselves to be widows in locations such as Malta and Scutari in Turkey remains a subject for examination. As the war progressed there was an increased need for nurses and many women, Irish women among them, travelled to the east to work in that capacity. These women included a group of Irish Sisters of Mercy who set up a field hospital in the Crimea.[15]

Within the army itself, Irish officers played a significant role, making up as much as 20% of the officer contingent within particular regiments. As might be expected, this demographic was well-represented within the Irish regiments but was by no means confined to them. As early as the seventeenth century, Irish, or Anglo-Irish officers emerged from within the aristocratic and landed classes in Ireland. Their service in the Crimea forms part of a long military tradition that encompassed the wars of the 18 Century, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and colonial wars such as the Anglo-Sikh Wars of the 1840s. Such officers were usually the 'lesser' sons, the sons not destined to inherit the title or the estates, of Irish landed families.

Two Irish generals served in the Crimea and are good examples of this pattern of service. Major-General John Lysaght Pennefather (1800-72) was the third son of the Rev. John Pennefather, treasurer of Cashel Cathedral and he initially served as a brigade commander in the 2 Division. His divisional commander, Lt-General Sir George de Lacy Evans (1787-1870), was the younger son of a landed family with a modest estate at Moig in Co. Limerick. Both generals served with distinction during the war. Within the Irish officer cohort during this period, and indeed over a longer period of history, we see these patterns repeated frequently – the lesser sons emerging from families owning landed estates, the sons of clergymen, and the other professions. It was unusual for the son-and-heir to be represented in these conflicts but there were two Irish examples in the Crimea: Arthur James Plunkett, then using the courtesy title of Lord Killeen, who served in the 8th Royal Irish Hussars as a captain and took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade and survived both the charge and the war. He would later succeed his father to become the Tenth Earl of Fingall; not so lucky was John Charles Henry, Viscount Fitzgibbon, who also served in the 8th Royal

[14]Paul Huddie (2017) Victims or Survivors: army wives in Ireland during the Crimean War, 1854–56, *Women's History Review*, 26:4, 541-554, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2016.1148502

[15]Maria Luddy, *The Crimean Journals of the Irish Sisters of Mercy, 1854-56,* (Dublin: Desaulnier, 2004).

Irish Hussars as a lieutenant. The Viscount Fitzgibbon was the only legitimate son of Richard Hobart Fitzgibbon, Third Earl of Clare, he also took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade but was listed as missing after the battle and was never seen again. As a result of his death the earldom of Clare was destined for extinction, a process normally associated with families who lost sons during the First World War, although it was obviously a possibility in earlier wars. There were also a series of curious epilogues to the disappearance of the Viscount Fitzgibbon; in 1877, when the 8th Royal Irish Hussars were based in Hounslow, a gentlemen visited the officers' mess and claimed that he was Fitzgibbon. This event was repeated in 1892, when the regiment was based in India when another gentleman, generally matching Fitzgibbon's description, visited the mess. These events caused the family to place a series of notices in newspapers seeking further information but to no avail. The Fitzgibbon story is believed to have inspired Rudyard Kipling's short story 'The man who was'.[16] Interestingly, within the records of the Irish Folklore Commission there is an entry collected as part of the Schools Collection that refers to Lord Clare. Collected by local teacher, Bríghid Bean Mhic Niocaill, from Kilmealy, in Co. Clare, it tells of a group of locals, which included a Crimean veteran, who went treasure hunting on Lord Clare's estate, only to be interrupted by a supernatural whirlwind. Again, we can see local awareness of events that had occurred 80 years previously.[17] It is also worth pointing out that these landed families, associated with the "Great Houses" in Ireland, often became the custodian of letter and journal collections connected to the Crimea, military portraiture, and items of material culture in terms of officers' equipment and sometimes souvenirs that were brought home from the war. Some of this material has since moved to public archives and museum collections, and a small selection of Crimean material can be seen in the 'Soldiers and Chiefs' exhibition at the National

[16]Murphy, David, 'John Charles Henry Fitzgibbon', *Dictionary of Irish Biography online*. Accessed 18 April 2023. A statue of the Viscount Fitzgibbon was erected in Limerick city in 1855 on what was then Wellington Bridge but which was later renamed Sarsfield Bridge. It was flanked by two Crimean trophy guns. This statue was dynamited in 1930. The Third Earl of Clare died in 1864 and the title became extinct.

[17]'The Schools' Collection, Volume 0776, Page 181' Image and data © National Folklore Collection, UCD by Dúchas © National Folklore Collection, UCD is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. Accessed 18 April 2023.

Museum, Collins Barracks, in Dublin.[18] However, some material still remains in family collections.[19]

The Crimean War was also the first war in which the Victoria Cross (VC) was issued, and this has since become Britain's highest award for gallantry. The medal was instituted in 1856 but the first recipients were soldiers and sailors who had served earlier in the Crimean War. In total, 111 VCs were awarded for gallantry in this war, the first award going to Master's Mate (later Rear-Admiral) Charles Davis Lucas from Poytnzpass in Co. Armagh.[20] A total of twenty-eight VCs were awarded to soldiers and sailors who had been born in Ireland, providing a testimony to the significant part that Irishmen played in war, not only in the Crimea itself but in the campaign in the Baltic. Many of these men went on to have significant careers and are illustrative of the social cachet associated with Crimean veterans in general and VC winners in particular. Taking just one example, Sergeant Luke O'Connor, who came from Co. Roscommon, was awarded the first VC to a soldier for his actions at the Battle of the Alma, while serving with the 23rd (Royal Welch Fusiliers) Regiment of Foot. He came from a background of dire poverty: born in 1831, in Kilcroy, his family was evicted in 1839 and his parents then decided to emigrate to America. His father died during the Atlantic crossing and his mother and younger brother died of cholera on the family's arrival at Grosse Isle, Quebec. At some point, O'Connor returned to Ireland and enlisted in the army. At the Battle of the Alma (20 September 1854) he was a 23-year-old sergeant and, although wounded, took up the regimental colour when the colour-bearer was killed. He would later be wounded yet again during an assault at Sevastopol in September 1855. O'Connor was one of 62 veterans invested with the VC at a special ceremony at Hyde Park in 1856. He was later commissioned and achieved the rank of major-general, showing a remarkable level of social mobility for someone who had emerged from poverty and had begun his career as a ranker. [21]

[18]National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, 'Soldiers and Chiefs' Exhibition. For details see https://bit.ly/41vqJb6. Accessed 18 April 2023.

[19]One of the more striking exhibits at the National Museum are the remains of Dickie Bird, a Crimean warhorse that ended its days in Dublin. See Lar Joye, 'Dickie Bird – buried but not forgotten' in *History Ireland*, 27, 6 (2019).

[20]David Murphy, 'Charles Davis Lucas', *Dictionary of Irish Biography Online*, https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.004904.v1. Accessed 18 April 2023.

[21]O'Connor was appointed as Colonel of his old regiment in 1914 and died, in London, in February 1915. He is buried in St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London. Richard Doherty & David Truesdale, *Irish winners of the Victoria Cross,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000). David Murphy, 'Sir Luke O'Connor', *Dictionary of Irish Biography online,* https://www.dib.ie/biography/oconnor-sir-luke-a6602. Accessed 18 April 2023.

Yet while O'Connor's later life was one of upward mobility and success, this was not true for all of the Irish VC winners and, indeed, all Irish veterans. Many would end their lives in poverty, and Irish veterans appear in the lists of relief funds and some had significant difficulties due to wartime injuries and mental health issues. . To take just two examples, John Sullivan, a thirty-seven year veteran of the Royal Navy, and John Byrne, formerly of the 68th Foot, both committed suicide after the war. Both were Victoria Cross winners and, in the years immediately preceding their suicides, both suffered from mental health issues due to their wartime experiences. Overall, Irish Crimean veterans appear with depressing regularity on the lists of recipients of charity from organisations such as the Patriotic Fund or the T.H. Roberts Fund, the latter being specifically set up to aid survivors of the Charge of the Light Brigade.[22] Despite the efforts of such charities, many veterans ended their lives at the bottom of the social ladder. For example, Private John Smith from Dublin, formerly of the 17th Lancers, received financial aid from the T.H. Roberts Fund and was also placed in employment but nevertheless died in the St Pancras Workhouse in 1899. Similarly, Private Patrick Doolan, formerly of the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, died in poverty in Dublin in 1907. Ironically, Doolan's Crimean Medal came to auction at Sotheby's in 1996, realising £5,290, which was then a record for a Light Brigade medal.[23] Between these two extremes, however, many Irish Crimean veterans would seem to have had reasonably functional lives, returning to former trades, or working in agriculture, while several served in constabulary forces, not only in Ireland but also in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[24]

In Ireland, it is now obvious that the war was a subject of great contemporary interest and actual excitement. In the context of traditional narratives of Irish history, this could be seen as somewhat surprising, given the proximity of the war not only to the

[22]Thomas Harrison Roberts was a newspaper editor and publisher who issued an open invitation to survivors of the Charge of the Light Brigade to watch the 1897 Jubilee procession from his Fleet Street offices. Shocked at the conditions that some of these men were living in, he organised the T.H. Roberts Fund, which operated until 1911.

[23]*The Irish Times*, 12 April 1996. Another destitute Crimean veteran was Patrick Hanlon who died in February 1909. After the Master of the Waterford workhouse wrote to the Veteran's Relief Fund, Hanlon was buried with military honours not in a pauper's grave but in a 'nice coffin' in St Mary's Churchyard, an hour's walk from the workhouse. See Aoife Bhreathnach, 'A dignified burial: military funerals for paupers, 1908-15'. Accessed 18 April 2023.

[24]For a useful overview of the men of the Light Brigade, that includes some biographical information on every "Charger", see Cannon William Lummis and Kenneth Wynne, *Honour the Light Brigade, a record of the services of officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the five light cavalry regiments, which made up the Light Brigade at Balaclava etc.* (London: J.B. Hayward & Son,1973).

Irish Famine but also to the 1848 Young Ireland rebellion. But surviving accounts and newspaper coverage would suggest that public interest and enthusiasm was widespread. The departure of troops leaving Ireland for the war was covered in the Irish newspapers and these recorded the enthusiasm of the public, many of whom would gather to say farewell to family members in the ranks. One of the earliest regiments to leave was the 50th Foot, which marched through Dublin in February 1854 before moving by train to take ship at Dun Laoghaire (then Kingstown). The *Dublin Evening Post* reported:

> As the regiment proceeded through the streets, the cheering of the populace was again and again repeated, and it is scarcely necessary to add that the waving of numerous white handkerchiefs by the ladies who filled the windows and balconies along the entire line of streets, contributed in no small degree to heighten the enthusiasm of the multitude.[25]

Similar scenes were reported across all of Ireland, especially in the major garrison towns, at key railway stations and ports of embarkation. The Irish newspapers of the period covered the campaign in Bulgaria, and then in the Crimea itself in some detail and this further facilitated public interest. While there were a handful of Irish correspondents in the Crimea working for *The Times* and other British papers, the Irish newspapers sent none of their own, but did republish the reports of William Howard Russell and other correspondents. Public interest was further served by the publication of "letters from the front", written by Irish soldiers. This was a practice that would be repeated during later conflicts such as the Zulu War, the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War. Over the two years of the Crimean war, it is also possible to discern a shift in Irish opinion as casualties mounted and it became increasingly obvious that the war was being mismanaged. Again, we see a similar shift in the tone of Irish newspapers in later conflicts but in particular in the context of the First World War. A frequent news item in Ireland during the course of the war was the issue of recruitment. Due to the prolonged nature of the Crimean War, recruits needed to be found to make up for losses. The location of recruitment offices and the movements of recruiting parties are regularly referred to in the Irish papers and, if the pressmen of the period are to be believed, they were successful in drawing in Irish recruits. Regimental records confirm what had become an established pattern for Ireland since the Napoleonic period. Recruits tended to come from the labouring classes but there were also those who left secure positions to serve in the Crimea. There were also many others who served in the Crimea but did not serve in an Irish regiment or, indeed, any type of regiment. It is possible to identify numerous Irish people who volunteered to serve in a civilian or auxiliary capacity as doctors, nurses, chaplains, railway navvies, engineers, transport workers/teamsters and even members

[25] *Dublin Evening Post*, 25 February 1854.

of the Irish Constabulary, some of whom took leave to serve in the Crimea. These are also patterns that later were repeated in the context of the Second Anglo-Boer War and the First World War.

At the conclusion of the peace in 1856, there was public celebration across Ireland and large crowds gathered to mark the end of the war. In Dublin, a large crowd gathered in St. Stephen's Green and this crowd extended down Grafton Street and as far as the River Liffey. In the summer of 1856, a committee was formed to organise a celebratory dinner for the returning veterans. Prominent within the organising committee were Isaac Butt and Patrick O'Brien, both Irish MPs. This dinner would eventually take place on 22 October 1856 in Stack A at George's Dock, a customs clearance warehouse covering over 70,000 square feet. As public interest in the event had grown, the venue had to be moved to this space to accommodate the growing number of the public who wished to buy tickets. Ultimately, 5,000 people would attend the 'Dublin Crimean Banquet', of whom 3,000 were veterans of the war. A considerable amount of food was consumed in what was the largest-ever formal dinner in Ireland. This included over three tons of potatoes, 200 turkeys, 200 geese and 250 legs of mutton. Each veteran was supplied with a quart of porter (beer) and a pint of sherry or port. Alongside those at the dinner in Stack A, thousands more lined the route to cheer the veterans as they arrived, and then remained to cheer them as they departed.[26] As a reflection of public interest in the war and support for Irish soldiers and sailors, the Dublin Crimean Banquet was a key event. That this event was organised within a decade of the Irish Famine is somewhat startling but there appears to have been no voices of dissent or any questions raised at the time. Leftover food was distributed to the Dublin workhouses, and this was perhaps some small recognition of the dire plight of Dublin's poor. In terms of local memory, some traces of the painted decorations were still visible when the author visited Stack A before its renovation in the 1990s. Locally, it was still known as the 'banquet hall' up to the 1980s and today houses EPIC: The Irish Emigration Museum.[27]

There was also a proposal for a national Crimean memorial to be part-funded using the £1,000 left over from the organisation of the banquet. This was to be located in Dublin, but the project never got traction, perhaps in partl due to Crimean trophy guns being made available to any town that requested them. There are twenty-two of

[26]The banquet was covered by Irish newspapers including the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Dublin Evening Mail*, while the *Illustrated London News* reported on it with an illustration. A commemorative booklet was later published entitled *History of the great national banquet given to the victorious soldiers returned from the Crimean War etc* (Dublin, 1858).
[27]It is interesting that Stack A is proximate to a Famine memorial on the nearby quayside. EPIC: The Irish Emigration Museum. https://epicchq.com/. Accessed 18 April 2023.

these Crimean trophy guns surviving in locations around Ireland, which resulted in a pattern of local rather than national memorialisation. Dublin Corporation applied for some of these guns and ultimately was allocated six, which were on public display in front of the Royal Barracks, now the National Museum, Collins Barracks in Dublin. After restoration by the Irish Defence Forces, and some confusion over ownership, they are now located on the main square of Cathal Brugha Barracks in Rathmines - the former Portobello Barracks. Some towns in Ireland received a pair of guns, such as Galway, Waterford, Limerick and Tralee. Others, such as Trim, Ennis and Cobh, received a single gun. There was also a pair of Crimean cannons in Monaghan town, and one in Coleraine, both of which have since disappeared. There are also numerous memorials across Ireland, especially in churches and graveyards, denoting Crimean casualties, or the later passing of a Crimean veteran.[28]

It could be argued that the Crimean veterans who returned to Ireland after the war were, in many ways, living memorials. There is evidence that there was a level of awareness within communities in connection to these men. Several ended their days in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, and when the last Irish pensioners were transferred to the Royal Hospital Chelsea in 1921, there were two Crimean veterans among them. Within census records, it is possible to find people who referred to themselves as 'Crimean pensioners' and this occurs into the early decades of the 20 Century. In the 1901 census, there are two women who described themselves as Crimean pensioners, both widows, and it is specifically noted that one, Maria McNamara from Carlow, then 78 years old, was a widow of the 44th Regiment.[29] Interestingly in the 1911 census, there are four Crimean pensioners noted, one of whom was a widow. One of those listed was James Cushley of Londonderry, then aged 80, who was described as an 'ex-soldier of the Crimea/pensioner'.[30]

What is perhaps more surprising is the number of references in the Irish Folklore Commission to the Crimean War. The Commission was formed in 1935 and was charged with the collection and preservation of Irish folklore material in all forms as a means of preserving and later studying the Irish tradition of oral folklore. Various means of interviewing and collecting stories and traditions were employed and the activity often focused on local schools, facilitated by both teachers and students.

[28]Paul Huddie, 'That woe could wish, or vanity devise': Crimean War memorials in Dublin's Anglican churches' in Lisa Marie Griffith and Ciaran Wallace, eds, *Grave matters: death and dying in Dublin 1500 to the present,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), pp. 77-85.

[29]Maria McNamara, 'Census of Ireland, 1901', National Archives of Ireland. The second widow was Mary Mahoney of Queenstown in Cork. Accessed 18 April 2023.

[30]James Cushley, 'Census of Ireland, 1911', National Archives of Ireland. Accessed 18 April 2023. There were four pensioners in total in 1911, all men, over the age of 76.

Within the collection of the Irish Folklore Commission are numerous references to the Crimean War in material which is particularly interesting and often quite colourful. For several of these entries, the war is the event through which some other event or story is dated and set suggesting it functioned as one of what Guy Beiner refers to as a 'dazzling panoply of complex mnemonic practices', a chronological point in time around which vernacular memory was constructed.[31] In other stories, the period is retold as a time of food shortage, due to the export of agricultural produce. Other testimonies to the commission recalled local individuals joining the army or discussed locals who had been veterans of the war. It is a varied selection of references but that the Crimea was still a reference point for folk memory in the 1930s, in the context of an Ireland that had seen rapid, if not drastic, political and social change, is fascinating. The accounts themselves add further context to the Irish understanding of the Crimean War and illustrate the development of folk memory and local concepts of trauma. To take one example, Samuel Barrett, the schoolmaster at Monkstown in Co. Cork, recorded the origins of a local placename – 'Hullabuloo Corner':

> In the olden days when the Irish regiments were going to the Crimean War they has to come to Monkstown because it was from there they embarked. With the soldiers came their relatives to bid them farewell. After farewells were given the relatives gathered at the above mentioned corner to view the ship as it sailed away. When the ship was disappearing they started to cry and mourn loudly. Sometimes they used caoin and make such noise that the people of the district called the corner Hullabuloo Corner.[32]

In terms of Irish casualties of the war, it is estimated that over 7,000 Irish soldiers and sailors died in the war. Coming so close to the Irish Famine, this represented a significant further layer of national trauma. The practice of intense recruitment within local communities, exacerbated the impact of these wartime casualties. To take one example, records survive of the pre-Famine male population and also Crimean casualties for a number of parishes in Co. Cork, which traditionally provided sailors for the Royal Navy. The parish of Upper Aghada had a male population of 97 in 1841. The parish's Crimean dead numbered 54 men. Similarly, the parish of Farsid's male

[31]Recent work on folk memory in Ireland tends to be led by Guy Beiner's work on 1798. See Guy Beiner, *Forgetful remembrance: social forgetting and vernacular historiography of a rebellion in Ulster,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 2.

[32]'The Schools' Collection, Volume 0390, Page 209', Image and data © National Folklore Collection, UCD by Dúchas © National Folklore Collection, UCD is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. Accessed 18 April 2023.

population was 98 in 1841, with a Crimean death toll of 44.[33] The effects of Crimean casualties coming so close after the Irish Famine on these small communities must have been nothing short of catastrophic and suggests a further line of possible research. We tend to view the vast demographic changes and population decline in Ireland, particularly in the West of Ireland, in the context of the Irish Famine and associated emigration. It would be interesting to explore how casualties among the Irish soldiers and sailors serving in 'Queen Victoria's Little Wars' during the nineteenth Century impacted on wider demographic patterns in Ireland.

Irish military history remains an under-researched field of study and this is, sadly, particularly true in Ireland. Since the 1990s, we have seen increasing levels of activity in this area but much of this scholarship has focused on the First World War which was, obviously, a major event for Ireland and the Irish regiments. The earlier and more numerous small wars of the nineteenth century were also formative in this story but are often missed in the wider discussion or, if they are dealt with at all, it is in the sense of examining isolated events. Instead, we should view these nineteenth century conflicts as a part of a longer continuum and in them we can see patterns that were maintained into the twentieth century. There are recurring patterns in terms of the Irish contribution, recruitment, newspaper coverage, public support and civilian volunteering, These continuities can be traced across the wars of this period, from the Crimea, to the Indian Mutiny, to Afghanistan, the Sudan, South Africa, right up to the First World War. The Crimean War was a fundamental episode in the development of these patterns, and also attitudes to military service in Ireland. This issue of the British Journal of Military History discusses the contribution of the Irish regiments up to their disbandment in 1922, but within that long tradition of Irish military service, the Crimean War was a key moment, and the legacy of that war in the public memory up to the 1930s and, in some cases even later into the twentieth century, is testimony to that significance.

[33]National Archives, Dublin, MS 6077, 'Lists of men from Aghada and Whitegate Parishes Co. Cork, serving in the Royal Navy, and lists of those killed or died in the war'.

Soldier Stories: The Irish in the Army from the Late Nineteenth Century to the First World War

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ABSTRACT
By drawing on soldiers' writings and their broader cultural representations, this article enables new ways of seeing Irish soldier identity as socially and politically mobile. Using Lady Butler's famous 'Listed for the Connaught Rangers: Recruiting in Ireland (1878) *as its starting point, it explores the Irish soldier's positioning from the late Victorian period to the First World War. Analysing narratives of William Butler, John Lucy, Francis Ledwidge and Patrick MacGill, alongside fictional and visual representations of Irish soldiers, it is demonstrated how Irish soldierly identity was responsive and shifting during this period of complex political and social change for Ireland.*

Introduction

A group of men is coming along a country road. The background is picturesque: a heathery glen surrounded by mountains. The artist captures them at a moment when they are passing a ruined cottage. Its desolation is not recent as grass is growing on its crumbling front wall. The mud road is wet from recent rains but the sky has cleared to blue with scattered clouds. With his raised step, hands in pockets, clay pipe in mouth, the central, most striking figure, stares ahead out of the picture's frame. His companion, almost identical in attire, is looking back at the swirling smoke faintly seen in the valley beyond the bridge which the men have recently crossed. The earthy-coloured apparel of both is in keeping with the surrounding countryside – they are of this land. A hint of red protrudes from the shirt of the central figure and his

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companion's jacket has blown back to reveal a red shirt.[1] In this sense, they are aligned in colour with the red-uniformed recruiters of the Connaught Rangers, their four companions on the road. The recruiters' red apparel contrasts with the muted browns and purples of the County Kerry countryside in Ireland's southwest. The two young men are on their way to war, their recent enlistment evident in the bright recruiting ribbons on their hats, mirrored in the ribbons of the recruiting sergeant.

This is Lady Butler's '*Listed for the Connaught Rangers: Recruiting in Ireland* (1878) and these future soldiers are in transition from their rural Irish homes to the British army. This reading of Elizabeth Butler's famous painting encapsulates the shifting position of the Irish soldier. It is a 'political painting' which 'occupies two contradictory positions': as a patriotic piece it depicts an Ireland which, despite its social difficulties, still produces recruits for the army, but it simultaneously showcases how economic conditions in the 1870s, evident in the prominence of the ruined cottage and the positions of the two recruits, one looking back, the other ahead, compel Irish men to join the army.[2] It is argued here that the Irish soldier is positioned at the crossroads of these interpretations. Focusing on the late nineteenth century to the First World War, this article examines how the Irish soldier in literature, art and memoir occupies different and seemingly conflicting identities at once. His position is fluctuating, contingent and situational. Mobility, change and non-uniformity are embedded in the Irish soldier's identity, as this reading of Elizabeth Butler's painting suggests. An analysis of Irish soldiers' writings, in conjunction with their representation by others, produces novel readings and understandings of how they saw themselves and how we can see them, a hundred years after the disbandment of Irish regiments from the British army.

[1] A 1909 publication describes the indigenous red dye found in Irish dress as similar to a 'red carnation' and not an 'offensive scarlet'. Robert Lynd, *Home Life in Ireland,* (London: Mills & Boon, 1909), p. 210.

[2] See Catherine Wynne, *Lady Butler: War Artist and Traveller, 1846-1933,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2019), p. 103.

Figure 1: '*Listed for the Connaught Rangers: Recruiting in Ireland*, 1878. Oil on Canvas, 107 x 169.5cm.. © Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre / Bridgeman Images

The Nineteenth-Century Soldier Story:
I. William Butler: Soldier-Writer

When the artist first encountered Ireland, she was also in a period of transition. Recently married, she changed her name from Thompson, under which she achieved fame with her historical war painting, *Calling the Roll After an Engagement, Crimea* (popularly known as *The Roll Call*), in 1874. She had established her reputation as Victorian Britain's leading war artist by the time of her marriage. In her first encounter with her husband's native land on honeymoon in 1877, she describes how she was struck by its beauty, its 'tracts of glorious bog-land', a picturesque vision coupled with deprivation, as she notes the 'hard struggle for existence in this stony and difficult land of Kerry.'[3] She returned to prepare *Connaught Rangers* in the region of Glencar the following year and found two Kerry cousins for her models. An interpretation of this work in progress appeared in the press in January 1879, four months before its Royal Academy exhibition:

[3]Elizabeth Butler, *From Sketch-Book and Diary,* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1909), p. 4 & p. 10.

> Mrs Butler (Miss Elizabeth Thompson) is at work on a picture of Irish life, at once military and pacific, and containing a more elaborate study of landscape than she has made before … Two broad-shouldered young peasants of the West of Ireland are quitting a wild glen with its ruined cabins, having just taken the QUEEN'S shilling from the sergeant, who marches with them. There is no effort at sentimental pathos, and the young fellows step out briskly, with little show of regret. The scheme of colour is subdued and exceedingly powerful, every detail having been studied on the spot under a thoroughly Irish atmosphere.[4]

Elizabeth Butler recalls how she was invested in her husband's project to get more men like these recruits into the army. Major (at the time of his marriage) William Butler was an advocate of army reform, noting in the preface to his Canadian travel narrative, *The Wild North Land* (1872), that during the 1870s 'everybody had something to do with military matters', as the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) had 'caused the panic-stricken British people to overhaul and reconstruct.'[5] This was a period in which his wife's novel approach to war art, which focused attention on the condition and welfare of the ordinary soldier, flourished. A Catholic from County Tipperary in the south of Ireland, William Butler was also a campaign veteran of the Red River Expedition (1870) in Canada, and the Second Anglo-Ashanti War (1873-4) in Africa by the time of his marriage. A passionate critic of the take-over of the lands of other peoples, William Butler also fought for the control of such foreign lands. His story, captured in his writings, reveals a figure who, despite achieving the rank of general by the end of his career, exhibited shifting and seemingly contradictory opinions and allegiances.

William Butler's sole novel, *Red Cloud, The Solitary Sioux* (1882), explores his political positioning. The story's protagonist starts life in the Glencar of Elizabeth Butler's earlier painting. This fictional vision is idyllic: his family's cottage in Glencar is set against a 'mountain, heather-covered, and sprinkled here and there with dwarf furze bushes.'[6] The cottage had been purchased by his dead soldier father as a relief from his army duties. It is from this glen that his son ventures forth, inspired and trained by a neighbour, Sergeant McMahon, a veteran of the Peninsular Wars:

[4]Press cutting, 5 January 1878. Meynell Archive, Greatham, Sussex.
[5]William Butler, *The Wild North Land: The Story of a Winter Journey with Dogs Across North America,* (London: Burns and Oates, 1915), p. 3 & p. 5.
[6]William Butler, *Red Cloud, The Solitary Sioux: A Story of the Great Prairie,* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1896), p. 1.

> He taught me the 'extension motions,' the 'balance step without gaining ground,' the manual and platoon exercises, and the sword exercise. He also showed me the method of attack and defence with the bayonet.[7]

He also tells him 'stories of bivouac … of nights on outlying picquet, of escapes when patrolling, and of incidents in action'.[8] This is coupled by the stories of a local priest, who had met Napoleon:

> The little parlour would fade away, the firelight became a bivouac, and I saw in the grim outside darkness of the glen figures dimly moving; the squadrons charged; the cannon rumbled by; and the pinetops swaying in the storm, were the bearskin caps of the old Guard, looming above smoke and fire![9]

His destiny is not the army as he is too poor to buy a commission, William Butler's comment on the purchase system, abolished in 1871, whereby 'promotion [was] regulated by money'.[10] Instead the narrator sets out, with his childhood companion, to North America: 'we went not to annex, to conquer, nor to destroy; we went to roam and rove the world'.[11] Here he travels with Red Cloud, a 'Mandan Sioux'.[12] Red Cloud sees the narrator as the 'first white man' he has 'ever met who came out' to their 'land' with the 'right spirit': 'You do not come to make money … you do not come to sell or to buy, and to cheat and to lie to us.'[13] Red Cloud recounts a story of colonisation as the 'soldiers of the United States' pushed the inhabitants off their lands, forcing them to move 'farther and farther into the west.'[14] Red Cloud refuses to remain 'an idle spectator' as the Mandans resist further incursion into their territories.[15] His father, captured by a trader called MacDermott, and sold to the Americans, was 'hanged as a traitor in sight of the very river by whose banks he had been born.'[16] The trader's Irish name is undoubtedly deliberate as William Butler positions the Irish, the narrator and the trader, on opposite sides of the colonising enterprise. Red Cloud's mission, on which the narrator, his Irish companion, a Cree and an Assiniboine accompany him, is to find MacDermott. After MacDermott is swept away in a cataract, Red Cloud and the narrator's journey ends. Knowing how the

[7]Ibid. p. 7.
[8]Ibid., p. 8.
[9]Ibid., p.10.
[10]Butler, *Wild North Land*, p. 4.
[11]Butler, *Red Cloud*, p. 32.
[12]Ibid., p. 44.
[13]Ibid, p. 31.
[14]Ibid., pp. 44 - 45.
[15]Ibid., p. 45.
[16]Ibid., 49.

narrator's world functions, Red Cloud equips him with the gold that he will need to survive when he goes back. He leaves him in a manner evoking the backward glance of Elizabeth Butler's painting: 'At a bend in the trail he turned to look back: it was but a moment, and then the mountain path was vacant, and I saw him no more.'[17]

This romanticised adventure story explores its author's thoughts on colonisation, a theme earlier articulated in *The Wild North Land* in which William Butler describes how the inhabitants of these lands are viewed: 'the impediment to our progress – the human counterpart of forests which have to be felled … he is an obstacle, and he must be swept away.'[18] This interpretation extends beyond William Butler's experience of North America as he sees similar patterns in Africa. He observes in *Far Out: Rovings Retold* (1880):

> One hundred years ago it was considered right to cheat the black man out of his liberty and to sell him as a slave. Today it is the natural habit of thought to cheat the black man out of his land or out of his cattle.[19]

In the same year that Elizabeth Butler exhibited *Connaught Rangers*, he published an essay, 'A Plea for the Peasant', in which he criticises the 'Highland clearances in Scotland and the unjust system of land tenure in Ireland', policies which 'deprived the army of valuable recruits.'[20] His writing condemns commercial exploitation and the erosion of cultures. His method of negotiating his identity as a soldier is through the championing of the rights of indigenous peoples and through his interpretation of the role of the soldier. He expresses this in *Red Cloud* through the combined forces against the trader as Sioux, Cree, Assiniboine and the two Irishmen become 'bound by a sympathy of thought, by a *soldier* [author's italics] instinct which was strong enough to bridge the wide gulf' which separated them and enable them to 'unite in a real brotherhood'.[21]

In the same year that *Red Cloud* was published, William Butler was involved in war in Egypt. At the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir on 24 August 1882, British forces under Garnet Wolseley's command, suppressed the nationalist army of Colonel Ahmed Arabi in revolt against the Ottoman empire and its representative in Egypt, the Khedive. Writing to his brother-in-law, the journalist Wilfrid Meynell, from Egypt on 11 September 1882, William Butler notes that 'the Khedive has no following, the mass of

[17]Ibid., p. 237.
[18]Butler, *Wild North Land*, p. 52.
[19]William Butler, *Far Out: Rovings Retold* (London: William Isbister, 1881), p. x.
[20]Wynne, *Lady Butler*, p. 105.
[21]Butler, *Red Cloud*, p. 148.

the people are with Arabi.'[22] After Arabi's defeat, William Butler was only one of two British officers who saluted him in his transport to prison. At the 1885 Royal Academy exhibition, Elizabeth Butler exhibited the return from victory, led by Wolseley, with William Butler on his left flank. Her husband's apparent disapprobation of a commemoration of the victory led to *After the Battle* being cut up.[23] Only the part of the original with her husband on horseback remains. After the defeat of Zulu forces in southern Africa in the Anglo-Zulu War (1879), William Butler brought rushes for King Ceteswayo from Zululand during his imprisonment at Cape Town castle, so the king could have sleeping mats woven for him. The king's words on receiving the rushes were translated for him: 'say to him that he has brought sleep to me: now I can rest at night.'[24] William Butler also subscribed to a Parnellian vision of a Home Rule Ireland, and his dedication to Parnell, after the Irish leader's death on 6 October 1891, is commemorated in a poem published five days later:

> Keep alive his sacred fire, oh! my Home-land –
> Keep it burning on thy mountains and thy plains;
> Listen not to Saxon-land or Rome-land
> Should they tell thee to sit satisfied in chains.[25]

William Butler's positionality, however, caused problems in the build-up to the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1901) when he was appointed to the military command in South Africa in late 1898, and as temporary High Commissioner in the absence of Alfred Milner. This, Elizabeth Butler, describes, was a 'dark period in his life … brought about by the malice of those in power there and at home.'[26] He advised against going to war and his command ended in his being summoned home to experience the virulence of the 'Jingo and Yellow press'.[27] At a Royal Commission investigation following the war, he provided evidence that he had 'emphasised the seriousness of the conflict'.[28] 'His offence,' Elizabeth Butler notes, 'had been a frank admission of sympathy for a people tenacious of their independence and, knowing the Boers as he

[22]William Butler, Letter to Wilfrid Meynell, 11 September 1882. Unpublished. Meynell Archive, Greatham, Sussex.
[23]Engravings of the original show Wolseley and his officers being saluted by the Gordon Highlanders. See Peter Harrington, *British Artists and War: The Face of Battle in Paintings and Prints, 1790-1914,* (London: Greenhill Books, 1993), p. 216. For a reading of the painting, see Wynne, *Lady Butler*, pp. 127-132.
[24]Martin Ryan, *William Francis Butler: A Life,* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003), p.78.
[25]'William Butler', Newspaper Cutting, Oct 1891. Meynell archive.
[26]Elizabeth Butler, *Autobiography,* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), p. 275.
[27]'General Butler's Warnings'. *Morning Leader*, 12 February 1909. Meynell Archive.
[28]Ibid.

did, he knew what their resistance would mean in case of attack.'[29] From his new command of the Western District, William Butler addressed his soldiers on the eve of their deployment to the war in early November 1899. The speech reflects his views of soldiering:

> Do your duty, no matter what may be the circumstances, no matter what may be the difficulty… [a soldier's] duty is to face the storm, no matter what the storm may be … as it has been met manfully and bravely by your comrades in South Africa, I feel certain that you will meet it in the same warlike, soldier-like, Briton-like manner.[30]

On the morning of William Butler's death in June 1910, the *Morning Leader* commented:

> If ever a man lived to see his judgement vindicated and his critics put to confusion it was Sir William Butler … Whether it was due to the wider sympathies of his nationality, or to sheer observation, that sagacious Irishman was able to give the Government of 1898 advice on the real condition of South Africa, the neglect of which – because it was distasteful to Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner – cost Great Britain cruelly dear in life, treasure and reputation.[31]

The article suggests that it was his Irishness which enabled him to see politics from a different perspective, while his soldier experience enabled him to read the military situation. As the next section explores, the Irish soldier's positionality is also reflected in his cultural representation.

The Nineteenth-Century Soldier Story:
II. 'The Green Flag'

In Patrick MacGill's First World War autobiographical novel, *Red Horizon* (1916), MacGill's London Irish Rifles relieve the Scots Guards in the trenches. '[M]any of my Irish friends,' MacGill points out, 'belong to this regiment.'

> In the traverse where I was planted I dropped into Ireland, heaps of it. There was the brogue that could be cut with a knife and the humour that survived Mons and the Marne, and a kindliness that sprang from the cabins of Corrymeela and the moors of Derrynane.

[29]Elizabeth Butler, *Autobiography*, p. 277.
[30]'Address by Sir William Butler', *The Weekly Register*. 11 November 1899. Meynell Archive.
[31]'Sir William Butler', *Morning Leader*, 8 June 1910. Meynell Archive.

> Irish? I asked.
>
> Sure, was the answer. 'We're everywhere.[32]

The soldier remarks that the Irish can be found in a 'Gurkha regiment', while another quips that MacGill has 'lost' his 'brogue'.[33] The Irish soldier is everywhere, even if the Irish soldier, Rifleman MacGill, whose claims to Irishness are secured by his County Donegal origins, is not recognisably Irish in the trenches. The point about the Gurkha regiments demonstrates the Irish reach into empire. It evokes Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) in which the protagonist, a young boy, is neither English nor Indian, but sits in-between as Irish. The son of an Irish soldier who dies in poverty in India, Kim, a waif who lives on the streets, has been grafted onto both the Indian and English cultures, leading him to question who he is, 'till his head swam.'[34] Identity for this young Irish boy is a process of self-interrogation and negotiation between cultures.

Arthur Conan Doyle's lesser-known imperial story, 'The Green Flag' (1893), explores the shifting identities of the Irish soldier. The story relates the experience of an Irishman forced to join the army through adverse circumstances at home. From a writer of Irish descent who struggled to integrate his Irish identity into a British imperial one, this story has much to contribute to notions of the positionality of the Irish soldier.[35] It opens with Dennis Conolly, a Fenian, who is in a predicament following the shooting of his brother by the constabulary. This is the 1870s, the period of the Irish land struggle and of Elizabeth Butler's *Connaught Rangers*. Conolly resolves to join the army to escape but '[s]eldom has Her Majesty had a less promising recruit, for his hot Celtic blood seethed with hatred against Britain and all things British.'[36]

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[32]Patrick MacGill, *Red Horizon,* (New York: George H. Doran, 1916), p. 82.
[33]Ibid., p. 83.
[34]Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*, ed. Zohreh T. Sullivan, (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2002), p. 101.
[35]See Catherine Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic,* (Westport CT., and London: Greenwood Press, 2002).
[36]Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Green Flag', *The Green Flag and Other Stories of War and Sport,* (London: Smith, Elder, 1905), p. 1. Eva Ó Cathaoir notes that it was a Fenian strategy to infiltrate the Irish regiments. While 'an estimated 7000 soldiers took the IRB [Irish Republican Brotherhood] oath in Ireland and Britain', their 'potential remained unrealized' due in part to lack of organization and financing. *Soldiers of Liberty: A Study of Fenianism 1858-1908,* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2018), p. 138. Conan Doyle encountered Fenian activity in Ireland in 1866 (aged 9). He describes it in his 1924 autobiography as a 'glimpse of one of the periodical troubles which poor Ireland has endured'. *Arthur Conan Doyle, Memories and Adventures*, ed. Douglas Kerr, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), p. 7.

Conolly's response to his predicament is 'situational' – he needs to escape and enlistment offers a way out. The fictional regiment he joins is riven with complexity:

> The Royal Mallows … were as strange a lot of men as ever were paid by a great empire to fight its battles … while [they] still retained their fame as being one of the smartest corps in the army, no one knew better than their officers that they were dry-rotted with treason and with bitter hatred of the flag under which they served.[37]

On a Sudanese campaign, Conolly urges his platoon to mutiny to the horror of their captain:

> [Captain Foley] saw several rifles were turned on him … What is it, then?' he cried, looking round from one fierce mutinous face to another.
>
> Are you Irishmen? Are you soldiers? What are you here for but to fight for your country?
>
> England is no country of ours, cried several.
>
> You are not fighting for England. You are fighting for Ireland, and for the Empire of which it as part.
>
> A black curse on the Impire!' shouted Private McQuire, throwing down his rifle.
>
> 'Twas the Impire that backed the man that druv me onto the roadside.[38]

Foley, coincidentally, shares his surname with the two Kerry models in *Connaught Rangers* and Foley was also the maiden name of Conan Doyle's mother, Mary. Captain Foley identifies that he is fighting for his country, Ireland, correcting the soldiers' assumption that he is referring to England. For Foley and, indeed for Conan Doyle, Ireland is part of the empire. McQuire, by contrast, refuses any identification with the empire, citing it as the cause of his social condition. These Irish soldiers occupy different positions and different Irish identities.

When Conolly decides to break the square, Foley invokes the plight of their Irish soldier comrades: 'Think what you are doing, man, he yelled, rushing towards the ringleader. 'There are a thousand Irish in the square, and they are dead men if we

[37]Conan Doyle, *The Green Flag*, p. 2.
[38]Ibid., p. 17.

break.'[39] How Conolly intends to act on this invocation is paused as at that moment the enemy, described as 'fiends from the pit', breaks through.[40] Conolly realises that he is faced with an enemy with whom he cannot racially identify: 'And were these the Allies of Ireland?'[41] He rapidly shifts allegiances and, planting his rifle in a mimosa bush, attaches a green flag with a 'crownless harp' to it, while calling on his comrades: 'Bhoys, will ye stand for this?'[42] While the narrator ponders 'for what black mutiny, for what signal of revolt, that flag had been treasured up', in this context and in this foreign war, its meaning and interpretation changes. For the Irish soldiers at this moment their allegiance to the flag (representing Ireland) aligns them against the enemy and as such draws them into an alignment with empire.[43]

> What for the flag?' yelled the private.
>
> My heart's blood for it! and mine! and mine!' cried a score of voices.
> God bless it! The flag, boys—the flag!
>
> C Company were rallying upon it. The stragglers clutched at each other, and pointed. Here, McQuire, Flynn, O'Hara, ran the shoutings.
>
> Close on the flag! Back to the flag![44]

C Company is annihilated, and the interpretation of the soldiers is left to the victors and survivors of the battle. The enemy leader, Sheik Kadra, takes the flag to send to his superior as a victory token: 'By the colour it might well seem to have belonged to those of the true faith … we think that, though small, it is very dear to them.'[45] For Sheik Kadra, the Irish soldiers are 'other', just as the forces of the Sheik are 'other' to Conolly, but he also identifies with the flag's colours. Then a squadron of Hussars comes upon the Company:

> The flag is gone but the rifle stood in the mimosa bush, and round it, with their wounds in front, lay the Fenian private and the silent ranks of the Irishry. Sentiment is not an English failing, but the Hussar captain raised his hilt in a salute as he rode past the blood-soaked ring.[46]

[39]Ibid., p. 19.
[40]Ibid., p. 20.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid., p. 21.
[43]Ibid.
[44]Ibid.
[45]Ibid., p. 24.
[46]Ibid., p. 23.

The hussar salutes the soldiers' sacrifice within the context of imperial war, while the Sheik recognises their flag as 'small' and 'dear', unknowingly invoking Ireland. The Irish soldiers shift positions over the course of the battle, just as their interpreters see them from their differing viewpoints. The narrator interprets Conolly's original possession of the flag as a signal that he will mutiny against the British army, but on the field of imperial battle where Conolly cannot identify with the enemies, it becomes a rallying call to fight. Ultimately, the story 'situates Irish nationalist aspirations within the imperial matrix', testing the boundaries and revealing the complexities of both.[47]

'The Green Flag' was illustrated by Charles E. Fripp, an established war illustrator who worked for *The Graphic* magazine, as did Elizabeth Butler in the early years of her career. Fripp's work had captured a variety of imperial conflicts, including the Anglo-Zulu war and the Sudan Campaign of 1885. In his first illustration for the story's publication in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, Conolly is presented outside his partly dilapidated cottage, clay pipe in mouth, hands in pockets. The image of social distress shares similarities with the *Connaught Rangers* in its presentation of a ruined cottage, but Fripp, unlike Elizabeth Butler, aligns Conolly's physicality, his prognathous jaw, with a representation of the rebellious Irish present in Victorian caricature and racial typology.[48] Another of Fripp's illustrations, also used as the frontispiece for *The Green Flag and Other Stories of War and Sport* (1905), is a conventional imperial war image presenting the Irish soldiers as successfully repulsing the enemy. In this image, Conolly is soldierly and heroic (his jaw modified) as he holds the green flag aloft on the bayonet of his gun while his comrades charge into battle. His change in allegiance, it would seem, changes his physicality. In the story Conolly plants the rifle in a mimosa bush, but Fripp's artistic license with the original tells his version of Conolly's transformation from Fenian rebel to imperial soldier. It also coheres with Fripp's heroic battle art, such as *Dying to Save the Queen's Colours* (1881).[49]

[47]Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle,* p. 33.

[48]For images of the rebellious Irish, see L. Perry Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England,* (Bridgeport, CT.: University of Bridgeport Conference on British Studies, 1968).

[49]See Harrington, *British Artists and War*, p. 298. For various illustrations, see https://www.arthur-conan-doyle.com/index.php/The_Green_Flag

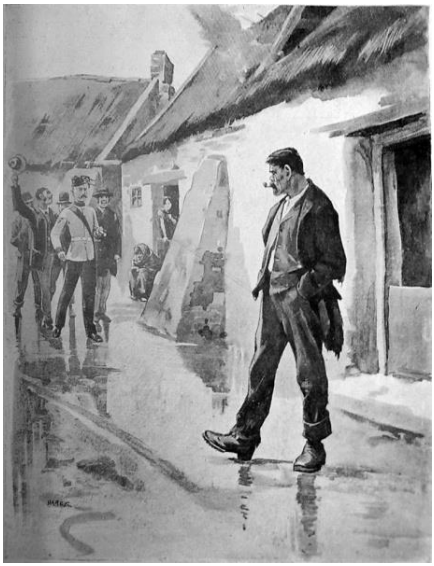

Figure 2: 'The Green Flag', *Pall Mall Gazette*, (June 1893), p. 209.

Figure 3. Frontispiece, *The Green Flag and Other Stories of War and Sport* (1905)

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century Conan Doyle had converted from a Liberal Unionist position to advocating Home Rule for Ireland. Before and during the war years he called on his own Irishness to encourage Irish men to enlist. He quotes a letter from Major William Redmond, the brother of the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, John Redmond, who commends the Irish soldiers in the war:

> No words – not even your own – could do justice to the splendid action of the new Irish soldier. They never flinched. They never give trouble, and they are steady and sober.[50]

Redmond, also a Member of the Irish Parliamentary Party representing East Clare, describes himself as 'an extreme Nationalist' but concurs that 'if others as extreme, perhaps, on the other side will only come half-way' then 'a plan to satisfy the Irish sentiment and the Imperial sentiment at one and the same time' could be achieved. He encourages Conan Doyle: 'I am sure you can do very much, as you already have done, in this direction.'[51] The letter was received by Conan Doyle just before Redmond's 'lamented death' after he was killed in action in Belgium on 7 June 1917.[52] However, Redmond's and Conan Doyle's political positions were becoming redundant following Easter 1916. Ireland at the time of the publication of Conan Doyle's autobiography in 1924 had just emerged from a War of Independence and a Civil War and Conan Doyle calls for Redmond's letter to him to be posted at 'every cross-roads of Ireland' so Redmond's 'spirit' 'might heal the wounds of this unhappy country.'[53] During the war period the Irish soldier-writer, as demonstrated in the following section, explores and articulates his own positioning and identity during a period of rapid social and political transformation.

First World War Soldier Stories: John Lucy, Francis Ledwidge and Patrick MacGill

> My chief asset was that I was alive, young, and hopeful, but I could not enjoy life. I had no right to breathe freely and savour the bewitching sights and scents of spring while death sneered in the offing above the rough graves of an incredible number of soldier friends freshly killed and rotting in France. My mind was slightly troubled, because I would have preferred to have pledged my body to

[50]Quoted Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, p. 282.
[51]Ibid.
[52]Ibid. For Redmond's account of war and his political position, see William Redmond, *Trench Pictures from France*, ed. E. M. Smith-Dampier, (New York: George H. Doran, 1917).
[53]Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, p. 382.

> the cause of Ireland, still in thraldom. It was her's by every right and every tradition, yet I felt bound in honour to England too, for I had attested on oath, and I was a British soldier as well as being an Irishman and a Catholic.[54]

In this extract from *There's a Devil in the Drum* (1938), Cork-born John Lucy captures a period when he is at home recuperating in 1915. At this moment, Lucy occupies a position in-between: his allegiances are split between his identity as 'British soldier' and 'Irishman'. He continues: 'I disliked compromise on such big issues, and wished myself free of such complications.'[55] (320). These 'complications' can be interpreted as the varied positions of the Irish soldier in his narratives of war.

Lucy cites his reasons for his and his brother's enlisting in 1912: '[we] were tired of landladies … of fathers … The soft accents and slow movements of the farmers who swarmed in the streets of our dull southern Irish town … and the talk of politics filled us with loathing. Blow the lot.'[56] Unlike the recruits in Elizabeth Butler's painting, Lucy and his brother avoided the recruiting sergeant: 'I objected to presenting myself to any of that bluff, florid beribboned type' and instead entered the local barracks.[57] Here they 'took oath' with 'some national qualms of conscience', choosing an Irish regiment as a 'sop' to their 'feelings'.[58] They travelled north to enlist in the Royal Irish Rifles.

Lucy's pre-war narrative describes his exposure to, and navigation of, sectarian tensions. '[B]igotry' and anti-Catholicism reigned in 'Ireland's quarter of [industrial] progress.'[59] With a balance that is a feature of his narrative, Lucy describes how he also 'saw with regret that some Catholics living here seemed just as much embittered as their Protestant neighbours.'[60] Later, stationed at Aldershot, he prevents a soldier from the Royal Munster Fusiliers, the regiment he would have joined had he chosen to enlist in his native Cork, from starting a fight with the Royal Irish Rifles. While the soldier's 'soft Cork accent' was 'music' in his 'ears', Lucy becomes concerned when the inebriated Fusilier claims he is 'only goin' down to have a look at the Belfast min.'[61] Lucy neutralises the situation by 'lapsing into his way of speaking', questioning whether it is 'wan of our fellahs yeh know', thus discovering that the Fusilier's purpose is to

[54]J. F. Lucy, *There's a Devil in the Drum,* (Eastbourne: The Naval and Military Press, 1992), p. 319.
[55]Ibid., p. 20.
[56]Ibid., p. 15.
[57]Ibid.
[58]Ibid.
[59]Ibid., p. 46.
[60]Ibid.
[61]Ibid., p. 69.

find some 'Orangemin'.[62] Lucy's shared Cork identity de-escalates a potential conflict between the regiments: 'Divil an Orangemun,' I lied. 'What would we be doin with Orangemin in the army?'[63] He reassures him that the 'Orangemin' are in Belfast, and urges him to not cause 'trouble … between two good Irish regiments.'[64]

On their way to the front, the French lining the streets cheer the 'Anglais.'[65] Lucy corrects them: 'Nous ne sommes pas Anglais, nous sommes Irlandais. They liked that and laughed with pleasure, and then shouted: 'Vivent les Irlandais,' and we cheered back at them: 'Vivre la France.'[66] Later, on the retreat from Mons, Lucy describes how his brother, Denis, in a sleep-walking state, dreams of Ireland: 'One more turn to the left now, at the top of Tawney's Hill, and we're home, my lad.'[67] When he denies that he had spoken, Lucy knows that Denis

> had been asleep on the march and had been enthralled by the prospect of rest and refreshment in a farmhouse of our childhood days, where as little boys we had built forts in the summer meadows and practised mimic war in the role of Irish chieftains dealing death and destruction to the Sassenach.[68]

In the childhood to which Denis returns in sleep, identities and allegiances are more defined. Enlistment and war generate confusion.

After an attack on the Aisne, Lucy draws on Elizabeth Butler's *Roll Call*:

> The next few minutes reminded me of Butler's picture of the Crimean roll-call, when the senior N.C.O's listed our casualties from information given by the survivors: 08 Corrigan? Dead, Sergeant. I saw him too. Right, killed in action. Any one seen 23, Murphy? No answer. Right, missing. What about MacRory. Any one see MacRory coming back after he was hit? No answer. Right, wounded and missing, and the sergeant's stubby pencil scribbled on.[69]

It is a roll call of recognisably Irish names. It is not until later that he learns that Denis is also dead after first being told that he was injured. His grief is mediated through an

[62]Ibid., pp. 69-70.
[63]Ibid., p. 70.
[64]Ibid.
[65]Ibid., p. 97.
[66]Ibid.
[67]Ibid., p. 149.
[68]Ibid.
[69]Ibid., p. 184.

'aggressive reaction' to a survivor of his brother's section as he redirects his loss into violence.[70]

Relieved on 19 November by London Territorials, Lucy surveys the battlefield on which he calculated that "ninety-six men out of every hundred had been killed or wounded'[71]. When the Londoner asks Lucy if his own regiment would be as 'good as those of the old army', Lucy surveys the destruction:

> My eyes weakened, wandered, and rested on the half-hidden corpses of men and youths. Near and far they looked calm, and even handsome in death. Their strong young bodies thickly garlanded the edge of a wood in rear, a wood called Sanctuary. A dead sentry, at his post, leaned back in a standing position, against a blasted tree, keeping watch over them.
>
> Proudly and sorrowfully I looked at them, the Macs and the O's, and the hardy Ulster boys joined together in death on a foreign field. My dead chums.[72]

By the end of 1915, the professional army to which Lucy belonged had been decimated. Those remaining bonded with each other and Lucy became friends with two Orangemen. From Lucy's perspective soldiers had the ability to connect beyond sectarian or class lines. This is underpinned by his comments on John Redmond's visit to the troops at the end of 1915: 'Everyone – Orangemen as well as Nationalists – gave him a cheer. We buried the hatchet of bigotry during the war.'[73]

The psychological breaking point for Lucy was the death of an Irish orderly with whom he had become friendly. Ryan's English medical officer had been killed and Ryan implores Lucy to kneel and pray with him. Shortly after Ryan goes out to tend the wounded after another round of shelling and is killed, 'his body brought back and placed on another stretcher beside his medical officer. Each had been killed in the act of binding men's wounds.'[74] Here Lucy invokes a language of shared sacrifice.

> I went in slowly to visit the dead Ryan and his officer. I prayed for them both. These devoted men had died directly to save their fellows. There was something Christlike about them – the young English public-school Protestant and the

[70]Linda Maynard, *Brothers in the Great War: Siblings, Masculinity and Emotions,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), p. 219.
[71]Lucy, *There's a Devil in the Drum*, p. 285.
[72]Ibid.
[73]Ibid., p. 345.
[74]Ibid. p. 347.

> Dublin Catholic … I patted [Ryan's] cheek in farewell. Then I stood up, and I could not move away. The world turned over.[75]

Lucy presents a connection between the two dead men which crosses over class and national boundaries.

The fallout from the Easter Rising of 1916, however, is difficult for Lucy to come to terms with and this is reflected in a marked change in the narrative's equilibrium. It is also coupled with a deeper reflection on his sense of identity:

> My fellow soldiers had no great sympathy with the rebels, but they got fed up when they heard of the executions of the leaders. I experienced a cold fury, because I would see the whole British Empire damned sooner than hear of an Irishman being killed in his own country by any intruding stranger.[76]

Lucy recounts how his friend, a Welsh sergeant called Jim, introduces him to a 'chap [who] had something to do with your country-men in the rebellion last year.'[77] The unnamed sergeant confirms that he 'had the job of seeing them off.'[78] The sergeant is seeking reconciliation:

> Knowing my sympathies by hearsay, he had come to me somehow like a man coming back to the scene of some doubtful act to attempt reconciliation. He was the first of a number of unhappy Englishmen who tried, and tried vainly, to square their acts against Ireland with me.[79]

The sergeant describes the executions of Easter Week and offers Lucy what he claims are the rosary beads of Joseph Mary Plunkett: 'I touched them for a reason he would never understand, and said: "No. Keep the beads. I hope they will do you good," but really I did not hope that, because mentally I was wishing him and his like non-existent.'[80] Returning to Jim, he describes the encounter as 'devilish.'[81] On their walk Jim 'discoursed on duty and the sergeant having no choice. He also said that the sergeant was uncertain and uneasy now in the presence of Irishmen, and was to be pitied.'[82]

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[75]Ibid.
[76]Ibid. p. 352.
[77]Ibid., p. 356.
[78]Ibid.
[79]Ibid.
[80]Ibid., p. 357.
[81]Ibid.
[82]Ibid.

Lucy's narrative demonstrates how an Irish soldier criss-crosses the complex field of identity at a time when the political ground is shifting beneath him. His Welsh sergeant friend translates, mediates and tries to make sense of Lucy's encounter with the English sergeant. Across his entire narrative Lucy is peace-keeper between regiments, a channeler of loss, who also experienced the profound grief of losing his brother in battle, a recorder of war and a confessor figure. The role he refuses is that of reconciler. What remains constant, however, is his commitment as a soldier as, shortly after this encounter, Lucy enters the ranks of the officer class and continues this route through the army and the war.

Like Lucy, Francis Ledwidge occupies the dual position of Irish nationalist and British soldier. Born in poverty in County Meath, Ledwidge's poetry was championed and edited by Lord Dunsany, who also introduced him to his Irish literary contemporaries. An Irish National Volunteer, Ledwidge enlisted in 5 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, a battalion in 10 (Irish) Division at the outbreak of war, the same regiment as Dunsany, rather than enlisting in 16 (Irish) Division, which was closely associated with the Irish National Volunteers. With his seemingly incongruous positioning, Ledwidge is seen to embody 'the contradictory spirit of his time in Ireland' and the complexities of reconciling an Irish nationalist identity with war service. [83] The war poet who eschews, unlike Lucy and MacGill, the grim details of war in his published writing, Ledwidge, nonetheless, becomes the poster poet of the Irish experience of the First World War. He was killed on 31 July 1917. He also serves a role in an understanding of Irish engagement with the First World War 'as a man of words, whose body of verse lifts the mask of anonymity from the 200,000 Irishmen who enlisted in the British Army.'[84] He conjoins disparate aspects of Irish social and cultural identity at a particular moment in time.

Seamus Heaney's poem, 'In Memoriam of Francis Ledwidge' (1980), conflates the rural Meath landscape of Ledwidge's upbringing with the war landscapes of the Dardanelles and Ypres, where Ledwidge fought and finally lost his life. Heaney's speaker is conscious that the 'Boyne water' represents one of Ireland's fractures.[85] Various Irish fractures would play out over the course of the First World War, the ensuing Irish wars, and beyond. John Redmond had instigated one such fracture which had implications for Ledwidge in 1914: he fractured the Irish Volunteers when he made

[83]Thomas O'Grady, 'Places and Times: The Doubleness of Francis Ledwidge', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review,* 104, 414 (2015): p. 145. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24347758. Accessed 27 June 2023
[84]Ibid., p. 144.
[85]Seamus Heaney, 'In Memoriam Francis Ledwidge', *Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966-1996,* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998), p. 177.

the famous speech at Woodenbridge on 20 September 1914 urging the Irish Volunteers to enlist, encouraging them to 'account' themselves 'as men *not only in Ireland but whereever the firing line extends*.'[86] Initially, Ledwidge sided with the anti-Redmondites but then decided to enlist. Ledwidge's choice was situational: 'I joined the British Army, because she stood between Ireland and an enemy common to our civilisation and I would not have her say that she defended us while we did nothing at home but pass resolutions.'[87] In his introduction to Dermot Bolger's edition to Ledwidge's poetry, Heaney recognises in Ledwidge a figure who 'faced the life of his times' acting with 'solitary resolve' and expecting 'neither consensus nor certitude'.[88]

The Easter Rising, which took place when he was on leave, had a profound impact on Ledwidge. It also produced one of his finest poems: 'Lament for Thomas McDonagh'. Here he laments that his fellow poet will not 'hear the bittern cry', an allusion to McDonagh's translation of an Irish poem[89]. A poem for McDonagh, it is also used to signify the subsequent loss of Ledwidge, as both poets, who occupied different positions in war, are memorialised in the 'Lament'. Ledwidge's poem is embedded in an Irish poetic tradition in which Ireland is symbolised by the 'Dark Cow' which will lift its 'horn' in pleasant 'meads'.[90] The poem also entrenches allusions to war: 'horn', 'fanfare', 'blows'.[91] Writing to a University of Wisconsin professor on 6 June 1917, Ledwidge articulates his position from 'the firing line' in France:

> I am sorry that party politics should ever divide our own tents, but am not without hope that a new Ireland will arise from her ashes in the ruins of Dublin, like the Phoenix, with one purpose, one aim, and one ambition. I tell you this in order that you may know what it is to me to be called a British soldier while my own country has no place among the nations but the place of Cinderella.[92]

In 'At Currabwee', written in the immediate aftermath of the Rising, Ledwidge deploys the folklore of the fairy. The fairies sing of 'Ireland glorious and free.'[93] The poem

[86]Quoted in Alice Curtayne, *Francis Ledwidge: A Life of the Poet, 1887-1917,* (London: Martin Brian & O'Keefe, 1974), p. 76.
[87]Ibid., p. 83.
[88]Seamus Heaney, Introduction, in Dermot Bolger, ed., *Francis Ledwidge: Selected Poems,* (Dublin: New Island Books, 2017), p. 14.
[89]Francis Ledwidge, 'Lament for Thomas McDonagh, *Francis Ledwidge: Selected Poems*, p. 57.
[90]Ibid.
[91]Ibid.
[92]Quoted in Curtayne, *Francis Ledwidge*, p. 130.
[93]Francis Ledwidge, 'At Currabwee'; *Francis Ledwidge: Selected Poems*, p. 60.

relates that both Joseph Plunkett and Patrick Pearse have heard the fairies. Ledwidge defers to Pearse's superior knowledge of the 'truth" before establishing his own place:

> And I, myself, have often heard
> Their singing as the stars went by,
> For am I not of those who reared
> The banner of Old Ireland high
> From Dublin town to Turkey's shores
> And where the Vardar loudly roars?[94]

It is posed as a question, but it is also a call to recognition. Ledwidge, both in the manner in which he is posthumously remembered and in his writing, is a figure who occupies seemingly conflicting identities at once. The poet is captured, like the figures on John Keats's Grecian urn, at a particular moment in time, constantly in movement between positions.

Ledwidge shares, in part, a common identity with MacGill. Both the Meath labourer and the Donegal-born 'navvy' enlisted, both wrote and were published during the war. But MacGill came back from war, although he never settled again in Ireland. MacGill provides little clarity about why he joined, noting in *The Amateur Army* (1915): 'What the psychological processes were that led to my enlisting in Kitchener's Army need not be inquired into. Few men could explain why they enlisted'.[95] He points out in the preface that he 'had no special yearning towards military life.'[96] MacGill's searing social realist novels, *Children of the Dead End* (1914) and *The Rat Pit* (1915), draw on his experiences. Born into extreme poverty in County Donegal, MacGill was first sent to work on a farm, aged twelve, before joining the seasonal workers who left Donegal for potato-picking in Scotland, and who experienced the brutalities of itinerant labouring, before publication success secured work as a journalist, and a post as librarian at St. George's Chapel, Windsor.[97] Unlike Lucy and Ledwidge, whose nationalist identities are expressed alongside their identities as soldiers, MacGill evinces a sense of a national identity or sense of Irishness, but this is devoid of nationalist politics. Terry Phillips argues that he was disconnected early in life from Irish political and cultural nationalism through his childhood poverty, lack of education and emigration.[98] Instead he articulates the voice of the working class, the camaraderie

[94]Ibid.
[95]Patrick MacGill, *The Amateur Army,* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1916), p. 13.
[96]Ibid., n.p.
[97]Brian D. Osborne, Introduction. *Children of the Dead End,* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1999), p. xiii.
[98]Terry Phillips, *Irish Literature and the First World War: Culture, Identity and Memory,* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 55-6. See also, David Taylor, *Memory, Narrative and*

of the labouring poor, and his politics are rooted in a socialism generated through his lived experience. *Children of the Dead End* was a sensation on publication. Ledwidge read it in May 1916, before leaving his copy with a soldier friend in Belfast and promising to return to reclaim it.[99]

The Red Horizon and *The Great Push* (1917), written during the course of the war articulate the immediacy of the experience, unlike Lucy's narrative which was published decades later. MacGill focuses on a trans-national camaraderie between men. In his description of his regiment, the London Irish, a name reflecting the mobile identities of the Irish, the camaraderie extends beyond an exclusively Irish-born identity incorporating those with no recognisable Irishness such as Cockney Bill Teake, those who are from Ireland such as Flaherty, 'a Dublin man with a wife in London', and those in-between such as Barty, a 'Cockney of Irish descent, and the undesignated Cherub, who 'had a generous sympathy for all his mates'.[100] In his role as stretcher-bearer, he finds Flaherty and Cherub dead in the wreckage after shell-fire, and carries Barty on his back to safety. When a Brigadier asks Barty how he is, he replies: 'Not bad. It will get me 'ome to England, I think.'[101] Through the narrative, injury that get will get men home, wherever that home may be is welcomed. MacGill's narrative fuses realism with Gothic horror in his description of the loss of his comrades and the devastation of war. *The Great Push* describes those who are killed in terms of an absence which is felt to be present. As the men leave the trenches, the 'ghosts' of the killed come with them.

> And when we sit us down to drink
> You sit beside us too,
> And drink at Cafe Pierre le Blanc
> As once you used to do.[102]

One of MacGill's most compelling character portraits is a soldier called Gilhooley, whom he first encounters in Café Pierre le Blanc. 'Gilhooley was an Irishman and fought in an English regiment; he was notorious for his mad escapades, his dare-devil pranks, and his wild fearlessness.'[103] But Gilhooley also challenges the reckless pursuit of glory when an English officer determines to stop a sniper:

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the Great War: Rifleman Patrick MacGill and the Construction of Wartime Experience, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 97.
[99]Curtayne, *Francis Ledwidge*, p. 160.
[100]Patrick MacGill, *The Great Push,* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1916), pp. 232-33.
[101]Ibid., p. 236.
[102]Ibid., p. 1.
[103]Ibid., p. 23.

> I'm going to stop that damn sniper, said the young officer. I'm going to earn the V.C. Who's coming along with me?'
>
> 'I'm with you,' said Gilhooley, scrambling lazily out into the open with a couple of pet bombs in his hand.
>
> 'By Jasus, we'll get him out of it!'
>
> The two men went forward for about twenty yards, when the officer fell with a bullet through his head. Gilhooley turned round and called back, 'Any other officer wantin' to earn the V.C.?[104]

However, Gilhooley loses his life to a sniper on a roadway in Loos, falling into a similar pattern to the officer. The scene of his death haunts MacGill: 'It was here that I saw Gilhooley die, Gilhooley the master bomber, Gilhooley the Irishman.'[105] The ruined houses become fantastical in MacGill's imagination, the 'desolation' generating 'morbid fancies.'[106] MacGill draws on his Catholic roots in this episode to make a connection with the Crucifix: 'I came across the Image of Supreme Pain, the Agony of the Cross. What suffering has Loos known? ... The crucifix was well in keeping with this scene of desolation.'[107]

In his poetry collection, *Soldier Songs* (1917), MacGill brings the strands of his experiences together. In the Preface he establishes these soldier songs as consolidating a soldier identity, but they are also situational: 'the songs are no good in England', Rifleman Bill Teake notes, because they have 'too much guts in them.'[108] Equally, 'Tipperary' 'means home when it is sung in a shell-shattered billet, on the long march "Tipperary" is Berlin, the goal of high emprise and great adventures.'[109] The refrain of 'Loos in the morning' which ends each stanza of 'In the Morning' accentuates the horror of what they encounter: 'dead men' … on a 'shell-scarred plain' with 'bones stuck over the ground.'[110] The deprivations of life in Donegal sit alongside these poems of war. In 'The Farmer's Boy', as MacGill explains in a note, Donegal children, aged between twelve and fifteen, go the hiring fair in Tyrone where they are sold like cattle and work up to eighteen hours a day. In this poem home is 'cold and bare' and it is

[104]Ibid., p. 24.
[105]Ibid., p. 244.
[106]Ibid., p. 245.
[107]Ibid.
[108]Patrick MacGill, *Soldier Songs,* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1917), p. 13.
[109]Ibid., p. 10.
[110]Ibid., p. 85-6.

hard to pay the rent 'for all you dig and delve.'[111] Relief from childhood poverty and war is expressed in an imagined, bucolic version of Donegal in 'I Will Go Back':

> I'll go back again to my father's house and live
> on my father's land–
> For my father's house is by Rosses' shore that
> slopes to Dooran strand.[112]

But he has no land to return to. He transports himself 'In Fairyland' from the trenches to the supernatural realm. On the field of battle,

> The field is red with poppy flowers,
> Where mushroom meadows stand;
> It's only seven fairy hours
> From there to Fairyland.[113]

In a 'shell-shoveled hole' while on 'listening-patrol', MacGill reimagines the space between the trenches as inhabited by fairies in 'The Listening-Patrol.'[114] Here MacGill echoes Ledwidge in his teleportation to an imagined Ireland of fairies. In a letter to Katherine Tynan, Ledwidge describes taking cover in a shell-hole and, in the time preceding the attack, he portrays how 'bright the nights are made' by the 'enemy's rockets' which are,

> in continual ascent from dawn to dusk, making a beautiful crescent from Switzerland to the sea. There are white lights, green and red, and whiter, bursting into red, and changing again, and blue bursting into purple drops, and reds fading into green. It is like the end of a beautiful world.[115]

Realism and the supernatural converge in both poets' experiences of the battlefield. In 'Death and the Fairies' MacGill describes how '[a]t home' in Donegal, the fairies would hold a 'carnival', but here death holds its 'carnival'.[116] The return home to Ireland in the imagination or in sleep is a feature of these narratives: Lucy's brother returns to the Cork of his childhood in his sleepwalking retreat from Mons. On home on leave Lucy seeks solace in the beauty of the Cork countryside, but he is tortured by images of the battlefield. Ledwidge avoids direct engagement with war in his poetry in favour

[111]Ibid., p. 104.
[112]Ibid., p. 101.
[113]Ibid., p. 48.
[114]Ibid., p. 67.
[115]Quoted in Curtayne, *Francis Ledwidge,* p. 177.
[116]Ledwidge, *Soldier Songs*, p. 89.

of a focus on home and nature. In a letter, he urges Tynan to go to Tara (in Meath) and asks her to 'remember' him to 'every hill and wood and ruin … Say I will come back again surely, and maybe you will hear pipes in the grass, or a fairy horn and the hounds of Finn.'[117] MacGill, the relentlessly realist writer of deprivation and suffering, sees fairies on the battlefield as he transports himself to an imagined Ireland. These soldiers of the First World War create their own Irelands as they attempt to come to terms with their positions in war. In an earlier generation, William Butler, who spent much of his life in wars of empire, imagines an idyllic Ireland of Glencar in *Red Cloud*, just as the fictional Irish soldiers in Conan Doyle's story invest their lives in a vision of Ireland encapsulated in a green flag with a harp.

In his play, *Walking the Road* (2007), an imaginative reworking of Ledwidge's story, Dermot Bolger presents Ledwidge as walking the road home alongside other soldiers. In limbo in Bolger's play, Ledwidge is trying to find his way back. For Bolger, Ledwidge is the 'Everyman, a representative of the thousands of Irishmen who walked the same road as him … from every corner of Ireland.'[118] Irish recruits walk towards an uncertain future in war in the nineteenth-century *Connaught Rangers*. What is certain is that central figure of the *Connaught Rangers* returns in Elizabeth Butler's representation of Lance-Corporal Michael O'Leary of the Irish Guards, who was awarded the Victoria Cross, for almost singlehandedly capturing an enemy position near Ypres on 1 February 1915.[119] With his moustache and clay pipe, O'Leary's face is identical to that of the recruit in the earlier painting. The journey to imperial wars in *Connaught Rangers* ends in the First World War painting of *A V. C. of the Irish Guards* (1915). Irishmen travelled the roads to imperial and global wars and also travelled a journey in their stories in the ways in which they examined and expressed what it was to be an Irishman and a soldier in the final decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. This work started this journey with them and, through a close examination of their own writings in conjunction with their broader cultural representations, revealed how the social and political identities of these Irish soldiers were situational, contingent and ultimately, mobile.

[117]Quoted in Curtayne, *Francis Ledwidge*, pp. 183-84.
[118]Dermot Bolger, Author's Note, *Walking the Road,* (Dublin: New Island, 2007), p. 11.
[119]Paul Usherwood and Jenny Spencer-Smith, *Lady Butler: Battle Artist, 1846-1933,* (London: National Army Museum, 1989), p. 143.

'A fanatical separation money mob': The British Army Soldier's Wife in Wartime Ireland, 1914-1918

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ABSTRACT
This article focuses on the experiences of Irish soldiers' families during the Great War. Soldiers' families occupied a complex place in Irish society. Initially supported and praised for their husband's service, working-class women quickly came under criticism and surveillance from the British state and civic authorities. They developed a reputation for excessive drinking and neglect of their children, blamed on the corrupting influence of the separation allowance. The 1916 Easter Rising and the by-elections in 1917 and 1918 provided opportunities for violent clashes and for the negative reputation of the women to be cemented in the public imagination. Separation women as an identifiable group disappeared in the aftermath of the war but the difficulties and challenges for Irish military families continued.

During the Great War a street-song named Salonika became popular in Ireland, especially in county Cork. It is told from the perspective of a working-class woman whose husband is serving with the British Army. The lyrics include reference to two prevalent tropes associated with the wartime soldiers' wife: the material benefits linked to the separation allowances, and the sexual immorality that soldiers' wives were supposedly engaged in.[1] The song's narrator mentions the presence of American soldiers in Cork in 1917 and suggests that for every child born in America, there would be two in Cork. She wonders if her own husband is alive and if he is aware he has a 'kid with a foxy head'. In Bureau of Military History Witness Statements collected in the 1940s, republicans recalled their interactions during the war years with the dependents of British Army soldiers, describing the women as 'a fanatical separation

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[1]Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society, 1800-1940,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 178.

money mob', the rabble of the city and depicting them as shrieking hordes of wild women. The families of British soldiers exist in Irish popular memory primarily in two contrasting images: the weeping woman waving farewell in August 1914 and dutifully knitting socks as she waits for news of her loved one on the home front; or the drunken disorderly 'separation woman' recklessly spending her allowance at the local pub and protesting against the republican movement. Untangling these stereotypes helps us gain a stronger understanding of the home front and of the relationship of the British Army to Irish society. Soldiers do not participate in the military in isolation, they belong to families who are affected by the military service. This article focuses on the experiences of soldiers' families and the relationship between Irish women and the British Army during the Great War. This was a time when the British Army had unprecedented contact and interaction with soldiers' families and the home front in Ireland. There are a few key questions central to examining the experience of the Irish soldier or their dependents in the British Army: How were the families of those enlisted treated within their communities? What did service in the British Army mean in an Irish context and how did this differ to Britain? How were veterans and their families treated in the aftermath of the war? These questions will all be addressed in this article.

The impact of the war on women in Ireland was immediately apparent in August 1914. Reservists in the British Army were quickly mobilised and sent to the front leaving bereft families behind. As estimated 210,000 Irishmen voluntarily served in the British Army between 1914 and 1918. The Dublin based magazine *Lady of the House* described the weeping women in the streets of Ireland, as they feared for their menfolk in the army. The magazine editor sympathised with the distress of the women left at home waiting for news, noting that women 'live through more battles than ever those they love have fought or will fight'.[2] The novelist Katharine Tynan wrote in her memoir, first published in April 1918, of her distress on hearing of the enlistment of her son Toby: 'On the last day of 1914 I had finished up my little diary with "Lord my heart is ready!" I do not know why I wrote it. I never thought then that the War would last long enough for the boys to go'. Emily Shirley in County Monaghan experienced similar anguish when her son Evelyn was called up in autumn 1914, adding 'May God help us' to her diary entry which noted his mobilization.[3] The casualty list of men wounded or killed in the war began appearing in the local newspapers as early as 5 September 1914 and would remain a tragically regular feature for the duration.

Before 1914 only a small proportion of British Army soldiers were entitled to marry; soldiers required the permission of their commanding officer, and it was only granted

[2]*Lady of the House,* 15 September 1914

[3]Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (hereinafter PRONI), D3531 Diary of Emily Shirley, 5 August 1914.

for those who had served for at least seven years, were of good character and had some savings.[4] For those granted permission, the families under the system of 'marriage on the strength' received a small separation allowance during the overseas service of the men. It was expected that the payments would be supplemented by the Poor Law system or through philanthropic relief if the families were regarded as sufficiently deserving.[5] The demand for recruits after the outbreak of war in 1914 led to the significant expansion of this scheme and a relaxation of the marriage restrictions. In the United Kingdom the wives and children of all enlisted men received separation allowances.[6] By November 1918 the British government was providing separation allowances to 3,013,800 families in the United Kingdom.[7] This was an unprecedented system of universal welfare, resulting in uncertainty as to its administration and confusion as to whether the payment constituted a welfare entitlement or charitable aid, and as such what conditions should be attached. This was further complicated by the initial involvement of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association (SSFA) in their administration.[8] The SSFA was established in 1885 in the United Kingdom to provide support for soldiers' families. From 1914 to 1916 the organisation also administered the separation allowances on behalf of the War Office.[9] The SSFA undertook to assess families to ascertain their level of dependency and the veracity of their claim for support, and to issue advances to women while they waited for their separation allowances to be processed. These assessments were carried out by 'lady visitors' – typically middle-class Protestant women acting in a voluntary capacity.[10] For example, Emily Shirley, widow of the Conservative Party MP Sewallis Shirley, was one of these lady visitors in county Monaghan, combining visits on behalf

[4]Army, Report of an Enquiry by Mrs. Tennant Regarding the Conditions of Marriage Off the Strength, December 1913, Parliamentary Papers, 1914, vol. 51, Cd. 7441.
[5]Myra Trustrum, *Women of the regiment: marriage and the Victorian Army*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 90-91, p. 189.
[6]Susan Grayzel, 'Men and women at home' in Jay Winter (ed.), *Cambridge history of the First World War, vol. III, Civil Society,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 107-108.
[7]War Office, *Statistics of the military effort of the British Empire during the Great War 1914-1920* (London, 1922), 570.
[8]Susan Pedersen, *Family, dependence & the origins of the welfare state,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 110-111; Stephanie J. Brown, "An "insult to soldiers' wives and mothers": the Woman's Dreadnought campaign against surveillance on the home front 1915-16', *Journal of Modern Periodical Studies*, 7, 1-2 (2016), pp. 121-162.
[9]Paul Huddie, 'The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association and the separation women of Dublin in 1914', *Dublin Historical Record*, 71, 2 (2018), pp. 185-201.
[10]Ibid., pp. 189-192.

of the SSFA with Red Cross sewing circles in Carrickmacross.[11] These inspections ended in 1917 when the Ministry of Pensions took responsibility for the administration of the allowances.[12]

Negotiating the welfare system could be bewildering for families even with the support of the SSFA. The wives of soldiers were entitled to a separation allowance, the rate of which depended on the rank of the soldier and the number of children the family had. For other family members however, including mothers and siblings, an allowance could be claimed based on pre-war dependency on the soldier. The responsibility was on the family member to accurately report the earnings and their level of dependency. The War Office reported in August 1915 that there was abundant evidence of the scheme being abused and warned that the only effective means of 'dealing with the evil' was to prosecute those who had made false claims.[13] There were many court cases in Ireland during the war years concerning allegations of fraudulent allowance claims, ranging from failure to adequately complete paperwork to deliberate impersonations. Many of the investigations for fraud reflected honest mistakes in the completion of the forms. Mary Bothwell, for example, was suspected of fraudulently conspiring to get a higher separation allowance by listing herself as the 'wife' of her son, rather than as his mother on her original application. It could not be proved that this was a deliberate falsification rather than an error and consequently no prosecution was taken.[14] There were also several cases involving mothers exaggerating the financial support provided by their soldier sons before the war to claim a higher separation allowance.[15] In one case the mother allegedly recorded her son's worth as opposed to what he had in fact been providing for her. Bridget Lee stated that her son was a 'good boy, and worth what she had claimed for him'.[16] Lee was convicted of fraud and fined ten shillings. Several tragic cases involved women prosecuted for claiming separation allowance for children who had recently died.[17] Annie Moran, for example,

[11]Diary of Emily Shirley, 1914-1916.
[12]Holly Dunbar, 'Women and alcohol during the First World War in Ireland', *Women's History Review*, 27, 3 (2018), pp. 379-396 & p. 389.
[13]*Annual report for the Local Government Board for Ireland 1915-1916* (Dublin, 1916), xvi.
[14]National Archives Ireland (hereinafter NAI), CSO/ RP/ 1917/607: Case for prosecution of Mary Bothwell.
[15]See for example, NAI CSO/ RP/ 1917/ 246 Case of fraud against Sarah Maguire, November 1916-January 1917; see also *Freeman's Journal*, 7 August 1915; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 November 1915; *Ulster Herald*, 11 December 1915; *Irish Times*, 10 August 1915; *Irish Times*, 13 September 1915; *Irish Independent*, 25 September 1915; *Irish Times*, 24 December 1915.
[16]*Irish Times*, 24 December 1915.
[17]*Irish Independent*, 25 May 1917; *Anglo-Celt*, 14 July 1917; *Irish Independent*, 25 July 1917; *Irish Independent*, 1 December. 1917.

was prosecuted in 1917 for failing to declare the death of her child and continuing to claim the higher rate. The court imposed a fine of 10 shillings, noting the seriousness of the case but acknowledging that the family was in financial difficulty following the military discharge of her husband.[18] Mary Connolly was similarly convicted of fraud for failing to promptly report the death of her child and was fined the more substantial sum of £2.[19]

Others engaged in more serious deceptions. There was more than one case of a woman claiming to be her soldier brother's wife, to receive a higher allowance.[20] For example, Mary Rogers impersonated Priscilla Rogers, the late wife of her brother John. Priscilla had died in 1914 and Mary had decided to claim the allowance for herself and for Priscilla's child, whom she was raising. She did not consider the pretence wrong in the circumstances.[21] Katharine O'Brien was convicted for claiming as her brother's dependent while not informing the authorities that she was also receiving an allowance in respect of her husband's war service. She was fined £2 together with the costs of the court case.[22] She was fortunate to escape a custodial sentence. Mary Wood and Rose McNamara were both jailed for three months for claiming two separation allowances simultaneously. Wood was described as 'one of those who is stealing the country's money'.[23]

Wood's prosecution for fraud was in 1917 by which time the negative reputation of soldiers' wives had solidified in the public consciousness in Ireland. Previous scholarship has revealed the significant controversy and press commentary generated by the separation allowances in Ireland.[24] Contemporaries recognised the value of the separation allowances for soldiers' families but worried about how women with absent husbands might spend the money. Rumours abounded of soldiers' wives spending their allowances on alcohol and of creating 'a disturbance' when they withdrew their weekly payments.[25] This reputation persisted even when it was evident that it was not

[18]NAI CSO/RP/ 1917/ 1913: Case of Annie Moran, March 1917 to June 1917.
[19]NAICSO/RP/ 1917/2448: Case of prosecution of Mary Connolly.
[20]See case of Margaret McKinnon, *Freeman's Journal*, 23 October 1915; that of Mary Rogers, *Irish Independent*, 6 September 1917; and Elizabeth Wood, *Leitrim Observer*, 15 September 1917.
[21]*Irish Independent*, 6 September 1917.
[22]NAI CSO/ RP/ 1917/ 1137: Case of Katharine O'Brien, April 1917.
[23]*Freeman's Journal*, 2 December 1915; *Irish Independent*, 28 March 1917.
[24]Fionnuala Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 97-113; Dunbar, 'Women and alcohol', pp. 379-396; Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society*, pp. 178-184.
[25]See for example, NAI, Bureau of Military History (hereinafter NAI BMH) Witness Statement (WS) 887 Aine Ryan.

supported by police records. There was a marginal increase in the number of women arrested for drunkenness or drunk and disorderly behaviour in 1915, but the total arrests of women for such crimes otherwise declined over the course of the war. The number of men arrested for alcohol related offences also declined sharply, resulted in more visibility for the women offenders.[26] Brian Griffin rightly observes that criminal statistics represent police knowledge of crime rather than its true incidence; they also reflect variables in the number of police and the attention paid to specific crimes at different times.[27] This is especially relevant for comparing wartime Ireland with the pre-war period. Nevertheless, the statistics offer a useful insight into the gendered nature of wartime prosecutions.[28] The increase in arrests in 1915, both in Dublin and more generally in Ireland, corresponds to the time when there was most public anxiety about the supposed excessive drinking by separation women.

The question remains of how many of those arrested were separation women. The SSFA Dublin branch noted few cases of soldiers' wives whose behaviour deemed them unworthy of support. In his examination of the minute books for 1914, Huddie has uncovered just three such incidences out of a total of approx. 8,000 women who received support from the branch during that time. One woman was noted as being 'bad, not to be helped' while two more were 'written off' without further explanation. The organisation themselves suggested that some of the complaints about drunken separation women may 'arise out of personal squabbles and may frequently not be true'.[29] In January 1916 Rev. John Manning defended the reputation of the women of Arklow, county Wicklow. He noted that there were a few hundred women in the locality collecting weekly allowances and that he would 'defy any town in the world to produce such a record – hardly a drunken woman'.[30] An editorial in the *Irish Independent* newspaper later asserted that the fears of excessive drinking in the first year of the war were either unfounded or that the situation had significantly improved.[31] The rumours persisted however.

The anxiety surrounding the drinking of soldiers' wives was primarily motivated by concern about its effects on their children. Women drinking in the home were seen as endangering their infants through neglect and carelessness.[32] The National Society

[26]Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, pp. 105-106.
[27]Brian Griffin, *Sources for the study of crime in Ireland, 1801-1921,* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), p. 62.
[28]Dunbar, 'Women and alcohol', p. 380.
[29]Huddie, 'The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association', pp. 197-198.
[30]*Freeman's Journal*, 20 January 1916.
[31]*Irish Independent,* 21 December 1917, cited in Dunbar, *op. cit*., 392.
[32]Edward Coey Bigger, *Carnegie United Kingdom Trust: report on the physical welfare of mothers and children, IV, Ireland,* (Dublin: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1917), p. 44.

for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) investigated the welfare of 33,234 children of soldiers in Ireland between August 1914 and March 1917.[33] Some of the investigations performed by the NSPCC in the first months of the war were merely attempts to see if the family required support obtaining the allowances or managing without the breadwinner husband. Occasionally the soldier would himself request that the NSPCC report to him on his children's welfare, perhaps motivated by concern about his wife's conduct in his absence.[34] Despite the high number of investigations, the society took over the administration of the separation allowance for just 116 families.[35] The criminal judicial statistics reveal that while child neglect and cruelty declined during the war, the proportion of female offenders increased. This was a significant change, from 42 per cent for the period 1911-14 to 63 per cent for the following three years, and likely reflects the higher numbers of women in the position of head of household in wartime and the particular focus by the NSPCC on the children of serving soldiers.[36]

In 1917 there were over 1,700 soldiers' dependents registered as heads of households in Dublin tenements.[37] These overcrowded living conditions made it more likely the families would come to the attention of the welfare authorities and that the children would be identified as suffering from neglect. In his 1917 report on the physical welfare of mothers and children, Dr Edward Coey Bigger lamented the impact of the appalling housing conditions on the morality and industriousness of the inhabitants.[38] The separation allowance was typically blamed as the corrupting influence however, rather than entrenched poverty. The challenging pre-war living conditions of the Merrigan and Fitzgerald families, for example, were unlikely to have been fully resolved by the separation allowance. Mary Merrigan was sentenced to two months' hard labour in September 1915. Her two older children had recently died of pneumonia and she was accused of spending her allowance on alcohol and of neglecting her surviving infant.[39] Her husband had been a general labourer before joining the army and they were living in a one-room home in Dublin city with their eldest child in 1911.[40] Mary Anne

[33] *Twenty-eighth annual report of the NSPCC* (Dublin, 1917), p. 11.
[34] Padraig Yeates, *A city in wartime: Dublin 1914-1918,* (Dublin: Gill, 2011), p. 259.
[35] *Twenty-eighth annual report of the NSPCC* (Dublin, 1917), 11.
[36] Compiled from the Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1900-1919; Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, pp. 108-109.
[37] Dublin City Archives, 'Report of the housing committee, 1918', *Reports and printed documents of the Corporation of Dublin, vol. I 1918* (Dublin, 1919), pp. 115-145.
[38] Bigger, *Carnegie United Kingdom* Trust, p. 40.
[39] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 September 1915.
[40] NAI, 1911 census record for the Merrigan family. http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Dublin/Kingstown_No__2/Patrick_Street__East_Side/95710/. Accessed 21 June 2023.

Fitzgerald's family was living in a two-room home in Carrick-on-Suir in Tipperary in 1911, with seven of their ten children, aged between thirteen and under a year.[41] Fitzgerald was sent to prison for child neglect and drunkenness in 1915, again blamed on the corrupting influence of her separation allowance.[42] In contrast, Kate McEvoy was spared a prison sentence when accused of the same crime in December 1915 because she was a sergeant's wife and had a certain social status'. Her husband had been in the Royal Irish Constabulary for twenty-five years and had recently enlisted in the army. Her solicitor claimed her case was 'not an ordinary case of unfortunate women not used to much money drawing separation allowance'.[43] Those involved in policing women's behaviour also differentiated between the deserving and undeserving poor. Intemperate mothers were typically held responsible for their poverty and were considered unworthy of welfare or support. The focus of the State and charitable agencies was the needs of the soldiers' children and ensuring their welfare.[44]

The allowance had served as an incentive for enlistment among poor communities in Ireland's cities, particularly in Dublin where many labourers had few employment prospects following their participation in the 1913 Dublin Lockout. The regular army payments, made available to the women directly, brought some relief in the early months after enlistment and in some cases greatly improved the material welfare of households and reduced the vulnerability of women. The rate varied significantly depending on the rank of the soldier, but the allowances took account of the number of children in a family. They compared favourably to the wages of unskilled labourers. The prevailing cultural memory of the separation allowances in Ireland emphasises the material benefit of the welfare for impoverished working-class families.[45] However, many families continued to struggle in wartime, especially as inflation drove the price of food and coal up and essential items were in short supply. Housing conditions also deteriorated in Dublin. The housing report of the Irish Convention in 1918 estimated that 67,000 new working-class houses were urgently required in urban areas across Ireland.[46] Building work came to a standstill after the outbreak of war in 1914, lending greater urgency to the urban housing crisis. By 1917 the separation allowance was no longer keeping pace with inflation and the high cost of food and fuel in urban areas was creating significant hardship. The winter of 1916-1917 had been exceptionally

[41]NAI, 1911 census record for the Fitzgerald family. http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Tipperary/Carrick_on_Suir__Urban_/Moores_Lane/839869/. Accessed 21 June 2023.
[42]*Freeman's Journal*, 8 July 1915.
[43]*Nenagh News*, 11 December 1915.
[44]Buckley, '"Growing up poor"', pp. 350-351.
[45]Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, pp. 76-77.
[46]Report of the Housing Committee, adopted by the Convention on 5 April 1918, in *Report of the proceedings of the Irish Convention*, (Dublin: HMSO, 1918), p. 137.

cold, affecting crops and making the coal shortage more acute.[47] Cecilia Daniel, a Westmeath farmer writing to a relative in Australia, described it as 'the most extraordinary winter and spring ever experienced in Ireland. No one alive ever remembered such a winter'. Daniel lamented the 'indescribable' sufferings of poor families on account of the fuel shortages and worried that they would 'feel many a pinch in the next few months as everything is getting very scarce and dear'.[48] Women attempting to feed their families in these conditions had little money to spare for the public house. Indeed, the *Irish Independent* reported destitution was widespread in Dublin in March 1917 and separation allowances were 'barely sufficient' to feed a family and left no money for clothes or school supplies.[49] Women who attempted to alleviate these difficulties by supplementing the allowance with work outside the home were criticised for neglecting their children. In January 1917 Alice Whelan in County Tipperary, was charged with non-compliance with orders directing her to send her children to school. She was criticised for going out to work 'every day instead of looking after the children' despite being in receipt of a separation allowance.[50]

The separation allowances brought the state and welfare agencies into women's domestic lives and legitimated an unprecedented level of state surveillance and intervention in the family. Frequent references made to the state's duty of care to the soldier and his children reflected the perception of the allowances as 'public money'. This was not unique to Ireland however, and similar rhetoric can be seen regarding the morality and conduct of soldiers' wives in Britain.[51] However, the difficult relationship between the British Army and Irish society complicated the Irish situation and increased the hostility towards the women. The extension of the separation allowance to unmarried mothers in 1916 for example, led to accusations that the British state was promoting immorality and illegitimacy.[52] Patrick Maume has noted that republicans viewed the provision of allowances to illegitimate children as proof that Britain was 'irredeemably debauched' and that Ireland needed independence to save its soul from such depravity.[53] Maria Luddy has persuasively linked wartime hostility to separation women to long-standing antipathy towards the British Army dating from the Anglo-Boer War among some segments of the population, which

[47]David Fitzpatrick, 'Irish consequences of the Great War' *Irish Historical Studies*, 39, 156 (2015), pp. 643-658; Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, pp. 66-71.
[48]PRONI, T2782: Letter from Cecilia Daniel to Mrs Flett, 9 May 1917.
[49]*Irish Independent*, 27 March 1917.
[50]*Nenagh News*, 13 Jan 1917.
[51]Brown, 'An "insult to soldiers' wives and mothers"', pp. 136-140.
[52]Yeates, *A city in wartime*, p. 282; See for example, *Irish Citizen*, 21 November 1914, *Kildare Observer*, 30 October 1915.
[53]Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891-1918,* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1999), p. 165. See also Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society*, p. 180.

manifested itself in anti-recruiting campaigns and efforts to prevent girls 'walking out with soldiers'.[54] The National Archive of Ireland's Bureau of Military History witness statements demonstrate the extent to which separation women became embedded into nationalist and republican memory of the Great War.

The impact of the separation allowances on women in Ireland was denounced as 'national demoralisation' by the republican Seamus Babington in his witness statement to the Bureau of Military History. He recalled that although public sympathy was growing towards the separatist movement after the 1916 Easter Rising, the separation money was having a pernicious influence on morale: 'the nationalist spirit seemed dead or dormant'. Interestingly he had little criticism for the Irish army recruits, acknowledging that many were young men who 'joined from sheer necessity, no industry, no employment' but described the men's families in pejorative terms as 'pro-British separation women' who engaged in active hostility towards the Irish Volunteers.[55] Indeed, the separation women became known in Ireland as much for protesting the republican movement as for their drinking and criminality. The economic incentive of the separation allowance was believed to have had such a demoralising effect that the women were willing to sacrifice nationalist aspirations to ensure the continuation of the regular payments. They were viewed as war profiteers, more preoccupied with their allowances than with the safety of their family at the front. The prejudicial depictions of the women in the witness statements are revealing of social class tensions, with the women variously described as 'the rabble of the city', and as belonging to the 'rowdy class'.[56]

Caution is needed with the source material for researching soldiers' wives, especially regarding their political activism. One of the challenges for historians attempting to uncover the women's motivations and experiences is that we lack sources which give us the voice of the separation woman. She is described repeatedly and vividly by others, mostly negatively, and recalled and quoted in apocryphal anecdotes but we have no surviving sources from her perspective. Even those prosecuted for drunkenness were seldom given a voice in the press accounts of their court cases. We view them the prejudiced perspective of others and are encouraged to see them as one-dimensional characters. Most of the commentary on the separation women comes primarily from republican sources who were determined to attribute all opposition to their cause to women with connections to the British Army, and to the economic motivation of the separation allowance. This is especially relevant for the

[54]Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society*, pp. 142-152.
[55]NAI BMH WS 1595 Seamus Babington.
[56]NAI BMH WS 1048 Sean Murnane; BMH WS 1103 Dennis F. Madden; NAI BMH WS 939 Ernest Blythe.

Bureau of Military History where political bias is just one of the limitations. The Bureau of Military History consists of witness statements from 1,747 participants of the Irish Revolution, 1913-1921, that were collected in the 1940s and 1950s. Many of the statements were collected orally and converted into 'a coherent statement submitted to the witness for approval', others were collected as responses to questionnaires.[57] The contributors include former members of the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Army, the Irish Citizen Army, Cumann na mBan and Fianna Éireann. The bulk of the statements come from Irish Volunteers and IRA officers in Dublin and Cork. There are 146 testimonies by women included in the collection. The statements consist of 'flawed memories from a remove of several decades' and must be treated with sufficient caution.[58] They nonetheless provide a wealth of information about the activities of the Irish Volunteers, the IRA and Sinn Féin that is otherwise unrecorded. Eve Morrison has persuasively argued for their importance, highlighting the 'considerable range of opinion, experience, motivation and complexity' evident in the statements.[59] Examination of a wide sample provides insight into the attitudes of those active in the nationalist and republican movements towards separation women.

There is also extensive contemporary evidence from diverse sources, including diary entries, police reports, and press accounts, which substantiate the Bureau testimonies of separation women engaging in violent protests against the republican movement from 1915 onwards. A notable instance of this occurred in May 1915 when separation women protested members of the Irish Volunteers parading through Limerick city. The event and the participation of separation women was recorded in the Judicial Division Intelligence Notes for Limerick in 1915, and mentioned in a letter from Sir Matthew Nathan to Lord Basil Blackwood, private secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, on 24 May 1915: 'they met with a bad reception from a section of the population who had relatives in the army'.[60] Nineteen Bureau statements mention this Limerick demonstration, often in the context of praising the Volunteers for their restrained response. The local press in county Cork reported several incidents involving violent demonstrations by separation women in Cork city over the course of the war, including clashes between republicans and separation women on Easter

[57]Diarmaid Ferriter, "In such deadly earnest", Accessed 25 June 2023. *Dublin Review*, 12 (2003).
[58]Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland Easter 1916,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 6.
[59]Eve Morrison, 'The Bureau of Military History' in Donal O'Drisceoll, John Crowley and Mike Murphy (eds) *Atlas of the Irish Revolution,* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), pp. 876-880.
[60]Bodleian Library, Matthew Nathan papers, MS 463: Letter from Sir Matthew Nathan to Lord Basil Blackwood, 24 May 1915.

Monday 1917 and an attack on camogie players at a republican parade in June 1917.[61] Other incidents recalled in the Bureau statements were mentioned in contemporary diary accounts and newspapers.[62]

The interaction of separation women with rebels during the Easter Rising is also heavily documented in both contemporary diaries by the republican doctor Kathleen Lynn, and a Dublin apprentice, while Patrick Pearse's Easter week statement referenced the participation in looting by 'hangers-on of the British Army'. The hostility of the local Dublin population to the rebellion was remembered in notably pejorative terms in more than forty retrospective witness statements.[63] Kevin O'Shiel's statement for example, refers to a 'dreadful old hag' and a 'motley crowd of men and women from the back streets and rat infested tenements'. [64] The anger of separation women at the actions of the rebels is understandable given the women's inevitable loyalty to the men in the British Army drafted in to suppress the rebellion. St John Ervine described in his autobiographical novel *Changing Winds* how the Dubliners who were full of mourning for the Irish lives lost at Gallipoli the previous year were in 'no mood for rebellion'.[65] The response of soldiers' families is memorably depicted in the figure of Bessie Burgess in Sean O'Casey's play, *The Plough and the Stars*, first performed at the Abbey Theatre in 1926. Bessie, a soldier's mother, is horrified by the events of the Rising and she felt that the rebels were betraying the Irish men in British Army: 'Stabbin' in th' back th' men that are dyin; in the threnches for them!'.[66] There were 41 Irishmen among the British military who were killed during Easter week in Dublin. The destructive impact of the events on the women's locality further

[61]John Borgonovo, *The dynamics of war and revolution: Cork city 1916-1918,* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013), pp. 60-65.

[62]For example, CP Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian, described in his diary the support for the Irish Parliamentary Party candidates during the South Longford by-election in 1917 provided by the 'wives and mothers of enlisted men' who 'went about waving both the Irish flag and the Union Jack and cheering for the khaki': Trevor Wilson (ed.), *The political diaries of CP Scott 1911-1928,* (London: Collins, 1970), pp. 289-290. See also reporting of the activities of separation women during the 1918 general election in the *Irish Independent* in December 1918, cited in Senia Paseta, *Irish nationalist women, 1900-1918,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) p. 259.

[63]Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, pp. 178-180. See Paseta, *Irish nationalist women*, p. 195.

[64]NAI BMH WS 177 Kevin O'Shiel.

[65]St John Ervine, *Changing Winds* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p. 498. Cited in Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 44. See also the depiction of separation women in Walter Macken, *The Scorching Wind,* (London: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 54-55.

[66]Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars* (London: Macmillan, 1926).

affected their response. Richard Grayson has noted the high recruitment rates to the British Army among families in inner city Dublin, in the areas which witnessed most fighting during the rebellion. 65 men from Marlborough street, for example, enlisted in the British Army, nine of whom had been killed by Easter 1916. The street suffered significant damage during the fighting.[67] Some compensation was provided for the civilians who had experienced hardship through the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund, but the amounts paid out were relatively small and many of those most in need received no compensation.[68]

Over the following two years, Ireland witnessed increased public political engagement by soldiers' wives. As an identifiable group, they vociferously opposed the advanced nationalist movement, protesting Irish Volunteer parades and Sinn Féin by-election events. In his 1953 memoir, the republican activist Frank Gallagher recalled the separation women as a 'new element in Irish politics' who caused great disturbance and unrest.[69] The role of separation women in the by-election campaigns in 1917 and 1918 was particularly notorious with incidents reported in East Clare, South Longford, and Waterford. According to the Bureau testimonies, the protests by separation women had a significant impact on advanced nationalist events. Irish Volunteer and Sinn Féin meetings were disrupted, and detours and event cancellations were required. Irish Volunteers were drafted in to Clare to protect the Sinn Féin leader Eamon De Valera from the 'truculent crowd' of separation women who allegedly attacked De Valera's supporters with 'bottles, stones and whatever missiles were available'.[70] The contemporary association between the separation women and the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) is shown by a Sinn Féin propaganda poster from the South Longford by-election in 1917.[71] The poster shows two women dressed in rags and elaborate furs. One of them is standing at a bar with a drink while the other is waving a banner in support of Patrick McKenna, the IPP candidate. Several tropes relevant to the reputation of the separation women are evident in the poster: the furs representing their supposed extravagant spending, the Union Jack in the woman's cap indicating their link to the British Army, the drinking in public referring to their reputation for alcohol abuse, and the banner indicating their overt support for the IPP.[72] The South Longford constituency included garrison towns with established recruiting traditions

[67]Richard S. Grayson, *Dublin's Great Wars: the First World War, the Easter Rising and the Irish revolution,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 163-165.
[68]Yeates, *A city in wartime*, p. 122.
[69]Frank Gallagher, *Four glorious years* (Dublin: Irish Press, 1953), p. 28.
[70]NAI BMH WS 985 Peter O'Loughlin and BMH WS 1048 Sean Murnane; BMH WS 1322 Art O'Donnell
[71]National Library of Ireland, Sinn Féin, "The Irish Party's only props in Longford", 1917.
[72]Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society*, p. 181.

to the British Army and the soldiers' families were especially vociferous in their hostility towards Sinn Féin.[73]

This hostility from soldiers' wives was also evident in Waterford city where there was a high level of local support for the war effort. Waterford was particularly dependent on the army and munitions industries and about 35 per cent of the area's eligible male population had enlisted in the army in the first 16 months of the war.[74] Rosamond Jacob, a suffragist, Republican and writer, described in her diary the dramatic scenes in Waterford in March 1918 where a Sinn Féin meeting was disrupted by IPP female supporters 'roaring and screaming to drown the speakers' voices and singing Keep the Home Fires Burning'.[75] In December 1918 she noted how a meeting to plan the Sinn Féin general election campaign in Waterford city was disrupted by separation women making 'a great uproar'.[76] There were also violent clashes on polling day.[77]In his Bureau statement, Charles Wyse Power recalled that in Waterford the women were 'made half-drunk each evening and then let loose on the streets with their aprons laden with stones'.[78] Although there were physical attacks on the Sinn Féin supporters, the Volunteer veterans asserted in their Bureau statements that the police turned a blind eye to the actions of the women.[79] Most women over the age of thirty could vote in the general election in 1918 but achievement of the franchise does not appear to have had any immediate impact upon the numbers of women expressing their politics through public demonstrations and violence. There is also no evidence of the IPP specifically targeting female voters in that election.[80]

The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the IPP and the women is ambiguous. The *National Volunteer* newspaper denounced the violent confrontation between Irish Volunteers and separation women at the 1915 Limerick parade, arguing it sullied the noble cause of nationalism.[81] This was the only reference to such

[73]Maume, *The Long Gestation*, p. 196.
[74]Michael Laffan, *The resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Féin party 1916–23,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 125; Pat McCarthy, *The Irish Revolution, 1912-23: Waterford,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), p. 28.
[75]NLI MS 32,582/34, Diary of Rosamond Jacob, 11 March 1918.
[76]NLI MS 32,582/35: Diary of Rosamond Jacob, 17 November 1918. See also McCarthy, *The Irish Revolution*, p. 56.
[77]McCarthy, *The Irish Revolution*, p. 57.
[78]NAI BMH WS 420 Charles Wyse Power.
[79]Laffan, *The resurrection of Ireland*, p.126; NAI BMH WS 985 Peter O'Loughlin, NAI BMH WS 1552 Bartholomew Flynn, BMH WS 420 Charles Wyse Power.
[80]Elaine Callinan, *Electioneering and propaganda in Ireland, 1917-1921: votes, violence and victory,* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2020), p. 66.
[81]*National Volunteer*, 29 May 1915.

confrontations in the paper during the period of its publication, 1914 to 1916. The public support of the women for the Irish Parliamentary Party did not necessarily help its election candidates. The women acted as a visible reminder of the IPP's support for British Army recruitment, a divisive issue that Sinn Féin was exploiting in their campaigns.[82] Opponents of the Irish Parliamentary Party accused its candidates of using the women as a mob for hire, to be paid through alcohol.[83] The republican newspaper *New Ireland* described the separation women as the 'great stand-by of the party' whose 'special dislike against Sinn Féin' had been converted into 'fanatical hatred' by the IPP.[84] *New Ireland* was especially hostile to the IPP throughout this period and exploited the actions of the separation women to strengthen their propaganda against the party.

The separation women involved in anti-republican demonstrations represented a minority of soldiers' wives in Ireland. Many soldiers' families had direct links to the Irish republican movement. The Foster family in Dublin illustrate the mixed allegiances of many families. Kate Foster suffered the loss of her child Sean in the crossfire during the Easter Rising. Her brother was serving with the Irish Volunteers at the Four Courts while her husband had been killed on active service in France some months previously.[85] Joseph Byrne was himself a member of the British Army when he temporarily deserted to follow his brothers and try to join the rebels during the Easter Rising. On his demobilisation from the British Army in 1918, Byrne joined the IRA.[86] There were many others who combined military service in the British Army with membership of the IRA and many families with complex or competing loyalties during the war.[87] Separation women were also not immune from the shift in public opinion in favours of the rebels after the events of the Easter Rising. Robert Brennan recalled in his witness statement that he heard two separation women comment positively on the Easter 1916 rebellion after they received permits from the rebels to purchase provisions: "'Glory to be God, Katie, isn't this a grand government'".[88] Michael Brennan was interned in Wales after the Rising and recalled in his statement the crowd

[82]Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish revolution* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), p. 59.
[83]*New Ireland*, 12 May 1915.
[84]*New Ireland*, 30 March 1918.
[85]*Irish Times*, 23 September 2015.
[86]NAI BMH WS 461 Joseph Byrne.
[87]Paul Taylor, *Heroes or traitors: experiences of southern Irish soldiers returning from the Great War 1919-1936,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), p. 14. See also Steven O'Connor, ""It's up to you now to fight for your own country": Ireland's Great War veterans in the War of Independence, 1919-21', in David Swift and Oliver Wilkinson, eds, *Veterans of the First World War: ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen in post-war Britain and Ireland,* (Routledge: London, 2019), pp. 104-121.
[88]NAI BMH WS 779 Robert Brennan.

of 'separation allowance ladies' who 'howled insults, pelted us with anything handy' at Limerick station as they departed. On his return eight months later, he was greeted by a crowd who 'cheered themselves hoarse and embarrassed me terribly by carrying me on their shoulders'. For Brennan the contrasting responses indicated that the Rising 'had already changed people'.[89] The overwhelming support for Sinn Féin at the expense of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the December 1918 election indicates that the separation women who continued to protest Sinn Féin events represented a declining minority of the population. Bound together primarily by the commonality of their husband's war service, they no longer featured as an identifiable group in the post-war years.

Many of the women involved in these protests would have faced difficult times in the aftermath of the war, however. The separation allowances ended, and pensions or disability payments were paid directly to the soldier husband, renewing the economic vulnerability experienced by women within the household. Not all men returned home to their families, and not all reunions were joyful affairs. Paul Smith's novel *The Countrywoman*, inspired by his mother's experience, evokes the difficulty endured by some working-class Dublin women on the return of their husbands. Molly Baines, the novel's central character, had enjoyed a wartime improvement in the standard of living of her family due to the separation allowance. She was able to provide food and clothes for her children, pay off debts and feel some relief from the strain of potential destitution: 'The gradual ease from want gave Mrs Baines time to explore the world about her and in the second year of the war she discovered the canal and the water fast-flowing'.[90] This temporary respite was quickly destroyed on the arrival home of her husband Pat. In Pat's case, the penchant for drinking and recklessly spending the family's income was a continuation of his pre-war behaviour, with the war making it easier for him to get the money to drink from the 'British Legion and all the other patriotic bodies in the city'.[91] Other people in the novel are more notably scarred by their wartime experiences: 'some propped on crutches, others nursing hidden wounds'. One character, Mr Thraill returned from the war and began 'wearing a carnation in his buttonhole and, on Saturdays, setting fire to his wife'. A nurse veteran was suffering from trauma: 'Mary Ellen Timmons who had been a nurse in the Army and been shell-shocked, came down to the pipe in broad daylight in her skin and had to be dragged back to the room screaming and the priest had to be sent for'. Within the novel, the war widows also had challenging experiences. One woman drowned herself in the canal when her husband didn't return and her daughters had to resort

[89]NAI BMH WS 1068 Michael Brennan.
[90]Paul Smith, *The Countrywoman,* (London: Picador Books, 1982), p. 4.
[91]Ibid., p. 39. The character of Pat Baines is inspired by Smith's father, a British Army soldier known for his alcoholism and violence: Laurence William White, 'Paul Smith' in Dictionary of Irish Biography (2009). Accessed 25 June 2023.

to prostitution, while two others became habitual drunkards, attributed to the temptation of the income provided by the widows' pensions.[92] O'Brien was born in 1920 into a family living in a two-room tenement home by the Grand Canal in Dublin city. His father served in the British Army and O'Brien recalled in an interview how his mother had raised ten children alone on seven shillings and six pence when his father was away.[93]

War widows received pensions from the British government, albeit consisting of smaller sums than the separation allowance. However, the pensions were conditional on good behaviour and were ended if the woman remarried. Widows were subjected to police surveillance and were vulnerable to having their allowance withdrawn if they were observed to have partaken in 'serious or persistent misconduct'. This could include infidelity, child neglect or prostitution, amongst other offences.[94] Such conditions were not unusual at the time, however. The gratuities provided to the widows of deceased Royal Irish Constabulary members were also contingent on the moral character of the widow and were liable to be reduced or cut entirely if the widow was known to be 'intemperate…or to have borne an indifferent or bad character'.[95] Siblings and parents of the men lost had limited supports. Annie Casey, a Dublin woman, was left in poverty following the death of one of her brothers and the permanent disablement of the other on war service. They had both previously contributed to the family income following their father's death. Annie had worked in munitions during the war but in 1921 she applied for a grant to train as a housekeeper. She was twenty-six by then but unmarried and fully dependent on the family income.[96] There are many similar examples in the applications for financial aid for training programmes submitted by Irish women during the scheme's existence from 1920 to 1922.[97]

While demobilisation brought challenges for the population across the United Kingdom, life was particularly difficult for the families of ex-servicemen in Ireland. Many women suffered on account of their husband's war service or the perceived loyalty of the family to the British Crown. Soldiers' families in Ireland continued to face financial

[92]Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[93]Eibhear Walshe, "A wounded lynx", *Irish Pages*, 7, 2 (2013), pp. 51 & p. 56.
[94]PRONI, MIC 523/24 Secretary of State to Chief Constable, RUC, 1925, PRONI, MIC 523/24.
[95]PRONI, D989/B/2/4A Papers relating to pensions for widows of ex-Royal Irish Constabulary, 1922, PRONI, D989/B/2/4A.
[96]The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA) LAB 2/1580/CCW911/2/1920: Central Committee for Women's Training and Employment for the South of Ireland, Case of Annie Casey, Dublin Board, 30 September 1921.
[97]Walsh, *Irish women and the Great War*, pp. 204-206.

difficulties in the aftermath of the war, with unemployment levels among Irish veterans particularly high. Many veterans depended on the British Legion, the UVF Patriotic Fund and the Southern Irish Loyalist Association for basic support.[98] The records of these organisations reveal the desperate circumstances many ex-servicemen's families found themselves in after the war ended. The following appeal for aid was sent to the Southern Irish Loyalist Association and printed in one of their pamphlets in 1925,

> I am a married ex-service man with a wife, 10 children and myself, almost naked in the want of some clothing at this present time. I am out of work, and I am not in receipt of any pension. I served 3 years in the late war... Sir I am in a very bad way at this present time for clothing, my wife is about to become a mother again and I don't know what to do. [99]

The daughter of a recently deceased veteran wrote to the same organisation saying she and her siblings were struggling to survive on the wage of her brother who only earned a few shillings a week. She pleaded that 'employment is very scarce here and it's not ex-servicemen or their son that gets what employment there is'.[100] In 1927 the British Legion reported on the 'pitiful' conditions in Ireland and noted that in many areas that 'the men are afraid to identify themselves with the Legion for to acknowledge themselves as British Ex-servicemen means, speaking generally, unemployment and no guardians relief'.[101] Associating with organisations such as the Southern Irish Loyalist Association and the British Legion also exposed the veterans and their families to accusations of disloyalty and potential intimidation and violence from the IRA. The files of the Southern Loyalist Relief Association and the Irish Grants Distress Committee reveal many examples of soldiers' families being targeted by the IRA during the War of Independence and Civil War.[102] Emmanuel Destenay argues that the motives for these assaults were usually more complex than simple retaliation for British Army service, however veteran status was an easily identified indicator of

[98]Robinson, 'Nobody's children?' p. 321. See discussion of the charitable support provided by the UVF Patriotic Fund in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 24 May 1921.
[99]PRONI, D989/C/1/68 Printed Leaflet Irish Ex-Servicemen. Fate of Loyalists who fought for the Empire. Circa 1925.
[100]Ibid.
[101]PRONI, D4246/2/3, Davis Papers, report of the British Legion in Southern Ireland, A review of the clubs and branches visited in Southern Ireland, November 1926.
[102]Fionnuala Walsh, '"The future welfare of the Empire will depend more largely on our women and girls": Southern Loyalist Women and the British War Effort in Ireland, 1914–1922', in Brian Hughes and Conor Morrissey (eds), *Southern Irish Loyalism 1912-1949,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), pp. 137-154.

loyalty to the Crown for the IRA.[103] Many soldiers' families fled Ireland, feeling that they were no longer welcome in their home communities and indeed in their own country.

Soldiers' families occupied a complex place in Irish society. Initially supported and praised for their husband's service, working-class women quickly came under criticism and surveillance from the British state and civic authorities. Despite the material benefits of the separation allowance, women were mistrusted and believed incapable of responsible control over the family finances. Perceived lapses in morality were framed as an affront to the sacrifice of their heroic husbands on the one hand or as proof of the negative influence of the British Army in Ireland. Even the republicans who opposed Irish recruitment to the British military had more empathy for the men in uniform than their families left behind who dared express their hostility to the 1916 Rising and the rise of Sinn Féin. The by-elections in 1917 and 1918 provided opportunities for violent clashes and for the negative reputation of the women to be cemented in the public imagination. Separation women as an identifiable group disappeared in the aftermath of the war but the difficulties and challenges for Irish military families continued. Veterans and their families suffered assaults and intimidation. Rebuilding domestic and family life was difficult across the United Kingdom but particularly so for soldiers' families in independent Ireland.

[103]Emmanuel Destenay, *Shadows from the trenches: veterans of the Great War and the Irish Revolution 1918-1923,* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2021), pp. 91-92.

Ireland and the First World War: Myth, Memory and History

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ABSTRACT
The First World War is a major event in world history and in Ireland's history as well. This article demonstrates how myth, memory and history became intertwined in contemporary understandings of Irish participation in the conflict, as well as in subsequent scholarly writing. Through examples including recruitment statistics, policy decisions, the war at sea, memorialisation, unionism and Northern Ireland, and the Irish Revolution, this article demonstrates that a triangular relationship between myth, memory, and history has pervaded our understanding of the history of the war itself. A critical appreciation for how and when these phenomena intersect is therefore needed for a better understanding of Ireland and the First World War – and how we as historians continue to write its history today.

The world conflict that began in July 1914 mobilised 65 million troops and claimed 20 million civilian and military lives across the globe. It destroyed three empires – four if we were to include that of Germany – and witnessed the rise of powerful ideologies that sparked the horrors of the twentieth century. Cycles of violence convulsed much of Europe and further afield until 1923, troubling the notion that 1918 was an 'end point' in the largescale violence unleashed in 1914. During the war itself, new political 'isms' gained traction. Bolshevism and counter-revolutionary movements formed the backdrop of conflicts stretching from 'Finland and the Baltic States through Russia and Ukraine, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Germany, all the way through the Balkans into Anatolia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and even Czechoslovakia'.[1] Fascism arose and adapted to new national contexts in Italy, Germany, Britain, Ireland and elsewhere, generating powerful political movements that would in time spark another world war.

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[1]Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela 'Introduction' in Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, eds., *Empires at War: 1911–1923,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.1-16, (p. 10).

What we might term anti–colonial movements, a catch-all term that does not sufficiently capture the variety within and between groups that sought to reform their relationship to empires, received a new impetus in an emerging, international order. Within the British Empire, Egypt, India, and Ireland were at the forefront of agitation. Even the so-called White Dominions, where British and Irish emigrants had become settled populations from Canada to New Zealand, now pushed in different measures for a loosening in ties of sovereignty from the imperial centre of London.[2] Across the Atlantic a new superpower, the United States of America, emerged on the international scene from 1917, further upsetting the balance of power in Europe.

This sketch of some ways in which the First World War left transformational, geopolitical impacts on the long twentieth century reminds us of the immensity of the world's first 'total war'. But how does Ireland fit this picture? This article explores the triangular relationship between myth, memory and history to demonstrate how all three became embedded in contemporary understandings of Irish participation in the conflict, as well as in subsequent scholarly writing. My aim is to suggest that particular myths and memories of the war have come to substitute our understanding of the conflict itself, often squeezing out wider, complicated dynamics in place of more narrowly defined experiences. In so doing, the lenses commonly used to view Ireland and the Irish in the First World War have made Irish experiences less relevant to understanding the major geopolitical transformations spawned in the wake of the conflict, but this need not be the case. This article makes clear that a critical appreciation for history, myth and memory is needed for historians seeking to situate Irish experiences in broader contexts.

Some points of clarity are firstly needed. By 'myth', it is not necessarily meant a fallacy, but an exaggerated or reductive sense of facets of an event that have come to substitute a more complex, historical picture. The term can also refer to existing narratives about the 'past', which are myths in a more fallacious sense, but they have made it into public and even scholarly domains to such an extent that they have taken the place of 'history'. Memory is closely related and at times indistinguishable. As with myth, certain memories of the conflict have replaced history, squeezing out complex realities and accentuating the most valuable aspects of those that remain. This can be done consciously (by state actors) and unconsciously (by mere repetition, so that over time memory comes to take the place of history, especially when repeated by governmental, media, clerical, educational and other powerful outlets). While history is seemingly more straightforward, as recovery of 'the past' is the historian's objective, to 'recover' the past is an exercise deeply wedded to the interpretative lenses and guiding principles we use to conduct our research. Our conclusions therefore are

[2]John Darwin, *The empire project: the rise and fall of the British world-system, 1830–1970,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

unlikely to be representative but subjectively partial, but they come to represent 'history' when facilitated by the various social structures that enable individual success within or outside of the academy.

Recruitment and statistics

The question of recruitment is one that has attracted different generations of people, whether one thinks of policymakers during the conflict itself, constantly preoccupied with how many men were joining up from both Britain and Ireland; members of the public interested in recruitment from localities, counties or regions; or historians, who for a long time saw this as *the* most important question in Irish history when assessing responses to the First World War, or Great War as it was known at the time.

The late David Fitzpatrick estimated that 206,000 Irish-born men served in that conflict.[3] Perhaps 27,000–30,000 were killed.[4] There had been several other approximations prior to Fitzpatrick's publication, but the main figures he sought to dispute were the figures surrounding Irish participation, cited by some military historians, such as Henry Harris and J. P. Duggan, to have been at 400,000 or even 500,000.[5] Similarly, the fatalities captured in the multi-volume edition of *Ireland's War Memorial Records*, published in 1923 as part of a wider project of remembrance chaired by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the time, Sir John French, were also disputed.[6] In these volumes, the figure of 49,647 Irish military deaths was put forward. Considerable effort has since gone into debunking these statistics and Fitzpatrick's estimate of just under 30,000 war dead has come to stand. However, an important thing to be said in favour of the *Records* is that through listing all those who fought in an Irish regiment, the names recorded include men born outside Ireland while also including those born in Ireland who served in any British army unit. Many of those born outside Ireland were born in Great Britain, its empire, or even elsewhere, thus allowing for a wider

[3]David Fitzpatrick, 'The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–1918', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 1017–1030, (p. 1018). Also see Fitzpatrick, 'Militarism in Ireland, 1900–1922', in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, eds, *A Military History of Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 379-406, (pp. 386–9).

[4]David Fitzpatrick, 'Irish consequences of the Great War', *Irish Historical Studies* 39, 156 (2015), pp. 643–58, (p. 645).

[5]See Henry Harris, *The Irish regiments in the first world war* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1968), p. 32; J. P. Duggan, *A history of the Irish army,* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), p. 328. Cited in David Fitzpatrick, 'The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914–1918', *The Historical Journal*, 38, 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 1017–1030, (p. 1018).

[6]Committee of the Irish National War Memorial, *Ireland's War Memorial Records, 1914–1918: Being the Names of Irishmen Who Fell in the Great European War, 1914–1918,* 8 vols, (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts, 1923).

definition of 'Irish' than Fitzpatrick's figures, as his 'Irish' composition was based on correlating deaths recorded by the Registrar-General for Ireland with government mortality figures within Ireland.[7] A 'born in Ireland' designation was crucial to his estimation of the Irish war dead based on the sources consulted, therefore excluding what he termed 'non-Irish members of 'Irish' regiments', as well as natives of Ireland who joined units in Britain, the colonies and the USA.'[8]

The *Records* undeniably had faults – for instance, the inclusion of men from Great Britain with no Irish connections whatsoever who served in Irish units – but they did represent a broader conception of *who* was Irish in the Great War than Fitzpatrick came to use. This wider conception of Irish military participation – one that spanned Great Britain as much as it did the Dominions, the USA and elsewhere, only somewhat accounted for in the *Records* – would be erased from later historiographical and popular accounts. Fitzpatrick's figures have become the standard metric for citing Irish recruitment in the Great War.[9] The result has been the narrowing of 'Irishness' to the island of Ireland, a fallacy in itself given persistently high rates of emigration that pre– and post–dated the Famine of 1845–52, and the importance of Irishness to first – and second – generations, as discussed below. Such a restrictive definition of *who* was 'Irish' has in turn created a myth that military service almost exclusively came from Irish-born men who joined up in Ireland itself.

Yet the reality was more complex, as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission database demonstrates.[10] It does not always record where a soldier was 'from' (that is dependent on information provided by relatives), but where that information is included, it shows that Irish recruits joined a range of military units, many of which were not raised in Ireland *at all*. To take three towns at random – Kilrush, County Clare; Dundalk, County Louth; and Randalstown, County Antrim – all reveal considerable variety in both recruitment and war deaths at the local level. In Kilrush for instance, the database records 43 war dead. 25 were men who served in various Irish regiments while 18 served in non-Irish units. In Dundalk, there were 170 war deaths. Only 58 died while serving in Irish regiments. A large proportion of the remainder (which includes one woman) died elsewhere, predominantly in ships sunk by German U-Boats. Even in unionist-dominated Randalstown, 12 out of 48 men died

[7]Fitzpatrick, 'Irish consequences', p. 645. See footnote 6 for how Fitzpatrick estimated deaths of Irish servicemen.
[8]Fitzpatrick, 'The Logic of Collective Sacrifice', p. 1018.
[9]See for instance their use within Timothy Bowman, William Butler and Michael Wheatley, *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish recruitment to the British Armed Forces, 1914-1918,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), p. 2.
[10]Commonwealth War Graves Commission, available at www.cwgc.org. Accessed 5 July 2023.

in other units. This messy picture of war dead was replicated throughout towns and villages across the island.

The other units in which Irish men served differed tremendously. Some troops with specialist skills joined corps such as the Royal Army Medical Corps and others joined tactical units including the Royal Engineers, Royal Garrison Artillery and Machine Gun Corps. The Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine rank highly in recruitment preferences among coastal populations. But the bulk of other units comprised infantry units outside of Ireland, including the Seaforth Highlanders, Canadian Expeditionary Force, York and Lancaster Regiment, King's (Liverpool Regiment) and many others. It is unclear to what extent any of the men listed on the CWGC database joined UK units in Ireland and therefore made it into Fitzpatrick's estimates of the war dead, or whether they enlisted outside of Ireland and therefore never made it into the final tally. Information in the *Soldiers Died in the Great War* records often does not include place of enlistment, and it is never included in the accompanying *Officers Died* records.[11] We can be certain that those who joined non-British units would not have been included in his totals for Irish fatalities. While this picture differed by locality and no single interpretation of recruitment can be drawn that best describes the 'Irish' experience, it reminds us of two important points: the imprecision in accurately accounting for Irish recruitment and fatalities during the First World War, and that there was never one typical Irish recruitment experience. There were only experiences, and in the cases above, recruitment to non-Irish units from Irish-born men could make up anywhere between 25 to 66 per cent of war deaths in a given locality.[12]

Looking anew at recruitment statistics forces historians writing about military service to think about a more profound problem: how the statistics they employ to portray Irish recruitment, and the associated experiences of military service, implicitly draw boundaries around *who* was an Irish serviceman during the First World War. Place of birth has been a useful criterion upon which to get some sense of scale, especially given the habit of authorities to label the Irish troops 'British'. Large numbers of Irishmen who enlisted in Great Britain for instance were therefore counted as English, Scottish or Welsh recruits.[13] But on the other hand, this narrow definition of Irishness

[11]Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919, available via online database www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/1543/. Accessed 5 July 2023.

[12]The vast bulk of these men were Irish-born judging by records listed for their parents and where they lived, but herein lies another problem. A handful of records are misplaced (e.g., see one D. D. Gillies from Dundalk, who is listed as 'Son of Rachel Davis Gillies, of Dundalk, Ontario, and the late James Gillies.'). And given the habit of British authorities to synonymise place of enlistment with nationality, it is possible that non-Irish recruits who joined up in Ireland are mistakenly included in the returns.

[13]Bowman et al, *Disparity*, p. 10.

is out of tune with a country where emigration and migration were facts of life. In 1911, just a handful of years before the war began, over one third of Irish-born people lived outside Ireland.[14] An unpublished document from the Department of National Defence in Canada suggests that 19,327 soldiers from Ireland served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) and Mark McGowan has suggested that that number is even higher, as 51,426 Catholics had enlisted in the CEF by 1 June 1917, most of whom were Irish, though that figure likely included non-Irish-born men who were later generations of Irish settlers.[15] Jeff Kildea has added another 7,000 or so Irish-born men to the Australian count.[16] We don't have figures for New Zealand or the most obvious case of the USA, and whilst impossible to measure enlistment in Britain, we can assume that this is probably one of the highest cases of recruitment outside of Ireland given high levels of migration and settlement.[17] Clearly many Irish-born men joined units outside of Ireland; to exclude them from the typical military statistics cited in relation to the Great War seems to make little sense.

One could interrogate this further. Why is Irish-born a pre-eminent criterion for who was 'Irish' in the First World War, especially given persistent emigration and endurance of Irish communities throughout the British Empire and USA? One needs only look at the importance of 'Irishness' in recruiting efforts throughout the Empire, such as in Canada, especially in urban centres such as Montreal and Toronto, or even in Irish America, to demonstrate that Irishness mattered to later generations, and was perceived to matter, in the push to attract more men to the forces.[18]

If historians are to restrict themselves to the murky business of 'Irish-born' for determining military participation, not least for the primordial and territorial elements it suggests which have long since been dismissed by scholars of nations and nationalisms, then a double exclusion is implicit within much of the scholarship. Irish-

[14]Joseph P. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity 1912–1918,* (New York: Syracuse, 2004), p. 155.
[15]*The Irish Times*, 1 August 2014; the implication in McGowan's work is that most English-speaking Catholics who joined up were Irish Catholic, and there was a strong correlation between English-speaking Catholics and the Irish. See Mark G. McGowan, *The Imperial Irish: Canada's Irish Catholics Fight the Great War, 1914-18,* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), pp. 105–162, p. 108.
[16]Jeff Kildea, *Anzacs and Ireland,* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2007).
[17]For further discussion, see Niamh Gallagher, *Ireland and the Great War: A Social and Political History,* (London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2019), p. 107ff.
[18]The following recruitment posters demonstrate the point. For Canada, see www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31032. Accessed 5 July 2023. For the USA, see www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.08405/. Accessed 5 July 2023.
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born men who enlisted in Ireland in British (and to be more precise again, largely UK) units have become the benchmark upon which scholarly and popular understandings of recruitment have been based. These have generated myths about Irish recruitment and its related cousin, the question of Irish 'support' for the war effort, as the two have been commonly linked. Irish-born men who enlisted outside of Ireland, or first– and second–generation Irishmen who enlisted elsewhere, are not considered sufficiently 'Irish' to have made it into the commonly cited statistics and therefore have had no bearing on the contentious debates surrounding nationalist and unionist 'support' for the war effort. And the question of recruitment, as the author has argued elsewhere, is surely only one strand of experience that enables us to assess support for the war effort *in toto*.[19]

Myths surrounding recruitment were also present during the war itself. Some authorities spent considerable energy trying to highlight the supposed slackers in Ireland who were avoiding military service. In March 1918, John Pretyman Newman, an Irish-born officer and Conservative politician, asked Henry Duke, Chief Secretary of Ireland, about what might be done to remedy the general slackness which Irish towns were supposedly fostering towards joining up, a problem '… owing to the presence of numbers of non-Irish, both Britishers and aliens, of military age who are evading military service by taking refuge in Ireland.' Duke replied that the police were aware and in cooperation with the recruiting authorities who would facilitate the 'arrest and removal of men who are absentees'.[20] The perception that Irish men, especially single men, were shirking their responsibilities, was a concern often raised in parliament from 1916, especially by Right-leaning politicians.[21] It was an important reason why conscription was introduced in 1918. Though never formally imposed on Ireland, Adrian Gregory has argued it was passed to pacify British public opinion.[22] Ireland was to 'step up' to its military responsibilities having so far avoided the draft, but it seemed only fair to those in favour of the Bill that Ireland be included now that the age range of British men was to be further extended in light of the German spring offensives.

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[19]Gallagher, *Ireland*, pp. 17–30.

[20]Parl. Deb. (HC) 14 March 1918 vol. 104 col. 452.

[21]For instance, Sir Edward Carson asked Henry Forster, Financial Secretary to the War Office, 'Is it the policy of the Government to encourage men of military age in Ireland to come over and take the jobs of men in England who have enlisted in the Army?', Parl. Deb. (HC) 8 Nov 1916, vol. 87 cols 174–5.

[22]Adrian Gregory, '"You Might As Well Recruit Germans": British Public Opinion and the Decision to Conscript the Irish in 1918', in Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (eds.), *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All?',* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 113-132, (p. 127).

These important perceptions shaped policy responses that transformed the British–Irish relationship. Yet we now know that recruitment from Ireland was not so 'dramatically out of kilter' with Britain after all when the two islands are compared. The late Keith Jeffery found that between a quarter and a third of all available young men in Ireland served in the conflict, 'a strikingly high proportion in the absence of conscription.'[23] Agricultural regions across the UK saw significantly lower rates of recruitment than urban centres, and rural areas contributed to the war effort in other ways, mainly through agricultural production.[24] To compare recruitment across these islands means one must acknowledge the very different historical, political, and social contexts in which it took place. To suggest that recruitment should have been the same throughout both islands implies that important contextual factors do not matter, which of course they did. Not all historians would agree, however.[25] The history of Irish recruitment in the Great War is as much a battle between different interpretations of the past as it is a definitional and numerical problem.

Other myths

Other myths pervade the understanding of Irish experiences during the First World War. One might consider the conditions of the conflict itself. Mud, rats, shell-torn land, and barbed wire are just some of the well-known images we think of when we recall the conflict.[26] And they were of course very real. The brutality of the Western Front needs no revision. But we are less accustomed to thinking about other dynamics of the military campaigns: considerable movement of the various armies in 1914 and 1918 as opposed to enduring attrition; the different geographies of the conflict, ranging from coastline engagements in the Dardanelles and the desert-like conditions of the Middle Eastern campaigns to the mountainous, snowy engagements in the Carpathians and war at sea and in the air. Irishmen served in all of these geographies as Richard Grayson has demonstrated, but there were elements of the conflict that were closer to the island of Ireland that helped reinforce crucial civilian support that enabled volunteers to stay the course.[27]

Margaret MacMillan has reminded us that one of the differences between the First World War and previous conflicts was that civilians now became legitimate targets as

[23]Keith Jeffery, *1916: A Global History,* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), p. 110.
[24]Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 192; Gallagher, *Ireland*, pp. 73–82.
[25]For the opposite view to that of Jeffery and Pennell, see Bowman et al, *Disparity*, pp. 3–4.
[26]Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory,* (London: Hambledon, 2005).
[27]Richard S. Grayson, *Dublin's Great Wars: The First World War, the Easter Rising and the Irish Revolution,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

well.[28] For civilians in Ireland, the war at sea was vital for bringing the conflict closer to home, and the sinking of the *RMS Lusitania* on 7 May 1915 by a German U-Boat off the coast of Queenstown, Co. Cork was the centrepiece of this dimension. The *Lusitania* was a passenger liner on its journey from New York to Liverpool when it was torpedoed by the German U-20, killing at least 1,198 of the 2,000 people aboard. The death toll was not far off that of a much more memorable disaster, the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, which killed approximately 1,500 people. Yet the former has faded from memory whereas the latter has been at the centre of popular culture and regeneration projects in Belfast and further afield.[29]

At the time however, the sinking of the *Lusitania* had an arguably greater impact. It was immediate, noticed across the entire country and beyond its borders, and it legitimised discourses that had been in currency for some time, such as the discourse of German barbarism, which at times could be aligned with anti-Semitism. It was game-changing in terms of hardening attitudes against so-called aggressors. There was simply no going back to a pre-*Lusitania* mindset, as it became the reference point that defined acts of brutality, triggering expressions of anger, sympathy, and support for those deemed to be on the 'right' side of the war, as well as a range of suggestions for what to do about those deemed to be on the 'wrong' side. The sinking of the *Lusitania* was not an isolated example of attacks on shipping, even if it was one of the most famous. The *S. S. Dundalk* for instance was torpedoed by the German submarine U-90 on its return journey from Liverpool in October 1918, killing 17 people. Fishermen frequently fell foul of mines laid on the western and eastern seaboards, such as when the seven fishermen on *The Pretty Polly* from the village of Carna on the west coast of Galway were killed by a mine (the mine was immediately assumed to be German in origin, though in reality that was difficult to prove). And when the *RMS Leinster* was sunk by U-Boat 123 as it travelled from Kingstown to Holyhead in October 1918, the sinking of the *Lusitania* was the reference point through which understanding the attack was framed.[30] 1917 and 1918 were the worst years for German U-Boat attacks around Irish coastlines, which gradually moved from attacks on the south-western seaboard towards the east. To focus exclusively on recruitment risks undermining the very reasons that kept civilian populations behind their troops as the conflict dragged on, even when domestic politics made the prospect of recruitment much more politically difficult to condone.

Memory

Most of the historical work on memory has helped us understand the wider dynamics of the conflict between unionism and nationalism, the two opposing 'isms' that have dominated research on modern Irish history. Indeed, it is the attempt to further

[28]Margaret MacMillan, *War: how conflict shaped us,* (London: Profile Books, 2020).
[29]Gallagher, *Ireland*, p. 64.
[30]Gallagher, *Ireland*, pp. 60–90.

understand the wedges between these polarities that continues to attract considerable attention in historical writing about the First World War. The nationalist desire for Home Rule, in train since the 1880s, had generated opposition under the banner of unionism. By the time of the First World War, unionism had taken on a powerful northern dimension through the province of Ulster. The polarities were somewhat reflected in the construction of two Irish divisions, 16 (Irish) Division, which was more nationalist in its makeup, and 36 (Ulster) Division, which was largely unionist. 10 (Irish) Division, the first to be formed from Kitchener's New Armies, was a mixture of all political persuasions, comprised of men most eager to join up.[31] The study of memory has largely bolstered research on the political extremities in Ireland, but such a lens has obscured our understanding of the past as much as it has enlightened it.

David Fitzpatrick, John Horne, Guy Beiner and others have all helped us understand how particular memories that served political agendas were built into the war from almost as soon as it began.[32] In Ulster, unionists remember the actions of the Ulster Division on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Over 5,000 Ulstermen were wounded, killed, and went missing on one day alone. There is no doubt surrounding the personal impact of such losses on families and localities. But is also clear that the meaning of this one day on the Somme took on interpretations other than loss. It helped sustain a 'creation myth' of sorts that marked out unionist Ulster as distinct from the rest of the island, fitting into the anti-Home Rule protests that had been at the centre of political Unionism since the 1880s. Scholars have argued that the Somme came to legitimise the connection with Britain and the wider Empire.[33] The notions of territorial defence, politico-religious exclusivity, the big words of patriotism/citizenship and heroism, and a strong dose of politicised masculinity through blood sacrifice were additional elements injected into the developing collective memory that came to stand for the reasons why men gave their lives. Though the division later served at Cambrai, Messines, Passchendaele and other iconic battles, including not least the rest of the Somme, they became insignificant in comparison to the 1 July. The creation of Northern Ireland mapped new meanings onto an emerging collective memory articulated by Ulster Unionist representatives. In a speech given by

[31]Philip Orr, *Field of Bones: An Irish Division at Gallipoli,* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press).

[32]David Fitzpatrick, 'Historians and the commemoration of Irish conflicts, 1912-23', in J. Horne, ed., *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in war and revolution 1912-1923* (2013), pp. 126-133; Guy Beiner, 'Between Trauma and Triumphalism: The Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland', *Journal of British Studies*, 46:2 (2007) pp. 366–89.

[33]B. Graham and P. Shirlow, 'The battle of the Somme in Ulster memory and identity', *Political Geography* (2002), 21, 7, pp. 881–904; Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry, eds, *Remembering 1916: the Easter Rising, the Somme and the politics of memory in Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

the Northern Ireland Prime Minister James Craig in a ceremony for the unveiling of a war memorial in Coleraine in November 1922, Craig declared that, 'those who have passed away have left behind a great message… to stand firm, and to give away none of Ulster's soil.'[34] Defence, protection, and the threat that what had been gained might be taken away, were new messages reflecting the present political context in which Craig found himself, with the Boundary Commission, appointed under the Anglo–Irish Treaty in December 1921, still waiting to precisely adjudicate on the new boundaries of Northern Ireland. These notions of defence, blood sacrifice, protection, and an enemy that threatened territorial integrity would intertwine in the new politics of the region and leave a long shadow on Northern Ireland's first Stormont administration.

But a preoccupation with the polarities between unionism and nationalism, between Ulster and the rest of Ireland, obscures evidence that does not align with this picture. As with national portrayals of recruitment, the picture of two groups contributing to the war effort for diametrically opposed reasons is also challenged by evidence at the local level. For instance, in largely unionist Coleraine, County Londonderry (1,496 Catholics/7,792 persons), the war memorial shows a bronze sculpture of a soldier with a rifle and a cape on a stone plinth.[35] Underneath him however is the female figure of Erin, holding a wreath in her outstretched hands, the symbol of the goddess of Ireland.[36] Including this symbol on a war memorial in largely unionist Coleraine in 1922 demonstrates that a symbolic attachment to Ireland was still important for those involved in its construction. It was seen as an appropriate symbol for honouring local Ulstermen, many of whom had fallen at the Somme. This connection with Ireland would later be forgotten, or considered less important, than the memory that 'unionist Ulster' effectively stood alone in the war. This is where history can diverge from memory; the urge to focus on changing meanings of the Somme and how it supported the evolution of Ulster unionism can help us in many ways, but it obscures the more complicated expressions of place, nationality, mythology, and territory rendered at the time.

This is not to say that later decades are unimportant or that the study of memory is somehow inferior to that of history. Indeed, the two are so intertwined that it can be difficult to separate one from the other, as we saw earlier in the case of the *Lusitania*, which became the reference point for comparing later attacks on shipping. The problem is amplified when the First World War is considered beyond the war years,

[34]*Coleraine Chronicle*, 18 November 1922.
[35]The National Archives of Ireland, 1911 census, available online at http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie. Accessed 5 July 2023.
[36]Available online https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/180049/. Accessed 5 July 2023.

as memory came to replace some of the histories of the conflict, generating its own perceptions of the past in turn. During the Troubles for instance, there was a proliferation of murals depicting the 1 July 1916 alongside the loyalist paramilitaries of the 1970s and 80s. Jonathan Evershed has demonstrated how the Orange Order and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) seized on the battle in both rhetoric and imagery.[37] The Somme became part of the politics of loyalism, taking on class dimensions that became part of the self-expression of loyalist identity. It also took on a new sense of purpose reconfigured to aid the paramilitaries during that conflict. It reminded them of their connection to the UVF of an earlier age and their resistance to Home Rule, replaced in the decades following Northern Ireland's creation with resistance to the Catholic 'South'. It embodied the politicised masculinity of the 'real men' of the Somme who the UVF members of the Troubles-era were being asked to emulate. The IRA bombing of the Remembrance Day ceremony in Enniskillen in 1987 demonstrated how far the First World War had been condensed into the 1 July 1916. The successful purging of the more complicated history of the War, and condensing it into memories that fitted political imperatives, had a very real effect that is now the stuff of historical enquiry. Specific myths had come to replace the history of the War itself, creating their own histories as a result.

In 1967, F. X. Martin wrote of the amnesia that existed in the Republic of Ireland over Irish nationalist participation in the First World War. Emigration, the memory of new wars, different governments with different nation-building agendas, and the passage of time, had all contributed to the relative scarcity of public memory surrounding the war that Martin was trying to capture.[38] However, it has now been firmly disputed that there was collective amnesia towards the war in the decades following independence, even if by the late 1960s public memory of the conflict was more difficult to find. Images of mass remembrance in College Green in Dublin in 1924 and the South Mall in Cork in 1925 firmly throw out the myth of Irish nationalist 'apathy' towards the conflict, which for a time became entrenched in historical scholarship. The various meanings mapped into episodes of remembrance could vary greatly. The Great Southern and Western Railway Company at Heuston station in Dublin commemorates, for instance, 'those who laid down their lives for their country in the Great War.' In Cork, the memorial is dedicated to those who 'Fell in the Great War fighting for the freedom of small nations.' Here we can see particular interpretations of war service mapped into the memorialisation process. Patriotism, sacrifice, defence of Ireland, defence of European liberty, and a dialectic between the domestic and international were deemed worthy of remembrance – grand ideals for which

[37]Jonathan Evershed, *Ghosts of the Somme: Commemoration and Culture War in Northern Ireland* ,(Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2018).
[38]Francis Xavier Martin, '1916 – Myth, Fact and Mystery', *Studia Hibernica* 7 (1967), pp. 7–126.

honoured men gave their lives. There is no mention on the memorials of getting a job, a desire to travel, to fulfil one's role as a man, to hold a gun, to help my friends, or any of the other mundane reasons that equally inspired enlistment across belligerent countries.[39] Just as memorialisation in the North came to squeeze out all of the other military engagements in which unionist Ulstermen participated and condense those reasons into particular politicised narratives, so too did memorialisation more generally narrow the picture, both North and South, as happened elsewhere in Europe.[40]

The First World War and the Irish Revolution

These various myths and memories have had their own impact on historical writing about the war years. Though historians have certainly helped our understanding of the multiple dynamics of the conflict, and in more recent years have reminded us that the war could not have happened had it not been for the involvement of various groups outside the military itself – groups in which women played important roles – there is a question to be asked here about how the war is viewed in relation to the revolutionary events it accompanied.[41]

The First World War still sits uneasily in the historiography of the Irish Revolution. It is dropped into the sequence of events that make up the revolutionary record as if it were happening in the background while the main events got underway. Whatever starting point one chooses, whether it be the political downfall of the Irish nationalist leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, fostering divisions within the constitutional Irish nationalist movement from the 1890s to the 1910s that were never healed; the radical networks fostered in the 1890s that spawned forms of thinking and action that inspired more revolutionary forms of Irish nationalism; the unionist opposition to Home Rule that crystallised in Ulster from 1905 and later, the Ulster Covenant and formation of the UVF; or the 1916 Easter Rising itself, it seems as if the story of Ireland's Revolution can be told without including the war. Therefore, do we need it?

[39]For further discussion of memory, see Gallagher, *Ireland*, pp. 177–184. For recruitment motivations, see p. 26ff.

[40]Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998).

[41]Some of the most important volumes include Gregory and Paseta, eds, *Ireland*; John Horne, ed., *Our War: Ireland and the Great War,* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008); and scholarship including Paul Taylor, *Heroes or Traitors? Experiences of Southern Irish Soldiers Returning from the Great War, 1919–1939,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015); and Fionnuala Walsh, *Irish Women and the Great War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

The problem with the exclusively *longue durée* approach is that it explicitly builds in the myth that events can happen outside of the vital contexts that made them. To tell the story of the Revolution without the First World War deepens the myth that it was always destined to come about in the manner that it did. Decisions, policies, people, and contingent events therefore do not matter. But how can one possibly understand the Revolution without the inclusion of these important things? The Defence of the Realm Act of 1914, which gave the military considerably more power to intervene in civilian life when military interests were concerned, was introduced because of the war. It was this very Act that allowed the military to behave in the manner that it did during Easter Week of 1916 when they responded heavily to the rebel takeover of iconic locations in Dublin, subsequently executing 15 men through military courts following the rebels' surrender. The placing of Home Rule on the statute book in September 1914 had the war built into its provision: to bring about Home Rule in the space of a year or when the war was over, with some as yet undecided amendment for Ulster. As this author has argued elsewhere, nationalist populations thus entered the war with a mixed sense of confidence that Home Rule was now a done deed. No former Act on the statute book had ever before been revoked, so there was little reason to assume that this case would be different. The jubilation expressed across nationalist Ireland helps explain the general settling into the war that can be seen in 1914 until at least early 1916. Naturally this confidence was shaken following the reinvigoration of the self-government question and worries over conscription. The conscription crisis of 1918 punctured many remaining notions that Home Rule would in fact happen, and hundreds of thousands of nationalists, led by the Catholic Church, protested the Military Service Act of 1918. Recruitment rallies became more than simply sites of enlistment, but instead became platforms through which different political opinions about Ireland's relationship with Westminster were aired. The sentiments expressed are revealing, demonstrating that there was no alignment on a preferred constitutional future for Ireland, nor was there agreement on how best men of military age should serve the Allies.[42] To negate the First World War in understanding the broad transfer of power from Home Rulers to republicans obscures the flux that existed in public opinion throughout 1918. And the war was central in demonstrating mixed attitudes towards Ireland's constitutional future.

Even the 1922 disbandment of the Irish regiments is part of the history of the Irish Revolution, yet it is almost never included. This is a missed opportunity, for Irish soldiers had served in the British Army for centuries and many even continued to do so long after partition. On 11 February 1922, it was announced by Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, the Secretary for War, that seven Irish regiments would be disbanded: six infantry and one cavalry. Most of the remaining regiments were not in Ireland at this time, serving as they were in various parts of the Empire or in the new

[42]Gallagher, *Ireland*, pp. 140–57.

conflicts that had emerged from the energies unleashed by world war. Disbandment would take place amidst the aftermath of the War of Independence and newspapers demonstrate the heated environment in which it occurred. In January, the Dáil voted to accept the Anglo–Irish Treaty by a margin of 64:57 votes. While there were many arguments for and against accepting the Treaty, Irish service in the British Army was also part of the debate. One of the major sticking points for anti–Treatyites was that Ireland, as a partitioned entity, would stay within the British Empire. It was therefore not a 32 County republic at all, negating what in their eyes had been achieved over the previous two years' campaign against the Crown Forces. Conversely, disbandment for some of those in favour of the Treaty was a reason why people should accept it. Alderman Richard Corish, Deputy for Wexford and a trade unionist, vocalised these sentiments:

> Now I think it was the second last speaker on the other side who talked of Egypt and India and he said if we were to associate with the British Empire that we would be responsible for the crushing of the Indians and Egyptians. Now I hold that under the present state of affairs we are far more responsible. Because we are sending the Connacht Rangers, Munster Fusiliers, the Dublin Fusiliers, the Leinsters and other Irish regiments into India and Egypt year after year to crush these people and we are doing this under the Republican Government… Under the Treaty all these regiments will be disbanded and no troops can be sent out of the country without the consent of the Irish Free State Government… And I believe as I said before that the proper thing for the moment for this Dáil to do is to Accept the Treaty (cheers).[43]

Corish's speech highlights how Irish service in the British Army was a symbolic problem for nationalists who supported anti–imperial movements elsewhere. But as Thomas Bartlett and Jeffery have argued, being against the symbolism of Irish military service did not strictly align with the support rendered for the men who served. Pride in Irish soldiery was vocalised during many historical conflicts even if there was mixed support for the symbolic army or the individual conflicts themselves.[44] Even Irish soldiers could hold seemingly contradictory positions. When 420 British auxiliaries left Galway on 10 February 1922, their departure heralded a confrontation of sorts with the Second Battalion of the Connaught Rangers. The battles over national allegiances through the singing of national anthems are normally seen to be a feature

[43]Dáil Éireann debate, Vol. T., No. 14, 'Debate on Treaty Resumed' Alderman Corish address, available at www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1922-01-06/3/. Accessed 5 July 2023.

[44]Bartlett and Jeffery, 'An Irish Military Tradition', p. 8. Also see Paul Townend, *The road to Home Rule: Anti-Imperialism and the Irish National Movement,* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).

of the musical clashes between Trinity College Dublin, that old bastion of unionism, and University College Dublin, from which many leading nationalists emerged.[45] But musical rivalries were not the preserve of academic institutions and were voiced on this occasion. The departing Black and Tan Auxiliaries reportedly 'waved Union Jacks and sang "God Save the King" when they gathered on the train to leave Galway. The *Irish Independent* reported that the 'Connaughts responded with by waving Republican flags and shouting "Up De Valera".[46] The *Longford Leader* also reported the event and gave a slightly different account, reflecting the ongoing allegiances to pro and anti-Treaty divisions that had been fostered. It noted: '… the Connaughts responded by waving Republican flags and shouting "Up the Free State".'[47] Given the variety of political opinions within 1918–1922 Ireland, it is likely that what was actually sung was in the ears of the beholder. These examples help situate some Irish servicemen and their symbolic service within the British Empire in the wider national struggle that is the stuff of the Revolution.

However, there is remarkably little in the Irish press about disbandment in the months between February 1922, when it was first publicly announced, and June 1922, when the regimental colours were deposited at Windsor Castle. At first glance, this might suggest that Irish nationalists had moved on, much like later historians of the Revolution for whom the war and power transfers from the British to the new Irish authorities were deemed less consequential than the brewing divisions of civil war. Yet the lack of nationalist commentary presents other explanations, for the 1921 Treaty made provisions for the new Free State to raise its own army should it choose to do so. Disbandment was not the 'end' of Irish military service but opened up space for Irish soldiers to serve a new Irish administration. And many did precisely that. Paul Taylor estimated that 25–30,000 ex-servicemen were recruited into the new Irish army – the single greatest transfer of men to any one organisation.[48] Others like the infamous Tom Barry joined the IRA, while some even joined the Black and Tans and other British regiments. This messy picture of what happened to disbanded Irish soldiers gives us a sense of the political flux that spanned these islands in the last days of the first United Kingdom. It also helps us further understand how the resulting civil war was possible, as Irish soldiers were also participants in that conflict rather than idle passers-by.

[45]Ewan Morris, 'God save the king' versus "'The soldier's song'": the 1929 Trinity College national anthem dispute and the politics of the Irish Free State', *Irish Historical Studies*, XXXI,. 121 (1998), pp. 72–90.
[46]*Irish Independent*, 11 February 1922.
[47]*Longford Leader*, 11 March 1922.
[48]Taylor, *Heroes or Traitors?*, p. 127, n. 145.

Most of the protests against disbandment came from Southern Irish unionists and officers aggrieved by the loss of long-established regiments. Protests were framed within some of the major debates ongoing in 1922 Ireland and indeed in other parts of the Empire. One H. Vere Flint based at the Rectory in County Wicklow wrote to the local paper to champion reasons why they should be maintained: 'Will no one champion the cause of our Southern Regiments? The Irish Regiments – North and South – would form a link in the chain of National unity in the days to come.'[49] For Flint, protesting disbandment was a vehicle for airing grievances over partition, seeing the role of the Irish regiments as an enabler of future unity within the island. Other Irishmen, especially those more favourable to the Empire, dwelt on their imperial role and brainstormed ways to maintain them within imperial service by combining them with other Dominion regiments.[50] North of the border, disbandment also prompted new arguments framed around the evolving political situation. In March, the Armagh Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution appealing to the King, the Government, and the Army authorities to retain the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The Chamber argued that the Fusiliers had a strong connection with the six counties of Ulster, now in the shape of Northern Ireland, and deliberately attempted to distance the regiment from the three other Ulster counties that were now in the new 'South', Monaghan, Cavan, and Donegal, which had historically been within the Fusiliers' recruitment catchment area.[51] This provoked an interesting response from champions of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, which the Chamber proposed might be willing to lose one of its two regular battalions so that one Fusiliers battalion could be retained. Champions of the Inniskillings used the 'new Ulster' to suggest that their regiment was more worthy than that of the Fusiliers for full retention, precisely because of its 'Ulster' and 'Protestant' roots. Rear Admiral Thomas Adair, a British Royal Naval officer and Unionist MP for Glasgow Shettleston, said in the Commons:

> In a further question Admiral Adair asked the Secretary for War whether he was aware that the recruiting area of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, an Ulster and Protestant regiment since 1639, comprised three counties – namely, Fermanagh, Tyrone, and Londonderry, with a combined population of about 360,000, and that the recruiting area of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, a regiment originally raised in the South of Ireland, mainly Roman Catholic, consisted of only one county – namely, Armagh – with a population of about 120,000.[52]

[49] *Wicklow Newsletter*, 11 February 1922.
[50] Officer Commanding 1st Battalion Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment, Royal Canadians, *Freeman's Journal* 3 March 1922.
[51] *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 March 1922.
[52] Parl. Deb. (HC) 20 June 1922 vol. 155 cols 1008–9.

The Inniskillings therefore had a legitimacy that the Fusiliers lacked due to their historic recruitment from counties now in the new Ulster. The Chamber instead proposed that both battalions of the Inniskillings be kept and one of the Fusiliers be disbanded. In the end, Adair and the Inniskillings were unsuccessful. But these arguments demonstrate how the cultivation of Ulster as a six-county, Protestant entity was already underway only one year after Northern Ireland's creation, cutting off those unionists who now lay outside its borders, not to mention the Catholics within or outside them who had equally helped staff these historic regiments. And such myths were fed by supportive unionists across the UK, in this case, in Scotland. The myth that Ulster was organically Protestant and comprised of the six counties helps us better understand the Northern Ireland that came to pass and played on some of the new associations current in the region that the memory of the Somme would further inculcate.

Conclusion

To research Ireland and the First World War is to recognise that myth and memory are crucial parts of its history. In several cases, they have come to substitute the history of the war itself. This is not a call to arms to defend history from its related cousins, and this article has demonstrated that such a task might well be out of reach given the radically different lenses adopted by historians through which the conflict has been analysed and conclusions have been reached. Indeed, the adoption, evolution and perpetuation of myths and memories have become a part of Ireland's history of the Great War. We should, however, be wary of simply accepting them and substituting them for history, as it leads to crucial omissions and misinterpretations that affect historical understanding. Instead, a critical appreciation for how, when, and why history diverges from the events played out at the time, and for some of the principles guiding historical enquiry, is necessary for a fuller understanding of the history of the Irish in the twentieth century – and how we as historians continue to write that history today.

The Disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments – 1922

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ABSTRACT
The disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments of the British army occurred in July 1922 due to the creation of the Irish Free State and the effects of the so-called 'Geddes Axe' on the British army. Special arrangements meant that officers and men who wished to continue their service in the British army were able to transfer to other regiments and there were very few compulsory redundancies. This saw limited public concern about these regiments. The preservation of those regiments associated with Northern Ireland was, however, the subject of extensive lobbying and James Craig, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, showed considerable ability in negotiations which ensured the survival of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers.

Introduction

The decision to disband the South Irish Regiments was driven by two factors: The Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 which established the Irish Free State as a Dominion within the British Empire and the so-called 'Geddes Axe' which sought to reduce British government expenditure and particularly targeted the army for such savings. Most obvious were the five Southern Irish infantry regiments: the Royal Irish Regiment (which recruited in the South-East of Ireland and should not be regarded as the predecessor regiment of the current Royal Irish Regiment), the Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regiment, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers which were all disbanded in July 1922. At the same time the part-time special reserve battalions of these regiments, along with the South Irish Horse, another special reserve unit, were disbanded. However, often overlooked are the curious arrangements which emerged with the infantry regiments which prior to 1921 were associated with the province of Ulster: the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Ulster Rifles, and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, and the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, which were the subject of lobbying for their future by the Northern Ireland Government.

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There is a popular perception that in the aftermath of the mutiny in 1 Connaught Rangers in India in June 1920 the British government saw the Irish Regiments as untrustworthy and was keen to disband them on those grounds alone. However, recent academic work on the Connaught Rangers mutiny has shown that it owed little to Irish Republican feeling in the regiment and more to poor officer-man relations and a harsh training regime.[1] While Irish regiments were not deployed in Ireland during the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21 they continued to play a full role in the British army's overseas commitments, notably in India, the Middle East and Silesia.[2]

Similarly, there is often some confusion about the timing of the disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments in the British Army and the formation of the Irish Free State Army. While in the later 'withdrawal from empire', British imperial forces were often the basis of the armies of newly independent states, seen most obviously in the case of India and Pakistan where some regiments transferred seamlessly from the army of the Raj to that of the new national armies, this was not the case in Ireland.[3] The origins of the Irish Free State Army can be traced to the formation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and the cadre being drawn from the pro-Treaty IRA, initially the Active Service Unit of the Dublin Brigade (Guards) of the IRA who first entered what could be termed 'regular' service in late January 1922. Individual officers and men from the Southern Irish Regiments joined the new army but not in any systematic fashion, nor with encouragement from the British Government.[4]

As so often in the history of Anglo-Irish military matters, wider British interests trumped purely Irish ones and British policy on the disbandment was confused and subject to various political pressures, rather than following any clearly defined masterplan. Indeed, most of those who served in the Southern Irish Regiments, and who continued their military service after July 1922, transferred to other British army

[1]Mario Draper, 'Mutiny under the Sun: The Connaught Rangers, India, 1920', *War in History*, 27, 2 (2019), pp. 202-223. See also: Anthony Babington, *The Devil to Pay: The Mutiny of the Connaught Rangers, India, July 1920,* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991); T.P. Kilfeather, *The Connaught Rangers,* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1969); and Samuel Pollock, *Mutiny for the Cause,* (London: Leo Cooper, 1969).

[2]Patrick McCarthy, 'The Twilight Years: The Irish regiments, 1919-1922', *Irish Sword*, 21, 85 (1999), pp. 314-335.

[3]Daniel Marston, *The Indian Army and the End of the Raj,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 248-280.

[4]J. P. Duggan, *A History of the Irish Army,* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991), p. 75; Eoin Kinsella, *The Irish Defence Forces 1922-2022,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023), pp. 11-55; and Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland: The Irish State and its enemies since 1922,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 15-17.

regiments, where pay, conditions and promotion prospects remained rather better than those in the fledgling Irish Free State Army. This extension of the careers of soldiers and officers in other regiments seems to have headed off almost all Irish Unionist concerns about the disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 came in the midst of discussions within the British government about cuts to the size of the British army. In the immediate aftermath of the Great War those service battalions which had been formed as the New Armies in 1914 were disbanded, the Territorial Force battalions were similarly demobilised, and conscription ended in 1919. Thus, by 1920 the British army was returning to its pre-war state as a voluntary force, largely responsible for Imperial garrison duty. Britain's worsening financial situation saw the creation of the Committee on National Expenditure of 1921-22 under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Geddes, and this took a particular interest in the armed services. This committee fully embraced the concept of the Ten-Year Rule which assumed that Britain could not expect to be involved in a major war until, at least, 1932. In this context the Geddes Committee felt that no real provision needed to be made for a major expeditionary force and that the army could be cut by 50,000 men by disbanding eight cavalry regiments and 28 infantry battalions. The War Office was able to resist some of these cuts and ultimately 22 infantry battalions, of which 12 were ultimately drawn from Irish Regiments, were disbanded. It should be noted that no infantry regiment in Great Britain was entirely disbanded, the cuts there coming from the reductions of the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers, Worcestershire Regiment, Middlesex Regiment, Kings Royal Rifles Corps and Rifle Brigade.[5] The Geddes Committee provided its first interim report in mid-December 1921, just days after the Anglo-Irish Treaty had been signed, but a special Cabinet Committee was set up under Winston Churchill, then the Colonial Secretary, in February 1922 to consider exactly how the Geddes Axe would affect the services and this allowed for a period of lobbying on behalf of particular interests.[6]

It might have been thought that Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, who was Chief of the Imperial General Staff until mid-February 1922 and then Westminster MP for North Down until his assassination in June 1922, would have emerged as a stalwart defender

[5]The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September 1922 (Cmd. 2114) (1924), pp. 6-7.

[6]Brian Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 25-27; David French, *Deterrence, Coercion, and Appeasement: British Grand Strategy, 1919-1940,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 58-60; Keith Jeffery, *The British army and the crisis of empire 1918-22,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 21-24; and Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 208-209.

of the Irish Regiments. He was Irish by birth, first commissioned into the Royal Irish Regiment (though quickly transferring to the more fashionable Rifle Brigade) and was Colonel of the Royal Ulster Rifles. However, this was not to be the case. Wilson, a convinced Irish Unionist, was essentially not on speaking terms with the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, between mid-July 1921 and 10 February 1922 over Lloyd George's decision to establish a Truce with Sinn Fein and carry out talks which resulted in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921. Over this period Wilson refused to attend cabinet meetings, sending a member of the Army Council in his stead. His farewell address given at the Staff College on the 21 December 1921 was entitled 'The Passing of Empire' and summarised his view that, by accepting the main recommendations of the Geddes Axe, the government was involved in a retreat from Empire, and left the army with insufficient forces for normal garrison duty.[7] Wilson was therefore poorly placed to campaign for any of the Irish Regiments. He did feel that the Ulster Regiments were being treated unfairly, compared to those recruited in Great Britain, but he recognised that his poor relationship with the government meant that his intervention might well do more harm than good. He wrote to Sir James Craig, the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in January 1922 stating, 'If you do wish to keep up these fine regiments in being I suggest you writing to L.G. a strong letter on the subject.'[8] Indeed, in debates in the Commons on the disbandment of the Irish Regiments, Wilson confined his contribution to raising concerns about the safety of former soldiers who returned to live in the Irish Free State.[9]

The constitutional realities of the Irish settlement of 1921 also meant that opposition to the disbandment of the Southern Irish regiments was muted. With the Irish Free State now established as a Dominion the British army presence would vanish. One key element of Dominion status was that the Dominions decided on the nature and funding of their military forces. In no Dominion did the British army actively recruit, so to most it was obvious that a grant of Dominion Status automatically saw the disbandment of the Southern Irish regiments.[10] Henry Wilson seems to have grasped this point by July 1921, writing,

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[7]Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 274.

[8]Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (hereinafter PRONI) CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter Wilson to Craig, 4 January 1922; *The "Faugh-a-Ballagh": The Regimental Gazette of The Royal Irish Fusiliers*, XVII, 90, 1922, pp. 1-2; and C. E. Callwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and diaries,* (London: Cassell, 1927), vol. II, pp. 318-319.

[9]House of Commons debates, 30 May 1922, Volume 154, column 2069-70.

[10]Douglas E. Delaney, *The Imperial Army Project: Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India, 1902-1945,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 168-180

> If the Cabinet grant what is euphoniously called "Dominion Home Rule"; but what is in hard fact complete independence, to Ireland … we shall lose the 16 Irish battalions.[11]

Major General J. Burton Forster, the Honorary Colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment, put it more directly at a farewell parade held in Portsmouth in May 1922, saying 'it was impossible to retain them on the British Army List owing to the alteration of the constitution of Ireland.'[12] Such awareness of the constitutional niceties was rather lacking at the meeting of the Army Council on 9 December 1921, which simply generated 26 questions relating to Ireland. These included:

> 7. What is to be the future of the three Irish cavalry regiments and the 16 Irish infantry battalions (10 South and 6 North)?
>
> 14. (a.) Is recruiting for the British Army to continue in Ireland (i) in the Irish Free State;
> (ii) in Ulster?
> (b.) If the Irish regiments remain, will recruiting for them continue in Great Britain?[13]

When decisions were being made about other army cuts in the immediate post-war period various claims were made about the seniority of regiments and their ability to recruit. This was seen in discussions on the Brigade of Guards, and as early as June 1920, when there was a serious discussion about reforming it with three large three battalion regiments, with the two junior regiments, the Irish Guards (formed 1900) and Welsh Guards (formed 1915) to be amalgamated into the older regiments. In these proposals the Irish Guards would be subsumed by the Scots Guards who would revert to their old name of 3 Guards and the Welsh Guards would either replace the 3 Coldstream Guards or be reformed as a company in the Grenadier Guards. The Army Council decided not to make any changes, as long as recruiting for the Welsh

[11]Letter Wilson to Rawlinson, 27 July 1921 cited in Keith Jeffery (ed.), *The Military Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson 1918-1922,* (London: Bodley Head for the Army Records Society, 1985), p. 290.
[12]Stannus Geoghegan, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment from 1900 to 1922,* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1927), p. 137.
[13]The UK National Archives (hereinafter TNA) WO33/1003, Minutes of the 288th Meeting of the Army Council, 9 December 1921.

Guards improved and this is, presumably, why the issue of the Irish Guards was not revisited in 1922.[14]

The reconstitution of the Territorial Army in 1920 also saw lengthy discussions about the yeomanry, particularly as this was a prestigious county force, with a powerful political lobby behind it. The War Office initially wanted to reduce the number of mounted yeomanry regiments to 12, while converting the rest to artillery or armoured car units. Yeomanry regiments fought doggedly to be part of the select 12 who would remain in a mounted cavalry role and ultimately, after a number of confused policy decisions about seniority and the ability of regiments to recruit, 14 were preserved in this role.[15] When the Territorial Force had been established in Great Britain in 1908 it had not been extended to Ireland, and the reconstituted Territorial Army formed in 1920 was also not extended to Northern Ireland until 1938. The two yeomanry regiments in Ireland, the North Irish Horse and South Irish Horse, had been formed as part of the Special Reserve which was not reformed after the Great War. The South Irish Horse was formally disbanded along with the Southern Irish infantry regiments but the North Irish Horse was simply placed in 'suspended animation' neither recruiting nor performing any duties until it was reformed in 1939 as part of the Territorial Army.[16] The Northern Ireland Government came under some pressure to reform the North Irish Horse in the early 1920s but seems to have quickly given up on this cause.[17]

Most famously, when reductions were sought in the cavalry, a policy of amalgamations was decided upon which created the so-called 'improper fractions' such as the 16th/5th Queen's Own Irish Lancers. This was a process which involved considerable lobbying by regimental colonels and discussion in the Army Council, in sharp contrast to the

[14]TNA WO33/979, Minutes of the 269th Meeting of the Army Council, 14 June 1920 and precis number 1028.
[15]George Hay, 'The Yeomanry Cavalry and the Reconstitution of the Territorial Army', *War in History*, 23, 1 (2016), pp. 36-54.
[16]J. W. Blake, *Northern Ireland in the Second World War,* (Belfast: HMSO, 1956), pp. 57-58; Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 106-146; Richard Doherty, *The North Irish Horse: A Hundred Years of service,* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2002), pp. 1-46; Mark Perry, *The South Irish Horse in the Great War,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2018); and Philip Tardif, *The North Irish Horse in the Great War,* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2015).
[17]PRONI CAB/4/30, Cabinet meeting conclusions, 26 January 1922 and CAB9R/7/1, Disbandment & Resuscitation of N. I. Regiments, letter Major E. C. Herdman to James Craig, 2 February 1923.

fate of the Irish Regiments.[18] It should be noted that while, in 1921, the British army had four regular cavalry regiments with Irish titles, 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards, 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers, 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons and 8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars, these titles were historic and did not denote that they were formed from Irishmen or were actively recruited in Ireland.[19] The 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons had actively recruited in Ireland during the First World War and a service squadron of the regiment was formed as part of 36 (Ulster) Division, initially recruiting in the town of Enniskillen where the regiment had first been formed in 1689.[20]

In what could rightly be regarded as an unattractive recruiting ground for the British army, with Sinn Féin sweeping the polls in Southern Ireland in the 1918 General Election, and with an insurgency campaign engulfing the island from 1919, recruitment rates held up remarkably well, as shown in Table 1.1. Though it is worth noting that the strong position which Belfast established during the First World War continued into the immediate post-war era, while recruiting in Dublin markedly declined.[21] Recruitment rates for the Royal Munster Fusiliers, which recruited heavily in 'rebel' Cork, remained surprisingly buoyant, which may have reflected long family traditions of service in the British army and the importance of recruitment in the social structure of traditional garrison towns. It should be noted that the British army did not note the religious persuasion of recruits in its reports, and it is possible that many of those who enlisted in the 1919-21 period were effectively refugees which may have influenced some of the regional aspects of recruitment. It should also be noted that different regiments had different recruitment quotas to fill, based on the numbers of wartime only Kitchener volunteers who had decided to continue their service as regular soldiers after 1919 which may also have shaped the regional recruiting figures in curious ways. Otherwise, the fillip in recruiting for the Royal Irish Regiment is impossible to explain. In the wider British context, it is worth noting that Irish recruits accounted for more recruits in the immediate post-war period (9.2% in 1919-20 and

[18]TNA WO33/1022, Minutes of the 296th and 297th Meetings of the Army Council, 13 March and 21 March 1922 and Precis Number 1091; and David French, The Mechanization of the British Cavalry between the World Wars, *War in History*, 10, 3 (2003), pp. 301-304.

[19]TNA WO33/1022, Minutes of the 296th Meeting of the Army Council', 13 March 1922 and precis number 1091; and E. M. Spiers, Army organisation and society in the nineteenth century in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 335-357.

[20]Cyril Falls, *The History of the 36th (Ulster) Division,* (Belfast: McCaw, Stevenson & Orr, 1922), pp. 7 and 11.

[21]Timothy Bowman, William Butler and Michael Wheatley, *The Disparity of Sacrifice: Irish recruitment to the British armed forces, 1914-1918,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020).

9.0% in 1920-21) than Scotland (8.0% and 8.6% respectively), even though Scotland's share of the United Kingdom population was approximately 10% while Ireland accounted for 9%.[22]

Regimental Area	1912-13	1919-20	1920-21	1921-22[23]
Royal Irish Regiment (18 Tipperary, Waterford, Kilkenny, Wexford)	257	652	400	143
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (27 Donegal, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Tyrone)	58	357	131	69
Royal Irish / Ulster Rifles (83 Antrim, Belfast, Down, Louth)	416	604	716	163
Royal Irish Fusiliers (87 Monaghan, Cavan, Armagh)	134	331	241	115
Connaught Rangers (88 Galway, Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo)	115	229	228	97
Leinster Regiment (100 King's, Queen's, Meath, Westmeath, Longford)	186	254	135	105
Royal Munster Fusiliers (101 Clare, Limerick, Cork, Kerry)	504	641	578	242
Royal Dublin Fusiliers (102 Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, Carlow)	985	653	428	371
Total	2,655	3,721	2,857	1,305

Table 1.1 Irish recruitment by regimental area, 1912-13 and 1919-22[24]

[22]Keith Jeffery, The post-war army in I. F. W. Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds), *A Nation in Arms: A social study of the British army in the First World War,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 211-234.

[23]Recruiting for Irish Infantry Regiments ceased on 15 December 1921. It restarted for the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Ulster Rifles on 20 February 1922 and for the Royal Irish Fusiliers on 22 September 1922.

[24]Figures abstracted from, The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September 1913 (Cd. 7252) (1914), p. 47; The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September 1920 (Cmd. 1610) (1922), p. 37; The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th

Recruitment for the Irish Regiments of the British army, with the exception of the Irish Guards, ceased, in the whole of Ireland on 15 December 1921, with all organised recruitment to the British army in Southern Ireland ceasing on 4 February 1922.[25] At a Cabinet meeting in January 1922, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, the Secretary of State for War, noted that recruitment for the Southern Irish Regiments had ceased and that he had gained agreement from Sir James Craig about the arrangements for the 'Northern Ireland Regiments'. In a brief minute, it is noted, 'That there was no objection to the disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments being announced.'[26]

Some concerns about the fate of the Southern Irish Regiments were raised in the House of Commons, but these were very muted. Sir Maurice Dockrell, the Unionist MP for Rathmines, Dublin County was a lone voice, as the only representative of Southern Unionists in the Commons, apart from those elected for Trinity College Dublin. The concerns he raised were simply over the memory of the regiments, particularly whether any of the historic traditions of the Irish Regiments could be retained in another regiment and if the regimental colours and trophies would be properly preserved. The Secretary of State for War assured Dockrell that the flags and trophies would be carefully preserved but thought the incorporation of regimental memory in other units impractical.[27]

Some British Unionists were more vocal but they clearly represented a minority view. During the debates on the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Rupert Gwynne, the Unionist MP for Eastbourne, was scathing of the Secretary of State for War and assumed that the Irish regiments were to be sacrificed. Lord Sydenham voiced his concerns more directly: 'There is very much that is left quite vague in this stupendous surrender, are the historic regiments of Southern Ireland, with their long record of world service to be disbanded and broken up?'[28] Viscount Wolmer, Conservative MP for Aldershot, asked, in the Commons in March 1922, if the Royal Dublin Fusiliers could be reprieved, noting that they were one of the oldest regiments in the army, with a history stretching back

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September 1921 (Cmd. 1941) (1923), p. 33; and The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September 1922 (Cmd. 2114) (1924), p. 27.

[25] The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September 1922 (Cmd. 2114) (1924), p. 6.

[26]TNA CAB 23/29/5, Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet, 27 January 1922.

[27]House of Commons debates, 15 February 1922, volume 150, column 1018; and 21 February 1922, volume 150, column 14; and https://www.dib.ie/index.php/biography/dockrell-sir-maurice-edward-a2648. Accessed 21 March 2023.

[28]House of Commons debate, 15 December 1921, volume 149, column 251; and House of Lords debate, 16 December 1921, volume 48, column 145.

250 years. Wolmer was concerned about the disbandment of all the Southern Irish Regiments given the 'present disorder' in India, Egypt and Ireland, and sought assurances that disbandment would not take place until a 'final settlement' had been reached on the Irish question.[29]

More practical concerns regarding the future careers of officers and men of the disbanded Southern Irish Regiments were also raised in parliamentary debate. MPs were assured by the Secretary of State for War that the majority of officers were not going to be forced to retire and most would be given a choice of five other regiments to transfer to. The only other ranks to be compulsorily retired would be a small number who had enlisted under the special short service scheme.[30] Of 72 regular officers serving in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers on disbandment, the regimental history lists 67 who transferred to other units of the British army.[31]

These limited parliamentary protests saw Army Order 78, issued on 11 March 1922. This was entitled, 'Reduction of Establishment' and noted that the King had approved, 'with great regret' the disbandment, 'as soon as the exigencies of the Service permit', of the Royal Irish Regiment, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regiment, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This disbandment was to include the regular and what were termed the 'militia' battalions of these regiments though, of course, since the Haldane Army Reforms of 1908 these had actually been Special Reserve battalions.[32]

A few political rear-guard actions were fought to attempt to preserve the Southern Irish Regiments. In April 1922 Winston Churchill, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, suggested delaying the disbandment of the Irish Regiments due to the number of responsibilities which the British army retained in the Empire. However, the Army Council decided that the disbandment should proceed as planned.[33] In June 1922 Stephen Gwynn, who had been a longstanding Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Galway City, until he broke with mainstream nationalism over his support for conscription, and had served as a captain in the Connaught Rangers during the First

[29]House of Commons debates, 7 March 1922, volume 151, column 1048; and *Irish Times*, 8 March 1922.
[30]House of Commons debates, 21 March 1922, volume 152, columns 207-208; and Volume 155, 27 June 1922, volume 155, column 1841.
[31]H. C. Wylly, *Crown and Company: The Historical Records of the 2nd Batt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1926), volume II, pp. 212-14.
[32]F. E. Whitton, *The History of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians),* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1926), volume 2, pp. 544-545; and H. C. Wylly, *Neill's "Blue Caps",* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1924), volume III, pp. 144-146.
[33]TNA WO33/1022, Minutes of the 299th Meeting of the Army Council, 11 April 1922.

World War, wrote to Lord French, the former Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, suggesting that the cadres of the Southern Irish Regiments should be preserved, allowing them to be transferred to service under the Irish Free State. Field Marshal Lord Cavan, the CIGS regarded this proposal as 'quite impossible' which appears to have ended any discussion of it.[34] Wittingly or unwittingly Sir Francis Vane, who had served in 9 Royal Munster Fusiliers during the First World War, wrote publicly, from his home in Italy, advocating the retention of the Southern Irish Regiments in the service of the Irish Free State. His letter, commenting not only on the fine battle performance of the regiments in the Great War, but in the South African War, which had been almost uniformly opposed by Irish Nationalists, can have done nothing to gain support for this idea.[35]

The most extreme Unionist objection to the disbandment of the Southern Irish Regiments appears to have come from Major General Arthur Solly-Flood, the Military Adviser to the Northern Ireland Government, who wrote to James Craig, outlining his concerns, 'I am not clear as to how the matter of the DISBANDMENT of the IRISH BATTALIONS now stands. It is patent on the face of it, however, that if this is proceeded with at the present juncture the I.R.A. will in all probability receive some thousands of well-trained potential enemies to Ulster.' Solly-Flood's solutions were either for the disbandment to be postponed or, in a quite incredible suggestion, 'the men being sent en bloc to join the Royal Ulster Special Constabulary'. There is no evidence that Craig entertained this suggestion or raised Solly-Flood's concerns with anyone in Westminster.[36]

There were a number of disbandment parades held by Southern Irish Regiments in various garrison towns throughout Britain and the Empire and these culminated in King George V receiving the regimental colours of the Southern Irish Regiments at Windsor Castle on 12 June 1922. The King gave a speech on this occasion, which one regimental history noted as being 'of a private – almost of an intimate character',

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[34]TNA CAB 24/137/46, letters Stephen Gwynn to Lord French, 14 June 1922 and Lord Cavan to E. H. Marsh, 17 June 1922; Colin Reid, *The Lost Ireland of Stephen Gwynn: Irish Constitutional Nationalism and Cultural Politics, 1864-1950,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 164-193.

[35]*Irish Independent*, 24 June 1922. While Vane had served as an officer in the British army in the South African War he regarded himself as a radical social reformer and had supported the formation of the Irish Citizen Army; https://www.dib.ie/index.php/biography/vane-sir-francis-patrick-fletcher-a9804. Accessed 15 March 2023.

[36]PRONI HA/5/899, Armagh Chamber of Commerce: resolution protesting against the disbandment of the Irish regiments, letter Arthur Solly-Flood to James Craig, 26 May 1922.

> We are here to-day in circumstances which cannot fail to strike a note of sadness in our hearts. No regiment parts with its colours without feelings of sorrow.
>
> A knight in days gone by bore on his shield his coat-of-arms, tokens of valour and worth. Only to death did he surrender them. Your colours are the record of valorous deeds in war and of the glorious traditions thereby created. You are called upon to part with them to-day for reasons beyond your control and resistance. By you and your predecessors these colours have been reverenced and guarded as a sacred trust – which trust you now confide in me.
>
> As your King I am proud to accept this trust. But I fully realize with what grief you relinquish these dearly-prized emblems; and I pledge my word that within these ancient and historic walls your colours will be treasured, honoured, and protected as hallowed memorials of the glorious deeds of brave and loyal regiments.[37]

In addition to this speech, King George V handed a letter to the colonels, specially addressed to each regiment. That to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was interesting as, while the King's speech had been enriched with medieval concepts of chivalry, the letter made much of the Imperial service of the regiment, noting its long service in India and more recent combat experience in South Africa. The letter to the Royal Munster Fusiliers similarly focused on their long service in India, noting that Robert Clive had been their first Colonel. The Royal Irish Regiment were commended for almost 240 years' service and their role in the campaigns of William III and the Duke of Marlborough. The Connaught Rangers were praised for the fine fighting record which they established in the Peninsular War, especially at Bussaco and Badajoz.[38]

The parade and the laying up of colours at Windsor Castle in June 1922 was not quite to mark the end of the Southern Irish Regiments. It was to be 31 July 1922 before the remaining cadres of the regiments were disbanded and the fact that the *Irish Times* later informed its readers that this date was the official disbandment date, suggests that some loose ends still required to be tied up.[39] Indeed, while the *Army List* for

[37]Whitton, *History of the Leinster Regiment*, volume 2, pp. 545-548. See also Wylly, *Crown and Company*, volume II, pp. 152-153.
[38]Geogheagan, *History of the Royal Irish Regiment*, p. 141; Jourdain and Fraser, The Connaught Rangers, Volume I, p. 578; S. McCance, *History of the Royal Munster Fusiliers: Vol. II From 1861 to 1922 (Disbandment),* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1927), pp. 90-91 ; and Wylly, *Crown and Company*, volume II, p. 154.
[39]Wylly, *Crown and Company*, volume II, p. 155; and the *Irish Times,*19 September 1923.

January 1923 noted each of the Southern Irish infantry regiments as disbanded, they showed a handful of officers still serving in them. Mostly, these were officers in the militia battalions, six in the Connaught Rangers, three in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and four in the Leinster Regiment, whose ranks were purely honorary by 1922, although the case of Major J. T. Gorman of the Connaught Rangers demonstrates just the sort of 'loose ends' which it took some time to tie up. He was seconded to the School of Cookery in Poona, India and being close to retirement, it was presumably felt that it was better not to transfer him formally to another regiment.[40]

While the Secretary of State for War had engaged in discussions with Sir James Craig, over the 'Northern Ireland Regiments' between December 1921 and February 1922, it took some time to resolve which of these regiments, or rather battalions, would be preserved. The problem was that no regiment was entirely 'Northern Ireland' based, with all having some historic recruiting area in the territory of what became the Irish Free State. The Royal Ulster Rifles (renamed from the Royal Irish Rifles on 1 January 1921) had a recruiting area based on Belfast and Counties Antrim and Down, although County Louth had also been regarded as part of their recruiting area until, at least 1908, when the Royal Irish Rifles were disbanded. The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers with a recruiting area taking in Derry City and Counties Londonderry, Fermanagh and Tyrone was also seen to be a viable regiment, having lost only Donegal. However, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, with a recruiting area based on Counties Armagh, Cavan, Louth and Monaghan was seen as particularly vulnerable as only Armagh was part of the new Northern Ireland state.

The Government of Ireland Act established a devolved government in the six counties of Northern Ireland but left this government with very limited powers. The British army remained a reserved service, run directly by the government in London, to which Northern Ireland made a small Imperial contribution. The complex financial arrangements, calculated in 1919-20 when the economy in what was to become Northern Ireland was experiencing a post-war boom, but became increasingly problematic by 1922-23. Thus, while James Craig was to emerge as a dogged defender of the three Ulster-based infantry regiments and the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, he was placed in the position of a supplicant in his dealings with the War Office. The complex security problems of 1921-22 meant that he was scarcely in a position to cajole the British government given that the large Ulster Special Constabulary relied increasingly on grants from the British exchequer.[41]

[40] *Army List*, January 1923, columns 1505-12, 1529-36 and 1545-52.

[41] Patrick Buckland, *James Craig: Lord Craigavon,* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), pp. 67-93; Patrick Buckland, *The Factory of Grievances: Devolved Government in Northern Ireland 1921-39,* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979), pp. 81-91 and pp. 179-205; D. S. Johnson, The Northern Ireland Economy, 1914-1939 in Liam Kennedy and Philip

As early as January 1922 James Craig assured the Annual General Meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council that he had secured a promise that the three Ulster regiments would be retained.[42] He outlined the situation in more detail to his Cabinet, with the relevant minute noting, 'It had been the intention of the British Government to disband all Irish Regiments, but the Prime Minister hoped that his representations would lead to the retention of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, of four out of our six Battalions, of two Militia Battalions, and possibly of the North Irish Horse. The matter was still sub judice.'[43]

In reality, War Office policy regarding the fate of the regiments which recruited in Northern Ireland was hopelessly confused. This is made particularly clear by two letters from the Secretary of State for War, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans to James Craig. In the first of these, of February 1922 it was stated,

> I have been considering your letter of the 17th regarding the disbandment of the Royal Irish Fusiliers.
>
> I am afraid that as the disbandment of the six regiments [i.e. the five Southern Irish regiments and the Royal Irish Fusiliers] was definitely and formally a Cabinet decision it must be considered as a chose jugée [final judgement]. No action was of course taken until I had submitted the Cabinet decisions to His Majesty with a full explanation ... I am exceedingly afraid that it would be quite wrong of me to suggest in any way that this decision is likely to be revoked; it is fairer to say on the contrary that I think no purpose will be served by pressing a request for its revocation.[44]

By the following month the situation had, in fact, been reviewed, with Worthington-Evans writing,

> I am glad to be able to let you know that the Cabinet have decided that in spite of the reductions consequent on the Geddes report, Ulster is to retain at any

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Ollerenshaw (eds), *An Economic History of Ulster 1820-1929,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 184-223; and R. J. Lawrence, *The Government of Northern Ireland: Public Finance and Public Services 1921-1964,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 38-42.

[42]*Fermanagh Times*, 2 February 1922.

[43]PRONI CAB/4/30, Cabinet meeting conclusions, 26 January 1922.

[44]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter Worthington-Evans to Craig, 23 February 1922.

> rate for the year 1922/23 four battalions instead of the two which I was afraid was all that would be possible.
>
> I was instructed by the Cabinet to discuss with you which these four battalions should be, and I should be glad to have your views. In my opinion it would be best to retain the two battalions of the Ulster Rifles and one each of the Inniskillings and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, and to treat the two latter as linked regiments. This would have the result of keeping alive the Royal Irish Fusiliers at any rate for the present.[45]

Craig ultimately concurred with the War Office decision that the Royal Ulster Rifles would remain a two-battalion regiment, with one battalion each of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The fusilier battalions would retain their old regimental names but, essentially, work as sister battalions under the Cardwell-Childers regimental system.[46]

This 'final judgement' of February 1922 was overturned due to considerable lobbying by James Craig of various cabinet ministers, including Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Craig was also apparently undaunted by the tone of Worthington-Evans' initial letter and raised considerable objections to the reduction of the 'Ulster Regiments'. He noted that these regiments were being treated entirely differently to two battalion regiments in England and Scotland, where no reductions were envisaged, stating, 'I consider it unfair that Ulster Regiments should be differently treated, as Ulster remains part of the United Kingdom for Army purposes as much as Yorkshire or London.' Craig continued by stressing the very good recruiting record of the regiments, which he claimed was better than most English Regiments. On the issue of regimental seniority, Craig noted that the third battalions of the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards 'are only of very recent origin' and should be disbanded rather than any of the Ulster Regiments. Craig proposed that the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers should retain a part-time militia battalion as a second battalion, but the government's decision not to reform the militia in the aftermath of the Great

[45]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter Worthington-Evans to Craig, 27 March 1922.

[46]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, 'Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments', letter Craig to Worthington-Evans 30 March 1922; *Fermanagh Times*, 6 April 1922; Marcus Cunliffe, *The Royal Irish Fusiliers, 1793-1968,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 369-371; and Frank Fox, *The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in the Second World War, 1939-45,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1951), p. 3.

War saw no action on this.[47] The promises made by Craig regarding recruitment were coming to fruition as early as 1923, when it was reported that recruitment in Northern Ireland was, 'very satisfactory' due to the improved political situation.[48]

Craig's lobbying on behalf of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers received strong approbation from some. The Armagh Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution against the disbandment of the Royal Irish Fusiliers which essentially endorsed Craig's solution of them surviving as a single battalion regiment.[49] Similarly, Dr Edward Thompson, a resident of Omagh, reproduced the correspondence he had with Craig and Lieutenant Colonel Wilfrid Spender, the Northern Ireland Cabinet Secretary, reflecting on Craig's, 'almost superhuman efforts … to preserve even the 1st Battalions of these glorious regiments.'[50] However, other elements within civic unionism and the regiments themselves were less than impressed by Craig's efforts. William Copeland Trimble, editor of the *Impartial Reporter*, who had written a brief history of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, addressed the Enniskillen Urban Council speaking of the, 'disaster to the traditions and spirit of the Inniskillings' which the loss of one battalion would cause. Councillor Clarke spoke of the need for further agitation on this issue and gave his opinion that if the Second Battalion was disbanded, the first would soon follow.[51] The Guardians of the Poor Law Union of Clogher, the Rural District Council of Clogher, the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Jury of County Fermanagh and the Grand Jury of the County of the City of Londonderry similarly passed resolutions protesting against the disbandment of 2 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, with the Commissioner of Cookstown Rural District Council also lodging an official protest.[52] Wilfrid Spender was convinced that a group of officers in 2 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers had engaged in a political campaign to have their battalion saved. This involved lobbying various Northern Ireland Cabinet ministers, including Sir Richard Dawson Bates, the Minister for Home Affairs. Spender

[47]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter Craig to Worthington-Evans, undated but circa 1 March 1922.
[48]The General Annual Report on the British Army for the year ending 30th September 1923 (Cmd. 2272) (1924), pp. 6 and 27.
[49]PRONI HA/5/899, Armagh Chamber of Commerce: resolution protesting against the disbandment of the Irish regiments, 28 February 1922.
[50]*Fermanagh Times*, 28 September 1922. The original letters are preserved in PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments.
[51]*Fermanagh Times*, 6 July 1922.
[52]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments; and HA 5/899, contains copies of these resolutions and the associated correspondence.

felt that these officers owed Craig, 'thanks for all the personal trouble that he took' in having the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers retained as a regiment and believed that the battalion Commanding Officer could not have told his officers of the political representations which had been made.[53]

While the editors of some local newspapers, namely, J. G. Glendinning of *The Derry Standard* and Delmege Trimble of the *Armagh Guardian*, lobbied the government they did not seek to orchestrate any wider action, such as petitions. The limit of the popular campaign to save 2 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers seems to have been the publication of a statement, 'Why the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers should be preserved intact' which claimed to be, 'A resumé of the various protests made by battalions and individuals of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, against the disbandment of a portion of the regiment' by *The Derry Standard*.[54] This emphasised the seniority of the regiment, its historic links to Ulster, its fine recruiting record and battle honours. Indeed, much was made of the seniority of the regiment over the Royal Irish Fusiliers and the fact that the Royal Irish Fusiliers recruiting area was now very small.[55]

This led Craig to reopen the issue of the disbandment of a battalion of each of these regiments, despite his acquiescence in the War Office decision of March. Trying an indirect approach, Craig wrote to Winston Churchill, claiming that immediately before his assassination, Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson had been making representations on behalf of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers and asking, 'if it were possible to get the last wish of the Field-Marshal carried out.'[56] This indirect approach failed however, as Churchill simply forwarded Craig's letter to the War Office and Worthington-Evans was less than pleased to see the matter reopened. Worthington-Evans reminded Craig of his agreement to the retention of four battalions, with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers as single battalion regiments and

[53]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letters Spender to Dawson Bates, 27 June 1922; and Spender to Commanding Officer, 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 28 June 1922.

[54]The original document is a single sheet of paper which, at the bottom of the page, notes it was printed by 'The Derry Standard' - there is no indication of which issue of that paper, if any, it was circulated with.

[55]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter J. C. Glendinning to H. M. Pollock, Minister for Finance, Belfast, 22 June 1922, attaching printed statement, 'Why the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers should be preserved intact'.

[56]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter Craig to Churchill, 27 June 1922.

concluded, 'I am writing this note to ask you to do all you can at your end to act up to the decision in which you concurred in March last.'[57]

Following this James Craig and Wilfrid Spender, writing on behalf of the Northern Ireland Cabinet, reminded those petitioning the Northern Ireland Government regarding the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers or Royal Irish Fusiliers that the army was a responsibility of the British Parliament at Westminster and that concerns should be raised with MPs there.[58] Charles Curtis Craig, James Craig's brother and MP at Westminster for South Antrim, wrote of the 'selfishness' of some officers of the 2nd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, noting that their campaign to save their battalion was completely at odds with the stance taken by their Colonel, Lieutenant General Sir Archibald Murray, who had agreed to the sacrifice of this battalion so that the Royal Irish Fusiliers could survive. Charles Craig concluded, 'By taking up the attitude they are doing, the Inniskillings are alienating the sympathies of all the Ulster Members here.'[59]

The 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, who faced disbandment or amalgamation as a result of the Geddes Axe, was the only regular cavalry regiment which the Northern Ireland Government campaigned for. This was due to the lobbying of Sir James Craig by officers of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons and William Copeland Trimble, who had raised the service squadron of the regiment during the Great War. Ultimately, Craig was able to intervene to have one squadron of the regiment preserved as part of an amalgamated regiment, joining two squadrons of the 5th Dragoon Guards and named from 1922 to 1927 by the inelegant title, 5/6th Dragoons.[60]

There were to be curious echoes of the Southern Irish Regiments throughout the rest of the twentieth century British army. As late as 1938 the London Irish Rifles, part of the then expanding Territorial Army, announced that their companies bore the names

[57]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter Worthington-Evans to Craig, 3 July 1922.
[58]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letters, Spender to Colonel H. Irvine, 19 July 1922,
[59]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, letter C. C. Craig to Spender, 12 July 1922.
[60]PRONI CAB/8/R/3, Correspondence concerning War Office proposals for the disbandment of certain Irish regiments, Disbandment of Irish Regiments, letter from Lieutenant Colonel Michael Rimington to Craig, 10 May 1922 and letter W. C. Trimble to Craig, 29th March 1922 and Roger Evans, *The Story of The Fifth Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards,* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1951), pp. 160-180.

of the disbanded regiments and invited former soldiers of those regiments to enlist.[61] When the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Royal Ulster Rifles and Royal Irish Fusiliers were amalgamated in 1968 they were given the title of the Royal Irish Rangers, a clear reference to the long-disbanded Connaught Rangers. When the Royal Irish Rangers were, in turn, amalgamated with the Ulster Defence Regiment in 1991, the title of the Royal Irish Regiment was resurrected.[62]

[61] *The Times*, 3rd May 1938.

[62] Keith Jeffery, 'The British Army and Ireland since 1922' in Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History of Ireland*, pp. 431-458 (pp. 449 & 456).

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The Irish soldier in the British army during the Napoleonic Wars, 1808-1815

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ABSTRACT
Consideration by historians of Irish soldiers' service in the regular British army during the Napoleonic Wars has been primarily through the perspective of the Irish regiments and the Irish enlisted man. This note presents new perspectives by demonstrating that Irish service was more widespread due to the presence of Irish officers and enlisted men across all regiments of the regular army. Important aspects of Irish service such as promotion, discipline, and the presence of Irish families are highlighted with the intention of facilitating a new perspective on the relationship between the regular British army and Irish society.

Introduction

Historians of the British army during the Napoleonic Wars have generally viewed the Irish soldier within the context of the Irish regiments and particularly those that served with Wellington during the Peninsula and Waterloo campaigns.[1] However, three times more Irish men served in English and Scottish regiments than in the Irish regiments.[2] In addition, a third of all regimental officers who served in the Peninsula and Waterloo

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[1]The 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards, 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, 18th (King's Irish) Hussars, 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot), 87th (Prince of Wales's Own Irish) Regiment of Foot, and the 88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot.

[2]UK National Archives, (hereinafter TNA) WO27/91, WO27/92, WO27/98, WO27/99, WO27/102, WO27/105, WO27/106, WO27/113, WO27/116, WO27/117, WO27/126, WO27/127, WO27/133, WO27/134, Inspection Returns, 1807 to 1815 and Regimental Description Books, WO25/329 6th Foot 1804 - 1812 and WO25/382, 1/42nd Foot, 1807-1811, hereafter referred to as the Regimental demographics database.

campaigns were Irish.[3] This has resulted in a narrow focus of historical analysis with an under appreciation of the extent of Irish manpower mobilised by the British state for the defeat of Napoleonic France. Furthermore, it has unintentionally limited research into the wider economic and social impacts of the war on Ireland and its relationship with Great Britain. This research note presents preliminary PhD research findings examining Irish military service across all regiments of the regular British army between 1808 and 1815. The research methodology employed differs from other studies of the Irish soldier during this period as it is based on the statistical analysis of data from the military records. Three databases were constructed using biographical and military service details from War Office records, predominately regimental description books and inspection returns.[4] A database of 1,913 randomly selected Irish enlisted men from 54 cavalry and infantry regiments provides unique insights into these men's social-economic backgrounds and their experiences of life in the regular British army.[5] A second database contains data relating to the country of birth (England, Scotland, Ireland and Foreign) of 7,173 British army officers from the Peninsula and Waterloo campaigns.[6] This database facilitates comparative analysis of the regimental experiences of Irish born officers against their English and Scottish colleagues. The third database allows for the analysis of the country of birth (England, Scotland, Ireland and Foreign) of 141,731 enlisted men of the regular British army by regiment and rank.[7] The findings presented in this research note are preliminary and any observations or alternate points of view are welcomed by the author.

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[3]TNA WO27/89, WO27/90, WO27/91, WO27/92, WO27/96, WO27/98, WO27/99, WO27/100, WO27/101, WO27/102, WO27/106, WO27/107, WO27/111, WO27112, WO27/116, WO27/117, WO27/126, WO27/127, WO27/133, WO27/134, WO27/135, WO27/138 and WO27/139, Inspection Returns, 1805 to 1816, hereafter referred to as the British Army Officers' database.

[4]WO/25 series of regimental description books and WO27 series of regimental inspection returns.

[5]TNA, WO25/ 276 to WO25/299 – Regimental Description Books for various cavalry regiments from 3rd Dragoons to 23rd Light Dragoons 1802 to 1824, and WO25/ 314 to WO25/541 – Regimental Description Books for various infantry regiments from 1st Foot Guards to the 97th Regiment of Foot 1776 to 1829. hereafter referred to as the Irish enlisted men's database.

[6]British army officers' database.

[7]Regimental demographics database. The military records of the period only identified the country of birth as 'English', 'Scottish', 'Irish' or 'Foreign'. Welch born officers and enlisted men were recorded as English. In a limited number of regimental records, such as the the 23rd (Royal Welch Fusiliers) Regiment of Foot, the country of birth of Welch enlisted men was recorded, however, this was not consistently applied across all regiments, prohibiting any accurate analysis of Welch born soldiers or officers.

Which were the Irish regiments?

By 1808 the regular British army consisted of 202,177 enlisted men serving in 204 cavalry and infantry regiments.[8] Of these, 13 bore an Irish regimental title.[9] However, analysis across the other regiments of the regular army found that over the period 1808 to 1815 a total of 54 cavalry and infantry regiments were predominately Irish in their demographical composition i.e. Ireland as the country of birth exceeded that for enlisted men born in England or Scotland.[10] Regiments such as the 11th (North Devonshire) Regiment of Foot, the 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot and the 67th (South Hampshire) Regiment of Foot had battalions with 94%, 91% and 88% Irish representation respectively.[11] 32% of all enlisted men across the 204 cavalry and infantry regiments/battalions analysed were Irish, with English and Scottish representation at 53% and 14% respectively.[12] A revised understanding of what constituted an Irish regiment during this period is required. Such an understanding would provide a starting point in appreciating the wider impact of the Irish contribution to the regular army, and the impact of that contribution on Irish society.

The reason why the regular army became so Irish during this period was due to two interrelated factors. Since 1793 the war with France had created an unprecedented demand for manpower as Great Britain expanded its military forces. In 1793 the strength of the regular army was 38,945; by 1813 it had increased to 220,469, not including men in the militia and other auxiliary forces.[13] Lord Liverpool, Home Secretary in 1805, estimated that one in five British men were in uniform.[14] Secondly, the legislative framework supporting recruitment resulted in the poorest of English,

[8]U.K. Parliamentary Papers Archive, Return of effective strength of the British Army 1807-1813, H.C. 1813-14, (16) xi, 269.

[9]These regiments were 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards, 5th (Royal Irish) Dragoons, 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, 8th (King's Royal Irish) Light Dragoons, 18th (King's Irish) Hussars, 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment of Foot, 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot, 86th (Royal County Down) Regiment of Foot, 87th (Prince of Wales's Own Irish) Regiment of Foot, 88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot, 99th (Prince of Wales's Tipperary) Regiment of Foot, 100th (Prince Regent's County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot, and 101st (Duke of York's Irish) Regiment of Foot.

[10]Regimental demographics database.

[11]TNA WO27/106, WO27/92, and WO27/99, Inspection Returns, May 1812, May 1808 and 1810.

[12]Regimental demographics database.

[13]U.K. Parliamentary Papers Archive, Effective men in the British Army 1793–1801, H.C. 1806 (173) x, 397 and Return of effective strength of the British Army 1807-1813, H.C. 1813-14, (16) xi, 269

[14]John Keith Bartlett, 'The development of the British Army during the wars with France, 1793-1815', (PhD thesis, Durham University, 1997), p. 107.

Scottish and Irish societies being enlisted into the regular army. These men were mainly from the labouring classes. Unemployed weavers, who had suffered the combined effects of industrialisation and the closure of European markets as a result of Napoleon's economic blockade of British trade, also provided a ready source of manpower. While economic conditions for these men and their families were difficult, the situation was worse in Ireland where no poor law system was in operation. Analysis by former occupation confirmed that the majority (73%) of Irish enlisted men were former labourers and unemployed weavers.[15] Former labourers and weavers were also predominant among English and Scottish enlisted men.[16]

Why did they serve?

Regimental life in the regular British army of the period has been portrayed in historical novels as one of unremitting hardship, draconian discipline, and the ever-present threat of death or serious injury. However, the regular army underwent a period of reform, primarily at the instigation of the Duke of York as commander-in-chief (1798-1809), during the wars with France. Improved conditions and terms of service, the provision of educational opportunities and prospects for promotion provided means by which soldiers could aspire to make a career within the army. Promotion within the non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks, and in rarer instances as commissioned officers, provided a form of social mobility. Irish born men were represented at all ranks of the army: commissioned, and non-commissioned. Over the period 1807 to 1815, thirty percent of all NCOs were Irish, which was proportionate to their overall demographic of 32% across the enlisted men ranks.[17] Irish men accounted for 29% of the more senior NCO ranks of sergeant, colour sergeant and sergeant major in comparison to 51% for English men and 19% for Scottish men.[18] These statistical findings are important as they indicate that Irish men were considered to be of a character and disposition for promotion within English and Scottish regiments by the military authorities.

Irish officers

While Irish officers such as Wellington, Beresford and Lowry are well known to military historians of the period, what is probably less appreciated was the extent of Irish officers across all regiments of the regular army. Among Wellington's Peninsula and Waterloo regiments, Irish born officers accounted for 33% of the officer corps.[19] These men were represented across the various regimental appointments –

[15]Irish enlisted men's database.
[16]Edward Coss. *All for the King's shilling the British soldier under Wellington, 1808 – 1814,* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), p. 69.
[17]Regimental demographics database.
[18]Ibid.
[19]British army officers' database.

commanding officers, company commanders, adjutants, and quartermasters, necessary for the effective and efficient functioning of their regiments. Analysis shows that Irish officers predominately served in the cavalry (23%), and infantry (36%) regiments, with fewer Irish born officers in the technical branches of the Royal Artillery (14%), and the Royal Engineers (9%).[20] The reason for this may be related to the requirement to attend the academy at Woolwich, which involved young gentlemen cadets having to remain in England for two years when they could have been advancing their careers within an infantry or cavalry regiment.

Discipline

The perception of Irish enlisted men during the Napoleonic period as portrayed in subsequent accounts and memoirs was one of ill-disciplined soldiers who were prone to excessive consumption of alcohol and theft. Such accounts may have been influenced by negative stereotypes that arose in response to Irish emigration to English cities in the decades following the war. Social unrest and political agitation in Ireland through-out the 1820s as the demand for Catholic Emancipation intensified may have further contributed to the negative stereotyping of Irish Catholics. Applying an empirical based analysis of the discipline of predominately Irish regiments and comparing them against English and Scottish regiments provides a more accurate understanding of discipline across the regular British army, and specifically the Irish soldier's relationship with military authority. Preliminary research was conducted on regimental court martials from eight regiments during the six-month period from May 1812 to January 1813.[21] The eight regiments selected for analysis were chosen to determine if country of birth was a determinate of the court martial rate and the findings are presented in the table below.[22]

[20]Ibid.

[21]TNA WO27/111 and WO 27/112, Inspection Reports May 1812 to January 1813. The regiments selected for analysis were the English 2/35th (Sussex) Regiment of Foot, the Scottish 2/42nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot, Anglo/Irish 2/43rd (Monmouthshire) Regiment of Foot, the Anglo/Irish 1/45th (Nottinghamshire) Regiment of Foot, the Scottish 1/72nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot the Irish/Scottish 74th Regiment of Foot, the Irish 1/87th (Prince of Wales's Own Irish) Regiment of Foot and the Irish 1/88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot.

[22]The courts martial data contained in the WO27 series of inspection reports does not identify an individual soldier's nationality. The returns only contain the total number of enlisted men in each regiment by country of birth (English, Scottish Irish and Foreign). This was used as the basis to calculate the predominate country of birth for each regiment.

Regiment	2/35th	2/42nd	2/43rd	1/45th	1/72nd	74th	1/87th	1/88th	Total
Pre-dominate country of birth	Eng-lish	Scot-tish	Ang-lo/ Irish	Ang-lo/ Irish	Scot-tish	Irish/ Scot-tish	Irish	Irish	
Court martials	25	20	2	16	10	54	26	34	187
Enlisted men	630	365	439	935	1035	892	933	1342	6571
Crime rate	4%	5.5%	0.5%	1.7%	1%	6.1%	2.8%	2.5%	2.8%

Table 1- Analysis of regimental courts martial May 1812 to January 1813.[23]

The average court martial rate across the eight regiments was 2.8% or 3 men out of every hundred men were found guilty of various crimes by a regimental court martial during that six-month period. Analysis found that the predominately Irish regiments - 1/87th (Prince of Wales's Own Irish) Regiment of Foot and the 1/88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot, had court martial rates that were at, or below, the average rate, while the Anglo/Irish regiments had rates below the average for the period. While the number of regiments and the time period sampled was limited, these preliminary findings contradict the perceptions articulated in some memoirs and subsequent histories of discipline of Irish enlisted men during the period. It can be concluded from this limited analysis that the perception that country of birth was a determinant of discipline was questionable, and that other factors may have impacted discipline within a regiment. When cross-referenced with the findings for the rates of representation of Irish at the NCO ranks, it is evident that more empirical research is required on this important aspect of Irish military service in the regular British army.

Irish families in the regular army

An under-researched area for historians of the period has been the presence of women and children within regular British army regiments. The research conducted to date has been focused on British women and children with limited analysis within a purely Irish context. Furthermore, no figure is available as to the total number of women and children who accompanied their husbands and fathers into the regular army. Analysis of military records across 114 regiments has found that in 1814 the marriage rate for Irish enlisted men was 11% compared with 12% across the army.[24] With 7,497 women and their children present in the 114 regiments analysed for this

[23]Source TNA WO27/111 and WO 27/112, Inspection Returns May 1812 to January 1813.

[24]TNA WO27/126 and WO27/127, Inspection Returns, 1814.

research, and Irish enlisted men representing 32% of all men, this equates to a minimum of 2,399 wives of Irish soldiers, and a similar number of children under the age of 16 years, present in regular army regiments during 1814.[25] This figure was probably greater as records were only available for 114 regiments.

Analysis then focused on why did these women opt for a life with an army regiment and why were British army regiments prepared to allow families within the regimental structure? The answers again were related to the socio-economic situation many Irish, English and Scottish families found themselves in during the period, and the manpower needs of the British army. An illustrative example was provided by the Cunningham family from Castlepollard, County Westmeath, Ireland. Michael Cunningham volunteered for the 67th (South Hampshire) Regiment of Foot in 1812.[26] Michael, a 28-year-old victualer, was already married with a family when he enlisted. His wife Abigail was recorded as having two children: a one-year-old infant boy, and a four-year-old girl. However, the regimental documents recorded that the couple had two older sons serving as drummers in the regiment. Whatever situation the Cunningham family found themselves in prior to enlistment, the British army was considered a viable alternative by the family. Such evidence of families who accompanied men into the regular British army is suggestive of the economic difficulties that many Irish families found themselves in during the period. The case of the Cunningham family also provides an understanding as to why the British army was prepared to enlist married men and provide for their families. This single Irish family unit provided three soldiers - one adult male and two boys - in exchange for providing accommodation and food for one wife and two infant children. The history of Irish, English, and Scottish families present with regular army regiments during the Napoleonic Wars deserves more attention. While research into women in the First and Second World Wars is well advanced, the Napoleonic era has received less attention, despite the presence of data within the military records.

Conclusion

Irish contribution to the defeat of Napoleonic France has been viewed by military historians through a limited number of Irish born officers and regiments. However, as this research note has presented, Irish manpower, in terms of its numerical contribution, was critical to the operation of the British army and its defeat of Napoleonic France. Military service resulted in men from every parish, town and city in Ireland enlisting in the regular army.[27] Irish wives and children accompanied their

[25]TNA WO27/126 and WO27/127 Inspection Returns, 1814.
[26]TNA WO25/453, Regimental Description Book, 67th Foot, 1806-1817.
[27]Jim Deery, 'Wellington's Irish – a socio-economic study of Irish enlisted men in the British Army, 1808-1815', *Retrospect, Journal of the Irish History Students' Association, 2021 Edition*, (2022), pp, 1-26.

menfolk and were a presence across all regiments of the regular army. While discipline and promotion among Irish enlisted men has been considered in this research note, other important aspects of Irish military service such as religion, welfare and education have not been addressed. Military service in the regular British army impacted Ireland and Irish society in ways that have yet to be fully understood by military, social or cultural historians. The complete story of the Irish soldier in the British army during this turning point in Irish, British, and European history has yet to be told. Addressing this topic in a more comprehensive manner utilising empirical based analysis is the focus of this current research. It is intended that this will facilitate a new perspective of the relationship between the regular British army and Irish society during this period.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES (July 2021)

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consultation with the author. The editors are the final arbiters of usage, grammar, and length.

Authors should note that articles may be rejected if they do not conform to the Journal's Style Guide and/or they exceed the word count.

Also note that the Journal editors endorse the importance of thorough referencing in scholarly works. In cases where citations are incomplete or do not follow the format specified in the Style Guide throughout the submitted article, the paper **will** be returned to the author for correction before it is accepted for peer review. Note that if citation management software is used the footnotes in the submitted file must stand alone and be editable by the Journal editorial team.

Authors are encouraged to supply relevant artwork (maps, charts, line drawings, and photographs) with their essays. The author is responsible for citing the sources and obtaining permission to publish any copyrighted material.

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Articles

The journal welcomes the submission of scholarly articles related to military history in the broadest sense. Articles should be a minimum of 6000 words and no more than 8000 words in length (including footnotes) and be set out according to the BJMH Style Guide.

Research Notes
The BJMH also welcomes the submission of shorter 'Research Notes'. These are pieces of research-based writing of between 1,000 and 3,000 words. These could be, for example: analysis of the significance a newly accessible document or documents; a reinterpretation of a document; or a discussion of an historical controversy drawing on new research. Note that all such pieces of work should follow the style guidelines for articles and will be peer reviewed. Note also that such pieces should not be letters, nor should they be opinion pieces which are not based on new research.

Book Reviews
The BJMH seeks to publish concise, accessible and well-informed reviews of books relevant to the topics covered by the Journal. Reviews are published as a service to the readership of the BJMH and should be of use to a potential reader in deciding whether or not to buy or read that book. The range of books reviewed by the BJMH reflects the field of military history, taken in the widest sense. Books published by academic publishers, general commercial publishers, and specialist military history imprints may all be considered for review in the Journal.

Reviews of other types of publication such as web resources may also be commissioned.

The Journal's Editorial Team is responsible for commissioning book reviews and for approaching reviewers. From time to time a list of available books for review may be issued, together with an open call for potential reviewers to contact the Journal Editors. The policy of the BJMH is for reviews always to be solicited by the editors rather than for book authors to propose reviewers themselves. In all cases, once a reviewer has been matched with a book, the Editorial Team will arrange for them to be sent a review copy.

Book reviews should generally be of about 700 words and must not exceed 1000 words in length.

A review should summarise the main aims and arguments of the work, should evaluate its contribution and value to military history as broadly defined, and should identify to which readership(s) the work is most likely to appeal. The Journal does not encourage personal comment or attacks in the reviews it publishes, and the Editorial Team reserves the right to ask reviewers for revisions to their reviews. The final decision whether or not to publish a review remains with the Editorial Team.

The Editorial Team may seek the views of an author of a book that has been reviewed in the Journal. Any comment from the author may be published.

All submitted reviews should begin with the bibliographic information of the work under review, including the author(s) or editor(s), the title, the place and year of publication, the publisher, the number of pages, the ISBN for the format of the work that has been reviewed, and the price for this format if available. Prices should be given in the original currency, but if the book has been published in several territories including the UK then the price in pounds sterling should be supplied. The number of illustrations and maps should also be noted if present. An example of the heading of a review is as follows:

Ian F W Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms: The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*. Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 2018. Xviii + 350pp. 3 maps. ISBN 978-0806161716 (hardback). Price £32.95.

The reviewer's name, and an institutional affiliation if relevant, should be appended at the bottom of the review, name in Capitals and Institution in lower case with both to be right aligned.

Reviews of a single work should not contain any footnotes, but if the text refers to any other works then their author, title and year should be apparent in order for readers to be able to identify them. The Editorial Team and Editorial Board may on occasion seek to commission longer Review Articles of a group of works, and these may contain footnotes with the same formatting and standards used for articles in the Journal.

BJMH STYLE GUIDE (July 2021)

The BJMH Style Guide has been designed to encourage you to submit your work. It is based on, but is not identical to, the Chicago Manual of Style and more about this style can be found at:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

Specific Points to Note

Use Gill Sans MT 10 Point for all article and book review submissions, including footnotes.

Text should be justified.

Paragraphs do not require indenting.

Line spacing should be single and a single carriage return applied between paragraphs.

Spellings should be anglicised: i.e. –ise endings where appropriate, colour etc., 'got' not 'gotten'.

Verb past participles: -ed endings rather than –t endings are preferred for past participles of verbs i.e. learned, spoiled, burned. While is preferred to whilst.

Contractions should not be used i.e. 'did not' rather than 'didn't'.

Upon first reference the full name and title of an individual should be used as it was as the time of reference i.e. On 31 July 1917 Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), launched the Third Battle of Ypres.

All acronyms should be spelled out in full upon first reference with the acronym in brackets, as shown in the example above.

Dates should be written in the form 20 June 2019.

When referring to an historical figure, e.g. King Charles, use that form, when referring to the king later in the text, use king in lower case.

Foreign words or phrases such as *weltanschauung* or *levée en masse* should be italicised.

Illustrations, Figures and Tables:

- Must be suitable for inclusion on an A5 portrait page.
- Text should not be smaller than 8 pt Gill Sans MT font.
- Should be numbered sequentially with the title below the illustration, figure or table.
- Included within the body of the text.

Footnoting:

- All references should be footnotes not endnotes.
- Footnote numeral should come at the end of the sentence and after the full stop.
- Multiple references in a single sentence or paragraph should be covered by a single footnote with the citations divided by semi-colons.
- If citation management software is used the footnotes in the submitted file must stand alone and be editable by the editorial team.

Quotations:

- Short (less than three lines of continuous quotation): placed in single quotation marks unless referring to direct speech and contained within that paragraph. Standard footnote at end of sentence.
- Long (more than three lines of continuous quotation): No quotation marks of any kind. One carriage space top and bottom, indented, no change in font size, standard footnote at end of passage.
- Punctuation leading into quotations is only necessary if the punctuation itself would have been required were the quotation not there. i.e. : ; and , should only be present if they were required to begin with.
- Full stops are acceptable inside or outside of quotation marks depending upon whether the quoted sentence ended in a full stop in the original work.

Citations:

- For books: Author, *Title in Italics*, (place of publication: publisher, year of publication), p. # or pp. #-#.
- For journals: Author, 'Title in quotation marks', *Journal Title in Italics*, Vol. #, Iss. # (or No.#), (Season/Month, Year) pp. #-# (p. #).
- For edited volumes: Chapter Author, 'Chapter title' in Volume Author/s (ed. or eds), *Volume title in italics*, (place of publication: publisher, year), p. # or pp. #-#.
- Primary sources: Archive name (Archive acronym), Catalogue number of equivalent, *'source name or description' in italics* if publicly published, p. #/date or equivalent. Subsequent references to the same archive do not require the Archive name.

- Internet sources: Author, 'title', URL Accessed date. The time accessed may also be included, but is not generally required, but, if used, then usage must be consistent throughout.
- *Op cit.* should be shunned in favour of shortened citations.
- Shortened citations should include Author surname, shortened title, p.# for books. As long as a similar practice is used for journals etc., and is done consistently, it will be acceptable.
- Ibid., with a full stop before the comma, should be used for consecutive citations.

Examples of Citations:

- Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 21.
- Michael Collins, 'A fear of flying: diagnosing traumatic neurosis among British aviators of the Great War', *First World War Studies*, 6, 2 (2015), pp. 187-202 (p. 190).
- Michael Howard, 'Men against Fire: The Doctrine of the Offensive in 1914', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 510-526.
- The UK National Archives (TNA), CAB 19/33, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Sclater, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917.
- Shilpa Ganatra, 'How Derry Girls Became an Instant Sitcom Classic', *The Guardian*, 13 February 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/feb/13/derry-girls-instant-sitcom-classic-schoolgirls-northern-ireland Accessed 20 April 2019.

Note: Articles not using the citation style shown above will be returned to the author for correction prior to peer review.